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A CASE STUDY EVALUATION OF THE QUADRENNIAL EVALUATION PROCESS OF THE ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS: 1974-1998

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Maurice Armand Ottinger
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DEDICATION

This dissertation deals with an aspect of Alabama higher education, and is offered in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from a Tennessee higher education institution. This amounts to a "family affair" for me, since my parents are graduates of Tennessee higher education institutions and my wife and several of her family members are graduates of Alabama higher education institutions and/or have served as faculty or staff members in these institutions. Correspondingly, this dissertation is dedicated to them for the support, encouragement, and inspiration they have provided in my pursuit of this degree:

- Charles Love Ottinger (graduate, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute and The University of Tennessee, Knoxville)
- Nana Marie Matthews Ottinger (graduate, Carson-Newman College and The University of Tennessee, Knoxville)
- Lorie Lee Spin Ottinger (graduate, John C. Calhoun State Community College and Athens State College; former graduate student and staff member, Troy State University)
- William Allan Spin (Colonel, US Army Retired; former assistant professor of military science, Auburn University)
- Mary Elizabeth Spin (graduate, The University of Alabama at Huntsville)
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Finally, and most importantly, I am forever indebted to my wife Lorie and children Emily and Allan. They have sacrificed more and longer than they should ever have had to for me to have this opportunity.

ABSTRACT

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) is a regulatory coordinating board that coordinates certain activities regarding all public institutions of higher education in Alabama. The state law that established ACHE in 1969 requires ACHE to arrange an external evaluation of its effectiveness once every four years. This was the first instance of any state governing or coordinating board being required to undergo regular external evaluations of that frequency, and Alabama remains the only state with such a requirement.

The objective of this study was to establish as clearly as feasible the degree to which the ACHE quadrennial evaluation (QE) process has been of benefit to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. Following the introduction, the literature review includes the results of a preliminary nationwide study concerning the practice of evaluations of statewide boards of higher education over a ten-year period. These results confirm the uniqueness of Alabama's requirement in this regard.

The main study includes analysis of survey responses from over fifty individuals representing current and former members of the following groups: ACHE commissioners, ACHE staff members, and faculty and administrators of both two-year institutions and four-year colleges and universities. The researcher also conducted telephonic interviews with selected individuals to clarify the reasons for certain responses. The researcher also analyzed documentary evidence

including the QE reports themselves, legislative changes based on QE committee recommendations, documents created by the ACHE staff in response to QE reports and recommendations, and media articles that address the various quadrennial evaluations. The evidence is presented by categories including ACHE's major roles as well as other areas in which one or more of the first six QE committees have made recommendations.

Based on the evidence presented, the researcher concludes that the ACHE QE process has been of significant benefit to ACHE and to Alabama higher education, that Alabama should continue the QE process, and that other states should favorably consider establishing similar processes. The researcher also makes several recommendations concerning how Alabama might improve the QE process, and offers some suggestions for further research opportunities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Statewide boards of higher or postsecondary education have never been a particularly popular social phenomenon…If this condition was generally true during the relative affluence and huge quantitative growth of the past twenty years when the vast majority of statewide boards were created, it may be even more true over the next twenty years... (Berdahl, 1975 Spring, p. 1)

In this manner, just over twenty-five years ago, the editor of a journal issue entitled Evaluating Statewide Boards began an effective introduction to his work, which has turned out also to be an accurate prophecy concerning the past twenty-five years.

The most compelling reason that these statewide boards have never been particularly popular is that they are, as the reader will see in more detail within this study, "boundary agencies" with an inherently tensioned role of dealing with the conflicting interests and expectations of multiple institutions of higher education as well as of state government. Another reason for their lack of popularity is that they are, for the most part, relatively new creations within American higher education. This is particularly true of coordinating boards as opposed to governing boards, the latter having existed in some form (though not necessarily at the statewide level) throughout the history of American higher education.

The Education Commission of the States' (ECS) State Postsecondary Education Structures Handbook (latest edition is 1997) provides a classification of the various types of statewide boards.

The exact terminology may change from author to author. However, the researcher classification of the various types of statewide boards (given below and elaborated at Appendix A) is amended from the ECS work and consistent with it and with other similar classifications (including Berdahl, 1975 Spring as shown further below):

Single Statewide Governing Boards (called **consolidated governing boards** by Berdahl) govern and coordinate the missions and finance of all or virtually all of the institutions of higher education within a given state where no statewide coordinating board (see below) exists. Such governing boards are further distinct from coordinating boards in that the "governing boards not only have responsibility for program and financial planning in a state, but they also have responsibility for major personnel appointments and policy, including the appointment of campus chief executives." (Bogue & Aper, 2000, p. 50)

Statewide Coordinating Boards (called **coordinating agencies** by Berdahl) are responsible for coordinating master planning and ensuring the equitable allocation of both programs and financial resources for higher education activities in states with one or more other governing boards. Certain of these coordinating boards also have governing powers over certain institutions. These coordinating boards are further classified as either **regulatory boards** (with statutory authority to approve new academic programs) or **advisory boards** (with program review/recommendation authority only). In some cases, regulatory boards also have the authority to terminate existing academic programs. (Bogue & Aper, 2000, p. 51)

Statewide planning agencies (called **voluntary associations** by Berdahl) include statewide higher education agencies that have even less formal responsibility and/or authority than do statewide coordinating boards, although some of them at least attempt to perform some of the same functions and services.

Berdahl (1975 Spring, p. 3) provides evidence for the relative newness of statewide boards, particularly those other than governing boards. His table (reproduced in this study as Table 1) shows the progression of statewide structures for coordination in higher education from 1940 through 1974. As the reader can easily see from the table, the progression is towards stronger coordination (or governance) over time, including the greatest growth among regulatory coordinating boards, and is especially pronounced after 1950. According to Bogue & Aper's (2000) analysis of Berdahl's account of these agencies, "In response to the rapid growth in higher education during the 1960s, many states established coordinating boards to bring some sense of order, planning, and equity among competing campuses and systems." (p. 51) The researcher has added an additional line to Berdahl's table showing the status as of 1996 of the fifty states based upon his classification given above and elaborated at Appendix A.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) is a regulatory coordinating board that coordinates the activities of all public institutions of higher education in Alabama. It is comparable to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), which is also a

Table 1

Number Of States Classified By Type Of Statewide Structure For Coordination In Higher Education, For Selected Years, 1940-1974 (1996 Added By Researcher)

Type of Coordinating Structure	1940	1950	1960	1965	1970	1974	1996
No board	33	28	17	7	2	2	1
Voluntary association	0	3	6	3	2	1	5
Advisory coordinating agency	1	1	5	11	13	11	7
Regulatory coordinating agency	1	2	6	12	14	17	22
Consolidated governing board	13	14	16	17	19	19	17
TOTAL	48	48	50	50	50	50	52*

* This total includes D.C. and Puerto Rico.

Source: Berdahl, 1975 Spring, p. 3 (except 1996 data)

regulatory coordinating board, although ACHE is arguably more complex than THEC from logistical and political perspectives.

ACHE was established in 1969 by act of the Alabama State legislature (Act Number 14, Special Session, 1969). In its initial form, it was an advisory rather than regulatory coordinating board; it became a regulatory coordinating board based upon legislation enacted in 1979 (Act 79-461). (One issue of interest in this study is the degree to which this change was influenced by the recommendations of the first two ACHE quadrennial evaluations.)

The state law that established ACHE in 1969 required ACHE to arrange and fund an external evaluation of its effectiveness once every four years. Here is a quote from Act Number 14 of Alabama Law (Special Session, 1969) that established the Commission:

> Section 9. Evaluating and Revising the Commission. Two years after the establishment of the Commission and during the last year of each gubernatorial term, the Commission shall appoint a committee of at least three consultants who are not associated with higher education in this State to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the commission and to recommend changes as needed. A report prepared by the committee shall be submitted to the Governor, the Legislature, the presidents and governing boards of the public institutions of higher education of this State and the public. (NOTE: The identical provision also appears as Section 12 of Act Number 79-461 of Alabama Law [Regular Session, 1979], the current law governing ACHE.)

These evaluations are usually conducted by higher education experts from outside the state, sometimes assisted by public figures from other walks of life from within Alabama. ACHE has gone through seven such evaluations since its inception, resulting in formal reports in each of the following years: 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, and 1999. While their official purpose is only to evaluate the

effectiveness of ACHE, these evaluations have by necessity addressed other elements of Alabama higher education as well.

One of the most surprising aspects leading to this study is that the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process has retained its unique nature among statewide higher education boards over the past quarter century. The journal issue entitled Evaluating Statewide Boards mentioned earlier (Berdahl [Ed.], 1975 Spring) identifies the first ACHE quadrennial evaluation as the first of its kind nationwide, frequently asserting that this breakthrough could and should result in other states establishing similar processes. However, this has clearly (as the reader will see below and in the next chapter) not been the case.

The researcher conducted preliminary research on the evaluations of statewide boards from 1985 through 1995 as an assigned part of his doctoral comprehensive examination (see Chapter 2). This research clearly confirms that ACHE's quadrennial evaluation process easily establishes ACHE as the most frequently and regularly evaluated of all statewide coordinating and governing boards. The reports from each of ACHE's quadrennial evaluations have included recommendations for improvements to ACHE itself as well as to other entities related to Alabama higher education. While many of these recommendations have been implemented, several others have not. This is true despite the fact that some of these recommendations have been made by more than one of the quadrennial evaluation teams.

Rationale

This is a case study of a state policy for higher education, specifically, that of the quadrennial evaluation requirement for ACHE. The researcher's intent is that it will become one of the types of studies that Chaffee (1989) had in mind when she expressed the need for a case study approach in investigating state systems of higher education. "Ideally, individual studies will be part of larger research programs, each study intended to fill in a piece of the mosaic." (Chaffee, cited in Aper, 1990, p. 4)

As mentioned earlier, Berdahl (1975) praised the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process as a model for other states to emulate. This suggests the following question:

- Have these evaluations provided important and useful information or guidance for policies and practice?

The ACHE quadrennial evaluations provide a routine review of Alabama higher education and the state's role in it. This suggests the following questions:

- Is such review and evaluation beneficial or not?
- What liabilities and impedances may associate with this review and evaluation?
- What are the impacts and implications of such regular review?
- What are the lessons for other states that might be derived from a close look at Alabama's quadrennial evaluation process?

Theoretical Bases for the Study

The overriding theoretical base for this study concerns the relationships between states and their higher education entities, policies which implement and/or are based upon these relationships, and the uses of evaluation in public (and especially state) agencies.

Aper (Fall 1990) proposed a model for higher education policy studies that suggests the primary theoretical base identified above. His model consists of two broad categories of components. The first category outlines the structure of each state policy-making apparatus. These structural components include higher education institutions, statewide higher education boards, state legislative and executive entities, and media and interest groups. The second category outlines the contextual factors influencing the policy making process. These potentially include the powers, expectations, attitudes, personalities, and political mood of each of the structural component entities; as well as the issues facing the state and the state's fiscal health (Aper, Fall 1990, pp. 4-6 and following).

In addition to this primary theoretical base, there are at least three significant sub-elements (lay governance, expertise-oriented program evaluation, and evaluation impact) of relevance to this study. The first of these, lay governance, deals with the nature of coordinating and governing boards themselves. The second and third sub-elements both stem from the well-established body of knowledge concerning educational evaluation (see especially Worthen,

Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). These sub-elements deal, respectively, with the nature of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process itself and with the nature of this study.

Sub-element #1: Lay Governance

This first sub-element deals with the nature of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and similar bodies. The basic theory undergirding both consolidated governing boards and coordinating boards is that of lay governance. It applied, of course, first to governing boards of individual institutions (usually referred to today as boards of trustees). Lay governance (defined simply as governance by those other than professionals in higher education) exists for at least two equally important purposes. First, it maintains academic autonomy by protecting the institutions and their faculty and administrators from unwarranted intrusion by other government officials (or the public at large) on the conduct of their day-to-day business. Secondly, it provides an appropriate level of academic accountability, both to government officials and to the public, for the institution(s) for which the board is responsible.

As Richard T. Ingram, president of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, explains, "The idea that nonacademics should oversee the academy, to hold it accountable to the public as well as to protect it from capricious political entanglements, has a very long and distinguished history." (Ingram, 1993, p. 5) He goes on to debunk the myth that lay governing boards

in American higher education originated based upon the practices of American corporations. Instead, he correctly points out that these boards themselves date back to Harvard's Board of Overseers in 1642, and that their "roots are found in Western Europe some four centuries before." (Ingram, 1993, p. 3)

Coordinating boards have also adopted the theory of lay governance as it applies to governing boards. More specifically, as Bogue & Aper (2000) point out,

> Coordinating board members are generally composed of appointed lay citizens, just as members of governing boards. The lay board members then appoint and entrust operational responsibilities of master planning, program review and evaluation, and financial and plant planning to a professional staff. (p. 51)

However, while governing boards are understandably oriented towards the interests of the higher education institutions they serve, statewide coordinating boards stand somewhat removed from that orientation. One view is that statewide coordinating boards stand (in terms of orientation) equally distant from and between the institutions themselves and the state government and public (Holderman, 1975 Spring; Bogue, 1983), or in a "tensioned posture between campus expectations for advocacy of higher education and political expectations for accountability and efficiency." (Bogue & Aper, 2000, p. 51) Another view (Millett, 1975 Spring) is that these coordinating boards are more closely oriented toward state government rather than toward the institutions. Regardless of exactly where one stands in this debate, it is clear that the orientations of coordinating and governing boards are significantly different.

Sub-element #2: Expertise-Oriented Program Evaluation

Worthen et al. (1997) provide two educational evaluation models of significant value in determining the theoretical orientation of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process. The first of these classifications (chapters 1 and 2) outlines the differences between product evaluation, educational research, and program evaluation based upon the generalizability of the phenomenon investigated. Because of its specificity in time and location, the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process is clearly an example of program evaluation rather than of either product evaluation or educational research in a broader sense.

The second valuable classification provided by Worthen et al. (1997, chapter 4) is that of different approaches to educational evaluations based upon their primary focus. They also argue that these classifications distribute along House's (1983) continuum between utilitarian and intuitionist-pluralist evaluation as follows (the earliest listed are more utilitarian, those listed later are more intuitionist-pluralist):

- Objectives- and management-oriented evaluation approaches
- Consumer-oriented evaluation approaches
- Expertise-oriented evaluation approaches
- Adversary-oriented evaluation approaches

- Naturalistic and participant-oriented evaluation approaches (including the case study approach as a type of naturalistic approach).

While few, if any, educational evaluations would fall exclusively under any one of these classifications at the expense of all others, classification based upon primary focus and related to House's continuum is valuable in distinguishing the unique nature of different educational evaluations. Based upon this classification model, the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process is clearly an expertise-oriented evaluation approach, as it depends primarily (though not exclusively, as noted below) on the direct application of professional expertise to judge the effectiveness of the Commission.

More specifically, the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process qualifies as a hybrid of varying types of expertise-oriented evaluations discussed by Worthen et al. (1997, chapter 8). These authors present formal review systems, informal review systems, ad hoc panel reviews, and ad hoc individual reviews as four distinct types of expertise-oriented evaluation approaches. They further identify "blue-ribbon panels" as one type of ad hoc panel review. However, the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process combines the primary characteristics of an informal review system (existing evaluation structure with no published standards) and an ad-hoc blue-ribbon panel (where members are appointed because of their experience and expertise in the field being studied).

Of course, neither of these classifications is absolutely correct. In the first case, while there are technically no

evaluation standards provided to the ACHE quadrennial evaluators, they are provided with a formal "Charge to the Committee." The charge to the 6th quadrennial evaluation (QE) committee appears below; the earlier committees received similar charges:

> The Sixth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee is charged by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to conduct a study and prepare a report in accordance with Section 12 of the Commission's statute. In conducting the study, the Evaluation Committee will solicit and analyze data and conduct interviews with Commission members, Commission staff, and key representatives of the State and the State's higher education community. Meetings for the purpose of these interviews will be held in Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, and Mobile.
>
> The proceedings of the Evaluation Committee are independent of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Commission staff.
>
> For the Committee's consideration:
>
> a. If you wish to suggest a different role for the Commission, it is important to specify what the role is and what type of action is necessary to accomplish it.
> b. Please identify new areas of concern based on your interviews and indicate their importance to the state. (Taken from an ACHE internal memorandum to the 6th QE committee)

Also, the regularity of the evaluations, despite the lack of published standards, tends to blur the distinction concerning whether the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process is a formal or informal review system based upon the Worthen et al. (1997) classification. In the second case, the ACHE quadrennial evaluation committees have not (at least not in all cases) been pure "blue-ribbon panels," since the lay members of the evaluation committees have not necessarily been appointed because of their experience and expertise in the field being studied. Despite these limitations, however, the reports from

these evaluations clearly indicate that they have been primarily expertise-oriented.

Sub-element #3: Evaluation Impact

This sub-element is a part of the issue of evaluating evaluations, or meta-evaluation (Worthen et al., 1997, chapter 20). In an even narrower sense, it specifically addresses the reasons why evaluation results are either more likely or less likely (Cronbach and Associates, 1980, pp. 45-46) to be used.

Informally, meta-evaluation has been around as long as evaluation, since people have always had opinions concerning the quality of evaluations. However, the formal evolution of meta-evaluation is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating only from the 1960s. In 1981, a profession-wide Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation culminated six years of work with its publication of the Standards for Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials (Joint Committee, 1981). This set of thirty standards has since served as the canon of practice for educational evaluation (Worthen et al., 1997, pp. 323-4).

These thirty standards are broken down into the four categories of utility (8 standards), feasibility (3 standards), propriety (8 standards), and accuracy (11 standards). Of greatest interest to this study is utility standard A8, Evaluation Impact, which reads, "Evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that encourage follow-through by members of the audiences." (Worthen and Sanders,

1987, p. 372) The present study only began to address this standard by taking a measurement of the perceived value of the overall ACHE quadrennial evaluation process and the degrees to which the recommendations of the various QE committees have or have not been implemented. While the researcher made comparisons between the individual evaluations regarding certain characteristics, he did not study in specific detail how each individual evaluation was planned or conducted.

It must be stated emphatically here that the researcher's purpose was not to conduct a full meta-evaluation of any or all of the six ACHE quadrennial evaluations. The primary focus of this study was on the value of the quadrennial evaluation process itself. The secondary focus, concerning the value of each individual evaluation, was intended only to identify where differences in characteristics of the various studies might have contributed to their being more or less effective, so that the process might be improved by more consistent implementation of the characteristics and practices of the more effective evaluations.

Furthermore, based upon the accepted criteria for meta-evaluation, this researcher would not be qualified to conduct a full meta-evaluation of the ACHE quadrennial evaluations. Specifically, Brinkerhoff and others (1983, p. 208) argue that a meta-evaluator must be at least as competent as, and preferably more competent than, those conducting the original evaluation(s). Since it is this researcher's position that the ACHE quadrennial evaluators have (at least for the most part) been highly skilled and experienced experts

in their field, it would be ludicrous for him to assert that he would be qualified to conduct a full meta-evaluation of their work.

Statement of the Problem

The ACHE quadrennial evaluation process is the result of a distinctive public policy mandating an external review and evaluation of the effectiveness of a statewide higher education coordinating board once every four years. However, there has been no previous systematic evaluation or research concerning what benefits, if any, flow from this public policy. Specifically, no such research has questioned whether this public policy is helpful or useful nor explored the contributions and/or liabilities of such a policy. Hence, the purpose of this study was to establish as clearly as feasible the degree to which the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process has been of benefit to Alabama higher education. The reason for doing this is to provide a body of knowledge that will assist higher education constituencies, both in Alabama and in other states, in determining to what degree the quadrennial evaluation process is either worthy of continuation or emulation or in need of change.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which the quadrennial evaluation process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education has been of benefit to Alabama higher education.

Specifically:

- Have the quadrennial evaluations provided important and useful information or guidance for policies and practice?
- Has such routine review of Alabama higher education and the state's role in it been beneficial or not?
- What liabilities and impedances may associate with this review and evaluation?
- What are the impacts and implications of such regular review?
- What are the lessons for other states that might be derived from a close look at Alabama's quadrennial evaluation process?

Importance of the Study

The researcher has clearly established that ACHE has (and has had for over twenty years) the most frequent and regular evaluation process of any statewide board of higher education. (The evidence for this assertion is presented in section two of the following chapter.) Therefore, a study of this evaluation process should be of the highest potential value (among similar studies that might be attempted in other settings) to those concerned with whether and to what degree such a process is either worthy of continuation or emulation or in need of change.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The initial focus of the research dealt only with the perceived benefits of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process to Alabama higher education. Therefore, the researcher was able to study indirect impacts (or "serendipity effects") only to the degree that participants identified them during the course of the research.

As will all research dealing with survey, interview, or written data; the researcher had to make certain assumptions concerning whether the data can be trusted: e.g., whether authors of documents, interviewees, and/or survey respondents may have attempted to intentionally deceive.

One obvious limitation of this study is its generalizability, since it deals specifically with Alabama higher education. Another limitation is that only individuals who have a certain amount of knowledge about ACHE will be able to provide meaningful information concerning the research questions. Therefore, individuals interviewed or surveyed were limited to those who had either participated in the quadrennial evaluation process, or who were otherwise known by the researcher to have sufficient familiarity with ACHE to intelligently address survey or interview questions related to the research questions. Yet another limitation was the inability to survey or interview certain relevant individuals who were deceased or unavailable for other reasons, or who were unwilling to participate in the study.

Definitions of Terms

Terms that might not be commonly understood by those likely to read this study include those concerning the various types of statewide governing and coordinating boards. These definitions were given in the introduction. In addition, all references to governmental entities, legislative entities, and legislation within this study should be construed as references to those of the State of Alabama unless otherwise specified.

For the sake of brevity, the researcher used the acronym "ACHE" frequently throughout the report in reference to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. Likewise, in all cases where "Commission" appears capitalized it should be understood to refer to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education unless otherwise indicated explicitly or by context. Also, the researcher frequently used the acronym "QE" to stand for "quadrennial evaluation" and (in appropriate context) simply used the term "evaluation" where the appropriate quadrennial evaluation should be inferred.

Also for the sake of brevity, the researcher made frequent references to the "2-year" and "4-year" sectors of Alabama higher education and to individuals who are current or former faculty members and/or administrators within these sectors. Within these contexts, the reader should understand the "2-year sector" to include all public colleges in Alabama that award the associate degree as their highest earned degree and that are governed by the Department of Postsecondary Education under the Alabama State Board of Education

(these bodies also sometimes refer to this collection of 2-year colleges as the "Alabama College System"). The reader should understand the term "4-year sector" to include all Alabama public colleges and universities that offer baccalaureate and/or higher degrees and that are generally governed by separate boards of trustees for either individual institutions or systems.

Likewise, references to survey respondents and interviewees as being members of the ACHE staff, ACHE commissioners, or legislators should be understood to include individuals who may either be current or former members of these categories, unless one or the other is specified.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

Introduction

This chapter is being presented in two parts: a review of the limited body of literature relevant to the study, and a presentation of the preliminary research mentioned in Chapter I concerning the evaluation of statewide boards of higher education. The reasons for both being presented in this chapter are twofold. First, the amount of commonly available literature of direct relevance to this particular study is somewhat limited. Second, the results of the preliminary research actually contribute to this literature (providing documents available at state level that would not have been available to the researcher without this effort) and arguably provide an equal, if not greater, basis for the present study than much of the other available literature.

Section 1: Review of the Literature

The related literature for this study includes several documents with varying degrees of importance. Of primary importance are the quadrennial evaluation reports themselves, as well as documents prepared by and/or directly relating to ACHE or dealing with Alabama higher education in ways relevant to the study. Other

relevant literature includes that dealing with the theoretical bases of the study, including the governance of higher education (especially its lay governance aspect), the use of expertise-oriented program evaluation in the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process, and the impact of such evaluation.

The relevance of the literature reviewed in this chapter to the present study (other than that which is of obvious relevance based on its connections to ACHE and/or Alabama higher education) is based on the degree to which it can help answer one or more of the following questions:

- How has the governance of higher education evolved?
- When and why did coordinating boards emerge?
- What is the theory of lay governance?
- What are the special responsibilities of coordinating boards and how do these differ from governing boards?
- What special challenges do coordinating boards face and how are these aggravated by political conditions in Alabama?
- How does the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process fit into the larger framework of educational evaluation?

The ACHE Quadrennial Evaluation Reports

As mentioned earlier, there have been six quadrennial evaluations during the period covered by this study. Each has produced a formal written report (Blackburn et al., 1979; Bogue et

al., 1995; Folger, Enarson, and Gilleland, 1991; Harcleroad, Altman, Lucas, and Roaden, 1987; McGowin et al., 1975; Norton, Weathersby, Wright, and York, 1983). (There was, of course, a seventh evaluation report in 1999 [McGuinness, Bowyer, Keller, and Wolfe, 1999], but it was not covered in detail in this study for two reasons. First, the primary survey data for this study was collected prior to the conduct of the seventh evaluation. Secondly, the researcher believes that sufficient time has not elapsed since the seventh evaluation to adequately address its effectiveness.) These reports differ considerably in format, since there have been no ACHE-imposed guidelines concerning the format of the report. Of course, each report includes a list of recommendations; some of these address issues that ACHE has the power to act on directly, while others address actions that would have to be taken by other parties (usually the state legislature).

The reports from the third through sixth quadrennial evaluations include lists of individuals that the committees interviewed and/or surveyed during the evaluations. The researcher discovered from ACHE and Alabama archival records some limited information concerning who may have been interviewed and/or surveyed during the first two quadrennial evaluations. However, this information lacked the certainty and degree of refinement necessary to justify reliance on it to the same degree as that available for the later evaluations.

Alabama Law and Legislation Regarding ACHE

Also of primary importance to this study are the sections of Alabama Law (Code of Alabama, 1975) containing the ACHE Statute, as well as acts of the Alabama Legislature that implemented and changed these sections in ways related to the findings and recommendations of the QE committees.

Acts of the Alabama Legislature of relevance to this study include the following:

- Act Number 14 of the Alabama Legislature (Special Session, 1969) initially establishing the Alabama Commission of Higher Education (ACHE) was approved on May 14, 1969. A copy of this act appeared as Appendix 1 to the report of the 1st Quadrennial Evaluation (QE) committee (McGowin et al., 1975, pp. 53-61) and as Appendix A to the report of the 2nd QE committee (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 41-48).
- Act Number 79-461 of the Alabama Legislature (Regular Session, 1979), which changed the name of ACHE to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and made other more significant changes, was approved on July 30, 1979. This act amended and reenacted Sections 16-5-1 through 16-5-10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. Copies of this act appeared as Appendix B to the report of the 3rd QE committee (Norton et al., 1983, pp. 31-42), Appendix D to the report of the 4th QE committee (Harcleroad et al., 1987, pp. 40-51), and Appendix C to the report of the 5th QE committee (Folger et al., 1991, pp. 34-44),

- Acts of the Alabama Legislature, which resulted in updates to Alabama State Law that are included in the 1996 Cumulative Supplement to the Alabama Code, include the following:
  - Act 96-497 removed the requirement that the Alabama Senate reconfirm the ACHE executive director every four years. This amended Section 16-5-4 of the Code of Alabama 1975, effective May 17, 1996.
  - Act 96-509 required ACHE to establish a student unit record data system. This amended Section 16-5-7 of the Code of Alabama 1975, effective May 17, 1996.
  - Act 96-539 required Alabama's public higher education institutions to submit facilities master plans to ACHE for their review. This act became law on May 17, 1996 as Section 16-5-15 of the Code of Alabama 1975.
  - Act 96-557 regarded ACHE's authority to review and report on program viability. This amended Section 16-5-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975 effective May 20, 1996.
  - Act 96-663 regarded minimum requirements for tuition rates for non-resident students. The Alabama House of Representatives passed this act on February 29, 1996.
  - Act 96-771 regarding the requirement for ACHE to establish a faculty unit record data system. This amended Section 16-5-7, Code of Alabama 1975, effective May 28, 1996.

A copy of ACHE's entire statute, including Article 1 - General Provisions (Sections 16-5-1 through 16-5-15 of the Code of Alabama), that incorporates all of the above acts, and Article 2 - Committee to

Improve Postsecondary Education Participation (Sections 16-5-30 through 16-5-33 of the Code of Alabama), appeared in the report of the 7th QE committee (McGuinness et al., 1999, pp. 25-48).

ACHE Responses to Quadrennial Evaluation Recommendations

With the arguable exception of the legislation mentioned above, the primary available source of information concerning evidence of implementation or non-implementation of Quadrennial Evaluation report recommendations is a series of reports that have been created and (in some cases) updated by ACHE senior staff just prior to or during each Quadrennial Evaluation after the 1st QE, largely as a basis for study by the upcoming or currently meeting Quadrennial Evaluation committee. On December 1, 1978, then ACHE Executive Director John F. Porter, Jr. (Porter, 1978) provided a "STATUS REPORT To the 1978 Evaluation Committee On the Recommendations of the 1974 Evaluation Committee" in memorandum format. It then appears that this report was updated, and a status report on each subsequent QE was made and subsequently updated, for reference by each subsequent QE committee through the committee for the 5th QE that met in 1990 and reported in 1991. The evidence that the researcher has found for this lies in paper copies of such reports provided to him by the ACHE staff and interviews with members of the ACHE staff.

For the most part, these status reports dealt with the recommendations of the various committees separately, without trying to relate them by topic. One notable (and valuable) exception was a

two-page document titled "SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE AND COMMISSION RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THREE EVALUATION COMMITTEES OF THE ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION." (ACHE, 1990 March 14) This document, which summarized certain recommendations of the first three committees, was apparently originally created on May 30, 1986 (a few months before the 4th QE committee would have met), and was apparently updated in March of 1990. However, while the status of the first three sets of recommendations was updated, the summary of the 4th QE recommendations (ACHE, 1990 August) was not added to this summary.

Prior to the 6th QE, the Commission published its "Responses to the Recommendations of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Report" in July 1994 (ACHE, 1994). This report dealt in detail with the recommendations of the 5th QE but did not specifically address or give updates to the status of any of the other previous recommendations. Likewise, sometime prior to the meeting of the 7th QE committee in 1998, ACHE released its "Responses to the Recommendations of the Sixth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee" (ACHE, 1998). Again, this report dealt with the recommendations of the 6th QE but did not specifically address or give updates on the status of any other previous recommendations (including those of the 5th QE).

Media Articles

As one would expect, there are a significant number of media articles from various newspapers within Alabama (as well as occasional articles from sources outside Alabama) that address the

ACHE QE process and/or other activities relating to ACHE and Alabama higher education. As one would also expect, the frequency of appearance of such articles varies considerably based on media and public interest, and the availability of such articles varies considerably based upon how far in the past they appeared and in what venues.

Among the media articles that deal with either preparations for or results of the quadrennial evaluations themselves, most of these report information provided from the reports themselves and from ACHE officials, information that the researcher has provided from more primary sources within this study. What is of interest in a review of such articles is the extent to which one can find evidence of media coverage for each of the quadrennial evaluations themselves, as well as the trends that one can notice concerning what aspects of the evaluations and recommendations these articles emphasize. The results portion of this study will include a summary showing the extent of media coverage for each QE for which the researcher was able to find evidence through thorough searches of appropriate databases and files within the Alabama State Archives and ACHE. These include items from The Birmingham News, Mobile Press Register, The Huntsville Times, Montgomery Advertiser, Birmingham Post-Herald, and other press sources.

Other Documents Regarding ACHE and/or Alabama Higher Education

Also of some relevance to the study are documents prepared by and/or directly relating to ACHE or dealing with Alabama higher education in ways relevant to the study. These include such items as ACHE documents dealing with state-level strategic objectives for higher education, annual reports, budget recommendations, statistical abstracts, and orientation materials. The most relevant of these documents appear in the bibliography and are referenced in the other portions of the study to which they specifically apply.

Literature Supporting Theoretical Base

Another category of documents of importance are those supporting the primary theoretical base for this study, that of state/higher education relationships and policy and uses of evaluation in public (and especially state) agencies.

The review of the literature in this category will be divided into two broad subcategories (although there will obviously be some overlap). The first of these broad categories will deal with those works of greatest relevance to this study that address the governance of higher education (including the theory of lay governance), the emergence of coordinating boards, and the responsibilities of coordinating and governing boards and how they differ from each other. The second broad category will cover works that are relevant to the issue of evaluations of governing and coordinating boards.

Within each of these categories and their subcategories, the discussion will roughly follow a chronological order in terms of the dates of the works involved.

Literature Concerning Higher Education Governance and Coordination

Literature concerning the evolution of higher education lay governance.

In 1982, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) released an essay entitled The Control of the Campus: A Report of the Governance of Higher Education. This essay included sections on the essential mission of higher education, the American tradition of trusteeship (what the present researcher refers to as lay governance), and relationships between the states and higher education. In discussing the essential mission of the university, the essay refers to the concurring opinion of U.S. Supreme Court justices Frankfurter and Harlan in the 1957 *Sweeny v. New Hampshire* case that affirmed "the four essential freedoms of a university: to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study." (CFAT, 1982, p. 4) The essay continues by tracing the history of these four essential freedoms as far back as the 12th century in places such as Bologna, Paris, and Oxford.

The section on trustees traces the origins of the American governing board for higher education to the 1637 Board of Overseers

for Harvard, followed by subsequent similar occurrences at William and Mary and Yale (which, more than the other two, became the prototype for American lay governance of higher education). The essay points out the importance of a U.S. Supreme Court decision concerning Dartmouth College:

> In the historic Dartmouth College decision of 1819, the Supreme Court not only vigorously affirmed the independence of that college from the state, but also clearly recognized its board of governors as the corporate body that held college property and exercised ultimate control. No other single action holds greater significance for the governance of American higher education (CFAT, 1982, p. 9)

The essay concludes by emphasizing the nature of lay governing boards (even of public higher education institutions) as legal entities independent from other functions of government.

Boyer (1987) offers a perspective concerning how the management of American institutions of higher education was, by today's standards, quite uncomplicated for much of its history:

> From the colonial era to the mid-nineteenth century, America's colleges were small, with uncomplicated organizations, and, by today's standards, easily managed. In 1859, The University of Michigan was among the largest institutions in the nation, yet it had only twenty faculty members. The historian Laurence Veysey wrote that "early in the nineteenth century it had been possible to speak of the officers of an entire college - its president, its faculty, and its trustees - as being of one and the same mind."
>
> Theoretically, trustees were at the center of institutional authority. In practice, the mind of an early American college was preeminently the mind of its president. Selected for an unlimited term by the board of trustees, the president ordinarily served as its executive agent. At the same time, he was the principal teacher of the college. Because many college tutors were recent graduates on their way to a different occupation, "only the president could stand before the governing body as a mature man of learning."

> As universities became larger and more complex, confusion about decision-making increased and relationships between faculty and administration became more obscure. Most significant, faculty gained a larger influence in governance, even as their loyalty to the institution weakened. Our data show that today, whereas 26 percent of faculty feel their *college* is "very important" to them, 76 percent rate their *academic discipline* as "very important." (Boyer, 1987, p. 236)

According to Ingram (1993), lay governance in higher education (which he refers to as "citizen trusteeship") "is an extension of the American ethos that dates back to Harvard in 1636, although its roots are found in Western Europe some four centuries before." (p. 3). While drawing several positive and negative descriptions of such trusteeship from other sources, Ingram indicates

> there can be no doubt that trusteeship is here to stay…As imperfect as they are, governing boards have proven their value in the U.S. version of participative democracy, which is averse to monopoly of power and which provides systems of checks and balances…The thesis of this chapter, indeed of this book, is simply that the citizen board of trustees is our best hope for sustaining the one institution among precious few that has maintained a strong competitive edge. The citizen board has emerged as the best alternative to governmental or exclusive faculty control of higher education. (pp. 3-4)

Ingram (1993) provides one definition of the theory of lay governance as "The idea that nonacademics should oversee the academy, to hold it accountable to the public as well as to protect it from capricious political entanglements," and indicates that this idea "has a very long and distinguished history." (p. 5) He proceeds by presenting and then debunking six myths concerning lay governing boards. The first three of these are of greatest relevance to the current study:

"Myth one: the origin of the lay governing board is found in the American corporation." (Ingram, 1993, p. 6) In fact, Ingram

asserts, the roots of lay governance are found in the Protestant Reformation. He gives evidence to support the existence of lay public governing boards in Italy, Germany, and Switzerland during the mid-14th century, as well as in Spain as early as the 12th century. He also indicates the establishment of such boards at Harvard in 1642, William and Mary in 1693, and Yale in 1701.

"*Myth two: the vast majority of students in public higher education are enrolled in institutions that have their own governing boards.*" (Ingram, 1993, p. 7) Here Ingram (p. 8) quotes Kerr and Gade (1989, p. 116) as indicating that this "once was virtually the universal situation, until change began about 1960. What we now see is the result of a revolutionary transformation over the past 30 years." In other words, this was a myth that was once true but is no longer. Later in this chapter, the reader will see how the change described above contributed to the emergence of governing boards.

> *Myth three: given the sustained preoccupation of state public policymakers with centralizing authority in multicampus systems and their success in doing so, governors and legislatures of most states are generally pleased with the resulting performance of their institutions and governing boards.* (Ingram, 1993, p. 9)

Ingram indicates, "there is no evidence to support such an assertion and much to refute it." (p. 9) He also points to "the increased politicization of public higher education in the name of strengthening accountability and improving academic quality." The remainder of the chapter includes discussions of the motivations of trustees, what Ingram sees as the distinguishing challenges of the 1990s, and the ambiguities of college and university governance.

McGuinness (1997) also comments concerning the evolution of higher education governance. However, since most of his comments relate more directly to the emergence of coordinating boards, they will be reviewed later in this chapter.

In their recent book Exploring the Heritage of American Higher Education, Bogue and Aper (2000) include a chapter entitled "Guardians and Governance: The Culture of Decision and Authority in Academic Life." This chapter begins with a discussion of the organizational complexity of colleges and universities, followed by a discussion of the concept of shared authority as it applies to governance. The authors then move to a discussion of what they call the "distinctive heritage" of the lay governing board, and have this to say specifically concerning the theory of lay governance:

> In a democratic society that looks with suspicion on the monopoly of power and that has constructed its government with a set of checks and balances, we may see lay governance as a way to keep a check on the power of faculty and to keep the heavy hand of government from undue influence on an institution … the essential concept of the lay board is that professional insight should be subject to lay oversight. The essential philosophic theory is that lay boards hold the academy accountable to the public and protect the academy from the caprice and entanglement of political life. Conditioning the occasional intellectual arrogance, political naivete, social insensitivity, and cultural narrowness that may accompany highly trained professionals is achieved by having professionals of the academy stand accountable before a panel of men and women having no direct self-interest in the outcome of policy and decision. It is argued that faculty and administrators who cannot make a reasoned argument before such panels deserve defeat of their plans. (Bogue and Aper, 2000, pp. 46-47)

Bogue and Aper also argue that the lay board serves "as a buffer between campus and state." (2000, p. 47) This chapter continues with discussion of the appointment or selection of board members and of

different statewide patterns of governance. The authors conclude their chapter on governance by identifying certain governance challenges and principles, many of which apply equally to coordinating as well as governing boards. The governance challenges they identify and discuss include performance review, cost containment pressures, public disclosure and candor in decision making, academic/financial dichotomies, the student voice in academic life, and political and policy pressures (Bogue and Aper, 2000, pp. 54-57). They arrange their governance principles "in the form of competing concepts that require continuous attention to balance," including autonomy and accountability, rights and responsibilities, professional interests and public interests, diversity and community, consensus and conflict, and complacency and courage. (Bogue and Aper, 2000, pp. 58-61)

Literature concerning the emergence and responsibilities of coordinating boards and how they differ from governing boards.

In 1959, Glenny wrote Autonomy of Public Colleges: The Challenge of Coordination, which Hines and Hartmark (1980) referred to as "the first comprehensive study of statewide coordination" (p. 13) Glenny's work incorporated a review of the historical development of higher education; a classification of state coordination structures into voluntary, coordinating, and single governing boards; and a discussion of the four major state-agency

functions of planning, policy making, program allocation, and budgeting. The primary focus of the book was to address

> Which processes, which organization patterns of state coordinating boards, and what kinds of relationships between those boards and institutions and other state agencies can secure the most effective diversification and improve the quality of higher education without unduly sacrificing the freedom, the autonomy and initiative of the affected colleges and universities? (Glenny, 1959, p. 16)

Glenny argued that the coordinating process:

- Lessens or eliminates tensions and conflicts among institutions.
- Focuses attention of the public on the whole system of higher education rather than on one or two of the larger institutions.
- Helps to create among legislators and State executive officers a more favorable attitude toward educators and higher education.
- Provides a relative increase in support for smaller colleges, which, thanks to the central agencies, are said to be financially better off than before competition.
- Affords, through assigning and enforcing differential functions, some protection of the traditional functions of the university and land-grant college against encroachment by teacher colleges and State colleges, and obtains for them financial support equivalent to, or greater than, that before coordination.
- Provides, in a number of states, long-range capital construction programs and schedules which, it is hoped, the legislature will agree to support.
- Enriches program offerings throughout the public system by increasing support and preventing unnecessary overlaps and duplications. (Glenny, 1959, pp. 204-205)

In the same year as Glenny's work, Moos and Rourke offered what appears to be the first significant opinion casting a negative light on statewide coordination of higher education, arguing that it represented "a grave threat to the tradition of the free college or university in America" (Moos and Rourke, 1959, p. 3) and that it could (at its worst) drain quality and originality out of state colleges and universities.

Chambers (1961) voiced another negative opinion concerning the potential for statewide coordination to impinge on institutional autonomy and damage voluntary coordination:

> But the notion that by and large [college and university presidents] are incapable of grasping statewide problems, that they invariably allow self interest to override the general public interest, that they are a feral species which somehow must be netted and caged and held within restraint of a rigid bureaucracy, is not only erroneous to begin with, but also, if effected, destructive of the essential spirit without which colleges and universities do not thrive. (Chambers, 1961, p. 43)

McConnell (1962), in A General Pattern for American Public Higher Education, cited the increasing complexity of society, necessity of diverse educational programs and opportunities, and finiteness of financial resources as logical reasons for the pursuit of objectives by whole systems rather than by individual institutions.

Management in Higher Education, written by Thad Hungate in 1964, discusses the then-ongoing vast expansion of higher education and how it "has led a number of states to provide a state lay board charged with responsibility for coordinating existing institutions, including their functions, activities, and support, and for interinstitutional cooperation in operations." (p. 17) He also indicated that

> Perhaps one of the greatest services of a lay board of governance is the capacity of its members to bring to the guidance of the institution their understandings and interpretations of the ongoing affairs of the practical world in which they live. (Hungate, 1964, pp. 17-18)

Hungate devotes quite a bit of time to proposing suggested organizations for institutions of higher education to include the

governing board, the office of the president, and the areas of educational and student personnel services, business and finance. His work also includes chapters concerning the evaluative function of management and state responsibility for management of higher education. The text and appendices to his work give his view concerning a framework for classifying the organization and responsibilities of statewide governing and/or coordinating boards in terms of student degree-credit enrollment.

Glenny (1965) argued that state-level planning was essential in order to effectively answer the following questions:

- How can the state provide a sufficient number of education places for new students?
- How can the state determine which colleges should become full-fledged universities and which should develop different roles and functions?
- What types and extent of research and public service activities are appropriate for each campus?
- Where should new colleges or new types of institutions be developed?
- What level of financing is really required for each campus to maintain a quality program? (Glenny, 1965, p. 133)

He also offered the following concerning the motivation of legislators for establishing coordinating boards:

> Coordination did not arise out of foresight by educators but from demands of legislators and governmental agencies for more efficient use of public monies. They wanted to eliminate wasteful duplication of programs resulting from competition among institutions, to facilitate realistic and scientific budget requests, and to establish the rationale for developing new institutions and campuses. (Glenny, 1965, p. 131)

Martorana (1968) and Lombardi (1968) specifically dealt with the state-level coordination of community colleges up until that year. Prior to the 1960s, a state's department of education usually

performed such coordination, which frequently caused it to be less than optimal because of the state department of education's emphasis on and preoccupation with K-12 issues. However, Martorana points out that the 1960s saw a move to separate agencies specifically dealing with community colleges (such as Alabama's Department of Postsecondary Education, although it is still an element of the State Department of Education).

Despite this shift, however, Stuckman (1969) argued that:

> The concept of coordination is not compatible with the traditional philosophy of the locally-governed community college. In attempting to meet the educational and occupational needs of its service community, each institution has paid little or no regard to the activities of its neighboring institutions. Commensurate with the pattern of local autonomy, each institution has traditionally developed its own philosophy, educational programs, and areas of interest. (Stuckman, 1969, pp. 2-3)

Henderson (1969) argued that since "Colleges are corporations chartered by individual states, the ultimate responsibility for monitoring these interrelationships inherently falls under state jurisdiction." (Henderson, 1969, p. 3) Miller (1972) made a similar argument:

> Since the state is the area to be served, only an agency with statewide responsibilities can identify geographic or programmatic gaps in the system of state service, and initiate action to fill these needs. Only a statewide agency can speak knowledgeably and nonparochially to the state legislature, governor, and budget office concerning higher education's needs - both its continuing needs and its newly emerging ones. Only this agency can determine the present and projected total demand for postsecondary education in the state and rationally allocate among the state's institutions responsibilities for meeting these needs. (Miller, 1972, p. 242)

In an article entitled "Institutional autonomy for whom?" (Glenny, 1970), Glenny supported the benefits of statewide

coordination against arguments that it infringed on institutional autonomy by arguing that state-level bureaucracy, rather than state-level coordination, was the culprit in cases where "atrocity stories about autonomy" resulted from "infringements by extra-institutional bureaucrats about administrative details." (Glenny, 1970, p. 155)

As mentioned elsewhere in this study, many individuals consider Berdahl's 1971 work, Statewide Coordination of Higher Education, the most significant early work in this area because it provides the best sense of an historical framework concerning when and why coordinating boards came on the scene. As covered in the introduction to the present study, Berdahl provided in this work what is still the dominant structural framework concerning the classification of states by their types of higher education coordinating structures (as having either no board, a voluntary association, an advisory or regulatory coordinating agency, or a consolidated governing board as its coordinating structure).

In addition, Berdahl had quite a bit to say in his 1971 work concerning what types of individuals should serve on statewide coordinating boards and how they should be selected. Here is a summary of some of his points in this area:

- Boards should consist of a majority of public citizens to ensure the safeguarding of the public interest.
- Boards should include a minority of institutional members to ensure a concern for institutional autonomy.

- Boards should have at least some members whose terms are long enough that a governor cannot appoint a majority during a single term.
- Nominees should require legislative confirmation to ensure that the board is viewed as more than just the governor's concern.
- Potential nominees should be brought to the governor's attention by a qualified and diverse body that is not dominated by educators.

He also made the following specific recommendations:

a) In the interests of making their deliberations seem less self serving, voluntary agencies should consider adding public members to their (at present) exclusively institutional membership.
b) Consolidated governing boards should consider adding some institutional members or creating very strong academic advisory committees … or doing both.
c) Coordinating boards should have a minority of institutional members or very strong academic advisory committees or both.
d) With respect to including state legislators or executive officers on coordinating agencies, the (admittedly slight) evidence inclines me to feel that they should be included either as nonvoting members … or on a separate advisory committee … (Berdahl, 1971, p. 244)

Berdahl indicated that the professional staff of a coordinating board must incorporate experience both in academia and in state government. He specifically indicated that the "salary, powers, and prestige of the chief executive officer" (Berdahl, 1971, p. 242) were of utmost importance in drawing outstanding leaders to such a post because, even if those of lower level employees were not commensurate, individuals would still be motivated to work for and learn from an outstanding leader. Berdahl specifically recommended that such individuals be employed on a contract basis (something that

has only recently become the case in Alabama based at least in part on the recommendations of more than one of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation committees.)

Berdahl (1971) recommended that coordinating boards have strong powers in planning, to include both public and private higher education. He also recommended strong program review powers, although he indicated that it would probably not be worth it for coordinating boards to get involved with the approval of individual courses, even if institutions attempted to develop programs piecemeal through this fashion.

Bogue and Aper (2000) identified Berdahl's work as a significant account of the responsibilities and roles of statewide coordinating boards. As they briefly reviewed Berdahl's premise, "In response to the rapid growth in higher education during the 1960s, many states established coordinating boards to bring some sense of order, planning, and equity among competing campuses and systems." (p. 51)

In the same year as Berdahl's work, Glenny and Hurst (1971) released "Current statewide planning structures and powers," an article that served as an update to Glenny's 1959 work. Glenny and Hurst still used the same classification of boards into the categories of voluntary, coordinating, and single boards. They argued that coordinating boards had greater potential for long-range planning and equal potential for other functions as did single governing boards, and also argued that coordinating boards were oriented equally between institutions and the state.

Corson (1971) apparently saw the increase in statewide coordination as a mixed blessing:

> The surveillance by state governments has done much to avoid duplication of facilities and to husband scarce resources; but it has also curtailed the administrative autonomy of the individual institution. It has markedly limited the freedom with which institutional administrators and faculties can hire personnel, build buildings, revise curricula, and even define their own purposes. (Corson, 1971, p. 435)

In April 1971, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) published a report with recommendations entitled The Capital and the Campus: State Responsibility for Postsecondary Education. The major themes of this report highlighted the primary responsibility of the states for the development of higher education throughout U.S. history, and held that the states had discharged these duties well especially during the "tidal wave" of students in the 1960s. The report concluded that the states should continue and somewhat expand this role and that it should not be subsumed by the Federal government. It had this to say specifically concerning statewide coordination:

> Two functions, however - long-range planning and current consultation - are not duplicative and do need to be performed by a state coordinating agency. We emphasize the great importance of effective long-range planning, of constant consultation within higher education, and of consultation between higher education and other directly interested agencies. The new coordinating systems serve best when they concentrate of planning and consultation, rather than on routine administrative tasks, bureaucratic controls, and detailed regulation. They should provide enlightened guidance and not stifling delay and restraint. Routine regulation and control are neither needed nor compatible with the statesmanlike planning and advice that are so essential. (CCHE, 1971 April, pp. 2-3)

The report also contains a chapter entitled "Coordination and Planning," which includes a discussion of the forms and purposes of statewide coordination as well as extensive recommendations concerning the roles and authority that statewide coordinating boards should have regarding statewide planning. According to this chapter, coordinating agencies "are usually established to achieve the following:

- Avoid wasteful duplication in programs and harmful competition for resources
- Work toward greater efficiency in the use of scarce resources
- Aid the orderly growth of all postsecondary facilities within the state, including consideration of locations for new campuses
- Assist in developing state policy on admission of students to higher education
- Collect data needed for policy determination
- Encourage sufficient diversity within the system to satisfy the diverse educational needs of the state
- Serve as a communications agency among the postsecondary education community, the state government, and the public
- Foster excellence in the development of the variety of programs involved in the expanding postsecondary education network (CCHE, 1971 April, p. 26)

In 1972, Richardson, Blocker and Bender commented on the problem of power as it relates to state coordination: "State coordination leads to a tug of war; on the one hand is the lack of power to maintain compliance, and on the other is the tendency to seek conformity through coercion." (Richardson et al., 1972, p. 396) They also discussed other problems coordinating agencies face including difficulties with communication, confusion, mutual understanding, development of appropriate relationships with constituents, and tendencies to work more with other state agencies than with other constituencies. The same year, Quehl stated that

even though state systems of higher learning were "Originally established because they made good social, educational, and fiscal sense," many of them:

> Have grown to deny basic autonomy to individual campuses and erode public confidence, often leaving individual colleges and state agencies in adversary positions. Too often the result has been a monolithic system that has routinized and dehumanized education, has stimulated the rise of unionism among faculty members, and has helped to push many states to the brink of bankruptcy. (Quehl, 1972, p. 257)

An April 1973 report by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education entitled Governance of Higher Education: Six Priority Problems dealt primarily with campus-level issues. However, three of the nine "major themes" identified in this report are of relevance to the study of relationships between the campus and governance and coordination structures beyond the individual campus:

> External authorities are exercising more and more authority over higher education, and institutional independence has been declining. The greatest shift of power in recent years has taken place not inside the campus, but in the transfer of authority from the campus to outside agencies....
>
> Governance may now be entering a new period marked by continuing conflict rather than by the informal consensus that characterized it in the recent past. If so, it will need to undergo substantial restructuring to meet the strains of conflict. We hope, however, that, to the extent possible, a new consensus may be achieved. For this to occur, some restructuring will also be necessary, but the resulting processes will be animated by a more tolerant spirit.
>
> Governance is a means and not an end. It should be devised and adjusted not for its own sake but for the sake of the welfare of the academic enterprise. (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973 April, pp. 1-3)

In October 1973, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) released Coordination or Chaos? Report of the Task Force on Coordination, Governance and Structure of Postsecondary Education.

This report specifically recommended that single statewide coordinating bodies in each state take responsibility for more continuous and comprehensive planning.

In a 1974 report entitled Statewide Planning in Higher Education, Halstead explains that although the movement toward statewide coordination began in the late 1940s, it was not until the 1950s that there was a serious move towards more centralized state level planning. He also includes information concerning the quadrupling of operating expenditures for higher education in a ten-year period between the early 1960s and the early 1970s, and indicated that the complexities of this growth "clearly called for … a centralizing of both control and planning and the making of policy decisions at a higher level." (Halstead, 1974, p. 5) He also realized that the "optimal balance" between centralized and decentralized control "is delicate, and equilibrium may exist only in theory." (Halstead, 1974, p. 11) He suggested the following operating principles for coordinating boards to help achieve such a balance:

- A scheme of statutory coordination should be established to serve as a protector of the substantive autonomy of institutions.
- A coordinating agency will function more effectively if the particular roles and distinguishing functions of the various institutions or institutional systems are clearly defined, if adherence to these definitions is enforceable, and if provision is made for future innovative change and modification of the definitions.
- Although frequently linked with administration, the planning function should be clearly differentiated from executive duties required for statewide administration of institutions and programs.

- A clear distinction is desirable between planning for a State system of higher education and planning for institutional development. (Halstead, 1974, pp. 15-17)

Halstead made the following observations concerning statewide planning and coordination:

- Planning should be conducted within a formal framework or structure.
- Emphasis should be given to systematic, long-range, continuous planning, as opposed to special or ad hoc planning.
- Planning in higher education calls increasingly for specialized skills.
- The coordinating mechanism will function more effectively if its professional staff is independent of the staffs of the educational institutions, as well as of the staffs of the State administrative agencies. (Halstead, 1974, pp. 14-15)

Halstead (1974) also specifically recommended (as had Berdahl in 1971) that lay members of the general public be in the majority on statewide coordinating boards, indicating that this would serve to improve board relations with the legislature.

Glenny (1974, Summer) pointed out the decline of the growth trend in higher education in the early 1970s, predicted that it would continue through the 1980s, and indicated that this would likely continue to contribute to a declining percentage of government monies going to postsecondary education. Glenny also commented on the shift towards greater centralization in coordination mentioned by Berdahl (a shift that Glenny had predicted based on the slowing of growth between the 1960s and the early 1970s), and further pointed out that "twenty-three states changed statutes relating to the powers and duties of their statewide boards, almost invariably toward making them more representative of the general public and more powerful in

their control, review, and recommending powers." (Glenny, 1974 Summer, p. 66)

Glenny (1974, Summer) also commented in this article concerning the interest that the U.S. Congress had placed in state level planning for higher education through the Federal Higher Education Amendments of 1972, which required states to establish postsecondary commissions for higher education (commonly called "1202 commissions" after the section describing them) in order to qualify for certain Federal funds. (As the reader will note in more detail later in this study, ACHE was designated as Alabama's "1202 commission" based on a recommendation of the 1st ACHE QE committee.) McGuinness, McKinney & Millard (1975, April) dealt specifically with this issue and the background leading up to this requirement. (This was also the topic of McGuinness' Ph.D. dissertation at Syracuse University in 1971.)

Wattenbarger (1974, Winter) also commented on the shift towards greater centralization that Glenny observed:

> The most often observed current trend in the development of American higher education is that toward increasing responsibility for coordination and governance at the state level. Within the past five years the power structure has changed in the direction of the concentration of responsibility in state level boards and away from traditional sources of power which had balanced the elements of governance of institutions of higher education. Even community colleges have not escaped this shift. (Wattenbarger, 1974 Winter, p. 1)

In 1978, Mortimer and McConnell presented a book entitled Sharing Authority Effectively. This book includes a section concerning the functions and composition of governing boards, as well as a chapter entitled "Statewide Coordination and External Constraints," which outlines the setting for and purposes of

coordination, types of coordinating agencies (with information taken from Berdahl [1975] and Glenny [1976]), and powers and membership of coordinating boards. Mortimer and McConnell emphasize the role of coordinating boards as intermediaries between the institutions and the public, as well as their responsibilities for planning, helping to attain diversity in postsecondary education, and in maintaining the balance between accountability and autonomy for higher education institutions. Interestingly, the section on functions of governing boards includes a suggestion made by a former college president in 1975 that boards should be responsible to evaluate the effectiveness of their own performance, an argument that Chait, Holland & Taylor (1991) might disagree with as the reader will see later in this chapter.

Hines and Hartmark (1980) presented an AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report entitled Politics of Higher Education. This report is divided into sections concerning the politics of higher education at the Federal, state, and local levels. The section concerning the state level primarily discusses the political aspects of statewide coordination of higher education and the related topics of accountability and institutional autonomy, budgeting for higher education, and interinstitutional relationships. A primary focus of their work was to review literature related to the politics of higher education, and their section on the state level serves as a good review itself of much of the literature that was available up to that time that is relevant to the present study.

Hines and Hartmark (1980) asserted that Glenny's (1959) Autonomy of Public Colleges: The Challenge of Coordination (reviewed earlier in this chapter) offered "the first comprehensive study of statewide coordination, reviewing the development of coordinating agencies to 1957 and describing their functions of planning, program review, statewide policymaking and budgeting." (Hines and Hartmark, 1980, pp. 13-14) They continue by explaining that Glenny (1959) devoted

> considerable attention to the tension between institutional autonomy and statewide coordination and suggests procedures and institutional structures intended to foster a balance between institutional autonomy and effective coordination. In many respects, this work is one of the first to clearly state the case for coordinating agencies rather than state governing boards, or continued institutional competition, or state governmental intervention. (Hines and Hartmark, 1980, p. 14)

Hines and Hartmark (1980) suggest that Berdahl's 1971 work can be viewed as a sequel to Glenny's 1959 offering. While Glenny's earlier work was valuable concerning the emerging theory of statewide coordination, Berdahl had the advantage of writing toward the end of the period in American history that saw the most significant movement in practice towards increased statewide coordination and governance. Hines and Hartmark point out (as have the current researcher and many others) the significance of Berdahl's classification system for statewide structures of higher education, and also have the following to say about his 1971 work:

> In addition to reviewing the roles and to some extent the effectiveness of coordinating boards in planning, budgeting, and reviewing programs, Berdahl pays particular attention to the agency as an intermediary between state government and higher educational institutions, and to the more generic issue of the delicate balance between coordination and institutional

> autonomy. The Berdahl study provides both an analysis of prevailing patterns and forms of coordination in the several states…as well as a more philosophical discussion of the essential qualities of institutional autonomy, higher education's responsibility to the public interest, and the degree and forms of coordination necessary to maintain autonomy and responsiveness. Berdahl argues for a distinction between substantive and procedural autonomy, with the primary concern of higher education being substantive autonomy. To a large extent, Berdahl views coordinating agencies as effective mechanisms for channeling political conflict. (Hines and Hartmark, 1980, p. 14)

Hines and Hartmark point out that most of the subsequent works on statewide coordination have reflected "many of the original themes laid out by Glenny and restated by Berdahl" (p. 14), although one could argue that much of the prominent subsequent literature in this area has mentioned Berdahl at least as frequently and prominently, if not more so, than it has Glenny.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) 1982 essay entitled <u>The Control of the Campus: A Report of the Governance of Higher Education</u> included a section on state involvement in higher education that emphasizes how the expansion of higher education between 1950 and 1980 (largely led by state governments themselves) made the governance structure of higher education more complex. This resulted in many public colleges and universities being reorganized into multi-campus systems with single governing boards. This section has this to say concerning the emergence of statewide coordination of higher education:

> Statewide coordinating councils or commissions formed yet another tier of decision-making in higher education. As budgets and enrollments burgeoned, "coordination" became the code word for efficiency and rational planning. In some states, coordinating units were organized as early as 1940. By

> 1982, all but three states (Delaware, Vermont, and Wyoming) had a coordinating agency for higher education.
>
> The authority granted to these coordinating boards varied greatly from state to state…[from] regulatory functions in specific areas such as budget review. … [to] advisory only. In the … states with a single consolidated governing board, the coordinating function is served by that board.
>
> Master planning became the order of the day. By the end of the growth decade of the 1960s, thirty-eight states had adopted or drafted master plans. In the same number of states the higher education coordinating agency was given authority to prepare a consolidated higher education budget. (CFAT, 1982, p. 38)

The CFAT essay continues by explaining the impact and potential dangers of this arrangement:

> Statewide planning, however, has changed the governance structure of higher education. America's colleges and universities are no longer viewed as wholly independent institutions. Instead, they have become "units" in a "statewide system." Private institutions often are included in this "integrated network" even though their location was frequently an accident of history and even though their outreach often extends far beyond the boundaries of the state. (CFAT, 1982, p. 39)

The essay concludes by pointing out what its author sees as potential dangers of excessive state oversight. These include the move by government agencies to evaluate and eliminate academic programs, the use of enrollment-driven budget formulas (adopted during a period of rapid growth) during periods of decline, and the failure of state governments to reward efficiencies within higher education (by returning monies saved to state coffers instead of to schools). While stating that the benefits of state support have clearly far outdistanced the abuses, the authors warn that if state control is too restrictive, it may result in all of the above problems and cause

American higher education to lose its diversity within and among campuses (CFAT, 1982, pp. 42-44)

In September 1987, Frank Newman presented his work Choosing Quality: Reducing Conflict Between The State And The University. Consistent with its title, Newman argued that there was a clear need "for a relationship between the university and the state that is constructive for both, built up over a long period of time by careful attention on the part of all parties." (p. XIII) In discussing the balance between appropriate public policy and inappropriate intrusion of the state into university affairs, Newman argued that the legitimate basis for state involvement stemmed from the fact that "Left totally to its own, the university will evolve toward self-interest rather than public interest." (p. 7)

Newman offers the following as factors that can contribute to the inappropriate intrusion of state government into higher education:

- The growth of state involvement
- The growing state ability to intrude
- The growing size and centrality of higher education
- The growth of state mandates aimed at improving quality
- The inability to create different missions [among institutions]
- The difficulty of a single pyramid of prestige
- Geography
- The replacement of an educational agenda with a political one
- The desire of the bureaucracy to exercise power
- Short-term interest versus long-term principles
- Problems with the roles and effectiveness of higher education governance structures (Newman, 1987 September, pp. 39-59)

He offers an additional list of factors that can cause either warranted or unwarranted intrusion into the university;

understandably, there is some duplication between this list and the one above:

- Confusion over institutional missions, compounded by the unchannelled ambitions of some colleges and universities.
- Overlap of institutions and programs and even a sense, in a few states, that there are too many colleges and universities.
- A focus of boards and systems on administrative matters rather than policy.
- A need for more effective leadership - at the campus, the system or board and the state.
- The desire of political leaders to force the university to respond to changes in the state's economy, geography and demography.
- The tendency of some political leaders to look toward self-interest rather than public interest.
- The desire of bureaucracies at all levels to exercise power.
- Patterns of funding and criticism that create counterproductive incentives for universities.
- Campus attempts to subvert the ordinary mode of governance to achieve short-term gains or to serve narrow self-interests.
- The failure of those on campus to take state leaders and state needs seriously. (Newman, 1987 September, p. 59)

Newman includes, as one of the appendices to his work, excerpts from a letter written to him by Lawrence K Pettit, who proposes a "continuum view" of different levels of state university governance. Pettit (chancellor at the time of Southern Illinois University) basically argued that governors, legislatures, legislative staff, and state agencies (including state coordinating boards) were external to and had no legitimate role in the governance and management of the internal affairs of colleges and universities. He also commented that "state coordinating boards and agencies. … are state agencies, but for higher education. They are usually viewed by each as the advocate for the other." (in Newman, 1987, p. 113) Pettit also believed that it was inappropriate for a "weak" executive of a consolidated governing board (meaning an executive secretary who does

not have line authority over campus presidents) to become very much involved in "campus matters," and that such involvement should be left to "strong" executives of consolidated governing boards, executives of less-than-statewide multi-campus systems, and campus presidents themselves.

In 1988, Hines authored an ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report entitled Higher Education and State Governments: Renewed Partnership, Cooperation, or Competition? He discusses the various forms of state-level higher education agencies and says the following concerning the importance of the appropriate level of state board involvement, "If state boards do not become involved, lawmakers' continued support for higher education may be jeopardized; if they become too involved, however, campuses become critical of their intrusiveness." (Hines, 1988, p. 1)

Included in Hines' discussion of state-level higher education agencies is the role of the State Higher Education Executive Officer (SHEEO). Each state's SHEEO is a member of the national SHEEO Association that has existed since 1954. This individual, as Hines explains, can be the head of a coordinating or governing board or of a higher education agency or system. As the reader will see later in this chapter, the preliminary research concerning evaluation of statewide boards of higher education was designed to ensure maximum participation by entities where the executive officer was the SHEEO for the state in question.

Hines points out what he sees as the possible beginning of a trend in the shifting of state support towards consolidation,

"Beginning in 1987 and continuing in 1998, the rates of gain [in state support] in consolidated systems began to outdistance the rates of gain in multicampus universities." (Hines, 1988, p. 21) However, he cautions against drastic changes regardless of the perceived benefits, "A major upheaval of the state's higher education system more often than not does not improve either the structure or state support of higher education." (Hines, 1998, p. 11)

In Governing Public Colleges and Universities (Ingram and Associates, 1993), Dr. Aims C. McGuinness, Jr. (who served as chair of the 7th ACHE QE committee) offers a chapter on "Strengthening Relationships with Government Agencies and Political Leaders." While he offers much information in this chapter on statewide structures for governance and coordination of higher education, there is more detailed information from a more recent work (McGuinness, 1997) that will be reviewed later in this section. McGuinness also offered comments concerning the following principles of effective board relationships:

- Both Institutional and Governmental Priorities and Perspectives Are Important and Legitimate
- Advocacy for Higher Education Should Be Tempered by Sensitivity to the State's Other Priorities and Economic Condition
- Board Performance and Leadership Are Keys to Effective Relations Between Public Higher Education and State Governments (McGuinness, 1993, pp. 202-206)

The State Postsecondary Education Structures Sourcebook (latest edition is Education Commission of the States [ECS], 1997) is the definitive "desk reference" concerning the various structures for governance, coordination, and planning for American higher education. This latest version includes an essay by McGuinness (1997) entitled

"The Functions and Evolution of State Coordination and Governance in Postsecondary Education." This essay provides a significant source of information in one location concerning the evolution of higher education governance, the emergence of statewide coordination of higher education, and the special responsibilities of coordinating and governing boards (and how they differ from each other).

McGuinness compares the responsibilities of governing boards of trustees or regents to those of a board of directors of a nonprofit corporation, including the responsibility to appoint the institutional or system chief executive, "establish policies and approve actions related to faculty and other personnel, ensure institutional fiscal integrity, and perform other policy and management functions." (p. 2) While acknowledging the existence of many ways to categorize these boards, he follows Kerr and Gade's (1989) three categories of consolidated governance systems for multiple institutions, segmental systems for different types of campuses, and campus-level boards for single campuses not under either of the previous two systems. While acknowledging that these boards were modeled after the lay boards of private higher education institutions, McGuinness debunks the popularly held myth that each public campus has its own governing board by pointing out "65% of the students in American public postsecondary education attend institutions whose governing boards cover multiple campuses." (p. 3)

According to McGuinness (1997), "The functions of postsecondary education coordination encompass several broad roles and areas of state policy" (p. 3) including the following:

- Planning and policy leadership.
- Policy analysis and problem resolution.
- Mission definition.
- Academic program review and approval.
- Budget development, development of funding formulae and resource allocation.
- Providing financial aid to students.
- Information, assessment and accountability systems.
- Licensing and oversight.
- Implementing statewide projects and initiatives.
- Quality assurance. (McGuinness, 1997, pp. 3-6)

Later in his essay, McGuinness gives what is arguably the clearest single comparison within the available literature of the responsibilities of coordinating boards and how they differ from those of governing boards. According to McGuinness:

> Common functions of consolidated governing boards include the following:
>
> - Governing a single corporate entity, including all the rights and responsibilities of that corporation as defined by state law and encompassing all institutions within a system. Individual institutions within the board's jurisdiction usually do not have separate corporate status.
> - Carrying out coordinating functions *related only to the institutions within the board's jurisdiction*. These functions include planning, setting a public agenda, policy analysis and problem resolution, academic program review and approval, budget development, and maintaining information and accountability.
> - Developing and implementing policy.
> - Advocating for the needs of the institutions under its jurisdiction to the legislature and governor.
> - Appointing, setting the compensation for and evaluating both system and institutional chief executives.
> - Establishing faculty personnel policies, including approving awarding of tenure and serving as the final point of appeal on faculty grievances.
> - Allocating and reallocating resources between and among the institutions within its jurisdiction.
> - Establishing policies for, and sometimes setting, tuition and fees, often within policies established by the governor and state legislature.

As distinguished from governing boards, coordinating boards:

- Do *not* govern institutions, in the sense defined above (e.g., appoint institutional chief executives or set faculty personnel policies).
- Appoint, set compensation for and evaluate *only* the agency executive officer and staff, but not the institutional chief executives. In several states, the governor is the final appointing authority for the agency executive but usually with recommendations from the coordinating board.
- Do *not* have corporate status independent of state government.
- Focus more on *state and systems needs and priorities* than on advocating the interests of a particular institution or system of institutions.
- Plan primarily for the *state postsecondary education system as a whole.* In most coordinating board states, this planning includes both public and private institutions.
- May or may not review and make recommendations on budgets for the state system as a whole rather than only for one part of that system. A few coordinating agencies recommend consolidated budgets for the whole public system. Others simply make recommendations to the governor or legislature on individual institutions or segmental budgets. Most coordinating boards have responsibility to implement budget policy only for funds appropriated specifically to the agency for its operations, for special initiatives or for reallocation to the institutions for performance, incentives or other purposes.
- May or may not review or approve proposals for new academic programs, and may or may not have authority to require institutions to review existing programs.
- Are *not* involved directly in setting or carrying out faculty personnel policies, except to carry out legislative mandates for studies or issues such as faculty workload and productivity or tenure policy. (McGuinness, 1997, pp. 10-12)

McGuineess further comments, "Differences in state structure … are related directly to differences in state policy, culture and tradition. Some of the most significant differences include:

- Legislative and executive branch roles.
- Regional economic and political differences.
- State cultures regarding the role of the private sector.
- State population and enrollment.
- Tradition and leadership quality. (McGuinness, 1997, p. 18)

McGuinness follows these comments with a historical review of changes in state structures for higher education:

> State actions to establish structures for coordination and governance can be traced to the late 1800s. Over the years, states have established postsecondary education boards because of needs and objectives important at a particular time. These needs and objectives included changes within postsecondary education, changing political and economic conditions, and circumstances unique to a state. (McGuinness, 1997, p. 20)

He continues by summarizing Berdahl's (1971) identification of four major periods in the history of statewide structures as follows:

> (1) the period of complete institutional autonomy lasting from colonial days to the late 1800s,
> (2) the creation of single statewide governing boards beginning in the late 19th century and reaching a peak in the first two decades of the 20th century,
> (3) the creation of voluntary arrangements in the 1940s and 1950s, and
> (4) the creation of statewide coordinating boards beginning in the 1950s and continuing today. (McGuinness, 1997, p. 20)

McGuinness continues by explaining the changes in state structures from the 1970s to the present. He describes the 1970s as a decade where state structures moved from growth to steady state, while the 1980s were a decade that saw an emphasis on education reform and accountability for results. Specifically, the following "governing/coordination mechanisms came into use in the mid- to late 1980s:

- Setting a state policy agenda and serving as agents for change.
- Incentive, competitive or targeted funding.
- Requirements for assessment of student learning.
- Performance-oriented accountability reports. (McGuinness, 1997, pp. 23-24)

McGuinness explains that the most significant changes in structures during the 1980s involved community colleges and states where different parts of the state system took different directions

toward centralization, decentralization and/or urban area coordination. In describing the 1990s as a period of concern over performance, productivity, and instability; McGuinness explains that the major trends of this decade included downsizing within existing structures, increases in board authority, and system consolidation.

McGuinness says that the following recurring concerns lead to changes in state postsecondary education structures:

- Actual or perceived duplication of high-cost graduate and professional programs.
- Conflict between the aspirations of two institutions (often under separate governing boards) in the same geographic area).
- Legislative reaction to institutional lobbying.
- Frustrations with barriers to student transfer and articulation.
- Proposals to close, merge or change institutional missions of colleges or universities.
- Inadequate coordination among institutions offering one- and two-year vocational, technical, occupational and transfer programs.
- Concerns about the state board's effectiveness.
- Proposals for "superboards." (McGuinness, 1997, pp. 31-32)

He also identifies these specific forces behind recent changes:

- Change in state government leadership.
- An apparent weakening consensus about the basic purposes of public postsecondary education.
- Growing political involvement in state coordination and governance.
- Increase in legislative mandates in areas traditionally handled by state postsecondary education boards and institutions.
- The gap between external and internal definitions of quality and expectations for quality assurance.
- Trend toward boards dominated by representatives of internal constituencies and a decline in "lay" membership.
- Impact of an increasingly market-driven, technology-intensive postsecondary education system.
- State postsecondary education structures ill-equipped to address increasingly important cross-cutting issues. (McGuinness, 1997, pp. 34-38)

McGuinness completes the essay by proposing guidelines for states considering reorganization of their higher education structures.

The remainder of the ECS volume contains many informative charts and related material concerning state structures, including current statuses, narrative profiles, coordination, governance, and planning responsibilities, agency responsibilities, basic legal powers and structures, board membership, and related state level agencies and committees.

Literature Concerning Educational Evaluation

Literature concerning general educational and/or program evaluation.

Of some relevance to this study are some of the significant major works on educational and/or program evaluation, including the already-mentioned Worthen et al. (1997). It is important to acknowledge these works due to the nature of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process and of the present case study. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the relevance of these works is somewhat limited by the nature of the ACHE QE process. The primary reason for this is that because the process does not specifically dictate particular actions, it is inappropriate, if not impossible, for anyone outside the process itself (particularly a researcher who is admittedly less qualified than most if not all of the evaluators

themselves) to assess the evaluators in terms of comparing what they did to what they "should have done."

As mentioned in the introduction to the present study, Worthen et al. (1997) provides the appropriate framework for identifying the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process as an example of an expertise-oriented program evaluation approach which combines the primary characteristics of an informal review system (existing evaluation structure with no published standards) and an ad-hoc blue-ribbon panel (where members are appointed because of their experience and expertise in the field being studied).

Another valuable aspect of Worthen et al. is that it provides a classification of case studies (which would include the present study) as a naturalistic or participant-oriented evaluation approach, specifically (as in the present study) "based on a small sample of those affected by the program or process being evaluated." (Worthen et al., 1997, p. 160)

Earlier significant works on educational evaluation include the following:

Effective Evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1981) discusses the emergence of naturalistic approaches from such concepts as the Tyler Rationale and Stake's Responsive Model. They also used the term "thick description" in reference to certain types of descriptive studies that concentrate on collecting a good deal of information from individuals impacted by a program to determine what is actually taking place. This idea of "thick description" could arguably apply

both to the ACHE quadrennial evaluations themselves and to the current case study effort to assess their effectiveness.

Worthen et al. (1997) uses Guba and Lincoln's idea of "thick description" to address the case study approach as follows:

> The **case study** is a frequently used approach to gathering qualitative information about a program. The focus of a case study is on the case itself. Such an approach may be particularly appropriate in evaluation when there is a need to provide in-depth information about the *unit*, or case, at hand, not so much to generalize to a larger population. With case studies, generalizability is obtained not through scientific external validity but through logical, "naturalistic generalization." The goal is to develop "thick descriptions," or a thorough, complete understanding of the case, to help others understand and judge its worth and the context within which it has operated. (Worthen et al., 1997, p. 374)

Worthen et al. (1997) goes on to explain that a case and its study methods can be as broad or narrow as one chooses to define them:

> Unlike quantitative designs, a case study does not have a clearly delineated method. …
>
> Case studies typically make use of many methods of data collection but lean most heavily toward qualitative methods such as observations, interviews, and the study of documents. … The methods may be selected or adapted as the evaluator achieves a better understanding of the case. That is, the design *is responsive* to the case and the circumstances at hand. It is adaptive and continues to adapt until the evaluator believes he has a good understanding of the case. (Worthen et al., 1997, p. 374)

The edited book Evaluation Models (Madaus, Scriven, & Stufflebeam, 1983) includes chapters by the editors as well as by other major players in educational evaluation including Tyler (concerning his rationale for program evaluation; chapter 4, pp. 67-78), House (on assumptions underlying evaluation models; chapter 3, pp. 45-64), Cronbach (on course improvement through education;

chapter 6, pp. 101-115) and Guba and Lincoln (concerning bases of naturalistic inquiry; chapter 18, pp. 311-333).

Among the chapters of this book that are of primary relevance to understanding the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process are Stufflebeam and Webster's "An Analysis of Alternative Approaches to Evaluation." (1983). These authors classify approaches to educational evaluation as being either politically oriented (what they call "pseudo-evaluation"), questions-oriented, or values-oriented. While the authors attempt pretty clear distinctions between certain of these categories, the ACHE QE process shows elements of several of their categories. The quadrennial evaluations are certainly politically oriented in that they are legislatively mandated and the results are provided to the legislature. However, they are more public relations inspired than they are politically controlled (as Stufflebeam and Webster define those terms), since the results are not controlled by a political arm and are released to the public. In addition, where Stufflebeam and Webster see a direct contrast under values-oriented studies between those that are consumer-oriented (with the evaluator seen as an "enlightened surrogate consumer") and those that are client-centered (where the evaluation helps those who are involved in the process evaluate and improve it), one could argue that the ACHE QE process has characteristics of both, with the in-state lay members of the QE committees serving as "enlightened surrogate customers" and the focus of the process on helping the parties involved in the process to improve it.

Another chapter from this work that is of some relevance to the ACHE QE process is Stufflebeam's "The CIPP Model for Program Evaluation." (1983) "The CIPP approach is based on the view that the most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve. (Stufflebeam, 1983, p. 118) Stufflebeam has defined evaluation as a "process of providing useful information for decision making" (p. 120), and offers the framework of context, input, process, and product evaluation types, each of which can contribute both to decision making (based on a formative orientation) and accountability (based on a summative orientation) to "promote growth and to help the responsible leadership and staff … systematically to obtain and use feedback so as to excel in meeting important needs, or, at least, to do the best they can with the available resources." (Stufflebeam, 1983, p. 120)

R.E. Stake offers two chapters in this volume, one on "The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry" (chapter 16), and the other on "Program Evaluation, Particularly Responsive Evaluation" (chapter 17). Stake identifies responsive evaluation as "evaluation based on what people do naturally to evaluate things: they observe and react." (Stake, 1983, p. 292) He also argues that

> An educational evaluation is responsive evaluation if it orients more directly to program activities than to program intents, if it responds to audience requirements for information, [or] if the different value perspectives of the people at hand are referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program. (Stake, 1983, p. 292)

Based on this definition, the ACHE QE process would certainly fit (based on one's perspective) any or all of Stake's criteria for

responsive evaluation. In addition, Stake also held that evaluators should search for side effects as well as intended effects.

Other major works specifically addressing program evaluation include the following: The Profession and Practice of Program Evaluation (Anderson & Ball, 1978) includes an extensive coverage of ethics and values in evaluation. Toward Reform of Program Evaluation (Cronbach & Associates, 1980) elaborates upon Cronbach's "Ninety-Five Theses" of program evaluation (titled based on Martin Luther's work) by describing the history and current status of evaluation, its role in shaping policy, and how it can contribute to learning and influence systems. The work also provides suggestions concerning the allocation of research resources and the improvement of the evaluation enterprise.

Two years later, Cronbach (1982) presented his work entitled Designing Evaluations of Educational and Social Programs, which examined issues in planning and designing evaluations and provided examples and commentary concerning validity, internal and external influence, and the choosing of appropriate questions and controls for evaluation.

Literature concerning the evaluation of statewide higher education boards.

Of primary importance to the current study is the relatively limited body of literature dealing directly with the organization and evaluation of statewide coordinating and governing boards. The most

significant volume is the journal issue cited earlier entitled Evaluating Statewide Boards (Berdahl [Ed.], 1975 Spring; several articles from this journal are referenced in the following paragraphs). It is perhaps ironic that this journal was being put together at the same time that the first ACHE quadrennial evaluation was taking place. Berdahl (1975, Spring) specifically alluded to this fact as follows:

> Happily, the first formal evaluation of a state coordinating board is now underway. The legislation creating the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in 1969 specified that during the last year of each gubernatorial term, the Commission should undergo formal evaluation by a team of at least three outside consultants. No evaluation criteria were specified. The Alabama authorities added four in-state persons not connected with the Commission to the three outside evaluators. That evaluation is currently underway, and the report will be in the public domain. Hopefully, the report will be reviewed by the national community as well, and other boards may be encouraged to follow the Alabama precedent. (Berdahl, 1975 Spring, p. 4)

Of course, while there is no way to know the extent of national review the ACHE QE reports have received, it is clear (as has already been mentioned in this study and is further evidenced in section two of this chapter) that other statewide boards have yet to follow Alabama's precedent regarding its quadrennial evaluations.

Millett (1975, Spring) contrasts the orientations of state coordinating boards and statewide governing boards. He argues that coordinating boards are necessarily oriented towards state government, while statewide governing boards are oriented towards institutions, and that the two different types of boards must therefore have different characteristics:

> The state coordinating board of higher education is an agency of state government…As a consequence, the real effectiveness of

> a state coordinating board of higher education depends on the kind of working relationship that the board and its staff can develop with a governor and legislature. (Millet, 1975 Spring, p. 62)

In struggling with distinctions that others have proposed but which Millett has found unsatisfactory, he offers the following:

> One possible distinction is to say that a state coordinating board of higher education is concerned with the higher education policy issues that come to the attention of the governor and the legislature, while the governing board is concerned with the policy issues that are not resolved by state legislation or for which restrictive legislation is not wanted…
>
> Another distinction between the state board of higher education and the statewide governing board is in the field of budgeting. The state board of higher education is primarily concerned with the programs of state institutions that the state government undertakes to support, which principally center on student instruction and institutional support… Most state governments have only a limited concern with sponsored research… [and] public service… and almost no concern with auxiliary enterprises and institutional support of student aid. The state government budget for higher education is therefore quite different from an institutional budget, even though the state may properly wish to be informed about the entire institutional budget and may provide for audit of the entire scope of institutional expenditures. (Millet, 1975 Spring, p. 65)

Robert Graham (1975, Spring) provides some valuable background concerning both the evolution and evaluation of statewide boards of higher education from the legislative perspective:

> In virtually all states the legislature was the initial coordinating board for higher education. The legislature allocated resources among the institutions, mediated controversies, and - to the extent it was done - engaged in planning for the state's systems of higher education.
>
> In the post-World War II years, the increasing size and complexity of higher education institutions and systems led most state legislatures to delegate the coordinating function to a board of lay persons with a permanent staff…
>
> In almost all cases, however, the legislature had at least two general objectives in establishing a state board. First,

> boards were established to restrain popular will, serving as a protective shield between the political institution and the academic community. Second, state boards were to function as a part of the democratic process for converting popular will through representative institutions into public policy…
>
> The state board is accountable for how effectively it functions to translate the general policies set by the appointee office, legislative intent through resource allocation, and the informal influence structures into public policy. (Graham, 1975 Spring, pp. 43-45).

Graham goes on to note that, because of the legislature's responsibility in the existence of statewide boards of higher education, legislatures should take the lead in providing for their evaluation. He further notes that statewide boards should be evaluated based upon their skills in the areas of anticipations, values, management, flexibility, and politics. From Alabama's perspective this has been somewhat true in theory but quite limited in practice, especially during certain periods. The legislature has, of course, made specific provision for ACHE to undergo the quadrennial evaluations that are the focus of the current study. However, as will become clear later in the study, the legislature itself has had relatively limited involvement in the QE process itself, and arguably (with notable exceptions) relatively little interest in the results of the evaluations themselves.

Statewide boards must be evaluated in terms of both structure and effectiveness in areas such as statewide planning processes and outcomes; as Callan (1975 Spring) points out, "while planning does not guarantee that a state board will be effective, the lack of planning makes effectiveness improbable." (p. 20) Harcleroad (1975, Spring) argues that while there are certain parallels between

statewide boards of higher education and business organizations, state agencies must be evaluated in terms of performance rather than in terms of profit. However, others could argue that profit is simply another way to measure performance. Odegaard (1975, Spring) argues, "Criteria for evaluation of coordinating agencies should include the sensitivity of their procedures for consulting the coordinated institutions, and the extent to which they encourage voluntary interinstitutional cooperation." (p. 87)

Ketter (1975, Spring), in his argument for centralized accountability and decentralized management within statewide coordinating boards, indicates that the attributes of an effective board can be considered based on its responsibilities, jurisdiction, staff, policy and management, and attitude toward institutional priorities, as well as the degree to which institutions exercise their own responsibilities regarding the coordinating board. In terms of evaluation of such boards, Ketter says, "educators might do well to reassert their confidence in the processes and results of reasoned judgments arrived at by reasonable persons." (p. 84)

Miller (1975, Spring) argues that evaluations of statewide boards must take the political context into account; this is especially true of coordinating boards, which are generally under greater political pressure than governing boards because, as mentioned earlier, they live closer to state government than do the governing boards:

> The effectiveness of a state planning and coordinating agency must be evaluated in a context, and that context in every state is the public policy decision-making process - politics. For

> too long members of the higher education community have hidden from that fact…
>
> Agencies have been in existence long enough for critics and friends alike to expect that they have accomplished something or can show reasons why they have not. (Miller, 1975 Spring, pp. 48, 52)

James B. Holderman (1975, Spring), a former executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, offers some perspectives concerning the special challenges that coordinating boards face. He explains, "There is no natural constituency of a statewide board" and humorously remarks that "no statewide board or its staff has a chance to play in any bowl game." (p. 55) He goes on to point out that "Two forces seek to dominate or neutralize [statewide coordinating boards]: the colleges and universities on the one hand and the government - especially the executive branch - on the other." (p. 55) Holderman goes on to point out that statewide boards should be evaluated based on their power and influence, master planning abilities, effectiveness in involving others, and budgetary success. Under the power and influence criteria, much of a board's capacities depend upon the stature of the board (both of the individual members and collectively), the acumen of the professional staff (both politically and academically), and the support of the governor and legislature. In a wonderfully humorous analogy, Holderman says, "Someone once described the [coordinating board's] position… as between the dog and the tree… One final criteria could be the survival of the board in the face of the tree's indifference and the dog's persistence." (Holderman, 1975 Spring, p. 60)

Making an observation that one could easily apply to the highly politicized climate in Alabama, Balderston (1975, Spring) writes, "Politicians often claim to want an expert coordinating and planning agency, but at the same time, they may, *de facto*, act directly to encourage or constrain a subsystem, thereby undercutting the state board's power." (p. 76)

Another work entitled Who Guards the Guardians? The Evaluation of Statewide Boards of Higher Education (French & Berdahl, 1980) deals with the rationale for evaluating statewide boards, and addresses specific attempts to do so (including the first two quadrennial evaluations of ACHE). In fact, the paper itself resulted from the authors' observations concerning the first and second ACHE quadrennial evaluations. It begins with a discussion of the classifications of state boards of higher education very similar to Berdahl's earlier work and that in the introduction to the present study. It also chronicles the occasional external evaluations conducted by other states that have in many cases been precursors to those outlined in the preliminary research presented in section two of this chapter.

In their discussions of reasons for formal evaluation, French & Berdahl (1980) discuss sunset evaluations (some of which are included in the research reported in section two of this chapter) as well as the probability of regional accrediting agencies paying more attention to the degree of external control exercised on campuses (something that the Alabama 2-year sector has experienced fairly recently as mentioned in the final chapter of the present study).

Their discussion of the complexities in evaluating statewide boards includes the following points:

- Personalities may be more important than structures.
- Classifying structures by formal attributes may be misleading.
- There is little guidance from the early literature.
- There are problems with applying goals-oriented evaluation theory to the evaluation of statewide higher education boards.

Their discussion of (then) recent evaluation efforts includes self-evaluation (with kits provided by the Association of Governing Boards), the criteria used by a 1972 University of Missouri Task Force on State Level Coordination and Governance in Higher Education, the first two ACHE quadrennial evaluations, consolidated governing board evaluations by the Academy for Educational Development in Mississippi, West Virginia, and Florida, and other evaluations in Connecticut and South Carolina. They devote an entire section of their paper to the evaluation criteria that the South Carolina Legislative Audit Council used in 1977 to evaluate the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and how the 2nd ACHE QE committee considered these criteria.

In their conclusion, French & Berdahl (1980) suggest a list of criteria that should be considered when evaluating statewide higher education boards. In addition to a "long list," they provide a "short list" summary as follows:

1. Is the intellectual/analytical work of the Commission of high quality? Here, a peer review of selected reports and studies should be adequate.
2. Is there a sense on the part of the governor and the legislature that the Commission's activities are helpful to

them in making at least quasi-rational judgments about higher education support and development?

3. Do the affected colleges and universities feel that they are being dealt with by the Commission in a fair and understanding manner - granted disagreements about final recommendations?
4. Does the commission operate on the basis of a philosophy of higher education that goes beyond simplistic manpower, occupational, and formula projections, and that endorses a maximum amount of institutional autonomy in making decremental as well as incremental decisions? (French & Berdahl, 1980, p. 41)

It is also interesting to note that the first item on their "long list" indicated, "The status of the recommendations made by any previous evaluations should be considered." (French & Berdahl, 1980, p. 41) As the reader will see later, this was a key issue in this researcher's analysis of the first six ACHE quadrennial evaluations.

The Education Commission of the States (ECS, 1984), in Challenge: Coordination and Governance in the '80s: A Report on Issues and Directions in Statewide Coordination and Governance of Postsecondary Education in the 1980s, made the following recommendation concerning the evaluation of statewide coordinating and governing boards:

> *The state agency, whether a coordinating or governing board, should also be held accountable and should periodically be assessed in terms of its achievement of objectives.* A preferred procedure may be establishment on a regular basis of an evaluation committee composed of laymen and experts from the field. It is crucial, however, that the evaluating body is chosen carefully with knowledgeability and objectivity as the prime criteria. (ECS, 1984, p. 315)

This recommendation appears to suggest exactly what Alabama has accomplished in its establishment of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process.

Chait, Holland, and Taylor (1991), in a study entitled The Effective Board of Trustees, reported on a research project that they started "with three deceptively simple questions in mind:

1. What characteristics define and describe effective boards of trustees…?
2. Do the behaviors of effective and ineffective boards differ systematically?
3. What is the relationship, if any, between board effectiveness and institutional performance? (Chait et al., 1991, p. 1)

Their major findings included the following:

1. *…there are specific characteristics and behaviors that distinguish strong boards from weak boards.*
2. *…there is a positive and systematic association between the board's performance, as measured against these competencies, and the college's performance, as measured against some conventional financial indicators.*
3. *…self-assessments by boards of trustees are of questionable validity as accurate and objective measures of actual board performance and competence.* (Chait et al., 1991, p. 1-2)

They presented the specific characteristics in terms of six different dimensions of effective trusteeship: contextual, educational, interpersonal, analytical, political, and strategic. While the study involved trustees of independent colleges, it is also of value for the public sector to include statewide coordinating and governing bodies.

In addition, McGuinness (1993) offered the following questions that public governing boards should address in periodic reviews of their own performance:

- Does the Board Have a Concise Mission Statement for the Institution It Governs or for the System and Each of the Campuses?
- Does the Board Have a Clearly Stated Vision of How the Institution or the System Contributes in Concrete, Measurable Ways to Major Public Priorities?

- Does the Board Consciously Seek to Support and Build Constructive Relations with the State Higher Education Board?
- Does the Governing Board Inform Political Leaders About Institutional and System Developments That Affect Their Constituents or That Will Receive Media Attention?
- Does the Board Exhibit Values That Characterize Exemplary Public Bodies in All Its Actions? (McGuinness, 1993, pp. 206-210)

Again, while these questions are directed to governing boards, they could be adjusted as appropriate for use with statewide coordinating boards.

The preliminary research mentioned in the introduction to this chapter (and presented below as section two of this chapter) references and reviews the documents the researcher received as a result of his research into the recent evaluation practices of statewide coordinating and governing boards. This research primarily addressed whether these boards had received evaluations and which types of evaluations they had received in at least the past ten years. It shows the frequency of certain types of evaluations ("sunset" evaluations, mandated vs. voluntary evaluations, and self- vs. external evaluations) by type of board.

In addition to these documents dealing specifically with evaluation of statewide boards, literature addressing the structure and function of statewide boards is of equal importance in understanding their evaluation. Such publications include the State Postsecondary Education Structures Handbook which is updated every few years as required (latest edition is Education Commission of the States [ECS], 1997, reviewed earlier in this chapter), annual almanacs produced by The Chronicle of Higher Education, and the

American Council on Education's Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education (latest edition is Anaya & Rozek [Eds.], 2000). Mingle's 1988 work entitled "Effective Coordination of Higher Education: What is it? Why is it so difficult to achieve" addresses the reasons for state higher education boards, how they have changed, the different types of boards, the problems and limitations these boards face, and their functions.

An example of structural challenge.

A simple comparison between Alabama and another state in the southeastern U.S., namely Tennessee, provides one example of why a state such as Alabama faces special coordinating board challenges. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is a regulatory coordinating board of basically the same type as ACHE. However, a review of the American Council on Education's Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education (Anaya & Rozek [Eds.], 2000) quickly reveals that Alabama has a much more diverse system of higher education to coordinate, both in terms of higher education governance structures and in terms of the number of institutions themselves.

Specifically, all Tennessee public institutions of higher education are governed by one of two governing bodies, The University of Tennessee System Board of Trustees (which governs the four campuses of that university system), or the Tennessee Board of Regents (which governs the other 20 public universities and colleges to include the community colleges). In contrast, Alabama has (as of

2000) seven governing boards for single university campuses, three governing boards for multiple campus systems, and the Department of Postsecondary Education under the State Department of Education that governs its 31 2-year campuses, for a total of 11 boards and 46 campuses (vs. two boards and 24 campuses in Tennessee).

Previous Doctoral Dissertations Concerning ACHE

The researcher has identified three previous doctoral dissertations dealing directly with ACHE. Royal (1977) is a critical analysis of the creation and development of ACHE from 1968 through 1977, Portera (1977) is a study of the impact of politics on the centralization of administration and governance in public education in Alabama, and Wise (1981) is a leadership case study on the creation of ACHE. While these dissertations provide or confirm quite a bit of relevant background information, none of them deals significantly with the quadrennial evaluation process of ACHE, which is the primary focus of the present study. Interestingly, however, Portera (1977) found that while there were strong logical arguments for giving ACHE greater power, the political climate in Alabama at that time would not support such a move. We now know, of course, that ACHE was strengthened from an advisory to a regulatory coordinating board in 1979 by legislation based largely upon the recommendations of the first two ACHE quadrennial evaluation committees.

Section 2: Review of Practice Concerning the Evaluation of Statewide Boards of Higher Education

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide the results of a nationwide survey conducted in the Spring and Summer of 1995. The survey instrument (copy at Appendix B) was sent along with a cover letter (example at Appendix C) to the senior executives of selected primary statewide coordinating and/or governing higher education boards in each of the fifty states and Puerto Rico (selected from the listing at Appendix A). The purposes of this survey were as follows:

1. To fulfill a comprehensive examination requirement assigned by the researcher's major professor (referred to elsewhere in this study as the research director).

2. To gather information concerning the practices of coordinating and governing boards (and their respective state legislatures) in directing and conducting formal evaluations.

3. To either confirm or refute the researcher's belief that the Alabama Commission on Higher Education has one of the more regular and thorough processes of formal evaluation in the nation.

Method

Development of the Survey Instrument

The researcher developed the survey instrument at Appendix B by combining the guidance given by his major professor with the intent of his own research interests. The external guidance primarily indicated that the survey should solicit information concerning the following:

1. Whether a board had received one or more formal evaluations in the last ten years.

2. Dates, purposes, and procedures of any evaluations conducted.

3. Whether any evaluations were required by policy or law.

The researcher included these basic elements in the survey instrument, refining them to ensure that the instrument was as easy to respond to as possible and would yield as much information as possible concerning both evaluations within the last ten years and those which may have occurred earlier but for which information was still available. The researcher also requested any available written products from these evaluations. The initial draft of the survey instrument was refined based upon guidance from the research director, who approved and countersigned the final product.

Determination of Survey Recipients

While developing the survey instrument, the researcher also engaged in determining the appropriate audience for the survey. As a result of studying different state coordination and governance systems, the researcher developed the classification at Appendix A. Following this, the researcher coordinated with the research director to determine the appropriate scope of the survey audience to adequately address the purposes of the research as stated above.

The researcher and research director agreed that surveys would be mailed to the senior executives of all SHEEO-member statewide coordinating and governing boards plus the Wyoming Postsecondary Education Planning and Coordinating Council. This ensured the opportunity for a response from at least one statewide governing and/or coordinating board in each state while minimizing duplicate responses from individual states. This sample included all single statewide governing boards, all regulatory and advisory coordinating boards, and most of the statewide planning agencies (excluding two in states where the governing boards wield considerably more power).

Distribution of the Survey

The cover letter at Appendix C was designed to make the survey as easy to respond to as possible by giving the responder as many options as possible in response method; including return mail (with self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed), fax, and telephone

conversation with the researcher. It also gave the responder the option to provide and reference written products in lieu of providing detailed answers on the survey instrument. As with the survey instrument itself, the researcher and research director agreed upon and jointly signed each cover letter. The surveys were mailed during the latter part of April 1995.

Response Rate

From fifty-two total surveys distributed, the researcher received forty-nine usable responses, one refusal to participate, and two failures to respond, yielding an actual response rate of 96.15% and a usable response rate of 94.23%. In terms of state representation, there was at least one usable response from every state (including Puerto Rico) except Connecticut (refusal to participate), North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Results

The following sections report the results of the survey in various summary forms. First, the results are listed by type of board and by type(s) of evaluation (if any) reported within each board category. Next, the results are listed by type of evaluation (if any), and then alphabetically by state within each evaluation category. (In each of these listings, the state name is underlined within the board name to assist in identification.) Tables 2 through

5 provide statistical profile matrices that further summarize these responses. Appendix D provides a narrative of the detailed survey responses received state-by-state. (In most cases, this appendix is a near-verbatim transcript of the survey response.) Appendix E is a bibliography of sources that either related to the conduct of the survey or were received in response to the survey. These sources are also included in the overall bibliography of the present study.

Results by Type of Board

Single statewide governing boards.

Of the nineteen single statewide governing boards:

- Two (The State Board of Higher Education/The North Dakota University System and The Board of Regents of The University of Wisconsin System) did not provide any response to the survey.
- Ten indicated that they had never been through any type of formal evaluation.
- One (Arizona Board of Regents) reported that they had received a "sunset" evaluation.
- Three indicated that they had participated in one or more self-evaluations but in no other type of formal evaluation.
- One (Iowa Board of Regents) indicated that it had received some other type of formal evaluation.

Table 2

Usable Responses and Number of Boards Evaluated by Type of Board

Type of Board	Surveys Mailed	Usable Responses	One or More Evaluations	Never Evaluated
Governing	19 (37%)	17 (89%)	7 (41%)	10 (59%)
Regulatory	22 (42%)	21 (95%)	8 (38%)	13 (62%)
Advisory	7 (13%)	7 (100%)	5 (71%)	2 (29%)
Planning	4 (8%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
TOTALS	52 (100%)	49 (94%)	20 (41%)	29 (59%)

Explanation of percentages:

Surveys Mailed - Percentage of total surveys mailed

Usable Responses - Percentage of surveys mailed

One or More Evaluations - Percentage of usable responses

Never Evaluated - Percentage of usable responses

Table 3

Evaluations of Boards by Type of Board and Type of Evaluation (External vs. Internal)

Type of Board	Total Number of Evaluations of Different Types	"Sunset" Evaluations	Other External Evaluations	Internal (Self-) Evaluations
Governing	10 (40%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
Regulatory	9 (36%)	3 (33%)	5 (56%)	1 (11%)
Advisory	6 (24%)	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)
TOTALS	25 (100%)	7 (28%)	11 (44%)	7 (28%)

Explanation of percentages:

Total Number of Evaluations of Different Types - Percentage of grand total

Other Categories - Percentage of total number of evaluations of different types

Table 4

Evaluations of Boards by Type of Board and Type of Evaluation (Statutory vs. Voluntary)

Type of Board	Total Number of Evaluations of Different Types	"Sunset" Evaluations	Other Statutory Evaluations	Voluntary Evaluations
Governing	10 (40%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)
Regulatory	9 (36%)	3 (33%)	4 (44%)	2 (22%)
Advisory	6 (24%)	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	2 (33%)
TOTALS	25 (100%)	7 (28%)	7 (28%)	11 (44%)

Explanation of percentages:

Total Number of Evaluations of Different Types - Percentage of grand total

Other Categories - Percentage of total number of evaluations of different types

Table 5

Evaluations of Boards by Type of Board and Type of Evaluation (Full Detail)

Type of Board	"Sunset" Evaluations	Statutory Evaluations		Voluntary Evaluations		Total # of Evaluations
		External	Internal	External	Internal	
Governing	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	10 (40%)
Regulatory	3 (33%)	4 (44%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	9 (36%)
Advisory	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	6 (24%)
TOTALS	7 (28%)	6 (24%)	1 (4%)	5 (20%)	6 (24%)	25 (100%)

Explanation of percentages:

Total # of Evaluations [of Different Types] - Percentage of grand total

Other Categories - Percentage of total number of evaluations of different types

- Two (Idaho Board of Regents and The Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada) reported that they had both participated in self-evaluation and had received one or more other types of formal evaluations.

Statewide regulatory coordinating boards.

Of the twenty-two statewide regulatory coordinating boards:

- One (Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education) specifically declined (in writing) to participate in the survey.
- Thirteen reported that they had never received any type of formal evaluation.
- Two (Colorado Commission on Higher Education and Indiana Commission for Higher Education) reported that they had received "sunset" evaluations but had not received any other type of formal evaluation.
- One (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education) reported that they had conducted a self-evaluation but had not received any other type of formal evaluation.
- Four (Alabama Commission on Higher Education, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and the State of Virginia Council of Higher Education) reported having received one or more formal evaluations other than a "sunset" or self-evaluation.

- One (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) reported that it had received both a "sunset" evaluation and other types of formal evaluation besides self-evaluation.

Statewide advisory coordinating boards.

Of the seven statewide advisory coordinating boards:

- Two (Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education and California Postsecondary Education Commission) reported that they had never received a formal evaluation.
- Three (Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, Pennsylvania Board of Governors of Higher Education, and Wyoming Postsecondary Education Planning and Coordinating Council) reported that they had received a "sunset" evaluation.
- One (Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board) reported that it had received both a self-evaluation and another type of formal evaluation.
- One (New Mexico Commission on Higher Education) reported that it had received a formal evaluation other than a "sunset" or self-evaluation.

Statewide planning agencies.

Of the four SHEEO member statewide planning agencies, all four reported that they had never received any type of formal evaluation.

Results by Type(s) of Evaluation(s) (if any) Alphabetized by State

The following listings show the results of each returned survey by type(s) of evaluation(s) indicated (if any), listed alphabetically by state for each evaluation category.

No formal evaluation.

Representatives from the following boards reported that their boards had never received any type of formal evaluation (or that there was no available record or knowledge of same):

- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (advisory).
- University of Alaska System Board of Regents (governing).
- Arkansas State Board of Higher Education (regulatory).
- California Postsecondary Education Commission (advisory).
- Delaware Higher Education Commission (planning agency).
- District of Columbia Office of Postsecondary Education, Research, and Assistance (planning agency).
- Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (governing).
- Illinois Board of Higher Education (regulatory).
- Kansas Board of Regents (governing).
- Kentucky Council on Higher Education (regulatory).
- Louisiana Board of Regents (regulatory).
- The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System (governing).

- Maryland Higher Education Commission (regulatory). The current Maryland Higher Education Commission (started in 1988) has never received a formal evaluation; however, the former Maryland Board of Higher Education (which existed from 1976 until 1988) received a formal evaluation around 1980-81.
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council (regulatory; governing except for the University of Massachusetts).
- State of Michigan Board of Education (planning agency).
- Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (governing).
- Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (regulatory).
- Board of Regents for Higher Education/The Montana University System (governing).
- Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (regulatory).
- New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission (planning agency).
- State of New Jersey Commission on Higher Education (regulatory).
- The Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York (regulatory).
- The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina (governing).

- o Ohio Board of Regents (regulatory).
- o Oregon Board of Higher Education (governing).
- o Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education (regulatory).
- o South Dakota Board of Regents (governing).
- o The University of Vermont (on behalf of all state boards). (A representative of the University of Vermont opined that Vermont has no statewide coordinating and/or governing board.)
- o Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (regulatory).
- o The Board of Trustees of the University System of West Virginia. The Board of Trustees of the University System of West Virginia has never been formally evaluated; nor was its predecessor, the Board of Regents of West Virginia, which embraced all state institutions. However, a representative of the University System of West Virginia opined that a major motivating factor in the 1989 abolishment of the former Board of Regents and creation of two new boards was legislative displeasure with the operation of the existing Board of Regents.

No usable response.

Despite repeated mail and telephonic attempts; the researcher never received any usable response from the following boards:

- o The State Board of Higher Education/The North Dakota University System (governing).

- The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (governing).

Declined to participate.

A representative of the Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education (regulatory) specifically declined (in writing) to respond to the survey.

"Sunset" evaluations.

Representatives of the following boards provided responses which indicated that their most recent and/or most significant formal evaluations were conducted under "sunset" provisions; i.e., that they were conducted as directed by the state legislature as a condition of continued existence:

- Arizona Board of Regents (governing), 1990-91.
- Colorado Commission on Higher Education (regulatory), 1982.
- Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (advisory), 1990 (state senate) and 1991 (state house).
- Indiana Commission for Higher Education (regulatory), 1985-86. The copy of the report provided was undated; however, this approximate dating is most likely based upon the currency of material in the report.

- Pennsylvania Board of Governors, State System of Higher Education (advisory), 1992. (The researcher requested but never received a copy of this report.)
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (regulatory), 1987-89.
- Wyoming Postsecondary Education Planning and Coordinating Council (advisory), sometime after 1991. (The responder could not provide additional information or a copy of the report.)

Self-evaluations.

Representatives of the following boards indicated that their most recent and/or most significant evaluations had been some form of self-evaluation:

- Hawaii Board of Regents (governing), 1986 and 1992.
- Idaho Board of Regents (governing), 1994. While this was the board's most recent evaluation, the board was a subject of four, more formal governance studies conducted between 1983 and 1985.
- Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (advisory), 1994-95. This self-study was unique in that it was in response to a 1994 state legislative directive. An earlier formal board evaluation was conducted in 1986 at the board's own request.

- The Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada (governing), 1992. In addition to this completed study, this board was (as of June 1995) undergoing a performance audit directed by the Nevada Legislature.
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (regulatory), 1994.
- Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (governing), 1995.
- Utah System of Higher Education State Board of Regents (governing), 1990 and 1994.

Other types of formal evaluation.

Representatives of the following boards reported that these boards had undergone some type(s) of formal evaluation that cannot be categorized primarily as either a "sunset" evaluation or a self-evaluation:

- Alabama Commission on Higher Education (regulatory). This commission has had six quadrennial evaluations since its inception, which have resulted in formal reports in each of the following years: 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, and 1995. These evaluations are required by state law (Act 74-461, Section 16, Code of Alabama), which states that the purpose of the evaluation is "to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Commission and to recommend changes as needed." Teams consisting of out-of-state higher education

professionals have conducted the evaluations. In some cases, in state lay persons in community leadership positions have also served on these evaluation committees.

- Idaho Board of Regents (governing). In addition to the 1994 self-evaluation mentioned earlier, this board was involved to some degree in four higher education governance studies conducted in Idaho between 1983 and 1985. These studies are identified in more detail in the state-by-state listing at Appendix D.
- Iowa State Board of Regents (governing). This board (and its institutions) received an organizational audit from KPMG Peat Marwick Main & Co. of New York between 1987 and 1989. The board issued subsequent reports in 1990 and 1991 that addressed actions taken as a result of the audit.
- Maryland Board of Higher Education (existed from 1976 until 1988). This forerunner to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (which has never been formally evaluated) reportedly received a formal evaluation around 1980-81; however, the researcher has not been able to obtain a copy of this report.
- Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (advisory). In addition to the 1994-95 self-evaluation mentioned earlier, this board received an "Agency Performance Audit" from The M & H Group Study Team (an external consulting firm) in 1986.

- Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada (governing). In addition to the 1992 self-evaluation mentioned above, the Nevada Legislature directed (in June 1995) that the State Department of Audit conduct a performance audit of the Board of Regents and the system administration.
- New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (advisory). This commission received a formal evaluation in the early 1980s that was conducted by the staff of the state's executive finance and administration agency; however, no staff member was able to locate a copy of the report.
- South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (regulatory). This commission received a formal evaluation from an external consulting firm in 1985-86. It also received a report based upon responses to an internally-developed evaluative survey instrument in 1992.
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission (regulatory). This commission received a state compliance audit covering the years ended June 30, 1994 and June 30, 1993 on July 5, 1995.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (regulatory). In addition to the "sunset" evaluation mentioned earlier, this board receives periodic audits from the State Auditor's office. It also is sometimes affected by the results of the biennial Texas Performance Review, conducted by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, which reviews all of state

government and recommends changes in state programs to be considered by the Texas Legislature every other year.

- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (regulatory). The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission conducted the most recent formal evaluation of the council in 1994 under Section 30-58.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Discussion

Statistical Summary

Tables 2 through 5 (pages 85-88) summarize type(s) of evaluation (if any) by type of board. Boards that have experienced more than one type of evaluation are double (or, in one case, triple) counted according to the number of different types of evaluations.

While compiling these data, the researcher noticed what appeared to be trends concerning the implementation of certain types of evaluations based upon type of board. For example, it appears that governing and regulatory boards are (roughly) equally likely to conduct evaluations. However, governing boards appear to engage more frequently in voluntary and/or self-evaluation, while regulatory boards appear to engage more frequently in statutory (including "sunset") and/or external evaluation.

By the same token, it would appear that advisory boards engage in evaluation more frequently than either governing or regulatory

boards, although they appear to mirror regulatory boards in being more likely to engage in statutory vs. voluntary and external vs. self-evaluation. None of the above observations are surprising when one considers that governing boards generally have more control over their own actions than do regulatory or advisory boards. What is perhaps most striking is that none of the four planning agencies has ever been formally evaluated.

In spite of what appear to be clear trends, however, the researcher failed in a diligent attempt to find statistical significance (alpha less than or equal to 0.05) in these observations using various chi square contingency tables. (Various attempts yielded alphas in the range of 0.07 to 0.20.) When comparing governing boards against all types of coordinating boards grouped together, straight chi square contingency tables did yield significant differences (alpha less than 0.05) concerning statutory vs. voluntary evaluations and external vs. internal evaluations. However, with df=1, even these comparisons yielded alphas greater than 0.05 after adjusting for Yate's Correction. While the researcher continues to believe that these trends are real and consistent, it is impossible to firmly establish them statistically due to the inherently limited number of possible observations.

Conclusion

This study was successful, despite its limited statistical significance, in that it achieved a high response rate and fulfilled its basic purposes of comprehensive exam content, researcher exposure to evaluation trends, and confirmation of the uniqueness of the evaluation process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. While there are occasional isolated instances of more frequent evaluation (e.g., Idaho's four studies between 1983 and 1985 and Texas' being potentially subject to multiple types of evaluation), there is no evidence that any statewide coordinating and/or governing board approaches the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) in thoroughness and frequency of formal evaluation over the past twenty years. Therefore, a study of the effectiveness of the ACHE evaluation process and how it might be used to improve such evaluation throughout American higher education should prove to be an ideal dissertation topic.

Summary

This chapter has provided a review of both the related literature and of a preliminary study concerning the evaluation practices of statewide boards of higher education. The literature review included works that describe the evolution of higher education

governance, focusing on the long and distinguished history of governance of higher education institutions by boards consisting of lay members with no other substantial ties to higher education. While these boards existed largely at the institutional level for much of America's history, the expansion of American higher education in the past half century, especially during the 1960s, has resulted in increasing centralization of higher education coordination and governance, resulting in many cases in the creation of boards for systems of multiple institutions that took the place of boards for individual institutions. In addition, many states (including Alabama) created various forms of coordinating boards to coordinate certain aspects of higher education among the various institutions and systems. In most cases (including Alabama's) these boards consisted of all or a majority of lay members. The literature review above also includes information concerning the responsibilities of governing and coordinating boards and how these responsibilities differ from each other.

The review of evaluation practice in section two of this chapter confirmed the researcher's belief that the statutory requirement for quadrennial evaluation of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education is unique among all state higher education coordinating and governing boards. However, there has been no specific prior assessment of the effectiveness of this evaluation process over time, nor has there been (despite Berdahl's stated

hopes) any move by any other state to replicate Alabama's practice in this regard. Therefore, the researcher concludes that there is value in conducting a case study analysis of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process to determine whether this distinctive policy requirement is of sufficient benefit to warrant its continuation and/or emulation by other states.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the methods the researcher used to conduct a case study evaluation of the Quadrennial Evaluation (QE) process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). First, the researcher determined which individuals would be potentially appropriate survey and/or interview subjects based on their level of familiarity with the ACHE QE process. Next, the researcher developed, administered, and analyzed responses from a written survey instrument designed to determine respondents' views concerning the contributions and benefits of the ACHE QE process to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. Based on the analysis of these responses and other data, the researcher conducted limited follow-up telephonic interviews with some of the survey respondents to clarify certain unusual trends in the responses. The remainder of the chapter discusses the documentary evidence used in the study, as well as the presentation of evidence in the following chapters and the sampling and methodological limitations of the study.

Survey Instrument

Selection of the Sample

A major source of evidence for this study came from responses to a survey instrument that was mailed to appropriate individuals (copy of survey instrument is at Appendix F). The researcher identified approximately 225 potentially appropriate individuals for receipt of this survey. These individuals included current and former members of each of the following groups who were closely associated with ACHE and/or had participated in one or more of the ACHE quadrennial evaluations:

- state governors and members of the governor's staff
- state legislators
- members of the legislative fiscal office
- administrators of postsecondary institutions
- members of ACHE and of the ACHE professional staff
- members of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation committees
- prominent state citizens who are familiar with ACHE

The researcher attempted to contact each individual in each of the above categories for which he had or could reasonably obtain contact information. However, as the reader will see in the following chapter, the researcher decided to narrow his focus to the responses of certain of the above categories based upon the response rates from the various categories.

Development of Survey Instrument

The premise for the development of the survey questions was that the value of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process could best be measured by assessing the influence of the process on ACHE's effectiveness. The first five questions in the survey are based upon questions suggested by Bailey (in French & Berdahl, 1980) as guides in assessing the effectiveness of a state board or agency. The researcher (based on guidance from the research director) reworded these questions so that they request the respondent to address the degree to which the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process has contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of its five specific statutory areas of responsibility. These questions each requested a fixed response along a five-point Likert scale to the degree to which the process has contributed to ACHE's effectiveness in each area.

The next two questions were open-ended and asked the respondent to identify and describe:

- the greatest benefit(s) of the quadrennial evaluation process to ACHE and/or Alabama higher education, and,
- the change(s) most needed to the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process in order to improve its value to ACHE and Alabama higher education.

The purpose of these questions was to determine whether any consensuses emerged on these issues.

The last set of questions asked the respondent to indicate, to the degree s/he was able, the degree to which each quadrennial evaluation itself had been of benefit to Alabama higher education. These were also measured on five-point Likert scales from low degree to high degree.

The survey also requested demographic information on the survey respondents themselves, and asked them to indicate their willingness to contribute further to the study through completion of one or more of the following activities: one or more additional surveys, telephone interview, or personal (face-to-face) interview.

The survey also provided for all individuals willing to participate further to include necessary information so that the researcher would be able to contact them. The researcher made (and assured respondents of) every effort to ensure confidentiality; and also employed an appropriate coding system (on both the survey instrument itself and the self-addressed, stamped envelope) to identify which individuals had and had not returned surveys. The survey included an appropriate cover letter (see Appendix G).

Analysis of Survey Responses

The researcher analyzed the results of the initial survey to determine what trends appeared concerning the issues already identified as well as to determine which issues (both among those already identified and those emerging as a result of the survey responses) needed to be further addressed. The researcher also

conducted detailed demographic analysis based upon his previous study and experience, which indicated that one's position relative to Alabama higher education may have a significant correlation to one's attitude towards ACHE and/or the quadrennial evaluation process.

In terms of statistical analysis, the researcher used t-tests to determine whether the Likert scale responses of certain categories of individuals were at significantly higher or lower levels than those of other categories of individuals. As the reader will see in the following chapter, this was the case concerning two particular areas and formed much of the basis for the researcher's follow-up interviews described below.

Follow-Up Interviews

The researcher initially held all options open concerning what further research might be needed after the results of the initial survey were analyzed. He anticipated, however, that there would be a need for at least a few telephone and/or face-to-face interviews with certain individuals who had indicated a willingness to contribute further to the study. The researcher also considered it possible that issues would be raised which would need to be addressed through one or more additional surveys. However, the researcher initially believed this to be somewhat less likely and in fact, once he had analyzed the initial survey results, concluded that additional surveys would neither be necessary nor beneficial.

The researcher determined, based on the results and analysis found in the following chapters, that it would be beneficial to conduct only a limited number of non-intrusive, telephonic interviews with selected individuals to clarify two key areas where different demographic groups differed significantly from other groups in their opinions concerning the benefits of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process. Although the researcher conducted each of these interviews by telephone, he first obtained from each interviewee an initialed and signed copy of the informed consent statement (copy at Appendix H) as required by The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Office of Institutional Research. All existing data collected were from public records, all survey and interview participants were adults, and all responses were recorded in a confidential manner.

Documentary Research

In addition to collection and analysis of the survey and interview data described above, the researcher also gathered and analyzed official and other public records (especially the quadrennial evaluation reports themselves and other historical documents) to determine certain changes in Alabama higher education which are a matter of record and which could reasonably be related with recommendations of one or more evaluation committees. Likewise, the researcher also identified recommendations of the quadrennial evaluation committees that had not been implemented. Specific

elements of this analysis, the results of which can be seen in the following chapters, included the following:

- Analysis and comparison of the six QE reports themselves, including similarities and differences in the compositions of the QE committees, lengths of the reports, survey and documentary evidence concerning the effectiveness of the reports, and balance of information collected by each committee from the various constituents of Alabama higher education.
- Review of the legislative changes that have been made to ACHE based on the recommendations of the various QE committees.
- Review and analysis of the documents created by the ACHE staff specifically attempting to show what responses have and have not been made to the recommendations of the various QE committees.
- Review of media articles that address the preparation for, conduct of, and results of the various quadrennial evaluations and/or other relevant issues regarding ACHE and/or Alabama higher education.

Presentation of Evidence

Based on the review and analysis of the survey, interview, and documentary evidence described above, the researcher created narratives concerning the recommendations made by each of the first six quadrennial evaluation committees concerning the role areas identified in the first five questions of the survey instrument, as

well as other areas in which one or more of the QE committees had made significant recommendations. These narratives are in essence short histories concerning the recommendations that the QE committees have made in each of these areas and the evidence from legislation, ACHE staff reports, media articles and (in some instances) interviews concerning the degree to which these recommendations have or have not been implemented.

In the final chapter of this report, the researcher gives his conclusions based on the research questions as well as his recommendations concerning potential improvements to the quadrennial evaluation process that the researcher believes are mutually supported and reinforced by the various types of evidence presented.

Limitations

Sampling Limitations

As mentioned earlier, the researcher intentionally limited the distribution of surveys to those individuals who were closely associated with ACHE and/or had participated in one or more of the ACHE quadrennial evaluations. The purpose of this limitation was to ensure that every respondent had at least some experience base from which to comment on the contributions and benefits of the evaluation process. As a practical matter, this means that the researcher limited distribution of the surveys to individuals who had been specifically identified in one or more of the 3rd through 6th QE

reports as having provided information in some fashion to the committee and/or as having had some type of direct involvement in the QE process (such as an ACHE staff member identified as having a key role in the process). The researcher was also limited by the inability to survey or interview certain relevant individuals who were deceased or unavailable for other reasons, or who were unwilling to participate in the study. As covered in the following chapter, the survey instrument yielded a substantial number of usable results only from members of certain groups from among those to whom the researcher mailed surveys. Because of this, the researcher chose to limit the focus of the remainder of the study to the views of those groups from which sufficient data were available to make meaningful comparisons.

Methodological Limitations

As will all research dealing with survey, interview, or written data; the researcher had to make certain assumptions concerning whether the data can be trusted: e.g., whether authors of documents, interviewees, and/or survey respondents may have attempted to intentionally deceive. The researcher's basic practice in this study was to assume honesty among these individuals in the absence of any specific, credible evidence to indicate the contrary. The researcher did not identify any attempt at intentional deceit by any survey respondent or interviewee.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the survey described in the previous chapter concerning the benefits and effectiveness of the quadrennial evaluation (QE) process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). Specifically, this presentation of the survey results includes a discussion of the response rates for various categories of respondents, as well as an explanation concerning why the researcher chose to narrow the scope of the study based upon the lack of responses from certain categories of respondents. Following this is a presentation of the survey's quantitative results as they relate to the various role areas of the Commission and to each of the first six ACHE quadrennial evaluations. The next section is a qualitative analysis of the survey data for the two open-ended questions concerning the greatest benefits of the QE process and changes needed to the QE process. The chapter concludes by explaining how the following chapters of this study will focus on the consistency of the survey results with other available evidence concerning the benefits and effectiveness of the ACHE QE process.

Discussion of Survey Results

Response Rates

Explanation of Narrowing of Study Scope

As explained in the previous chapter, the researcher initially identified approximately 225 potentially appropriate individuals for receipt of the survey from the following categories:

- State governors and members of the governor's staff
- State legislators
- Members of the state legislative fiscal office
- Administrators and faculty of postsecondary institutions
- Members of ACHE and of the ACHE professional staff
- Members of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation committees
- Prominent state citizens who are familiar with ACHE

As the reader may recall from the previous chapter, the study called for contacting as many individuals as possible in each of the above categories who had participated in previous surveys or interviews during an ACHE Quadrennial Evaluation (QE). Of course, the researcher was limited to lists from the 3rd through 6th evaluations because there were no reliable records kept of which individuals had been interviewed or surveyed during the 1st and 2nd evaluations. The researcher was also limited to those individuals for whom he could find valid addresses after diligent research

through their current or former institutions, ACHE, and other appropriate sources.

While the researcher made equally diligent efforts to survey each member of each of the above groups, there were some groups for which the researcher received too few usable responses to continue with a view towards assessing the views of those groups concerning the contribution and benefits of the ACHE QE process. The groups from which too few usable responses were received included the following:

- State governors and members of the governor's staff
- State legislators (However, there are some comments from state legislators included in the qualitative data below.)
- Members of the state legislative fiscal office
- Members of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation committees
- Prominent state citizens who are familiar with ACHE (Interestingly in this case, there were a significant number of individuals who acknowledged receipt of the survey but specifically responded that they did not feel qualified to respond to the survey.)

Because of the lack of usable responses from these groups, the researcher chose to focus on the usable responses from the two remaining groups listed above, administrators and faculty of postsecondary institutions and members of ACHE and of the ACHE professional staff. Also, for reasons that will become clear during the discussion to follow, the researcher further divided each of these categories into two more distinct categories.

Response Rates from Usable Groups

Table 6 is a summary of the response rates from the following groups (current or former position holders) that responded in sufficient number that their survey responses could be used in the study:

- Administrators/faculty of 4-year institutions (N=19)
- Administrators/faculty of 2-year institutions (N=15)
- ACHE Commissioners (N=10)
- ACHE Staff Members (N=9)

Explanation of Table 6

Following is an explanation of how to read Table 6: From left to right there are columns for the group in question, each of the 3rd through 6th evaluations, a total number of interviews, and a total without duplicates (counting each individual only once, regardless of the number of evaluations in which that individual participated). From top to bottom the following lines appear for each group:

- Total - Total number of individuals in each group in each column.
- Less Total Unable to Contact - This gives the number from the total that are deceased, for whom the researcher was never able to get a valid address, or from whom the researcher received returned mail with no ability to ascertain a forwarding address.

Table 6: Summary of Response Rates (Part 1)

Entity	3rd Quad (1983)	4th Quad (1987)	5th Quad (1991)	6th Quad (1995)	Total # Interviews	Total w/o Duplicates
4-Year Administrators Total	26	20	19	15	80	53
less Total Unable To Contact	6	2	2	1	11	7
Total Presumably Contacted	20	18	17	14	69	46
less Total Returned Without Response	7	3	1	2	13	8
Total Potential Respondents	13	15	16	12	56	38
less Total Did Not Respond	8	6	7	5	26	19
Total Respondents	5	9	9	7	30	19
Percent Presumably Contacted	76.9%	90.0%	89.5%	93.3%	86.3%	86.8%
Actual Response Rate	60.0%	66.7%	58.8%	64.3%	62.3%	58.7%
Usable Response Rate	38.5%	60.0%	56.3%	58.5%	53.6%	50.0%
2-year Administrators Total	18	7	7	12	44	34
less total Unable To Contact	7	2	4	1	14	11
Total Presumably Contacted	11	5	3	11	30	23
less total Returned Without Response	0	1	1	0	2	1
Total Potential Respondents	11	4	2	11	28	22
less total Did Not Respond	6	0	0	1	7	7
Total Respondents	5	4	2	10	21	15
Percent Presumably Contacted	61.1%	71.4%	42.9%	91.7%	68.2%	67.6%
Actual Response Rate	45.5%	100.0%	100.0%	90.9%	76.7%	69.6%
Usable Response Rate	45.5%	100.0%	100.0%	90.9%	75.0%	68.2%

Table 6. Cont. (Part 2)

Entity	3rd Quad (1983)	4th Quad (1987)	5th Quad (1991)	6th Quad (1995)	Total # Interviews	Total w/o Duplicates
ACHE Commissioners Total	9	12	14	11	46	25
less Total Unable To Contact	2	1	0	0	3	2
Total Presumably Contacted	7	11	14	11	43	23
less Total Returned Without Response	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Potential Respondents	7	11	14	11	43	23
less Total Did Not Respond	2	6	7	6	21	13
Total Respondents	5	5	7	5	22	10
Percent Presumably Contacted	77.8%	91.7%	100.0%	100.0%	93.5%	92.0%
Actual Response Rate	71.4%	45.5%	50.0%	45.5%	51.2%	43.5%
Usable Response Rate	71.4%	45.5%	50.0%	45.5%	51.2%	43.5%
ACHE Staff Members Total	9	9	10	14	42	23
less Total Unable To Contact	3	3	0	0	6	6
Total Presumably Contacted	6	6	10	14	36	17
less Total Returned Without Response	1	1	0	0	2	1
Total Potential Respondents	5	5	10	14	34	16
less Total Did Not Respond	2	2	4	6	14	7
Total Respondents	3	3	6	8	20	9
Percent Presumably Contacted	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%	85.7%	73.9%
Actual Response Rate	66.7%	66.7%	60.0%	57.1%	61.1%	58.8%
Usable Response Rate	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	57.1%	58.8%	56.3%

- Total Presumably Contacted - This gives the remainder after subtracting total unable to contact.
- Less Total Returned without Response - This gives the number from those presumably contacted that returned their surveys to the researcher uncompleted. In virtually all cases, these were individuals who for one reason or another felt unqualified or unable to complete the survey.
- Total Potential Respondents - This gives the remainder after subtracting total unable to contact.
- Less Total Did Not Respond - Self-explanatory. All individuals for whom the researcher had (to the best of his knowledge) valid addresses were given at least two separate mailings of the survey. However, it is still possible that some of these individuals never received the survey.
- Total Respondents - Self-explanatory.
- Percent Presumably Contacted - Total Presumably Contacted divided by Total.
- Actual Response Rate - Total Respondents plus Total Returned without Response divided by Total Presumably Contacted.
- Usable Response Rate - Total Respondents divided by Total Potential Respondents.

Discussion of Response Rates

The reader will note that the 2-year response rate is very good. The other response rates are less than one would hope for;

however, there is a logical explanation for at least one of the lower percentages. In the case of the 4-year group, the lowest usable response rate by far is in the "oldest" group (those involved in the 3rd QE). If they were factored out, the overall actual and usable response rates would be at or over 60%. Also note that each group has stronger rates in the "Total # Interviews" column than in the "Total without Duplicates" column, indicating that those who had been interviewed during more than one QE were overall more likely to respond to the survey. In each group, the actual and usable responses account for over fifty percent of the available QE experience among ACHE commissioners and staff and institution faculty and administrators, as measured by number of QE participations among those the researcher was presumably able to contact. One should also note that some of these individuals might in fact have not been contacted. If this is true, this would make the actual and usable response rates even higher. The researcher was unable to identify any specific biases among potential participants that would have negatively affected these response rates.

Quantitative Analysis of Survey Data

Tables 7 through 17 present an initial quantitative analysis of the survey results. For each question, the researcher has listed the individual groups, overall response, and any combination groupings for which there are statistically significant comparisons in order by ascending means. Of course, since the survey instrument used a 1 for

Table 7: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 1
(Regarding Survey Question #1)

To what degree has the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of the following areas?

1. Master planning and policy issues (state-wide long-range planning; study, analysis, and evaluation of present and future higher education needs):

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Commissioners	2.700	1.418	10
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	2.789	1.436	19
ACHE Staff	2.889	1.449	9
All except 2-year Administrators	3.028	1.404	36
4-year Administrators	3.294	1.318	17
All Respondents	3.412	1.430	51
2-year Administrators	4.333*	1.011	15

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than all other listed subgroups at p =. 0377 or lower for each listed subgroup.

Table 8: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 2
(Regarding Survey Question #2)

To what degree has the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of the following areas?

2. Finance and budget issues:

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

Group	Mean	SD	N
4-year Administrators	3.235	1.113	17
All except 2-year Administrators	3.400	1.151	35
ACHE Commissioners	3.400	1.200	10
All Respondents	3.580	1.150	50
ACHE Staff	3.750	1.090	8
2-year Administrators	4.000*	1.033	15

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than those of 4-year administrators and the combination of all responses except 2-year administrators at p = .09456 or lower.

Table 9: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 3
(Regarding Survey Question #3)

To what degree has the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of the following areas?

3. Issues related to new academic programs and the prevention of unnecessary program duplication:

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

Group	Mean	SD	N
4-year Administrators	3.059	1.162	17
All except 2-year Administrators	3.194	1.265	36
ACHE Staff	3.222	1.474	9
ACHE Commissioners	3.400	1.200	10
All Respondents	3.451	1.318	51
2-year Administrators	4.067*	1.236	15

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than those of 4-year administrators and the combination of all responses except 2-year administrators at $p = .03137$ or lower.

Table 10: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 4
(Regarding Survey Question #4)

To what degree has the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of the following areas?

4. Issues related to new campuses, centers, and other facilities:

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

Group	Mean	SD	N
4-year Administrators	3.059	1.211	17
All except 2-year Administrators	3.278	1.304	36
ACHE Commissioners	3.400	1.200	10
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	3.474	1.352	15
ACHE Staff	3.556	1.449	9
All Respondents	3.627	1.313	51
2-year Administrators	4.467*	0.884	15

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than all other listed subgroups at p = .08673 for ACHE Staff and p = .02311 or lower for every other listed subgroup.

Table 11: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 5
(Regarding Survey Question #5)

To what degree has the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of the following areas?

5. Issues related to the development of a State University and College Information System to track the activities and performance of institutions:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Staff	2.444*	1.165	9
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	2.556*	1.066	18
ACHE Commissioners	2.667*	0.943	9
All Respondents	3.240	1.305	50
4-year Administrators	3.471*	1.194	17
4-year and 2-year Administrators	3.625*	1.269	32
2-year Administrators	3.800*	1.327	15

The responses of each ACHE subgroup were significantly higher than those of the combined group 4-year and 2-year administrators at p = .04662 or lower. Likewise, the responses of each administrator subgroup were significantly lower than those of the combined group of ACHE commissioners and staff at p = .02638 or lower. Most significantly, the difference in responses between the combined group of ACHE commissioners and staff and the combined group of 4-year and 2-year administrators is significant at p = .00473.

Table 12: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 6
(Regarding the 1st Quadrennial Evaluation)

8. The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

1st Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1975):

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Staff	1.500	0.500	4
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	2.250	1.259	8
All except 2-year Administrators	2.455	1.233	11
ACHE Commissioners	2.500	1.658	4
4-year Administrators	3.000	0.816	3
All Respondents	3.250	1.561	16
2-year Administrators	5.000*	0.000	5

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than all other listed subgroups at p =. 02070 or lower for each listed subgroup.

Table 13: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 7
(Regarding the 2nd Quadrennial Evaluation)

8. The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

2nd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1979):

1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Commissioners	2.200	1.600	5
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	2.333	1.247	9
ACHE Staff	2.500	0.500	4
All except 2-year Administrators	2.615	1.211	13
4-year Administrators	3.250	0.829	4
All Respondents	3.300	1.418	20
2-year Administrators	4.571*	0.728	7

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than all other listed subgroups at p =. 03454 or lower for each listed subgroup.

Table 14: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 8
(Regarding the 3rd Quadrennial Evaluation)

8. The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

3rd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1983):

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Staff	2.500	0.500	4
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	2.556	1.165	9
ACHE Commissioners	2.600	1.497	5
All except 2-year Administrators	2.938	1.248	16
4-year Administrators	3.429	1.178	7
All Respondents	3.478	1.379	23
2-year Administrators	4.714*	0.700	7

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than all other listed subgroups at p = .04041 or lower for each listed subgroup.

Table 15: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 9
(Regarding the 4th Quadrennial Evaluation)

8. The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

4th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1987):

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Staff	2.800	0.748	5
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	3.125	0.927	8
All except 2-year Administrators	3.294	0.956	17
4-year Administrators	3.444	0.956	9
ACHE Commissioners	3.667	0.943	3
All Respondents	3.692	1.029	26
2-year Administrators	4.444*	0.685	9

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than those of 4-year administrators, ACHE staff, the combined group of ACHE commissioners and staff, and the combination of all responses except 2-year administrators at $p = .02863$ or lower for each subgroup.

Table 16: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 10
(Regarding the 5th Quadrennial Evaluation)

8. The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

5th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1991):

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Staff	3.333	1.106	6
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	3.400	1.114	10
All except 2-year Administrators	3.476	1.006	21
ACHE Commissioners	3.500	1.118	4
4-year Administrators	3.545	0.891	11
All Respondents	3.806	1.060	31
2-year Administrators	4.500*	0.806	10

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than those of 4-year administrators, ACHE staff, the combination of ACHE commissioners and staff, and the combination of all responses except 2-year administrators at p = .03929 or lower for each subgroup.

Table 17: Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results - Part 11
(Regarding the 6th Quadrennial Evaluation)

8. The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:

High degree Moderate degree Low degree No opinion or No basis to judge

6th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1995):

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Group	Mean	SD	N
ACHE Staff	2.571	1.591	7
ACHE Commissioners and Staff	2.727	1.601	11
All except 2-year Administrators	2.870	1.329	23
4-year Administrators	3.000	1.000	12
ACHE Commissioners	3.000	1.581	4
All Respondents	3.324	1.408	34
2-year Administrators	4.273*	1.052	11

* The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than those of 4-year administrators, ACHE staff, the combination of ACHE commissioners and staff, and the combination of all responses except 2-year administrators at p = .02033 or lower for each subgroup.

high degree to 5 for low degree scale, lower means correspond to higher contributions or benefits as seen by the various groups. The researcher started by using t tests for all individual groups, and continued with any combinations that showed significance without contradicting the significances of the individual comparisons.

The responses of 2-year administrators were significantly lower than at least some other groups (and, in many cases, most or all of the other groups) on every response. In fact, while the combination of all other groups seems to indicate that the QE process has made at least moderate contributions to the areas in question, the consistently low responses of the 2-year group tend to drag these numbers down in the overall average. A key focus of the remainder of this study was to explore evidence that might explain why members of the 2-year sector have such relatively negative opinions concerning the contributions and benefits of the ACHE QE process compared to their 4-year counterparts and members of ACHE and the ACHE professional staff.

One notable exception to the unique impact of the 2-year responses is on Question 5 dealing with the development of a State University and College Information System. On this question, the significant division in opinion is between the combined ACHE Commissioners and Staff (who believe that the QE process has contributed to a moderately high degree) and the combined 4-year and 2-year administrators (who believe that the QE process has only contributed to a moderately low degree). In addition, as the reader will see below in more detail, the 4-year administrators stand alone

among the four groups in disagreeing that this area is the one of greatest contribution among the five.

While some might argue that the number of responses (especially in the early cases) is too low for significance, the responses concerning the QEs themselves indicate an interesting trend. Whether controlling for the 2-year responses or not, the overall responses indicate that the 1st QE is viewed very favorably and that each successive QE (with the exception of the 6th) is viewed as having been successively less beneficial than the last. This is also true for each group and statistically significant combination grouping, with the exception of the 2-year group (which, strangely enough, has the QEs starting at rock bottom and getting only slightly better!). The responses concerning the 6th QE appear to indicate that it is viewed as having been more beneficial than several of the previous evaluations, receiving responses that compare favorably with the 1st and 2nd evaluations and are better than each of the others. This consensus of opinion appears quite consistent with the fact that the 2nd and 6th evaluations are the only ones of the six that have immediately preceded legislative changes related to ACHE that relate directly to the recommendations of previous QE committees.

Following are more specific explanations concerning the survey's quantitative results:

Responses Concerning Contributions to ACHE's Assigned Roles

The front page of the survey asked respondents to indicate to what degree the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process had contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of five areas. In terms of overall average responses, the survey respondents "ranked" the contribution of the process to each of these areas as shown below. The rankings are shown in list form for all respondents, as well as for all subgroups for which statistically significant differences occurred within responses:

All Respondents	Mean	N
Information System issues	3.240	50
Master planning and policy issues	3.412	51
New academic programs/duplication issues	3.451	51
Finance and budget issues	3.580	50
New campus, center, and facility issues	3.627	51

All except 2-year administrators	Mean	N
Information System issues	3.000	35
Master planning and policy issues	3.028	36
New academic programs/duplication issues	3.194	36
New campus, center, and facility issues	3.278	36
Finance and budget issues	3.400	35

2-year administrators	Mean	N
Information System issues	3.800	15
Finance and budget issues	4.000	15
New academic programs/duplication issues	4.067	15
Master planning and policy issues	4.333	15
New campus, center, and facility issues	4.467	15

4-year administrators	Mean	N
New academic programs/duplication issues	3.059	17
New campus, center, and facility issues	3.059	17
Finance and budget issues	3.235	17
Master planning and policy issues	3.294	17
Information System issues	3.471	17

4-year and 2-year administrators	Mean	N
New academic programs/duplication issues	3.532	32
Finance and budget issues	3.594	32
Information System issues	3.625	32
New campus, center, and facility issues	3.719	32
Master planning and policy issues	3.781	32

ACHE Commissioners and Staff	Mean	N
Information System issues	2.556	18
Master planning and policy issues	2.789	19
New academic programs/duplication issues	3.316	19
New campus, center, and facility issues	3.474	19
Finance and budget issues	3.556	18

Issues related to the development of a State University and College Information System to track the activities and performance of institutions.

This received the best overall mean of 3.240 among 50 respondents. However, as mentioned above, there was a significant difference of opinion between the ACHE commissioners and staff, who rated this relatively high (combined mean of 2.556 among 18 respondents) and 4-year and 2-year administrators, who rated it relatively low (combined mean of 3.625 among 32 respondents). With the exception of this area, the only other statistically significant differences of opinion were between 2-year administrators and one or more other listed subgroups.

Master planning and policy issues (state-wide long-range planning; study, analysis, and evaluation of present and future higher education needs).

This received the next best overall mean of 3.412 among 51 respondents. The combined grouping of all groups except 2-year administrators gave it a mean of 3.028 among 36 respondents, agreeing that it was the best effected of the four remaining areas. However, 2-year administrators gave it a mean of 4.333 among 15 respondents, indicating that they considered this the second worst effected of the five areas after that of "Issues related to new campuses, centers, and other facilities" (see below).

Issues related to new academic programs and the prevention of unnecessary program duplication.

This received the next best overall mean of 3.451 among 51 respondents. The combined grouping of all groups except 2-year administrators gave this area a mean of 3.194 among 36 respondents, consistent with the relative ranking of the overall group. However, 2-year administrators gave it a mean of 4.067 among 15 respondents.

Finance and budget issues.

This received the second worst overall mean of 3.580 among 50 respondents. The combined grouping of all groups except 2-year

administrators gave it a mean of 3.400 among 35 respondents, while 2-year administrators gave it a mean of 4.000 among 15 respondents, indicating that they viewed this as the second most favorably affected area after the one relating to the information system mentioned above.

Issues related to new campuses, centers, and other facilities.

This received the worst overall mean of 3.627 among 51 respondents. The combined grouping of all groups except 2-year administrators gave this area a mean of 3.278 among 36 respondents, while 2-year administrators gave it a mean of 4.467 among 15 respondents, indicating they believe this was the area of lowest contribution by the quadrennial evaluation process among the five areas considered.

The proliferation of higher education facilities, particularly at the 2-year level, within Alabama has been a point of pride for some and contention for others there for many years. Governor George Wallace supported the building of many 2-year schools with the idea of bringing higher education within commuting distance of every Alabama citizen (and arguably as well for the political benefits of those involved). However, critics of the proliferation of campuses have frequently joked that Alabama has been moving rapidly towards bringing higher education within walking distance of every Alabama citizen. As the reader will see in later discussions during this study, many individuals believe that the 2-year sector has been able

to operate with relative impunity in terms of governmental oversight, which perhaps helps to explain why the 2-year sector gave this area its worst ranking among ACHE's role areas.

Summary of responses concerning ACHE role areas.

Looking at the data in the list fashion shown above, we can make one further observation. With the exception of the 4-year administrators, all other groups appear to believe that the quadrennial evaluation process' greatest impact has been its contribution to ACHE's ability and willingness to address the State University and College Information System issue. However, it appears that the 4-year administrators believe that the quadrennial evaluation process has had less of an impact in this area than in any of the other four areas.

Responses Concerning the First Six Quadrennial Evaluations

As mentioned before, survey respondents as a whole indicated that the 1st, 2nd, and 6th Quadrennial Evaluations (Reports dated 1975, 1979, and 1995 respectively) were (in order) of greatest benefit to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. Once again, the responses of 2-year administrators were significantly less favorable overall than from other groups. Therefore, for comparison purposes, the following lists show the rank orderings of the means for all respondents, as

well as for both 2-year administrators and the combined grouping of all groups except 2-year administrators.

All respondents	Mean	N
1st Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1975)	3.250	16
2nd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1979)	3.300	20
6th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1995)	3.324	34
3rd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1983)	3.478	23
4th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1987)	3.692	26
5th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1991)	3.806	31

All except 2-year Administrators	Mean	N
1st Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1975)	2.455	11
2nd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1979)	2.615	13
6th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1995)	2.870	23
3rd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1983)	2.938	16
4th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1987)	3.294	17
5th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1991)	3.476	21

2-year Administrators	Mean	N
6th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1995)	4.273	11
4th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1987)	4.444	9
5th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1991)	4.500	10
2nd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1979)	4.571	7
3rd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1983)	4.714	7
1st Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1975)	5.000	5

A key focus of the remainder of this study was to explore evidence that might confirm or refute the assessment of the 1st, 2nd, and 6th evaluations as being of greater benefit to the ACHE QE process, and/or that might explain why these particular evaluations might in fact have been more beneficial than the others.

The responses of all groups except 2-year administrators were consistent with the overall responses, while 2-year administrators who responded generally appear to believe that the earlier evaluations were of virtually no benefit but that the more recent evaluations have become at least nominally beneficial.

The survey asked respondents to "provide responses only for those you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based on your knowledge of each one." Not surprisingly, there were increasingly more responses concerning the more recent surveys, as more individuals would have been more likely to have greater knowledge of more recent surveys, all other things being equal. What is perhaps surprising, however, is the fact that most individuals who had an opinion rated the 1st and 2nd Quadrennial Evaluations most favorably, despite the fact that they are the furthest removed from recent memory and that the researcher had no reliable information available concerning whether any of these individuals actually participated in either of these evaluations (although in all likelihood some of them did).

Qualitative Analysis of Survey Data

As one could expect, there were a wide range of responses from all groups, with those from the faculty and administrators of 2-year institutions generally less positive. Below is an analysis of the types of responses received for each question arranged by topic, identifying category of individual for each quoted comment.

Responses to Question #6 (Concerning Greatest Benefits of QE Process)

Question #6 asked individuals to "Please identify and describe the greatest benefit(s) that you believe the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process has provided to the Commission and/or to Alabama higher education.

External nature of the assessment.

Several individuals made comments that indicated they believed the external nature of the assessment was the greatest benefit the quadrennial evaluation process provided, or at least an element of that benefit:

- The greatest benefit of the quadrennial evaluation process is that it provides those outside of ACHE an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns about higher education in Alabama in general and the commission and its work in particular. Evaluation is a healthy process. (4-year)
- "The external to the state assessment." (4-year)
- The evaluation provides fresh perspectives on the issues from outside professionals who have no "axe to grind." Often, the

evaluation identifies important issues that those on the "inside" miss because of a preoccupation with other pressing concerns. Perhaps the greatest benefit is the provision of a basis for undertaking initiatives which might not be too popular. (ACHE Staff)

- "The evaluation provides benchmarks from a regional and national perspective. Politics prevent ACHE from reaching the benchmarks." (4-year)
- "Periodic outside review by 'experts.'" (4-year)
- "It provides the Commission with a third party evaluation and makes suggestions which the Commission can use with the Governor and the legislature. This strengthened ACHE's argument for new authority in the 95-96 legislature." (ACHE Staff)

Most recent evaluation.

Two individuals made specific positive comments concerning the most recent evaluation (that of the 6th quadrennial evaluation committee):

- "The ten recommendations of the "Action Agenda for the Commission" [provided by the 6th QE committee] are the greatest benefit provided to the Commission by the evaluation process." (4-year)
- "It is my observation that ACHE has not paid attention to what I consider to be a very significant review. [Researcher's note: This respondent referred to the 6th QE as an "outstanding

report"] Do not know if new commissioners have been given report, etc." (2-year)

Focus on ACHE mission.

Many of the comments related to the value of the QE process in helping ACHE to remain focused on its primary mission, vision and/or goals; identified, as one would expect, differently by different respondents:

- "The quadrennial evaluation process has enabled ACHE to remain focused on its primary mission." (4-year)
- "The opportunity to step back and reflect upon its purposes." (4-year)
- "The greatest benefit has been to help shape ACHE and its goals. There has been less benefit to Alabama higher education because of ACHE's reluctance to carry out its goals." (4-year)
- "Causes the staff and commission to review and reflect on ACHE's mission and its vision for higher education in Alabama." (ACHE Staff)
- "Process improvements [and] Ongoing focus on its mission." (ACHE Commissioner)
- "Objective review of the Commission's work -- during my tenure (1979-88) the recommendations of the review board were helpful in goal setting for the coming year." (ACHE Commissioner)

Contribution to accountability.

Several comments focused on the contribution of the QE process to a sense of accountability:

- "Some objective measure of accountability in an otherwise politicized environment." (4-year)
- "It is at best a very minor checkpoint that probably slightly intensifies a sense of accountability." (4-year)
- "Accountability." (ACHE Commissioner)

Value to constituencies and public.

The following comments focused on the value of the report to various constituencies and/or to the public in general, as well as (in some cases) perceived limitations to the realization of that value:

- "Value, in my opinion, limited to Commission self-review. Not much evidence of any impact on other potential constituents." (4-year)
- "Opportunity to clarify legislature's thoughts on role of ACHE." (2-year)
- "Feedback to commission staff and commissioners (if they take the to read it). [sic] Some positive information reaches the citizens of the state by way of the news media." (2-year)

- "It has served as an orientation guide for Commission members who are lay citizens appointed to serve on this coordinating board." (ACHE Staff)
- "It keeps the issues in front of the public and principle [sic] stakeholders." (ACHE Staff)
- "A positive image in the public eye." (ACHE Staff)
- "The evaluation usually points up shortcomings in the legislation creating ACHE, which information is given to the Alabama legislature." (ACHE Commissioner)
- "Attention of public, press, and legislature to ACHE and its role." (ACHE Commissioner)

- Relation to specific ACHE roles or QE recommendations.

Relatively few of the positive comments directly related to ACHE's specific roles and/or to specific recommendations of any of the QE committees. Those that did include the following:

- "In the last twelve years or so, it is the only time the Commission has been reminded of the need for a long-range focus. It is unfortunate that it does not last due to the political pressure on ACHE and the incompetence of the ACHE senior staff." (4-year)
- "Strategic planning." (4-year)
- "Legislative effort to remove executive secretary from Senate confirmation was successful." (2-year)

- "To call attention to unnecessary duplication of courses and institutions. This is Alabama's major problem." (ACHE Commissioner)
- "Studying present and future of higher education in state." (ACHE Commissioner)
- "Limitations on new programs and elimination of duplicate programs." (Legislator)

Political problems.

Some of the negative comments in this area focused on the political problems with advancing Alabama higher education:

- "While ACHE has performed a valuable role in some areas for coordination in Alabama higher education, the current situation is so politicized in the state that ACHE's best efforts are not paying major dividends." (4-year)
- "Not very much, it is too political. If politics was at a minimum [sic], ACHE would be quite useful." (2-year)
- "Identifying many continuing problems that are seldom corrected. To [sic] many legislators work for the colleges." (ACHE Commissioner)
- "Help them see the broad, complex problem in Alabama. With our diverse and jealous system of institutions it is difficult to work and evaluate without force." (Legislator)

Relationships between ACHE and 2-year sector.

Other negative comments dealt specifically with the relationships between ACHE and the 2-year college sector:

- "To point out the Commission's complete lack of understanding of the mission of two-year colleges and its micromanaging obsession with off-campus instruction." (2-year)
- "The best solution is to dissolve ACHE, channel these funds into K-12 and go to a Board of Regents." (2-year)
- "Makes the assumption there were benefits. I'm not sure I agree that there are benefits, other than fulfilling a statutory mandate. Actually, I think the last process was a hinderance. [sic] The team accepted some "judgments" from the 2-yr sector that were totally false & never gave staff a full opportunity to respond." (ACHE Staff)

Lack of benefits or benefits not worth the costs.

Several individuals obviously believed, based on their comments below, that the QE process has either yielded no benefits whatsoever or that the benefits have not been worth the costs:

- "The benefits are not obvious." (4-year)
- "This is a difficult question to answer, however, I have been associated with ACHE since its inception & cannot think of any major benefits of this report." (4-year)

- "It was my observation that resources that could have been used for operations were directed to evaluation." (4-year) [Note: This comment was made in a letter response from an individual who declined to complete the survey.]
- "None that I can see." (2-year)
- "No benefit." (2-year)
- "The benefits have been minimal. Those policies/activities which can be linked to the QE recommendations would (in most cases) have been initiated without the QE." (ACHE Staff)
- "Not particularly helpful." (ACHE Commissioner)

Responses to Question #7 (Concerning Changes Needed to QE Process)

Question #7 asked respondents to "Please identify and describe the change(s) that you believe are most needed to the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process in order to improve its value to the Commission and to Alabama higher education."

QE committees (composition, selection, and/or involvement of others in process).

Several respondents indicated that the process could be improved by changing the composition of the QE committees, the manner in which they are selected, and/or the individuals involved in the process in various ways, while at least one individual believed that none of this was necessary:

- "I believe that the process could be improved by adding one or two representatives from the two-year and four-year institutions NOT presidents but the staff "mules" who work with ACHE and its staff on a daily basis. Performance of the senior staff should be examined." (4-year)
- "It should include former university presidents such as I!" (4-year)
- "A much stronger evaluation that involves heavily persons most closely associated w/ACHE." (4-year)
- "Panel would have to be appointed by either the Governor or Legislature." (4-year)
- "The evaluation process should include the Governor's Office and the chairs of legislative committees that impact funding for higher education in Alabama." (ACHE Staff)
- "I believe it is working well with four educators and two lay people." (ACHE Staff) [Note: This was apparently a reference to the composition of the 6th QE committee.]
- "Add 2 - 4 yr. and 2 - 2 yr. people to the evaluation committee - these people to come from outside Alabama." (ACHE Commissioner)

Scope of evaluations.

Several other respondents indicated that the best improvement of the process would come from changing or better enforcing the scope

of the evaluations themselves. In most cases this included a call for either greater or different emphasis on the 2-year sector:

- "Process needs to evaluate ACHE's relationship with community colleges, not just 4-yr institutions." (2-year)
- "Auburn University, the 3 University of Alabama entities, and the State Board." (2-year)
- "Extend the evaluation to include the State Board of Education - and the university boards." (ACHE Staff)
- "Evaluation needs to look at two year system in more detail." (ACHE Commissioner)
- Emphasis needs to focus on the Commission's coordinating role, its role as an advocate for higher education in the state, and on the fact that it is not a governing body for institutions - and must be mindful of SACS/COC accrediting criteria. (2-year)
- "Probably evaluate more often, say every two or three years until Alabama becomes more stable in their thinking. It is heavy within the political arena now." (Legislator)

Publicity.

Other respondents emphasized the importance of giving the evaluations themselves greater publicity:

- "Improve the publication of the results to the general public." (4-year)
- "If the evaluation is to be of value then it must be made available to the media & published statewide." (4-year)

- "ACHE must have some reasonable requirement to give a progress report. Report of the commission evaluation system should be given to other agencies/institutions. Little accountability here!" (2-year)
- "A more effective way of communicating results to the Governor, Legislature, and public." (ACHE Commissioner)
- "The public needs more information on the results of the evaluation." (4-year)

Conduct and recommendations of QE and acceptance of recommendations.

The following comments involved the issue of the conduct of the quadrennial evaluations themselves as well as their recommendations and their acceptance:

- "Need more bold recommendations such as the need to select more highly qualified & less biased members to serve on ACHE." (4-year)
- "Acceptance by the Governor & legislature of the report & support of its recommendations since those are major groups to which ACHE currently responds/reacts." (4-year)
- "More time needs to be devoted to the process - the last evaluation appeared to have been an abridged version!" (ACHE Staff) [Researcher's note: The 6th QE was in fact published in both a full version and an executive summary, which might be the "abridged version" to which this respondent was referring.]

- I've always had some reservations concerning the level of dependence on interviews during the evaluation process. The political climate or "whose ox has most recently been gored" seems to color the situation quite a bit. However, a better approach does not readily come to mind. I think considerable emphasis should be placed on how ACHE responded to the recommendations of the previous evaluation. (ACHE Staff)
- "They need to approach with an open mind … which they don't always do." (ACHE Commissioner)

Political climate.

Several respondents indicated that the political climate would have to improve in order for the QE process to have greater value:

- "Findings of the quadrennial evaluation process could have a more positive influence on ACHE's performance if the political environment in Alabama was significantly more visionary." (4-year)
- "The evaluation process will not be very beneficial until ACHE role is politically solidified." (4-year)
- "Mimumize politics. [sic] ACHE is view as an enemy to high education. [sic] Especially the HBCU's." (2-year)
- "I can think of no changes that would improve the process in any meaningful way. With the current political climate in Alabama, planning for higher education is difficult. Commission action is, of necessity, usually reactive rather than proactive." (ACHE Staff)
- In my opinion, the process will never be helpful. Given that there is no commonly accepted mission/purpose of ACHE among the stakeholders & given the highly politicized environment of

higher education in this state, how can the agency be fairly evaluated? What one sector views as a positive, proactive action, another sector views as intrusive, bureaucratic meddling. Given that no one agrees on what we should be doing, how can there be a valid assessment of what we are doing. More often than not, the process gives those w/ an ax to grind a forum, & out-of-state consultants seem to listen with overly sympathetic ears. The staff is already trying to cope w/ fewer resources & staff & more responsibilities … and the burden of assuming this responsibility every four years does not seem worth the cost or effort. Maybe there is a good reason no other state in the country does this. (ACHE Staff)

Changes by ACHE and/or other entities.

While the question specifically asked about changes needed to the ACHE QE process, three individuals made comments instead about changes that ACHE and/or other entities needed to make:

- "Consolidation of programs - elimination of duplication - control of off-campus programs. ACHE's job is impossible if 2 year institutions are not under their purview." (4-year)
- "ACHE needs to accept the advocacy for higher education obligation created in its statutory charge and be less of an oversight authority." (4-year)
- Two year colleges should stop saying we are constitutional and we really do not have to follow ACHE policies. Also, ACHE's staff and commissioners need to apply their policies fair and equal [sic] to all segments of higher education in Alabama. They have not been fair to some colleges because of the lobby of other colleges. ACHE is supposed to be apolitical. Commissioners can serve only one time in a life time. [sic] Why don't they just do what is best for the poorest state in this nation? (2-year)
- "Extend supervisory authority over institutions of higher learning to implement evaluation process." (Legislator)

No changes needed or discontinue QE process or ACHE.

Finally, several individuals indicated either that the process was good in its present form or that it (or ACHE itself) needed to be done away with entirely:

- "The process is good in its present form." (4-year)
- "No changes are needed." (4-year)
- "See above." [Answer to Question #6: The best solution is to dissolve ACHE, channel these funds into K-12 and go to a Board of Regents.] (2-year)
- "Eliminate." (2-year) [No indication concerning whether the reference is to the QE process or to ACHE itself.]
- "Abolish ACHE entirely." (2-year)
- "I am not sure there are changes that could be made to the evaluation process to improve its value to the Commission and to Alabama higher education." (ACHE Staff)

Consistency of Survey Results with Other Evidence

Other evidence concerning the contributions and benefits of the quadrennial evaluation process will be presented in the following two chapters with a view towards determining whether and to what degree the survey results reflected above are consistent with that evidence. In addition, these chapters will include relevant comments from selected follow-up interviews with key individuals to focus on the following two questions:

- Why has the 2-year sector had such a low representation in the QE process (especially during the 4th and 5th evaluations) relative to the 4-year sector, and how has that (and perhaps other real or apparent disparities) affected their view of the QE process?
- Why do 4-year administrators have such a significant difference of opinion from all other groups concerning the contribution of the QE process to the development of a State University and College Information System?

The final chapter of this study will contain the researcher's conclusion concerning whether the QE process should continue, as well as recommendations concerning how the process might be improved, based upon his analysis of the above survey results and other evidence presented in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION OF OTHER EVIDENCE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the other evidence that the researcher considered (besides the survey results presented in Chapter IV) in assessing the effectiveness and benefits of the quadrennial evaluation (QE) process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). These include the comparing and contrasting of certain aspects of the six QE reports themselves, legislation related to ACHE QE recommendations, documents from the ACHE staff addressing the implementation or non-implementation of QE committee recommendations, media articles dealing with the ACHE QE process and/or other relevant aspects of ACHE and/or Alabama higher education, and clarifications and additional information gained from selected follow-up interviews. The following chapter (Chapter VI) will provide a discussion of this evidence as it relates to ACHE's roles in various areas and to other significant areas in which one or more of the QE committees have made recommendations.

Comparison and Contrast of the First Six ACHE Quadrennial Evaluation Reports

When the researcher asked one individual during a follow-up interview whether the QE process should continue in its present form, change in one or more ways, or be discontinued, the individual replied initially by indicating that a "process" did not in fact exist. In one very real sense, that individual is correct. The statutory requirement for the quadrennial evaluation, which has not changed substantially since its inception, reads as follows:

> Two years after the establishment of the commission and during the last year of each gubernatorial term, the commission shall appoint a committee of at least three consultants who are not associated with higher education in this state to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the commission and to recommend changes as needed. A report prepared by the committee shall be submitted to the Governor, the Legislature, the presidents and governing boards of the public institutions of higher education of this state and the public. (Code of Alabama Section 16-5-12)

As this interviewee correctly pointed out, the statute mandates an evaluation every four years, but is very open in the matter of process. In theory, for example, the commission could appoint three consultants who are not associated with higher education at all. Also, again in theory, the consultants appointed could provide a report based on as minimal an evaluation as they chose to perform, as there are no specified requirements for surveys, interviews, review of documents, etc. Finally, there is no set process or procedure concerning the format or nature of the recommendations or how they are to be communicated to the various constituencies.

Of course, as a practical matter, despite the differences in the individual committees and reports, a quadrennial evaluation process has in fact emerged for ACHE as can be seen in the similarities of procedures for the various QE committees. While not technically required to do so, ACHE has been diligent in securing experienced higher education consultants to serve on the QE committees. Likewise, while not specified in the statute, ACHE has from time to time appointed one or more additional consultants who are civic, business, or media leaders within Alabama to serve on the QE committees. (Interestingly, ACHE did this for the 1st, 2nd, 6th and 7th evaluations, but not for the 3rd through 5th evaluations.) ACHE has also practiced, over time, fairly standard procedures for selecting and supporting the QE committees, and generally facilitated the use of some form of survey instrument or written input followed by some types of interviews and/or focus group meetings to gather information. Also, as will be seen more clearly during the discussion in the following chapter, each of the QE committees has obviously been diligent in reviewing and considering the results of the previous QE reports, although they have again never technically been under any obligation to do so.

While not specified in law, ACHE has provided each of the selected QE committees with a formal "Charge to the Committee" that has provided each committee with somewhat more detailed guidance concerning how it should go about performing the evaluation. The charge to the 6th committee appears below; the earlier committees received similar charges:

The Sixth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee is charged by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to conduct a study and prepare a report in accordance with Section 12 of the Commission's statute. In conducting the study, the Evaluation Committee will solicit and analyze data and conduct interviews with Commission members, Commission staff, and key representatives of the State and the State's higher education community. Meetings for the purpose of these interviews will be held in Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, and Mobile.

The proceedings of the Evaluation Committee are independent of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Commission staff.

For the Committee's consideration:

a. If you wish to suggest a different role for the Commission, it is important to specify what the role is and what type of action is necessary to accomplish it.
b. Please identify new areas of concern based on your interviews and indicate their importance to the state.

(Taken from internal ACHE memorandum.)

Table 18 shows a comparison of the seven quadrennial evaluations that have occurred to date in the following categories:

- Numbers of in-state leaders and higher education professionals who served as members of each committee.
- Length (in pages) of each report and its appendices.
- Numbers on individuals in each of several categories who provided input to the committee through written instruments and/or interviews/focus groups.

This comparison shows several interesting occurrences over time:

Table 18: Comparison of First Seven ACHE Quadrennial Evaluations

Quadrennial Evaluation	State Leaders	Higher Education Professionals	Length of Report	Length of Appendices	Numbers of Individuals Interviewed and/or Surveyed					
					Governor/ Legislature	4-year Sector	2-year Sector	ACHE Commissioners	ACHE Staff	Others
1st (1975)	4 (incl chair)	3	46 pages[1]	33 pages	N/A[2]					
2nd (1979)	5 (incl chair)	4 (incl vice chair)	42 pages	27 pages[3]	N/A[2]					
3rd (1983)	0	4	30 pages	21 pages	17	26	18	9	8	9
4th (1987)	0	4	27 pages	27 pages	18	20	7	12	9	14
5th (1991)	0	3	29 pages	15 pages	6*	19	7	12	11	11
6th (1995)	2	4 (incl chair)	32 pages[4]	35 pages	4*	15	12	10	12	14
7th (1999)	1	3 (incl chair)	13 pages	27 pages	3*	31	17	8	12	18

[1] The 1st QE report included 20 pages of main text, plus another 26 pages of material before the appendices, including four pages concerning two-year institution relationships.

[2] The 1st and 2nd reports contain no information concerning how many individuals in each category were interviewed or surveyed.

[3] Appendix G of the 2nd QE report is a five-page comment on relations between ACHE and two-year institutions.

[4] Plus 8 pages of tables within the main report.

* The 5th, 6th, and 7th QE committees interviewed 3, 6, and 4 additional individuals (respectively) from the Governor's office, Legislative Fiscal Office, and/or State Finance Office in addition to the number of legislators indicated.

NOTE: Numbers of individuals interviewed and/or surveyed will not always equal the total number for each QE, as individuals are counted multiple times if they hold current and/or former status in multiple categories.

Differences in Composition of the Committees

The 1st and 2nd QE committees consisted of majorities of Alabama civic, business, or media leaders, each with a smaller number of higher education professionals from other states. In both cases, one of the Alabama committee members served as chair of the committee. The 3rd through 5th committees consisted exclusively of higher education professionals from outside Alabama; with no in-state lay leaders. The two most recent evaluations (6th and 7th) consisted of majorities of higher education professionals from outside Alabama, each with a smaller number of Alabama civic, business, or media leaders. In both of these cases, one of the higher education professionals served as chair of the committee.

Another interesting component of the compositions of the various committees concerns the backgrounds of the higher education professionals involved with each committee. These are difficult to ascertain in detail, because the committees varied in how much information concerning their members they provided in each of their reports. The 1st QE report has biographical sketches that provided only current employment status and degrees received (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 89), while the 2nd through 4th QE reports provided relatively detailed information concerning each of the committee members (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 56-60; Norton et al., 1983, pp. 26-30; Harcleroad et al., 1987, pp. 30-36). The 5th and 6th QE reports only identified the current employment status (and in some cases emeritus

positions) of the committee members (Folger et al., 1991, letter of transmittal; Bogue et al., 1995, p. 43).

However, despite the limitations in detail of information provided concerning the 1st, 5th, and 6th QE committees; one can make some potentially valuable observations concerning the compositions of these committees. As one can see by the vita (Blackburn et al., 1979, p. 56) and as was confirmed by a member of the ACHE staff, Dr. Louis Bender, who served on the 2nd QE committee, had a significant background and interest in two-year sector issues. However, from the 3rd through the 5th QE committees (which, as the reader will recall, were also the ones staffed solely by higher education professionals), there do not appear to be any individuals with a specific background and interest in two-year sector issues as compared with higher education in general. However, the 6th and 7th QE committees each included (for the first two times in the history of the QE process) an individual who was currently serving as president of a two-year college.

Differences in Length of Reports

Interestingly, for the first six evaluations, the length of the reports seems to be somewhat positively correlated with the survey opinions (in the previous chapter) and other documentary evidence (seen later in this chapter and the following chapter) concerning which of these evaluations were of greater benefit to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. In other words, the longer reports

corresponded to the more beneficial evaluations. For example, the reports of the 1st and 2nd QE committees (which the other evidence identified as the two most effective) were the two longest (in terms of number of pages in the report minus appendices) and were among the three longest when adding the appendices. Likewise, the 6th QE report was the third longest of the six (second longest if including the appendices), corresponding with the survey opinions and documentary evidence that it was the next most beneficial of the six evaluations after the first two. The other three evaluations were significantly shorter both in basic report length and in overall length when including appendices.

Not surprisingly, there also appears to be a close relationship between the numbers of consultants on each committee and the length of the committee reports. The 1st, 2nd, and 6th QE committees (with the longer reports) had seven, nine, and six total members respectively, while the 3rd through 5th QE committees had no more than four members each. Also, the 1st, 2nd, and 6th committees had a combination of higher education professionals and lay leaders, while the 3rd through 5th committees were composed exclusively of higher education professionals.

One could argue from the combination of these circumstances (number and composition of committee members, length of reports, and evidence concerning effectiveness of reports) that the use of larger committees composed of both higher education professionals and lay leaders has contributed both to more thorough and more beneficial evaluations and reports. Of course, this cannot be confirmed

statistically because the numerical rankings from the survey responses are only part of the evidence concerning the benefits of these evaluations.

Differences in Balance of Coverage

Some of the differences in the proportional numbers of certain types of individuals providing data to the various committees (through written responses and/or interviews or focus groups) are quite interesting. These differences exist primarily in two areas: changes in the number of legislators involved, and changes in the balance of involvement between the two-year and four-year sector. Since no reliable records are available concerning input to the 1st and 2nd QE reports, these comparisons must naturally focus on the differences among the five most recent reports (3rd through 7th QE reports).

The 3rd and 4th QE committees received input from 17 and 18 members of the legislature respectively, while the 5th, 6th, and 7th QE committees received input from six, four, and three legislators respectively. (In cases where a governor or lieutenant governor provided input, he was counted as a legislator for purposes of this comparison.) While the 5th through 7th QE committees did receive some additional input from staff members of the Governor's Office, Legislative Fiscal Office, and/or State Finance Office; the reduction in the numbers of legislators providing data between the earlier and later evaluations is still quite apparent.

Based on the prominence of the 2-year sector in Alabama higher education, one could easily argue that QE committees should be at least as interested in the views of 2-year representatives as they are in those of the 4-year sector. However, a review of the number of representatives of each sector from whom QE committees received data reveals that there has always been more input (in terms of numbers of participants) from the 4-year sector, and that this balance has varied widely over time. (In reviewing the numbers below, keep in mind that they may not always "add up" as exactly as one might expect, since the researcher has double counted individuals with experience in both sectors.)

The 3rd QE committee received input from 26 individuals in the 4-year sector and 18 individuals in the 2-year sector, for a 59% to 41% balance between the two sectors. However, the 4th and 5th QE committees received (proportionately by numbers of individuals) more input from the 4-year sector and less from the 2-year sector, as well as input from fewer individuals overall combining the two sectors. Specifically, the 4th QE committee received input from 20 individuals in the 4-year sector and only seven in the 2-year sector, for a 77% to 27% balance between the two (one individual had experience in both), while the 5th QE committee received input from 19 individuals in the 4-year sector and only seven in the 2-year sector, for a 73% to 27% balance between the two.

The 6th QE committee, while receiving specific input from the lowest total number of faculty and administrators from both sectors, apparently struck the best balance of any of the QE committees to

date. Specifically, the 6th QE committee received input from 15 individuals in the 4-year sector and 12 individuals in the 2-year sector, for a 65% to 52% balance between the two (four individuals had experience in both). The 7th QE committee, which used focus groups rather than personal interviews, heard from 31 individuals in the 4-year sector and 17 individuals in the 2-year sector for a 65% to 35% balance between the two.

When considering the differences in balance of coverage identified above, one would be interested in as much information as possible concerning why such differences exist. However, such information is quite limited as a natural consequence of the autonomy of each committee. From the researcher's interviews of members of the ACHE staff and review of documents concerning the support that the ACHE staff has provided to the committees, it appears that the staff has made consistent diligent efforts to support the QE committees' collections of data from as many relevant constituencies as possible. In other words, there is no evidence available to support any assertion that the differences in balance of coverage between the QE committees were based on the actions or inactions of any of the committee members or of any members of the ACHE staff. It appears that each committee was interested in receiving data from as many relevant sources as possible.

During follow-up interviews with the researcher, individuals from the 2-year sector, 4-year sector, and ACHE staff all indicated that the lower proportion of evidence from the 2-year sector, especially during the 4th and 5th evaluations, probably resulted at

least in part from the philosophy of certain senior leaders with the Department of Postsecondary Education and the State Board of Education. According to this theory, there have been fewer individuals from the 2-year sector involved because the chancellor of the Department of Postsecondary Education is viewed (and/or views himself) as speaking for all of the 2-year schools, reducing or eliminating the need for the evaluation committees to hear from other representatives of the 2-year sector. While there is no documentary evidence to support or refute this theory in the case of the 1st and 2nd QE reports, some proponents of the theory hold that the first three evaluations were able to collect significantly more data from representatives of the 2-year sector, and that the philosophy mentioned above significantly reduced the ability of the 4th and 5th QE committees to collect data from the 2-year sector.

In fact, if this was a factor (which the researcher agrees it probably was), the chancellor may have been within his rights to make such an assertion based upon certain language in the Commission's statute (though one could certainly argue that this might not have been beneficial for the QE process). The Commission's statute includes the following provision concerning the relationship between the chancellor of the Department of Postsecondary Education and the Commission:

> The State Board of Education and any successor board or boards which govern the state's public postsecondary institutions, including senior institutions, community colleges, junior colleges, and postsecondary technical institutes or colleges, shall stand in the same relationship to the commission as do university boards of trustees. The chancellor shall stand in

> the same relationship to the commission as do presidents of the universities. (Section 16-5-13(b), Code of Alabama)

One individual from the 2-year sector indicated that a senior official within the 2-year sector had stood up at a meeting sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s and made statements to the 2-year sector individuals present to the effect "Our job is to kill ACHE. I don't want anyone to talk with ACHE. If you're going to do so, raise your hand and resign your position."

One evidence that supports the assertion that more information might have been available from the 2-year sector (as opposed to legislators) comes from the researcher's own efforts to solicit data for the present study. As the reader may recall from the earlier presentation of survey data, the highest response rate of all groups was from the 2-year sector, while legislators did not respond in sufficient number for statistical analysis. This (combined with the relatively negative responses from the 2-year sector) suggests the possibility that the 2-year sector may have been underrepresented based on the philosophy discussed above, while the decrease in legislative input may have arisen simply from a relative lack of interest (or lack of time to participate) on the parts of the legislators themselves.

Review of Legislation Related to ACHE Quadrennial Committee Recommendations

As mentioned earlier, the indication of the 1st, 2nd, and 6th Quadrennial Evaluations as being of greater benefit is consistent with at least one major area of objective evidence available concerning the relative impacts of these evaluations. This area of evidence is that the 2nd and 6th Quadrennial Evaluations preceded Alabama legislative acts that primarily specifically addressed recommendations of the 1st, 2nd, and 6th Quadrennial Evaluations. Specifically, there was legislation passed in 1979 (Act 79-461) that did the following:

- Gave ACHE regulatory authority in review of new academic programs
- Prevented expenditure of state funds for new units/programs of instruction without ACHE approval
- Gave ACHE regulatory authority over new and existing off-campus programs, centers, and branches
- Gave ACHE approval authority over any new unit or program of instruction
- Required ACHE to provide annual rather than biennial reports
- Required ACHE to hold quarterly meetings
- Established ACHE as Alabama's statewide planning agency for higher education
- Increased ACHE membership from nine to twelve members

- Established the Council of Presidents as the major policy advisory group to ACHE

This legislative action was directly related to nine recommendations from the 1st Quadrennial Evaluation (McGowin et al., 1975) and four recommendations from the 2nd Quadrennial Evaluation (Blackburn et al., 1979). The researcher will present more specific information concerning these recommendations in the next chapter.

In addition, the Alabama Legislature passed the following acts that dealt with recommendations from the 6th Quadrennial Evaluation (Bogue et al., 1995):

- Section 4(a) of Act 96-663 required Alabama institutions to charge all non-resident undergraduate students a minimum of two times the institution's resident tuition rate. This was in response to a recommendation that dealt with formula funding and budgeting.
- Also in 1996, the Alabama legislature adopted Act 96-509, which required ACHE to develop a statewide unit record database, a specific response to a recommendation from the 6th Quadrennial Evaluation addressing this issue.
- Act 96-487, passed in May 1996, removed the requirement that the Alabama Senate reconfirm the executive director of ACHE every four years, a specific response to a recommendation addressing that issue.
- Also in May 1996, the Alabama legislature passed Act 96-539. This act required that each institution present to ACHE a five-

year master plan for facilities prior to January 1, 1997. Again, this was a specific response to a recommendation addressing this issue.

ACHE Staff Responses to the Recommendations of the ACHE Quadrennial Evaluation Committees

With the arguable exception of the legislation mentioned above, the primary available source of information concerning evidence of implementation or non-implementation of Quadrennial Evaluation report recommendations is a series of reports that have been created and (in some cases) updated by ACHE senior staff just prior to or during each Quadrennial Evaluation after the 1st QE, largely as a basis for study by the upcoming or currently meeting Quadrennial Evaluation committee. On December 1, 1978, then ACHE Executive Director John F. Porter, Jr. (Porter, 1978) provided a "STATUS REPORT To the 1978 Evaluation Committee On the Recommendations of the 1974 Evaluation Committee" in memorandum format. It then appears that the status of this report was updated, and a status report on each subsequent QE was made and subsequently updated, for reference by each subsequent QE committee through the committee for the 5th QE that met in 1990 and reported in 1991. The evidence that the researcher has found for this lies in paper copies of such reports provided to him by the ACHE staff and interviews with members of the ACHE staff.

For the most part, these status reports dealt with the recommendations of the various committees separately, without trying

to relate them by topic. One notable (and valuable) exception was a two-page document titled "SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE AND COMMISSION RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THREE EVALUATION COMMITTEES OF THE ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION." (ACHE, 1990 March 14) This document, which summarized certain recommendations of the first three committees, was apparently originally created on May 30, 1986 (a few months before the 4th QE committee would have met), and was apparently updated in March of 1990. However, while the status of the first three sets of recommendations was updated, the summary of the 4th QE recommendations (ACHE, 1990 August, part 4) was not added to this summary.

This summary of the first three sets of recommendations assessed each recommendation as receiving a positive response, a limited response, or no action from the organization(s) to which the committees directed them. Specifically, the report (as of March 14, 1990) indicated that 24 (80%) of the 30 recommendations of the 1st QE committee had received positive responses, with only three (10%) each receiving limited response or no action. For the 10 recommendations of the 2nd QE, six (60%) received positive action and four (40%) received limited action, while for the seven recommendations of the 3rd QE committee, six (86%) received positive action and only one (14%) received limited action.

Another interesting aspect of this study was its conclusion that the first three QE committees had reached basically the same conclusions and made similar recommendations, with some variations in scope and substance, concerning the following five broad areas:

- The continuation of ACHE with increased authority (recommendations 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 17 of the 1st QE and recommendation 3 of the 2nd QE; 9 total).
- The importance of long range planning and the development of a master plan for statewide higher education (recommendations 19, 20, and 21 of the 1st QE, recommendations 1 and 2 of the 2nd QE, and recommendation 4 of the 3rd QE; 6 total).
- Improved procedures and funding formulas for the review of institutional budgets (recommendation 8 of the 1st QE, recommendation 4 of the 2nd QE, and recommendation 6 of the 3rd QE; three total).
- Changes in the composition and size of the Commission, the appointment of its membership, and frequency of meetings (recommendation 25 of the 1st QE and recommendations 5, 6, and 7 of the 2nd QE; four total).
- The importance of advisory networks and the necessity for the development of improved relationships with all segments of postsecondary education, state agencies, and the executive and legislative branches of government (recommendations 7 and 23 of the 1st QE, recommendations 9 and 10 of the 2nd QE, and recommendations 2 and 3 of the 3rd QE).

This summary activity was one attempt to classify the recommendations of the various committees by single topic, which is very difficult because of how much several of them overlap into multiple areas. As the reader will see in the discussion chapter to

follow, the researcher has attempted his own classification of the recommendations of the first six QE committees that differs slightly from the one used in the summary report described above. The summary by the ACHE staff also wisely points out that, while there is no way to know conclusively the degree to which the QE reports impacted subsequent legislation or other changes, it is safe to assign at least some influence to these reports when subsequent legislation and ordering of Commission priorities fall in substantial line with their recommendations.

Perhaps unfortunately, it appears that the practice of updating status reports from the previous evaluations (other than the most recent) ended between the 5th and 6th QE. Prior to the 6th QE, the Commission published its "Responses to the Recommendations of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Report" in July 1994 (ACHE, 1994). This report dealt in detail with the recommendations of the 5th QE but did not specifically address or give updates to the status of any of the other previous recommendations. Likewise, sometime prior to the meeting of the 7th QE committee in 1998, ACHE released its "Responses to the Recommendations of the Sixth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee" (ACHE, 1998). Again, this report dealt with the recommendations of the 6th QE but did not specifically address or give updates on the status of any other previous recommendations (including those of the 5th QE).

In additional research and follow-up interviews with members of the ACHE staff, the researcher was unable to conclude whether there had been a specific policy decision to make this change. One staff

member indicated that such a decision had been made; however, several other more senior staff members said that they could not remember such a decision having been made, and the researcher was unable to find any documentary evidence concerning such a decision. However, the current senior staff believes that it is much more important to follow-up on the recommendations of an immediate previous committee than to continue to update the status of recommendations made by other previous committees. In fact, most of the ACHE senior staff members that the researcher interviewed were unaware of the existence of the older reports until he asked them questions concerning them.

This issue points out two elements that some might argue are weaknesses or limitations within the QE process. First, while the ACHE staff has provided the reports from all previous evaluations to the members of each subsequent committee, there is no specific requirement or mandate for these committee members to address the continued merits of these recommendations and/or their implementation or non-implementation. Secondly, to the degree that continued concern over the recommendations of previous evaluations (and the impacts of their implementation or non-implementation) is lost, there is less (if any) motivation for the ACHE Staff, ACHE Commissioners, or other concerned parties (Governor, Legislature, etc.) to continue to consider these items regardless of their merits.

However, while these are valid concerns, there is significant circumstantial evidence, based on the continuation of several similar themes throughout the first six evaluations, that the subsequent committee members were quite diligent in continuing to review the

reports of all previous committees in order to ensure that important issues addressed in previous recommendations were readdressed if necessary in subsequent evaluations and recommendations. This is apparent from the sections in the following discussion chapter that provide the researcher's categorizations of the recommendations of the various committees and ACHE's responses thereto.

Media Articles

As one would expect, there are a significant number of media articles from various newspapers within Alabama (as well as occasional articles from sources outside Alabama) that address the ACHE QE process and/or other activities relating to ACHE and Alabama higher education. As one would also expect, the frequency of appearance of such articles varies considerably based on media and public interest, and the availability of such articles varies considerably based upon how far in the past they appeared and in what venues.

Among the media articles that deal with either preparations for or results of the quadrennial evaluations themselves, most of these report information provided from the reports themselves and from ACHE officials, information that the researcher has provided from more primary sources within this study. What is of interest in a review of such articles is the extent to which one can find evidence of media coverage for each of the quadrennial evaluations themselves, as well as the trends that one can notice concerning what aspects of the

evaluations and recommendations these articles emphasize. The following is a summary showing the extent of media coverage for each QE for which the researcher was able to find evidence through thorough searches of appropriate databases and files within the Alabama State Archives and ACHE. As appropriate, some of these articles are discussed in the following chapter as they apply to specific subject areas, either instead of or in addition to their mention in this chapter.

Probably due to the age of whatever articles may have been created, the researcher was unable to find any references to the preparation for or results of the 1st QE, either through database searches or through searches of the Alabama Archives and ACHE. Concerning the 2nd QE, there were two articles that appeared in The Birmingham News (Harris, 1978, June 25; Harris, 1978, November 9) discussing ACHE's preparation for the evaluation, as well as one article covering the results of the evaluation (Harris, 1979, March 8) where committee chairman Blackburn argued that ACHE should change its name because of the bad public image given by calling it by its acronym.

The Birmingham News did, however, run a positive article in 1983 concerning the report of the 3rd QE entitled "ACHE gets good marks from visiting consultants" (Holmes, 1983, April 15). The article pointed out that the 3rd QE committee believed that ACHE was doing a good job and that the Governor and Legislature should rely on the information that ACHE was providing. It also specifically addressed the fact that the 3rd QE committee had recommended against

ACHE seeking additional authority at that time. The Birmingham News also ran an article on December 4, 1986 entitled "State college presidents give ACHE an OK" that quoted 4th QE committee chairman Fred Harcleroad as saying that Alabama's college and university presidents had given ACHE "qualified" approval during a closed-door session of the 4th QE committee while expressing certain problems with ACHE based on institutional needs.

The 4th QE is the only one of the first six for which the researcher was able to find evidence of news coverage by major staff and wire reports (Associated Press [AP] and United Press International [UPI]). This heightened news coverage (judging from the resulting reports) was apparently based on a specific press conference concerning the release of the 4th QE report. The Huntsville News gave credit to AP writer Paul Newberry for an article entitled "Report praises ACHE, but urges task force to improve state's 'chaotic' higher education" (Newberry, 1987, March 31). This report quotes 4th QE Fred Harcleroad concerning the good job that ACHE was doing, the relatively inexpensive cost of the evaluation (estimated at between $12,000 and $15,000), and the limitations of ACHE's power. Of course, as indicated in the title, it also focused on the 4th QE committee's call for a gubernatorial task force. Various versions of Newberry's work appeared in at least nine other newspapers as follows:

- The Alabama Journal (Time is ripe for education reforms; experts want blue-ribbon task force, 1987, March 31)

- Birmingham News (Panel asks Hunt to form educational task force, 1987, March 31)
- Decatur Daily (Experts urge state higher education study, 1987, March 31)
- Dothan Eagle (Report praises ACHE, 1987, March 31)
- Florence, AL Times Daily (Education task force proposed, 1987, March 31)
- Gadsden Times (Experts say time is ripe for ACHE reforms, 1987, March 31)
- Jasper, AL Daily Mountain Eagle (Report praises ACHE, but says more can be done to improve Alabama's higher education system, 1987, March 31)
- Opelika-Auburn News (Report praises ACHE, more can be done, 1987, March 31)
- Selma Times-Journal (Study proposed, 1987, March 31)

In addition to these articles, Bruce Ritchie of UPI wrote a slightly less positive article concerning the 4th QE report, which appeared in the Birmingham Post-Herald, entitled "ACHE tackles hurdles to do an OK job, panel says" (Ritchie, 1987, March 31). In addition, the Tuscaloosa News ran an article entitled "Higher education task force urged" (1987, March 31) apparently drawn from both the AP and UPI reports.

As one might expect, the smaller number of articles by other Alabama authors concerning the 4th QE went into more specifics concerning certain aspects of the evaluation:

- Amy Herring, staff writer for Montgomery's The Advertiser (1987, March 31), emphasized the committee's concerns that the recommended gubernatorial task force needed to consider an appropriate governance structure for higher education, since the Legislature was in essence governing higher education based on its budgetary control. She also pointed out the committee's concerns over duplication of programs and the number of Alabama lawmakers that were on salary at a public college or university.
- Jeff Woodard, Montgomery correspondent for The Huntsville Times (1997, March 31) quoted Harcleroad as saying that "The Legislature is currently a board of regents…That is what it amounts to."
- Frederick Burger, State Capital Correspondent for the Anniston Star (1987, March 31) quoted Harcleroad during a press conference as saying that Alabama law was structured in such a way as to make sure that it was extremely difficult for ACHE to perform its duties, while emphasizing that the committee had recommended against ACHE being given more power. Burger also emphasized the issue of the number of legislators employed in Alabama higher education.
- Editorials that appeared in The Montgomery Advertiser (Good blueprint, 1987, April 1) and the Talledega-Sycaluga-Pell City Daily Home (ACHE needs teeth, 1987, April 9) asserted that the 4th QE had concluded that ACHE lacked the power it needed to effectively govern higher education in Alabama and focused on

the call for the gubernatorial task force; both editorials opined that the governor should appoint the recommended task force.

The press coverage of the 5th QE report was apparently much less extensive based on what the researcher was able to find. It was also less optimistic than that for the 4th QE concerning the findings of the committee. The articles referenced below focused on ACHE's lack of authority to enforce its actions, Alabama's overgrown system of higher education, the lack of tax revenue to support this system, and the ability and willingness of the Alabama legislature to do whatever it wants to do with Alabama higher education regardless of the costs or consequences.

- The Huntsville Times carried an article entitled "Study says ACHE job hampered" (Woodard, 1991, March 19) that quoted 5th QE chairman John Folger as saying that Alabama had an "over-expanded" higher education system. This article also indicated that ACHE Executive Director Hank Hector disagreed with the committee's recommendation concerning closing programs. Hector opined (according to this article) that he saw ACHE's role in this area as advisory to the respective boards of trustees.
- The Birmingham News ran an article entitled "Education evaluators hit funding: Say lack of tax revenue curb on state's progress" (Lindley, 1991, March 19) that emphasized the committee's observations concerning Alabama's revenue base problems and pointed out the propensity for the state to fund "pet projects" and the number of educators who doubled as

lawmakers. A later opinion piece (Return of the blob, 1991, March 20) referred to the 5th QE report as Alabama's "umpteenth report on how bad off its higher education blob is from a trio of impressive experts…Their report was authoritative, but hardly startling…The three evaluators recommended things that are needed and have always been needed."

- The Birmingham Post-Herald ran two news articles, entitled "Evaluators find college system unwieldy" (Bruer, 1991, March 19) and "State wastes education money" (Bryant, 1991, April 2), as well as an editorial (Spread too thin, 1991, March 20), which focused on the committee's views about Alabama's overexpanded higher education system, the state's propensity for "pet projects," the need for the funding formula to be revised, and ACHE's lack of power to correct the situation.
- The Gadsden Times won the contest for the least optimistic article concerning the 5th QE report with its report titled "Why ACHE got a poor score" (1991, March 22) which went on to outline many of the same problems mentioned above but pointed out that "the shortcomings are not the fault of ACHE, but the fault of the Legislature for keeping ACHE handcuffed".
- An opinion piece that appeared in the Selma Times-Journal (Educators akin to politicians in their reports, 1991, March 22) took aim at the 5th QE committee members themselves for not being sufficiently critical of Alabama's higher education problems.

- Other opinion pieces that focused on the overgrowth of Alabama higher education highlighted in the 5th QE report included those appearing in The Alabama Journal (Too thinly spread, 1991, April 4) and the Daily Home (Too many colleges, 1991, March 27).

While the 6th QE did not receive a great deal of media coverage, it arguably resulted in some of the most unique articles from among these reports. Paul Davis, Publisher of The Auburn Bulletin/Eagle, was a member of the 6th QE committee. He wrote a piece for the Lee County Eagle (an Auburn weekly newspaper) entitled "Let the courts do it" (Davis, 1994, September 21) where he mentioned his participation in the QE process. However, as the title indicates, the focus of his article was on certain aspects of Alabama higher education that might have to be resolved by court action rather than by other means. Davis based this assessment on the historical involvement of the courts in matters concerning Alabama higher education, especially the then-ongoing Title VI legislation (which will be briefly mentioned in the next chapter). This was the only article that the researcher found written by a member of a QE committee concerning the QE process while their committee was in the process of performing its work.

The other most significant article concerning the work of the 6th QE committee was one that appeared in The Birmingham News entitled "Education board incensed by ACHE report" (Gordon, 1995, April 1). One could argue that the title was misleading, as the State Board of Education was actually "incensed" (if that's the right word) only by a particular recommendation within the report concerning the

governance structure of Alabama's two-year colleges. The researcher has provided more information concerning this issue in the section of the following chapter dealing with the relationship between ACHE and the two-year sector.

Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of relevant aspects of the first six ACHE quadrennial evaluations and reports, including areas where these evaluations and reports have been either similar or dissimilar in certain respects, and how certain aspects of these evaluations and reports might have impacted on their effectiveness and benefit to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. This was followed by a review of legislation related to ACHE QE recommendations and of documents from ACHE concerning the implementation or non-implementation of QE committee recommendations. These documents provide additional evidence concerning the effectiveness and benefits of the ACHE QE process and of the individual quadrennial evaluations and reports. The final section of this chapter gave information concerning the extent of print media coverage dealing with the ACHE QE process and/or other aspects of ACHE and/or higher education relevant to this study. This provided evidence concerning the levels and types of publicity that the ACHE QE process has generated at various times. In addition, this chapter has presented some relevant observations concerning these areas gained from selected follow-up interviews. The next chapter will

provide a discussion of all of the evidence presented in this chapter, as well as in the preceding chapter on survey results, as this evidence relates to ACHE's roles in various areas and to other significant areas in which one or more of the QE committees have made recommendations.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of the evidence collected primarily from the recommendations of the quadrennial evaluation reports themselves, legislation, ACHE responses to the recommendations of the quadrennial evaluation reports, and (where applicable) other sources including media articles and comments from selected follow-up interviews, concerning the impacts of the quadrennial evaluation report recommendations in certain areas. This evidence will be presented in two major categories. The first category will include the various areas that correspond to the role areas of the Commission identified in the survey instrument. The second category will include other areas where one or more of the quadrennial evaluation committees have made one or more specific recommendations.

For the first category, the researcher has arranged the areas in the order in which the overall survey respondents indicated that the quadrennial evaluation process had contributed to the greatest degree to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in that area. The exception to this is that the researcher has combined the area of "Issues related to new campuses, centers, and other facilities" with that of "Issues related to new

academic programs and the prevention of unnecessary program duplication" because of their close relationship and the fact that many of the QE committees' recommendations have touched both areas. The purpose of this overall ordering is to help the researcher (and the reader) compare the collective opinion of the survey respondents concerning these areas to the other evidence to determine the degree to which these are consistent.

For the second category, the researcher has arranged the areas roughly in order of relevance based on the number of recommendations involved and the importance of the issues to the current study.

Evidence Regarding ACHE's Assigned Roles

Development of the State University and College Information System

Recommendation 3 of the first QE report indicated that ACHE was "engaged in developing a statewide information system" and recommended that it "be designated by proper authority as the coordinating agency for the federally-sponsored Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS)." (McGowin et al., 1975, pp. 10-11). This recommendation was implemented on February 3, 1978 through a Memorandum of Agreement and formal letters of notification to appropriate individuals (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 1 of part 1). Recommendation 20 of the 1st QE recommended that ACHE "Continue the development of the "State University and College Information System" (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 16).

ACHE has reported positive actions concerning this area through the years in its status reports concerning the implementation of QE committee recommendations. In addition, the 4th QE committee reported:

> The statewide information system and data base which have been developed by the Commission on Higher Education are quite generally regarded by the lay public, by legislators, by executive staff, and by institutional administrators as a successful and effective operation of the Commission. It is generally felt that the Commission has continued to improve its data gathering techniques and is a reliable source of necessary data on the overall condition of higher education and its institutions throughout the state…the general finding is that the Commission has been quite successful in fulfilling this responsibility (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 14).

However, the 6th QE committee found that there was still more to be done. Specifically, this committee:

> Was not able to discern that this element of the Commission's statutory role [regarding the maintenance of a state information system] was being discharged…[and]… was not able to discern that any state agency in Alabama was conducting an audit of campus enrollments - a government management practice of serious neglect (Bogue et al., 1985, p. 35).

The committee recommended:

> That the Commission develop the higher education information system that is specified in its law so that it will have an appropriate data base for long-range planning, for enrollment studies and audits, for monitoring off-campus activities, for maintaining activity and performance intelligence on the "Condition of Higher Education in Alabama," and for conducting other special studies that may be required within its statutes (Bogue et al., 1995, page 38).

ACHE interpreted this recommendation as requiring a move beyond its current legal authority concerning data collection. As a result, the recommendation influenced the Alabama legislature's 1996 passage of Act 96-509 (which ACHE supported), which required ACHE to develop a statewide unit record database. This database is under development

and operative portions are available on ACHE's recently developed web site. In addition, ACHE's new director of data systems provided a detailed report for the 7th QE committee concerning the status of the student database project (Sherman, 1998, April 30).

In conducting follow-up interviews while analyzing the survey results, the researcher heard from individuals representing the 2-year sector, 4-year sector, and ACHE staff concerning the likely reason for the 4-year sector's lower opinion of the QE process being most effective in this area. All of these individuals to whom the researcher posed a question in this area indicated that representatives of the 4-year sector likely downgraded this area because of their concerns over how the information (primarily concerning faculty and workload) would be used. The basic fear is that, since faculty workload for the 4-year sector includes research, public service, and other scholarly activities not commonly encountered in the 2-year sector, such data would be incorrectly interpreted as indicating that 4-year faculty members were less productive than their two year counterparts, thus resulting in negative funding consequences for the 4-year colleges and universities. In the same fashion, the two-year sector ranked this area as the one in which the ACHE QE process had provided the greatest contribution (despite their overall lower rankings for all areas). Interviewees indicated that this was possibly due to a belief among those in the two-year sector that their numbers would compare favorably in funding decisions with those from four-year sector institutions.

Master Planning and Policy Issues

This is an area of major concern for ACHE, and is one in which each of the first six QE committees made one or more specific recommendations. The 1st QE committee made four specific recommendations, numbered as 19 through 22 in that report (McGowin et al., 1975, pp. 15-16) which included recommendations for ACHE to do the following:

- Continue the development of the statewide Master Plan (including the development of additional phases of the plan) with the full involvement of and in cooperation with all appropriate constituents.
- Continually provide the Governor and Legislature with analyses and recommendations concerning relevant legislation, as well as priority listings of needed facilities.
- Consider the development of planning regions in Alabama where appropriate constituents would meet on a formal, continuing basis to encourage cooperation, assist in dispute resolution, and assist ACHE in planning activities.

With the exception of the planning regions issue (on which ACHE reported it took no action), ACHE indicated that it had taken numerous positive actions concerning these recommendations between 1975 and 1983 (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 6-8 of part 1).

The 2nd QE committee made two recommendations concerning master planning and policy issues. The first recommendation was that the ACHE legislation be strengthened *"To fix clear responsibility upon*

the Commission for long range planning for Alabama's system of higher education." (Blackburn et al., 1979, p. 2) The Legislature accomplished this by passing Act 79-461 in 1979. The second recommendation was directed at ACHE that "An intensive effort should be begun at once to prepare a state-wide plan for Higher Education in Alabama…The Alabama Commission should undertake immediately a crash program to develop an Alabama Plan for Higher Education in the 1980's." (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 2-3, 26) ACHE reported as late as 1990 that progress in this area had been "limited," consisting primarily of development of a proposal for content, procedures, and a timetable for developing such a plan, as well as actual development of particular structural components of the plan (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 1 of part 2).

The 3rd QE committee recognized this incomplete progress as well, as it recommended "The Commission should move with dispatch to complete the development of a statewide long range plan for higher education. Furthermore, the Commission should establish a procedure to update the plan at least every two years." (Norton et al., 1983, p. iii) ACHE reported positive action on this recommendation through its establishment of the Council of Twenty-One, the issuance of that council's report (Hardin et al., 1983), and the subsequent establishment of a planning liaison group (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 2-3 of part 3).

The 4th QE committee, however, still indicated that this basic need had yet to be met, and recommended that ACHE "and its staff, working in close communication with the varied institutions of higher

education in the state of Alabama, should proceed with dispatch to develop, finally, a strategic plan for all of higher education in the state of Alabama" (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 22), and further indicated the specific roles that the legislature and Governor and his staff should play in such planning. ACHE's response to this recommendation began by indicating that ACHE had "proceeded to develop" such a plan during the past four years (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 4 of part 4), although the record of ACHE's complete response to this recommendation is not available.

The 5th QE committee was the first that did not directly challenge the adequacy of ACHE's planning process to date (as others had done, for example, by specifically recommending the completion of an as yet incomplete plan). Instead, the 5th QE acknowledged that ACHE "had made a start toward a planning process that can provide a sense of direction and guidance for state higher education policy in Alabama." (Folger et al., 1991, p. 20) It further recommended:

> Alabama needs a planning process that will raise people's sights and chart a path to a more effective and efficient educational system. The Commission needs to connect its planning process to the budget and to its program approval process so there are more positive incentives for planning. The planning process needs to involve business and political leadership more, and give them a bigger stake in making plans work (Folger et al., 1991, p. 20)

In response to this recommendation, ACHE adopted a new statewide plan for higher education on August 30, 1991, which included four goals (collaboration, access, quality instruction, and research and economic development) and 26 state level objectives (ACHE, 1991). Later that year, the ACHE staff compiled a list of potential projects

to promote the achievement of these goals and objectives. ACHE has indicated that many of the institutions responded positively to this effort, but also indicated that the connection between the planning and the budget and program approval processes was not particularly strong (ACHE, 1994, pp. 4-5).

The 6th QE committee made three recommendations that touched on planning and policy issues. Two of these, which dealt primarily with the State University and College Information System and with the expansion of campus missions and acquisition or creation of new campuses, are covered under other headings within this chapter. The third recommendation was "That the state adopt legislation to promote long range facility planning, lease, acquisition, and/or construction." (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 40) In response to this recommendation, the Alabama Legislature passed Act 96-539 in May 1996. This act required each institution to provide ACHE with a five-year master plan for facilities by January 1, 1997 (including prioritization of capital requests and needs assessments) and to update the plan annually thereafter. It also requires ACHE to report to the Legislature and institutional boards if it has concerns or recommendations concerning these plans. ACHE reported good responsiveness from the institutions concerning these requirements (ACHE, 1998, pp. 11-12).

Program Evaluation and Review and Prevention of Program Duplication

As mentioned earlier, the researcher is including in this area those items that would fall under both "Issues related to new academic programs and the prevention of unnecessary program duplication" and "Issues related to new campuses, centers, and other facilities" in the survey instrument for this study.

These are among ACHE's most important functions, and each of the first six QE committees has offered at least one recommendation concerning one or more of these issues. The 1st QE committee offered a total of eight recommendations that dealt with one or more of these areas, identified as recommendations 9 through 13 and 15 through 17 (McGowin et al., 1975, pp. 12-15). In summary, these recommendations asked the Legislature to do the following:

- Pass legislation to prohibit establishment of any new institution, program, center, or unit without first having received a recommendation from ACHE.
- Give ACHE reasonable authority to require institutional acceptance of its recommendations by preventing expenditures for any programs, branches, or activities not approved by ACHE.
- Require institutions to justify major equipment acquisitions in terms of system need and use to ACHE (with right of appeal to Legislature if ACHE disapproves the acquisition).
- Provide statutory authority for ACHE to develop procedures for evaluation of institutional performance (in conjunction with

other constituents) and for licensure and accreditation for all postsecondary education including proprietary schools. In addition, these included recommendations that ACHE establish procedures for justification of new programs and that ACHE require that no additional locations or centers for programs be established without ACHE approval.

The 2nd QE committee also offered a recommendation that the Legislature provide ACHE with final approval authority for new programs and campuses and with review authority for existing programs (including the authority to recommend termination or consolidation), subject to override by explicit legislative act (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 2, 30).

Most of these recommendations of the first two QE committees were addresses by the passage of Act 79-461 in 1979. This act specifically gave ACHE regulatory authority in review of new academic programs and provided explicit language preventing the expenditure of state funds on new units or programs not approved by ACHE (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 3-7 of part 1 and pp. 1-2 of part 2). However, the legislation did not provide ACHE with similar authority regarding research and service units, did not require institutions to justify major item acquisitions, and did not provide for the termination of existing units. A 1982 introduction of legislation that would have provided ACHE with termination authority (and would have also granted ACHE constitutional status) was unsuccessful.

The 3rd QE committee recommended, "The Commission should establish a process to review existing programs and report its

findings to the institutions, the Governor and the Legislature, and to the public." (Norton et al., 1983, p. iii) ACHE responded to this recommendation by incorporating a five-year institutional review of existing programs into its planning process, as well as instituting certain statewide generic reviews and using external consultants to address doctoral program proposals (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 3 of part 3).

The 4th QE committee made two recommendations, one dealing with the development of a new program review process and the other recommending that the legislature make ACHE responsible for "licensure, chartering, review and evaluation of all non-resident, and in-state proprietary, postsecondary institutions operating in Alabama and relieve the State Board of Education or other state agencies of responsibility in this area." (Harcleroad et al., 1987, pp. 22-24) In response to the first of these recommendations, ACHE revised its program review process in May 1989 and took several other related actions. In response to the second, bills that would have implemented this were introduced multiple times but failed to become law for various reasons (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 3-5 of part 4).

The 5th QE committee made three recommendations related to these areas as follows:

- The Legislature should authorize the Commission to terminate existing programs that do not meet criteria of program viability, state need, and centrality to individual institutional role and mission. Institutions should continue to have the right to appeal Commission decisions to the Legislature. (Folger et al., 1991, pp. 17-18)

As covered elsewhere in this study, the Legislature did not authorize this specifically but ACHE believes it has nonetheless achieved a certain measure of success in this area through its own efforts (ACHE, 1994, pp. 3-4).

- "Alabama should invest the resources necessary to develop comparable multiple indicators of educational achievement by each institution." (Folger et al., 1991, pp. 22-24) ACHE indicated that it had "not moved forward on this for a variety of reasons" (ACHE, 1994, p. 7), including primarily the lack of available data and some resistance by institutions to the idea of collection of the necessary data. It appears that this may have been a part of the reason for the 6th QE committee's recommendation concerning the State College and University Information System mentioned in more detail earlier in this chapter.
- "The Commission should utilize both planning and budget in support of state priorities for new program development, while continuing to be responsive to institutional program requests." (Folger et al., 1991, pp. 24-25) ACHE indicated that it has incorporated this recommendation into its procedures, and cited one example concerning its 1994-95 Unified Budget Recommendation (ACHE, 1994, pp. 7-8).

The 6th QE committee made three recommendations relating to these areas. The first called for ACHE to revise its policy and practices regarding the review and evaluation of off-campus programs and courses. The second called for ACHE to work with systems and

campuses in studying differential admissions standards for campuses of different missions, having campuses develop performance indicators, and establishing statewide performance indicators. The third recommended that ACHE establish a moratorium on expansion of existing campus missions to new degree levels, as well as the acquisition or creation of new campuses, until the appropriate constituents have created a Master Plan (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 39).

ACHE responded to the first of these recommendations by revising its off-campus guidelines in both 1995 and 1997, and provided quite a bit of material to the 7th QE concerning the specifics of these revisions (ACHE, 1998, pp. 6-9). While it did not address the recommendation concerning differential admissions standards, it cited a 1996 Alabama Legislature joint resolution that called for the establishment of a Higher Education Funding Advisory Commission as an impetus in making progress on both campus and statewide performance indicators (ACHE, 1998, pp. 9-10). In responding to the third recommendation, ACHE asserted that it did not have the authority to establish such a moratorium, but that it had adopted the spirit of this recommendation in exercising the limited authority it did have. ACHE also pointed out that (based at least in part on ACHE's actions in this area) there had been no institutional expansion to higher degree levels and no new creation or acquisition of campuses between the 6th QE committee's 1995 report and ACHE's 1998 response (ACHE, 1998, p. 10).

Budget and Finance Issues

This area is one of ACHE's key responsibilities, and each of the first six QE committees made at least one recommendation concerning budget and finance issues.

The 1st QE committee recommended that ACHE should do the following regarding budget and finance issues:

- "Develop procedures for coordinating the procurement of major instructional and research equipment, the use of which can be shared." (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 14)
- "Maintain medical school budgets on a separate basis rather than adding them into university budget totals, in order to avoid misunderstanding with respect to unit costs." (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 17)
- "Submit recommendations and proposed legislation to the Governor and Legislature for the establishment of a state student financial assistance program based on need." (McGowin et al., 1975, pp. 17-18)

While ACHE acknowledged the potential benefits of the first of these recommendations, it reported no action in this area. However, it does maintain the medical school budgets on a separate basis and is now more involved in the state student financial assistance programs. Specifically, ACHE took responsibility for the Alabama Student Assistance Program in 1976, began administering the Alabama Student Grant Program in 1978, began operation of the Alabama Guaranteed Student Loan Program in 1981, and also administers at least eight

other student financial assistance programs (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 5-6, 12-13 of part 1).

The 2nd QE committee recommended:

> The Commission should improve its procedures and funding formulas to provide equity and adequacy in review of institutional budgets. Close attention should be given to formula revisions, budget calendar reconsideration, and the establishment of a process to deal with capital and renovation needs. (Blackburn et al., 1979, p. 3)

ACHE reported a positive response to this recommendation through various actions from 1979 through 1986 involving the development and review of modified funding formulas and capital budgeting proposals to the Governor and Legislature (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 2-3 of part 2).

The 3rd QE committee recommended:

> The Commission should begin immediately with staff contact and direct meetings to seek understandings with the Governor and legislative leaders of the kinds of budget information and recommendations which the Commission might provide to help them make the best decisions for Alabama. (Norton et al., 1983, p. iv)

ACHE reported that it responded positively to this recommendation through regular meetings between ACHE staff and members of the Legislative Fiscal Office and Executive Budget Office concerning the development of the unified budget, as well as additional informal meetings with legislative leaders and these offices when possible, especially prior to each annual budget cycle (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 4 of part 3).

The 4th QE committee recommended:

> [ACHE] and its staff should take the lead in working with the Governor and the executive staff, the Legislature and the legislative budget staff, and the leadership of the several

> colleges and universities in the state of Alabama to develop a new and more diverse budgeting formula, including (1) enrollments as a beginning factor but also including (2) a variety of performance-based measures and an analysis of the developing economic and social needs of the state to (3) provide for special budget allocations as needed to meet each of these varied factors. (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 21)

ACHE reported a positive response to this recommendation beginning with the 1988-89 Unified Budget Recommendation (UBR) to the Governor and Legislature, which it said "represented an historic agreement between the governmental and higher education communities of Alabama" (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 2 of part 4), and continuing through changes anticipated for the 1991-92 UBR.

The 5th QE committee made the following three recommendations in this area with the following responses from ACHE:

- The Commission should seek support from educational, business, and political leaders, first to identify those key goals and priorities that are important to state progress. Second, that funds be allocated specifically for achievement of the goal or goals. Third, that the Commission provide targeted support for institutional efforts to achieve the goal or goals. (Folger et al., 1991, p. 22)

  ACHE reported that it sought input from these leaders "in formulating goals and objectives in the development of the state plan" and that it had sought, with limited success, the allocation of funds for specific goals and objectives (ACHE, 1994, pp. 5-7).

- "The Commission should seek the advantages for Alabama of a more differentiated system of higher education by first working with the institutions to develop unique roles, and second, to obtain resources needed to enhance the specialty areas." (Folger et al., 1991, p. 26) In response to this

recommendation, ACHE (after months of negotiating with the various institutions and governing boards) established a "role matrix" for each institution showing where the institution either offers programs or has a role to develop programs. However, ACHE indicates that there had been little progress in obtaining resources needed to enhance specialty areas because of considerable funds being drawn away due to the Title VI litigation and other funds being committed to capital outlays and the reform of K-12 education (ACHE, 1994, p. 8).

- There should be a more consistent tuition policy for all public institutions, and a companion policy for increasing student aid as the costs of college increase, so that opportunity for low income students won't be reduced, and so that low income students don't have to borrow more heavily than other students to afford college. (Folger et al., 1991, p. 26)

  In response to this recommendation, ACHE indicated that it did not have the authority to set tuition rates at public institutions and would have to receive such authority from the Legislature in order to do so. ACHE also indicated that it has consistently recommended increases in funding for the Alabama Student Assistance and Educational Grants Programs, but has been unable to obtain support from institutions because of their beliefs that their own funding levels are too low (ACHE, 1994, p. 8).

The 6th QE committee was specifically concerned about ACHE's failure to follow its own law in making appropriations recommendations for each campus, as shown by its recommendation in this area:

> That the Commission revise its approach to formula funding and budgeting so that the policy and process (a) moves each campus in the state toward the same percentage of equity funding on SREB standards, (b) includes budget recommendations for each institution in the state in the unified budget recommendation - including each two-year institution as specified and required in the law establishing the Commission, and (c) arranges for an equitable consideration of both instate and out-of-state fee structures for each institution. (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 38)

ACHE responded to this recommendation by (a) establishing a provision for recommending "special equity allowances" to the Legislature for institutions which would otherwise fall short of calculated standards, (b) including a specific lined recommendation for each two-year institution starting with the 1997-1998 Unified Budget Recommendation (UBR), and (c) supporting the Legislature's passage of Act 96-663 which required all institutions to charge all out-of-state undergraduate students a minimum of two times the undergraduate resident rate charged by the institution. However, ACHE indicates that Legislative action still causes some institutions to fall below the calculated standards and that the governing boards of institutions still have final say concerning the actual amounts institutions charge for tuition (ACHE, 1998, p. 5)

Evidence Regarding Other Areas

The Existence, Authority, and Role of ACHE

It is widely held among most who are familiar with ACHE that the various recommendations of the 1st and 2nd QE committees concerning the strengthening of ACHE's authority were instrumental in

the Alabama Legislature's passage of Act 79-461, which implemented the following items that were related to nine of the recommendations of the 1st QE and four of the recommendations of the 2nd QE:

- Gave ACHE regulatory authority in review of new academic programs
- Prevented expenditure of state funds for new units/programs of instruction without ACHE approval
- Gave ACHE regulatory authority over new and existing off-campus programs, centers, and branches
- Gave ACHE approval authority over any new unit or program of instruction
- Required ACHE to provide annual rather than biennial reports
- Required ACHE to hold quarterly meetings
- Established ACHE as Alabama's statewide planning agency for higher education
- Increased ACHE membership from nine to twelve members
- Established the Council of Presidents as the major policy advisory group to ACHE

More specifically, the 1st QE had recommended (among other things implemented above) that "ACHE should be continued, with additional responsibilities mandated by statute by the Legislature and provided with the assistance and authority necessary to carry out those responsibilities" (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 9), while the 2nd QE

> Committee [was] unanimous in its basic finding in favor of effective coordination for Alabama through a strengthened commission...having authority and responsibility for at least the following: Long Range Planning, Program Approval and Review,

> Budget Review and Recommendation, and Data Collection and Dissemination. (Blackburn et al., 1979, p. 1).

Although the legislature provided most of the strengthening of ACHE recommended by the first two QE committees, it was not without significant argument from other quarters concerning whether ACHE should be strengthened even more, on the one hand, or abolished, on the other. Several media reports during this timeframe (Friedman, 1978, June 4; Harris, 1978, June 4; Harris, 1979, February 22) show that individuals including ACHE executive director Dr. John Porter and outgoing ACHE vice chairman Senator Sid McDonald were arguing for ACHE to be strengthened even further by giving it state constitutional status, while other individuals including Senator Richard Shelby argued that ACHE was a failure and suggested abolishing ACHE and starting over.

A 1981 bill that would have given ACHE more power was defeated by the Alabama Legislature, apparently based on the lobbying of the two-year sector (Harris, 1981, May 9). Specifically, this bill would have taken the two-year colleges from the State Board of Education and put them under a separate appointed board, and would have restructured the two-year sector into regions combining some administrations. On August 11, 1982, roughly midway between the 2nd and 3rd QE reports, a bill to strengthen ACHE further passed by a vote of 73-13 in the Alabama House (Holmes and Fox, 1982, August 11), however, the bill was unsuccessful in the Alabama Senate (ACHE, 1990, pp. 3-4 of part 2). Specifically, this bill would have changed the name of ACHE to the Alabama Higher Education Commission (AHEC), would

have given it the power to prevent duplication of programs and services in all Alabama higher education, and would have increased the membership of the commission from 12 to 15 members as had been recommended by the 2nd QE committee (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 2, 33). In addition, a companion measure to give ACHE constitutional status failed to win sufficient votes in the Alabama House based on opposition primarily from the Auburn University and University of Alabama systems (Holmes and Fox, 1981, May 5). (In follow-up interviews with the researcher, multiple senior staff members of ACHE opined that the political fallout from these attempts to increase ACHE's authority, particularly the attempt to create a separate board for the two-year colleges, came very close to motivating state lawmakers to abolish ACHE altogether.)

Interestingly, the 3rd and 4th QE committees recommended against ACHE's receiving more authority (at least in the near term) beyond what it had received as a result of the 1979 legislation mentioned above. The 3rd QE committee found "that the Commission, strengthened as it was by the 1979 Legislature, has ample legal authority to fulfill its assigned role, but it has not exercised fully the authority it has." (Norton et al., 1983, p. 1) Despite acknowledging that there were many calls for ACHE to have more power, this committee "reviewed the authorizing legislation and believes the Commission has ample legal authority to fulfill the assigned role," further opined that "Until the Commission has exercised its powers, further discussion of expanding its authority is diversionary," and specifically recommended that "The issue of more authority for the

Alabama Commission on Higher Education be set aside for now, and attention focused on achieving the best performance of the tasks assigned." (Norton et al., 1983, p. 7).

The 4th QE committee, indicating that it was repeating "the recommendation of the Third Evaluation Committee," likewise recommended that

> The Commission on Higher Education and its staff should set aside the issue of more authority, continue to establish clear priorities regarding its many legally assigned responsibilities, publicize these clearly, and achieve the best possible performance on the highest priority duties. (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 20)

ACHE Staff status reports assert that ACHE followed these recommendations by not seeking more authority, even though the "Council of Twenty-One" (Hardin, 1983) opined that ACHE still did not have sufficient authority and specifically recommended that the Legislature give ACHE more authority (ACHE, 1990 August, p.1 of part 3 and p.1 of part 4).

However, despite the ACHE staff's internal assertion that it was not seeking more power during this time, there is evidence that some individuals might have disputed such an assertion had it been made publicly. An article entitled "ACHE director says legislative attacks just show his agency is doing its job well" (Jennings, 1987, July 1), asserts that then ACHE Executive Director Joseph Sutton believed that efforts during this time to eliminate ACHE or to change it or negate its decisions actually served as evidence that ACHE was doing its job well despite its limited power. This article also, of course, highlighted some of these efforts themselves, including bills

introduced by former Speaker of the Alabama House Representative Tom Drake that would have abolished ACHE and authorized a specific program that ACHE had opposed, as well as another bill introduced that would have reduced ACHE from 12 back to its original 9 members and required that all the members be appointed anew. Later that summer, ACHE considered new policy guidelines that many educators believed would have, if implemented, caused ACHE to function more as a governing body rather than a coordinating one. The impetus for this was a recent report by the Southern Regional Education Board that had criticized ACHE's lack of authority over Alabama higher education (Harvey, 1987, August 21; Jennings, 1987, July 1).

The 5th QE committee, while acknowledging that the 3rd and 4th QE committees had considered and rejected the issue of increased authority for ACHE, concluded that it should have increased authority in at least one particular area and recommended that

> The Legislature should authorize the Commission to terminate existing programs that do not meet criteria of program viability, state need, and centrality to individual institutional role and mission. Institutions should continue to have the right to appeal Commission decisions to the Legislature. (Folger et al., 1991, p. 18)

However, according to one news report covering the release of the 5th QE report (Woodard, 1991, March 19), ACHE Executive Director Hank Hector disagreed with this recommendation. Hector opined (according to this article) that he saw ACHE's role in this area as advisory to the respective boards of trustees. In its report on responses to this recommendation, ACHE indicated that the Legislature did not authorize this, but that ACHE's own results in this area had been

comparable to those of some state coordinating boards that did have similar authority (ACHE, 1994, pp. 3-4).

The 6th QE committee indicated that ACHE should be more aggressive in executing its existing authority regarding information system and budget issues, but did not specifically include any recommendations concerning whether ACHE needed more authority.

Relationships Between ACHE and the 2-Year Sector

One of the most pervasive themes encompassing Alabama higher education is the often-tumultuous relationship between ACHE and Alabama's 2-year college sector. As mentioned earlier in this study, the fruits of the late Governor George Wallace's efforts to establish a significant number of 2-year schools in Alabama have been a source of pride for many Alabamians and contention for many others. These tensions have brewed for many years because of widely differing views concerning whether there are too many of these schools, whether they have had (or currently have) sufficient (or excessive) governmental oversight, and whether they are too politically active. A thorough exploration of all of the aspects of this relationship and of its impacts on Alabama higher education would be worthy of its own separate study. The following recommendations of the evaluation committees relate to this issue:

- The 1st QE committee recommended that:

  The State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Education encourage and require the full participation of the postsecondary institutions under their control in the

activities of ACHE. The current arrangement of having the State Superintendent of Education, or one of his staff, act alone to represent these institutions in dealing with ACHE (instead of having the institutions participate directly in these activities and relationships), necessarily detracts from the institutions' potential contributions and limits their commitment to the statewide goals and objectives established for the system. (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 11)

- The 2nd QE committee recommended that:

  The state-wide plan should give particular attention to the role and governance of two-year institutions. The State Board of Education serves as a board of trustees for the two-year schools. Inadequate recognition of this fact has contributed to confusion as to roles between the Commission and its staff and the Board and its staff. Clarification of roles is essential to the resolution of conflict and the maintenance of a cooperative working relationship…The development of a successful system and the implementation of the state plan requires cooperation between the Commission and the institutions, including the two-year ones… (Blackburn et al., 1979, p. 3)

- The 6th QE committee recommended: "That the governance of the two-year college system in Alabama be invested in a newly created Board for Two-year Colleges, with appointment of board members by the Governor." (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 40)

In addition to these recommendations dealing specifically with the two-year sector, others dealing with other functional areas (covered in other portions of this chapter) have arguably been crafted, at least in part, because of perceived problems with the way the two-year sector handled those particular issues and/or perceived disparities concerning how they impacted the different sectors of Alabama higher education.

Some of the QE committees have given particular attention to two-year sector problems within their reports. The 1st QE committee included a four-page special section within its report (McGowin et

al., 1975, pp. 45-48), while the 2nd QE committee dedicated over eight pages to these issues between the main text and a special section (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 21-24, 63-67). The 6th QE committee also included specific commentary on the relationships within the two-year college system and between it and other constituencies (Bogue et al., 1985, pages 26-28).

The 1st QE committee specifically stated, "The Commission's relationship with two-year institutions is less than adequate." (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 45) It went on to point out that it was clear (at least in the QE committee's opinion) that the legislative intent and legal mandate for cooperation between ACHE and public institutions of higher education included the two-year sector, while pointing out that the two-year sector's cooperation had been little more than lip service and that ACHE was also at fault for not nurturing the relationship as well as it could have. The 2nd QE committee basically acknowledged the recommendations of the earlier committee and indicated that improvements had occurred but that many more still needed to occur. The comments of the 6th QE committee focused on the marked differences of opinions between the two-year and other sectors (a phenomenon seen clearly in the survey results for the present study as well) and the importance of all institutions within Alabama's higher education system.

There are two significant observations that one can make here regarding the specific attention paid to the two-year sector mentioned above. First, it is important to note that the 1st, 2nd, and 6th QE committees, which were the only ones of the first six that

used a combination of out of state higher education professionals and in state lay leaders, had the most specific commentaries concerning the relationships between Alabama's two-year college system and its other constituencies. (The reader will remember that there is other evidence indicating that these may have been the most beneficial of the first six evaluations as well.)

The other significant observation involves the issue of governance of Alabama's two-year college system. Both the 1st and 2nd QE committees specifically addressed the issue of whether the governance structure for Alabama's two-year college system should be changed, and both specifically concluded that such a recommendation was outside the scope of their responsibilities, although the 2nd QE committee did opine that Alabama should specifically study this possibility further. (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 47; Blackburn et al., 1979, p. 24) However, the 6th QE committee, as the reader can see above, did not hesitate to recommend a specific change in governance structure, although it also acknowledged that many other options were possible (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 28).

The response to this recommendation of the 6th QE committee was another evidence of the tumultuous relationship between ACHE and the two-year sector and the interesting types of actions that those concerned take from time to time because of the tumult. It was also a prime example of several reasons that recommendations from the QE committees are sometimes not acted upon.

In an article titled "Education board incensed by ACHE report" (Gordon, 1995 April 1), The Birmingham News reported that the members

of the State Board of Education were strongly opposed to the 6th QE recommendation concerning the change in governance structure of the two-year colleges. Further, the report also indicated that Hank Hector, the executive director of ACHE, had publicly stated that he had "put that one at the bottom of the pile" and was "not pushing that one at all." (Dr. Hector had also indicated the same in a personal conversation with the researcher in early 1996.) This is perhaps the most public example of a very significant reason that certain recommendations of the QE committees may not be implemented. Since there is only a requirement for evaluation, and no requirement for ACHE (or any other body) to address whether or why recommendations are or are not followed, it is relatively easy for a key individual to simply decide against supporting the implementation of a recommendation (especially if the recommendation is not likely to enjoy support from other influential individuals). Indeed, in its official response to the recommendation, ACHE cited the following barriers to implementation of this recommendation:

- Many two-year college officials prefer there be no change in governance for a variety of reasons.
- Many legislators and/or their spouses are employed at the two-year colleges; and there is little legislative support for making such a change.
- Making such a change has yet to be a high priority with the Governor of the State who serves as Chairperson of the State Board of Education. (ACHE, 1998, page 11)

In follow-up interviews with the researcher, multiple members of ACHE's senior staff opined that the appearance of the recommendation concerning the governance of the two-year colleges within the 6th QE report had caused considerable consternation in

ACHE's efforts to implement other recommendations within the report. These individuals indicated that, while (in their opinions) the recommendation itself had considerable merit, there was absolutely no way that it would have ever been favorably received or implemented due to the political climate in Alabama. In fact, these individuals stated that those in Alabama who were opposed to the recommendation had accused the ACHE staff of giving the 6th QE committee the idea to make the recommendation, because these individuals refused to believe that the committee would have made this recommendation on its own without such influence by the ACHE staff, although the individuals asserted that (to the best of their knowledge and belief) no one on the ACHE staff had or would have done such a thing.

These ACHE staff members also indicated that the process of individual interviews used by the 6th QE committee might have contributed to the committee making such a recommendation by serving to mask the fact that, while the recommendation was inherently logical, it was politically unfeasible. According to this argument, there may have been a significant number of individuals interviewed by the committee who would have privately asserted that such a recommendation was a good idea, though they would have never done so publicly knowing not only that it would never be seriously entertained in Alabama's political environment, but that it would damage the political fortunes of anyone who dared to publicly make such a recommendation. These ACHE staff members indicated that this concern was a primary motivator in ACHE staff discussions with the members of the 7th QE committee, who decided to use focus groups

rather than individual interviews so that individuals would not make assertions that they could not or were not willing to defend before their peers.

Also in follow-up interviews with the researcher, representatives of the 2-year and 4-year sectors and ACHE staff were consistent in their responses concerning why the 2-year sector had proportionately less input (relative to the 4-year sector) in the QE process and why the 2-year sector had (on average) less favorable opinions concerning the benefits of the process.

All of the individuals to whom the researcher posed questions concerning the participation of the 2-year sector in the QE process indicated that there had been specific actions by senior leaders within the 2-year system that had the effect of lessening participation of 2-year advocates in the QE process. Here are some specific examples:

- A former academic dean of a 2-year college said that when the individual asked that college's president how the college would interact with ACHE (when ACHE had been newly created in 1969), the president replied "Hopefully not at all." When the former dean asked the president what to do if the college received any mail from ACHE, the president replied "Throw it in the trash can and ignore it unless or until we hear otherwise [from the State Board of Education]." This same individual opined that the prevailing attitude from senior leaders in the two-year sector over the years had been that if the two-year sector didn't talk to ACHE much, it might go away. The individual

also opined that the relationship between ACHE and the two-year sector had improved somewhat, but that ACHE had compromised more than had the two-year sector in order to improve the relationship.

- A 2-year college president indicated that in the late 1970s or early 1980s a senior leader within Alabama's 2-year system (which the individual would not identify by name) stood up during a meeting involving 2-year colleges and publicly stated words to the effect of "Our job is to kill ACHE. I don't want anyone to talk with ACHE. If you're going to talk with ACHE, raise your hand and resign your position."
- Representatives of both the 4-year sector and the ACHE staff indicated that there have been periods (coinciding roughly with the QE reports which had the lowest proportion of 2-year vs. 4-year participation) where the 2-year system essentially "boycotted" ACHE due to turf battles (as put by one 4-year representative) or were not interested in being governed by ACHE (as put by a senior ACHE staff member). One senior ACHE staff member also indicated that the 2-year sector had sued ACHE three times over the years but that no institution from the 4-year sector had ever sued ACHE.
- An individual from the 4-year sector indicated that many 2-year sector individuals probably don't participate in ACHE issues because they feel that the Chancellor of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education speaks for the entire 2-year system. This individual also indicated that the chancellor had in fact

indicated that this is the case, and this assertion by the chancellor is also alluded to in various ACHE reports involving contact with members of the 2-year sector.

- An individual from the 4-year sector indicated that the lack of proportional participation by the 2-year sector might be in part a practical matter stemming from the fact that there are so many institutions and that many of them (such as the technical colleges) simply may not see participation in the QE process as relevant.

For the most part, these individuals indicated that the more negative opinions by members of the 2-year sector concerning the benefit of the QE process were a natural by-product of the issues that contributed to lower participation in the process:

- Multiple senior ACHE staff members emphasized that each institution of higher education in Alabama (including each of the 2-year colleges) has always been invited to provide input into the QE process, but opined that those who are less likely to participate would also be less likely to consider the process beneficial.
- A member of the 4-year sector indicated that the relationship between ACHE and the 2-year sector has always been "fairly contentious" and that this individual wouldn't expect members of the 2-year sector "to respond favorably to much of anything regarding ACHE."
- A member of the 2-year sector indicated that the entire "policy, philosophy, tone, and tenor" of ACHE has been

consistently negative towards the 2-year sector, and that discussions during commission meetings made 2-year advocates "want to scream." This individual claimed that commissioners were either uninformed or misinformed concerning 2-year colleges and that 2-year colleges were "at the mercy of ACHE" because university presidents have used political clout with ACHE "to keep policies in place that make no sense for community colleges." This individual also indicated that a chair of a previous QE committee (the individual would not specify further) said to the individual that "You've got a bad egg here" referring to ACHE's predisposition against the 2-year sector.

- One ACHE senior staff member opined that the 2-year sector's relatively negative view of the benefits of the QE process might stem from the fact that the QE reports had generally been positive towards ACHE. According to this logic, to the degree the 2-year sector has a more negative opinion of ACHE, they would also have a more negative opinion of a process that they believed painted ACHE in a positive light. More specifically, this individual opined that 2-year sector individuals felt that ACHE had used QE results over the years to bolster its authority at the expense of the 2-year sector.

Public Relations, Reports, and Meetings

The 1st QE committee made three recommendations in this area:

- [The Legislature should] "Invite the Commission to present its conclusions and recommendations on budgetary and other matters to major legislative committees prior to hearings on individual institutions." (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 12)
- "ACHE should develop and publish an annual rather than a biennial report as now required by statute, highlighting the conditions of postsecondary education in Alabama, current and emerging problems, recommendations for improvement and required levels of support." (McGowin et al., 1975, pp. 16-17)
- [ACHE should] "Hold at least ten (10) regular public meetings per year, with half of them on campuses around the state." (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 17)

ACHE reported that the legislature responded positively to the first of these recommendations, in that the "Commission's budget recommendation as adopted is taken to legislative committees prior to institutional hearings before the Joint Finance Committees of House and Senate." (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 3 of part 1) The 1979 passage of Act 79-461 addressed the other two recommendations by requiring the recommended annual reports and by requiring the Commission to meet at least quarterly. While the Commission has occasionally met more frequently, it has apparently never met ten or more times in a single year (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 11-12 of part 1).

The 2nd QE committee made the following recommendations in this area:

- Meetings of the Commission. The Commission should meet more frequently and use sub-committees to provide in-depth consideration of particular matters…The Commission should hold more frequent meetings per year, and should appoint working committees in areas of its major functions. (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 3, 34)

- Relations with State Government. The Commission should recognize the necessity for improving its relationship with the Executive Office, the Legislature and state agencies…The Commission should establish as a high priority the improvement of its communications with the Executive Office, the legislative and state agencies. (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 3, 38)

As mentioned above, ACHE cited the legislative response of Act 79-461 that increased required Commission meetings to quarterly from semi-annually, as well as the fact that the Commission had met even more frequently in certain years and that standing committees had been established within the Commission. ACHE also cited a positive response to the recommendation concerning its relations with state government (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 4-5, 7 of part 2).

The 3rd QE committee made the following recommendations:

- "Meetings between the Commission and leaders of the Legislature, and the Commission and the Governor, should be arranged regularly to discuss issues on which Commission advise might be useful." (Norton et al., 1983, p. ii)

- "The Commission should provide annual reports in a timely fashion and in a form designed to reach the several clientele groups which ACHE serves." (Norton et al., 1983, p. iv)

ACHE reported positive actions concerning both of these recommendations (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 2, 4 of part 3).

The 5th QE committee recommended,

> The Commission should use its already effective public information program to increase public awareness of important policy issues, so that they can be dealt with in the public interest. The Commission should involve community, professional, and business leaders in this process, to increase the likelihood of their resolution. The long-term goal of this effort should be to raise the aspirations of Alabamians for their higher education institutions. (Folger et al., 1991, p. 28)

ACHE reported numerous positive actions concerning this recommendation (ACHE, 1994, pp. 8-10).

Boards, Memberships, and Staffing

The 1st QE committee made these four recommendations in this area:

- [The committee recommended that ACHE] Obtain additional staff with competencies in the areas of two-year colleges, urban programs and institutions, allied health, computer services, and legislative liaison. The Commission also should be empowered, by statute, to solicit professional assistance from the system as needed and as agreed to by the institutions. (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 15)
- "The Legislature should provide separate boards of trustees for Alabama State University and Alabama A&M to parallel the independent governing board structure enjoyed by Alabama's other public senior institutions." (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 18)
- Appointing authorities, as they consider initial or replacement appointments to the governing boards in the state system of higher education and to the Alabama Commission on Higher

Education, seek nominations from the widest possible sources and select individuals whose merits and experience will unquestionably insure their contribution to the deliberations of the body. (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 18)

- The membership of future Evaluating Committees be appointed as follows: One Alabama citizen who does not presently have any direct relationship with postsecondary education in Alabama should be appointed by the Governor, one by the presiding officer in each house of the Legislature, and one by ACHE. These four in-state members then would select three out-of-state professionals in the field of postsecondary education who would comprise, with the Alabama members, a committee of seven. (McGowin et al., 1975, p. 19)

ACHE reported positive actions concerning each of the first three recommendations above, specifically including the fact that the legislature provided for the separate boards in a 1975 enactment, but ACHE took no action concerning the other recommendation (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 7-8, 13-14 of part 1).

The 2nd QE committee made the following two recommendations:

- To expand membership on the Commission from nine to fifteen members. This will make possible more and effective use of committees as well as provide for broader representation...The membership of the Alabama Commission should be enlarged from nine to fifteen members, with eight chosen from old Congressional districts as at present and seven appointed at large. The enlarged Board should act also as the state 1202 Commission without further augmentation. Terms should be for five years, with three members appointed each year, and reappointment possible. (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 2, 33)

- The State also should make available adequate resources to attract and hold the number and quality of staff needed to perform the legally assigned functions. Experienced, competent, senior-level persons are absolutely essential in such areas as Planning, Academic Affairs, Budget and Finance, and Systems Information...The Commission should be funded at a level which will permit it to be able to attract and retain as staff highly experienced administrators from universities and colleges. (Blackburn et al., 1979, pp. 2, 35)

ACHE reported limited results concerning both of these recommendations. The 1979 passage of Act 79-461 increased the size

of the Commission from 9 to 12 members, but legislation introduced in 1981 and 1982 that would have increased the size of the Commission to 15 members was unsuccessful. ACHE also reported limited progress in obtaining adequate resources for hiring appropriate staff based on variations in funding from year to year beginning in fiscal year 1975-76 (although funding had increased from 1969 through 1975). (ACHE, 1990 August, pp. 3-6 of part 2)

After the 2nd QE, the only other recommendation in this area made by the first 6 QE committees was the 6th QE recommendation concerning a new board for two-year colleges. The researcher has chosen to cover the particulars concerning this recommendation under the area concerning the relationships between the two-year sector and ACHE.

Employment Status of the ACHE Executive Officer

This issue is a simple but good example of how the persistence of similar recommendations made by multiple QE committees can eventually be of benefit even when the earlier recommendations are not successfully acted upon.

The statutory requirement that the Alabama Senate reconfirm the appointment of the ACHE executive director every four years was never a popular one with those favorably disposed towards ACHE. Former ACHE executive director Dr. John Porter resigned from the position effective October 1, 1981, in part because he did not want an expected fight over his reconfirmation in the Senate to interfere

with the consideration of certain 1981-1982 legislative initiatives regarding ACHE (which still failed). In explaining his decision, he was quoted regarding the reconfirmation requirement as saying "There's no way a director can do the job that he should for the commission that hires him under those circumstances." (Harris, 1981, March 2)

> The 4th QE committee recommended that the Legislature
>
> Delete from Section 4 of the law relating to the Commission on Higher Education the two sentences in Paragraph 4 relating to the appointment of the Executive Officer of the Commission on Higher Education and the requirement that this appointment be reconfirmed by the Senate each four years beginning with the regular session of 1981. A new contract every four years, determined by the Commission on Higher Education, should provide for adequate review and is a normal method of appointment of senior officers of this caliber and type. (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 23)

A bill to do this was introduced in the 1990 Regular Session with full support of Alabama's higher education institutions and legislative leaders. It passed Senate Committee but never reached the floor for debate (ACHE, 1990 August, p. 5 of part 4).

However, the 6th QE committee returned this issue to the forefront by recommending, "That the current statutory requirement mandating Senate confirmation of the Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education be eliminated." (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 40) This time, the recommendation was successfully implemented through the May 1996 passage of HB 542 (now Act 96-487) that eliminated the Senate re-confirmation requirement. In addition, ACHE (at the request of members of the House Education Committee)

voluntarily developed and issued a four-year contract, exactly as the 4th QE committee had recommended in 1987 (ACHE, 1998, p. 11).

Resolution of the Title VI Litigation

The 4th QE made two references to the Title VI litigation within its recommendations:

- "Governor Hunt might appoint a task force, with a relatively short calendar for reporting, to address such matters as…(5) recommend ways to achieve an equitable and early out-of-court resolution to the debilitating desegregation litigation." (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 3) Governor Hunt never appointed this recommended task force.
- "It is strongly recommended that all relevant parties move as expeditiously as possible to bring to resolution the many and complex issues involved in Title VI litigation." (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 24) In the text prior to this recommendation, the 4th QE commented that they had received many comments concerning this issue during their evaluation, and that the environment was such that many individuals appeared to be exercising caution in their public comments based on concern that these comments might end up in court. The committee further indicated that "Strategic and long-range planning is made difficult, if not impossible, because of the uncertainties associated with the outcome of this suit." (Harcleroad et al., 1987, p. 24)

The 6th QE committee recommended:

> That the Governor of the State take leadership in working with legislative and educational leaders in fashioning a resolution of the Title VI suit and submitting a proposed resolution to the court that will be endorsed by the Alabama Commission and all of higher education in the state. (Bogue et al., 1995, p. 40)

In addition to its specific recommendation, the 6th QE committee also included, as an appendix to its report, a detailed chronology of the Knight vs. Alabama case, from its origination in 1978 from a Title VI compliance investigation by the Office of Civil Rights of the (then) U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare through to the fact that a re-hearing of the case had begun on January 30, 1985 (Bogue et al., 1985, pp. 57-66)

The Court issued an Order and Remedial Decree concerning the case on August 1, 1995. ACHE's response to the 6th QE recommendation included the highlights of the remedial decree and a chronology of the implementation measures taken by the Governor, State attorney, and ACHE (ACHE, 1998, p. 12 and Tab 4).

Summary

This chapter has provided an account of the evidence collected during this study concerning the ACHE QE process as it relates to each of ACHE's mission role areas as well as to other significant areas in which one or more of the ACHE QE committees has offered recommendations. This evidence included the QE report recommendations themselves, legislation, ACHE staff responses to QE

report recommendations, and other sources including media articles and comments from selected follow-up interviews. The evidence showed many areas in which the ACHE QE process appears to have influenced meaningful change, as well as providing explanations concerning why other recommendations have not been implemented or have only been partially implemented.

The next and final chapter of this study will provide the researcher's conclusions, based on the evidence presented above and in the previous chapters of this study, concerning the contributions and benefits of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. It will also include recommendations for potential improvements to the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the researcher's conclusions concerning the contributions and benefits of the quadrennial evaluation (QE) process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), to provide recommendations that might contribute to the improvement of this process, and to suggest some opportunities for further research concerning related topics.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Chapter I of this study provided an introduction to include the rationale and theoretical base for the study. Chapter II was presented in two sections. The first section provided a review of related literature, while the second section presented a preliminary study that the researcher conducted concerning the evaluation of statewide boards of higher education. The results of this preliminary study confirmed that the ACHE QE process is the most thorough and frequent of any similar process conducted by or upon any similar body nationwide, hence providing an additional basis for the conduct and importance of the present study.

Chapter III covered the methods of the study, including the use of a survey instrument, follow-up interviews, and documentary research to assess the contribution and benefits of the ACHE QE process to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. Chapter IV presented the quantitative and qualitative survey results, while Chapter V provided an introduction to the other evidence used. Chapter VI provided a detailed discussion of the evidence. This chapter was organized around a review of QE committee recommendations by category, along with evidence that addressed the degree to which these recommendations were or were not implemented.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to establish as clearly as feasible the degree to which the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process has been of benefit to Alabama higher education, and to consider the following questions:

- Have the quadrennial evaluations provided important and useful information or guidance for policies and practice?
- Has such routine review of Alabama higher education and the state's role in it been beneficial or not?
- What liabilities and impedances may associate with this review and evaluation?
- What are the impacts and implications of such regular review?

- What are the lessons for other states that might be derived from a close look at Alabama's quadrennial evaluation process?

Consideration of the Evidence

Quantitative Survey Results

The quantitative survey data from the results chapter, if it were to stand alone, might paint in some minds a fairly disappointing picture concerning the effectiveness of the QE process, as it generally reflected (on average) moderate to moderately low opinions concerning both the degrees to which the QE process had contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in various areas, and the degrees to which each of the evaluations themselves have been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education.

Of course, the quantitative analysis and follow-up research showed two significant areas where the quantitative data may have been skewed by specific negative attitudes of two sectors concerning either ACHE or a particular activity of ACHE. These areas were the two-year sector's generally negative attitude towards ACHE and the four-year sector's generally negative attitude towards the implementation of a database that some four-year individuals believe could be interpreted negatively against the interests of their institutions.

If one were to factor out these responses (as the researcher did as part of his quantitative analysis in Chapter VI), the resulting numbers would reflect moderate degrees of contribution by the ACHE QE process to each of ACHE's assigned role areas, as well as moderate degrees of benefit to ACHE and Alabama higher education by each of the quadrennial evaluations themselves (and approaching moderately high degrees of benefit for the 1st, 2nd, and 6th quadrennial evaluations).

Qualitative and Documentary Evidence

In addition, much of the qualitative data from surveys and interviews, as well as the other documentary evidence available concerning the QE process and evaluations, presents a positive picture to all but the most hardened skeptic. There has clearly been significant progress, much of which can logically be attributed to the evaluations themselves, as well as the work of the Commission and its constituencies based on QE recommendations, in the following areas:

- Establishment of appropriate roles and levels of authority and accountability for ACHE.
- Helping ACHE to remain focused on its primary mission.
- Increased public awareness of the problems facing Alabama higher education and the actions that various constituencies have taken and continue to take to address these problems.

- Improvements in relationships between the Commission and many of its constituencies, including the Alabama Legislature.
- Helping ACHE to prevent an even greater proliferation of unnecessary and duplicative academic programs.

Specifically, a review of the narratives in Chapter VI regarding the recommendations of the QE committees and the evidence of actions taken concerning these recommendations shows that ACHE has almost always responded positively to each recommendation and has made progress in the areas identified by these recommendations. Regarding the few cases where ACHE has neglected (either intentionally or not) to follow through on a recommendation, there is evidence that (in at least some of these cases) the political environment external to ACHE was such that ACHE's pursuing these recommendations could have actually done more harm than good.

Concerning the State University and College Information System, ACHE responded positively to the two recommendations of the 1st QE committee, was praised by the 4th QE committee, and promptly responded to the criticisms and recommendation of the 6th QE by pursuing legislation that clarified ACHE's authority in this area and making progress in establishing the student and faculty unit record databases. The progress ACHE has been able to make in this area is particularly impressive when considering the complexity of the systems involved and the opposition of individuals within the four-year sector.

Based on recommendations concerning master planning and policy issues, it is clear that ACHE has made slow but steady progress over the years in improving its planning, study, analysis, and evaluation functions. One could easily argue that the consistent interest in this area by successive QE committees contributed significantly to this continued progress. Significant ACHE response actions over the years include supporting of successful relevant legislation in 1979 and 1996, establishing the Council of Twenty-One and a planning liaison group, and the development of the 1991 plan. The only recommendation on which it took no action was a recommendation of the 1st QE committee concerning the establishment of planning regions in the state. However, there is some circumstantial evidence that similar efforts at other times had not been politically feasible, and this may have been the reason for not attempting such action at that time.

In the area of program evaluation and review and prevention of program duplication, ACHE has attempted to implement virtually all of the QE committee recommendations and has been successful in implementing the majority. Significant actions in this regard include the successful support of legislation in 1979 (although not all recommendations were implemented), as well as multiple unsuccessful legislative attempts concerning certain other recommendations. ACHE has, however, been effective in some areas based on its own efforts even when the Alabama Legislature would not give it the authority that a QE committee recommended it should give to ACHE.

Regarding finance and budget issues, ACHE has taken or attempted positive action concerning all of the recommendations of the QE committee except one recommendation of the 1st QE concerning procurement and sharing of major instructional and research equipment among institutions. However, ACHE has been limited concerning several of these recommendations either by not having the authority to implement them or by their recommendations not being accepted by the Legislature.

The other evidence in the previous chapter regarding recommendations not specifically tied to ACHE role areas, when combined with the evidence concerning the role areas, clearly shows that ACHE has become (at least for the time being) as powerful a coordinating body for higher education in the state of Alabama as has been possible through the years given the prevailing political climate.

Value of External Evaluation

The greatest single beneficial aspect of the quadrennial evaluation process is probably the fact that it involves higher education experts from outside the state of Alabama. It may be clear to the reader by now (and has been clear to the researcher and many other observers for some time) that Alabama has one of the most highly politicized climates regarding higher education of any state in the nation. Perhaps one of the clearest evidences of this is the fact that the employment of Alabama state legislators and their

families in Alabama higher education positions (especially in the 2-year sector) is considered commonplace and rarely seriously questioned (see, for example, Parks, 1989, January 23; Continuing conflict, 1989, January 25; Anderson and Peck, 1994, September 18; Peck and Anderson, 1994, September 19; Colleges: all in the family, 1994, September 21), while in many other states in our nation it is specifically identified as either an unethical conflict of interest and/or illegal. As many survey respondents and interviewees have confirmed, an external evaluation by those who are not viewed as having a political stake in the outcome is the only type of evaluation that could have sufficient credibility for meaningful action in the Alabama political environment.

Internal Attitude Towards the QE Process

An additional argument for the benefit of this review that was not specifically presented in previous chapters is the attitude of ACHE itself towards the requirement for the review. During follow-up interviews with the researcher (as well as during earlier informal conversations), ACHE senior staff members have repeatedly indicated that they believe the original intent of the legislative requirement for the quadrennial evaluation was to "punish" or hinder ACHE in certain ways. According to this logic, the legislators who included this requirement believed that the evaluations would be likely to consistently paint ACHE in a negative light, thus keeping it from

gaining too much power or being any more effective than these legislators desired.

However, despite this perception of an original negative purpose for the evaluation requirement, the majority of the ACHE senior staff itself (as well as of those ACHE commissioners who responded to the survey) appears to believe that the process is of sufficient value to warrant its continuation. All of the individuals with whom the researcher conducted follow-up interviews (including multiple members of the ACHE senior staff) believe that the process should continue. Further, a review of the qualitative survey responses reveals not more than one ACHE staff member and one ACHE commissioner who may believe that the process should not continue, while many more in each category appear to believe (based on both numerical scores and comments) that the process should continue. When one considers the opinions of the ACHE senior staff concerning the original intent of the Legislature, as well as the considerable time, effort, and expense involved in planning, conducting, and responding to these evaluations, the fact that many ACHE senior staff members and ACHE commissioners appear to believe the process should continue is itself one of the strongest arguments for its continuation. Of course, as one ACHE senior staff member correctly pointed out, it would take an act of the Legislature to eliminate or substantially change the requirement, and such an action would not be likely even if ACHE were to recommend it.

Potential Shortcomings in QE Process

Of course, the evidence presented in the previous chapters also pointed out some potential shortcomings in the process that need to be addressed:

- Several respondents identified a need for greater specificity concerning the types of individuals that should be appointed to QE committees. Specifically, some argued that individuals who were more closely associated with ACHE or with Alabama higher education (2-year and 4-year sectors) should be involved, while others argued for increasing the number of higher education professionals (again, from both the 2-year and 4-year sectors) from outside Alabama on the committees.
- There were recommendations that the Governor or Legislature should appoint the consultants, as well as recommendations that there needed to be more input in the evaluations from the Governor and certain legislative committees, and that there needed to be a more effective way of communicating the QE results to the Governor, Legislature, and public. This concern multiplies when one considers the dramatic reduction in legislative involvement during the past few quadrennial evaluations as well as the researcher's own experience in receiving virtually no usable input from legislators or lay individuals who had been involved in the QE process.

- Other recommendations indicated that the QE committees needed to be more concerned with the relationships of the 2-year sector in general, as well as with the State Board of Education and boards of the various universities.
- The comparison and contrast of the first six QE reports presented in Chapter V, when considered along with the other evidence presented in this study, strongly suggested that some of the more beneficial evaluations have had certain characteristics that have not been present in the less beneficial evaluations. Specifically, the evaluations that the other evidence suggest were more beneficial have involved a higher total number of consultants, Alabama lay leaders in addition to higher education professionals, specific representation from the 2-year sector among the higher education professionals, and more balanced receipt of information from representatives of the 4-year and 2-year sectors. In addition, the more effective evaluations appear to have been more thorough as measured by their length in number of pages.

Conclusion

It is clear from the evidence presented in this study that the quadrennial evaluation process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, on the whole, has provided important information and guidance for policy and practice. It is also clear that this routine

review of Alabama higher education and the state's role in it has been beneficial to the Commission and to Alabama higher education in certain particulars. Specific evidences of this include the role of the 1st, 2nd, and 6th evaluations in providing support for important legislative changes that provided ACHE with appropriate authority based on its role and that improved its operating environment. These evidences also include the many actions and adjustments that ACHE has made based on the recommendations of the various QE committees.

The impacts and implications of this regular review include the following:

- The regular review of ACHE by a panel composed largely or primarily of higher education professionals from outside Alabama provides a benchmark that is far more likely both to be, and to be perceived as, objective and unbiased than any procedure that might be conducted by a similar panel composed exclusively by in state individuals. This would likely be true for any state, but is especially true for Alabama based on its highly politicized environment.
- A regular review that takes into account the recommendations of previous committees, as well as the previous actions (or lack thereof) by ACHE and other relevant constituents concerning these previous recommendations, serves a vital purpose in keeping appropriate issues in the public eye and/or in determining that the priorities of certain issues may have changed regardless of whether the relevant parties have taken appropriate action.

The lessons that other states might derive from a close look at Alabama's QE process include the following:

- The potential value of an external review in providing a less-biased observation of strengths and weaknesses.
- The importance of using a combination of out-of-state higher education professionals and in state lay leaders in conducting such an evaluation.
- The importance of having a sufficient number of evaluators and other sufficient resources to conduct a thorough and beneficial review.
- The importance of soliciting, collecting, and analyzing data from a balanced representation of all of the relevant constituencies.

Recommendations

Concerning the Continuation of the ACHE QE Process

Based upon the observations and analysis above, the researcher recommends that the Alabama Commission on Higher Education continue with its quadrennial evaluations. While the exact timing of some of the data collection may need to be adjusted (see one of the researcher's recommendations below concerning this), the timing of the quadrennial evaluation to coincide with the final year of each gubernatorial term should continue to provide the appropriate

frequency and timing of review necessary for these evaluations to be as effective and beneficial as possible.

Concerning Potential Improvements to the ACHE QE Process

However, the researcher further recommends that, either via legislation and/or other appropriate means, Alabama make the following changes to the quadrennial evaluation process. In making these recommendations, the researcher realizes that ACHE may already be doing some of them to certain degrees as a matter of internal policy, but believes that they need to be formalized to ensure consistency.

Responsibility for Selection/Approval of QE Committee Members

The selection of committee members should either be performed by, or at least approved by, the governor and/or legislature in such a manner as they may prescribe. ACHE commissioners and/or staff members could continue to recommend appropriate individuals to the legislature based on their current processes of soliciting recommendations from other constituencies. However, ACHE should not be the final authority in their selection.

The making of this recommendation should not be construed as a charge by the researcher in any way that ACHE has not performed its duties appropriately in this regard in the past, nor is it based on an intent to make the process more difficult or cumbersome.

However, the change recommended above would serve two very important purposes. First, it would serve to mitigate any accusations by other constituents (including especially those that may be unfavorably disposed towards ACHE) that ACHE might select individuals overly sympathetic to its positions as opposed to those of the governor, legislature, or other constituents. Secondly, it would provide an impetus for the governor and legislature to be more involved in the QE process.

Parameters for Selection of QE Committee Members

The parameters for selecting committee members should be expanded in several particulars.

Number of committee members.

The researcher recommends that the appropriate individuals give serious consideration to increasing the number of committee members for future evaluations to increase the likelihood of more thorough and more beneficial evaluations. There are at least two possible approaches to implementing this recommendation. One would be to change the legislation to increase the minimum number of committee members required from three to some higher number (the researcher would suggest that, if this option is taken, the minimum number of committee members should increase from three to at least five). Another approach (and one far easier to implement) would be to

establish and follow guidance with emphasis on the fact that, while there must be at least three committee members, there can and should be as many as the appropriate constituents feel are necessary to conduct a particular evaluation based on the particulars of a current situation.

Composition of committee.

The researcher recommends that the appropriate individuals implement more specific requirements concerning the composition of future QE committees to increase the likelihood of more beneficial evaluations through more specific focus on the various constituencies. There should be specific instructions concerning committee selection that there must be at least one individual on each committee in each of the following categories:

- One higher education professional from outside Alabama whose primary professional emphasis is the 2-year sector.
- One higher education professional from outside Alabama whose primary professional emphasis is in an area of higher education other than the 2-year sector.
- One civic, business, or media leader from Alabama who does not have any substantial professional ties to higher education within Alabama.

Instructions to the committee.

Within the instructions to the committee, there should be specific directions that the committee should strive to base its judgments on as balanced a review as possible among the various constituents of Alabama higher education. These instructions should advise the committee specifically concerning a balance of representation between the views of the 4-year and 2-year sectors, as well as the need to solicit and receive as much information from the governor and legislature and their staffs as possible. One possible scheduling consideration here concerns the receipt of information from the legislature. One ACHE senior staff member indicated during a follow-up interview that the reason for the drop in legislative participation in the QE process was likely the fact that the legislature is not in session during the times that the QE committees have usually done their interviews. The ACHE staff should consider making adjustments to the scheduling to improve the likelihood of QE input from legislators.

Updating of status reports.

The ACHE staff should continue its practice of providing a detailed update concerning the status of the recommendations of the previous QE committee to the subsequent committee. In addition, the ACHE staff should update the status reports cited earlier for all of the previous QE recommendations, arranged topically in a fashion

similar to that used in this study. The staff should provide each committee with any information it considers relevant concerning these older reports, and should inform each committee that the other information is available and provide it upon request. Each committee should receive specific guidance that the committee members should consider such information concerning previous conclusions and recommendations, but should not feel bound by it in forming their own conclusions and recommendations.

Reports to the Governor, Legislature, and Public

There should be a formal requirement and mechanism for each QE committee's report and recommendations to be presented to the governor and legislature in a formal and public manner. Ideally, this would occur by the chair of each QE committee appearing personally and publicly before the governor and at least a portion of the legislature. In addition, ACHE should provide, in a similar formal and public manner, its status reports concerning actions regarding the recommendations of previous QE committees to the governor and legislature. These actions would be additional ways to provide an impetus to the governor and legislature for increased ownership of the process and attention to the results and recommendations of the evaluations. In addition, the ACHE staff should ensure that the releases of these reports receive the maximum possible publicity through the appropriate use of press releases and news conferences. Making the report available on the ACHE web site

(already done for the 7th QE report) should be a matter of course as well.

Opportunities for Further Study

This study was admittedly quite broad in its time scope, covering the QE process over a twenty-five year period. Accordingly, in order to keep the study manageable, the researcher had to focus quite narrowly on those evidences that were both reasonably available and related most directly to the contribution and benefits of the QE process to ACHE and to Alabama higher education. In narrowing this focus, he identified the following areas that might provide valuable opportunities for other researchers:

- While there is a significant amount of information provided within this study concerning the relationship between ACHE and the 2-year sector, there was much more that the researcher collected but chose not to use because it did not bear as directly on the issue of the contribution and benefits of the QE process as the information included herein. There are several possibilities for future study of Alabama higher education issues based on this relationship. One specific possibility in this area involves what is known as the "off-campus controversy" that ensued between 1993 and 1997, where the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ultimately requested that Alabama Governor Fob James clarify that the Alabama State Board of Education was the

ultimate governing authority for Alabama's 2-year sector based on certain problems where ACHE and the State Board of Education were at odds concerning off-campus offerings.

- While the Title VI legislation was of concern to multiple QE committees, in the final analysis there was relatively little measurable interaction between the results of the QE process and the resolution of the Knight v. Alabama case. There is, of course, much more opportunity for the study of this case and its impact on Alabama higher education over the past twenty plus years.
- Other researchers either now or (more likely) in the future may be able to further the utility of the present study through greater success in receiving input from legislators and/or lay citizens within Alabama concerning the contribution and benefits of the QE process.
- Because of the timing of this study, the researcher was unable to adequately address the issue of whether the 7th QE committee's choice of focus groups rather than individual interviews may prove to be more or less effective in soliciting appropriate input from various constituencies. Any future studies of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process should certainly consider this issue.

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Act Number 79-461 of the Alabama Legislature (Regular Session, 1979), which changed the name of ACHE to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and made other more significant changes (most of which were in response to the recommendations of the 1st and 2nd QE committees) was approved on July 30, 1979. This act amended and reenacted Sections 16-5-1 through 16-5-10 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. Copies of this act appeared as Appendix B to the report of the 3rd QE committee (Norton et al., 1983, pp. 31-42), Appendix D to the report of the 4th QE committee (Harcleroad et al., 1987, pp. 40-51), and Appendix C to the report of the 5th QE committee (Folger et al., 1991, pp. 34-44),

Acts of the Alabama Legislature, which resulted in updates to Alabama State Law that are included in the 1996 Cumulative Supplement to the Alabama Code, include the following:

Act 96-497 removed the requirement that the Alabama Senate reconfirm the ACHE executive director every four years. This amended Section 16-5-4 of the Code of Alabama 1975, effective May 17, 1996.

Act 96-509 required ACHE to establish a student unit record data system. This amended Section 16-5-7 of the Code of Alabama 1975, effective May 17, 1996.

Act 96-539 required Alabama's public higher education institutions to submit facilities master plans to ACHE for their review. This became law on May 17, 1996 as Section 16-5-15 of the Code of Alabama 1975.

Act 96-557 regarded ACHE's authority to review and report on program viability. This amended Section 16-5-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975 effective May 20, 1996.

Act 96-663 regarded minimum requirements for tuition rates for non-resident students. Passed by the Alabama House of Representatives on February 29, 1996.

Act 96-771 regarding the requirement for ACHE to establish a faculty unit record data system. This amended Section 16-5-7, Code of Alabama 1975 effective May 28, 1996.

A copy of ACHE's entire statute, including Article 1 - General Provisions (Sections 16-5-1 through 16-5-15 of the Code of Alabama) that incorporates all of the above acts, and Article 2 - Committee to Improve Postsecondary Education Participation (Sections 16-5-30 through 16-5-33 of the Code of Alabama), appeared in the report of the 7th QE committee (McGuinness et al., 1999, pp. 25-48.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Classification Of State Higher Education Coordinating And Governing Boards

The following is an attempt to classify the various state higher education coordinating and governing boards. The classification shown below was believed to be accurate as of the date of the preliminary research described in Chapter II of the present study (Summer 1995). This classification places each coordinating or governing board into one of five categories based upon the following definitions.

Single Statewide Governing Boards

These are boards that govern all or virtually all of the institutions of higher education within a given state where no statewide coordinating board (see below) exists. Exceptions to overall governance are as noted.

Statewide Coordinating Boards

These are boards that coordinate higher education activities in states with one or more other governing boards. Certain of these boards also have governing powers over certain institutions as indicated. Where multiple entities are listed for a single state, these organizations share coordinating responsibility and/or authority. These boards are further classified as either regulatory boards (with program approval authority), advisory boards (with program review/recommendation authority only), or planning agencies.

NOTE: The senior executives of the boards in the two categories listed above are members of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) except where noted.

Multiple Campus College and/or University Governing Boards

These are boards that govern "multi-campus systems," i.e., multiple campuses of what is presented as the same overall institution. In these cases, the names of most (if not all) campuses within a system clearly indicate that these campuses are parts of the system. If such a system contains all of the higher education institutions in a given state, it is listed in the "Single Statewide Governing Boards" category above rather than here.

Community, Vocational, Technical, and/or Junior College Boards

These are boards that coordinate and/or govern all or virtually all of the institutions of higher education in a given state (or region) which do not offer a baccalaureate or higher degree, and which deal primarily with only such institutions. These include multiple independent boards that exist in certain states, but do not include subordinate boards.

Multiple College and/or University Governing Boards

These are boards that govern multiple colleges or universities within a state that do not fall more logically into any of the above-listed categories. These include entities which identify themselves as "systems" but which do not present the majority of the campuses within the system as elements of the same institution.

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Single Statewide Governing Boards

- Arizona Board of Regents (separate board governs community colleges)
- Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (separate board governs technical institutes)
- Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii
- State Board of Education and Board of Regents of the University Of Idaho
- Iowa State Board of Regents (separate board governs community colleges)
- Kansas Board of Regents (separate board governs community colleges)
- The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System
- Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (separate board governs community/junior colleges)
- Board of Regents for Higher Education/The Montana University System
- The Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada
- The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina (separate, subordinate board governs community colleges)
- The State Board of Higher Education/The North Dakota University System
- Oregon State System/Board of Higher Education (separate board governs community colleges)
- State of Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education
- South Dakota Board of Regents
- Utah State Board of Regents
- The Board of Regents of The University of Wisconsin System (separate board governs community colleges)

Statewide Coordinating Boards

Regulatory Boards (with program approval authority)

- Alabama Commission on Higher Education
- Arkansas Department/State Board of Higher Education
- Colorado Commission on Higher Education
- State of Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education
- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Kentucky Council on Higher Education
- Louisiana Board of Regents
- Maryland Higher Education Commission
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council (governing except for the University of Massachusetts)
- Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education
- Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
- State of New Jersey Commission on Higher Education
- The Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York
- Ohio Board of Regents
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education (public and private)
- South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Commonwealth of Virginia Council of Higher Education

Statewide Coordinating Boards (continued)

- Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board

Advisory Boards (program review/recommendation authority only)

- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
- California Postsecondary Education Commission
- Florida State Board of Education/Postsecondary Education Planning Commission
- Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board
- New Mexico Commission of Higher Education
- Pennsylvania State Board of Education Council on Higher Education/Board of Governors, State System of Higher Education
- Wyoming Postsecondary Education Planning and Coordinating Council (not a SHEEO member)

Planning Agencies

- Delaware Higher Education Commission
- District of Columbia Office of Postsecondary Education, Research, and Assistance
- State of Michigan Department/Board of Education
- New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission
- Oregon Office of Educational Policy and Planning (not a SHEEO member)
- Vermont Higher Education Council (voluntary body) (not a SHEEO member)

Multiple Campus College and/or University Governing Boards

- Auburn University Board of Trustees (Alabama)
- The Troy State University System Governing Board (Alabama)
- The University of Alabama System Board of Trustees

- University of Alaska System Board of Regents (statewide) (SHEEO member)

- Arkansas State University System Board
- University of Arkansas System Board
- Southern Arkansas University Board

- The California State University and Colleges System Board of Trustees
- University of California Board of Regents

- University of Colorado Regents

- Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut

- Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois
- Board of Trustees of the Southern Illinois University System

- Indiana University System
- Purdue University System (Indiana)

- Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College System
- Board of Supervisors of the Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College System (Louisiana)

- Montgomery College Central Administration (Maryland)

- The Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts

- Board of Regents of The University of Michigan System

- Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota System

- Board of Curators of the University of Missouri

- Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska

- Board of Trustees of the University System of New Hampshire (statewide; separate board governs technical institutes) (SHEEO member)

Multiple Campus College and/or University Governing Boards (cont.)

- Board of Governors of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- Board of Trustees of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

- Constitutional Regents of the New Mexico State University System

- The Board of Trustees of The City University of New York
- The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York

- Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges
- Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

- The Board of Trustees of Pennsylvania State University

- The Board of Governors of the University of Puerto Rico

- Board of Trustees of the University of South Carolina

- The Board of Trustees of The University of Tennessee System

- Lamar University System Board (Texas)
- The University of Texas System Board

- The Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia

- The Board of Trustees of the University System of West Virginia (statewide) (SHEEO member)

Community, Vocational, Technical, and/or Junior College Boards

- State of Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

- State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona

- Arkansas Division of Vocational and Technical Education/State Board of Education

- California Community College Board of Governors

- Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System

- State of Connecticut Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges
- Board of Trustees of Delaware Technical & Community College
- Florida State Board of Community Colleges
- Georgia State Board of Technical and Adult Education
- Illinois Community College Board
- Indiana Vocational Technical College Board of Trustees
- Iowa Board of Education Division of Community Colleges
- Kansas State Board of Education
- Kentucky Tech Regions (North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southern, West)
- Board of Trustees of the Maine Vocational/Technical Institutions
- The Community College Board of Michigan (advisory)
- Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges
- New Hampshire State Board of Vocational-Technical Education
- State University of New York Office of Community Colleges
- North Carolina Department/State Board of Community Colleges
- Oregon State Board of Education Office of Community College Services
- South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education
- Texas State Technical College System Board
- Virginia State Board for Community Colleges
- Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Wisconsin Technical College System Board
- Wyoming Community College Commission

Multiple College and/or University Governing Boards

- Colorado Board of Agriculture
- Trustees of The State Colleges in Colorado

- Board of Trustees of Connecticut State University

- Board of Regents of the State University System of Florida (separate board governs community colleges)

- Illinois Board of Governors of State Universities
- Regency Universities System Board of Regents (Illinois)

- Board of Trustees of the University of Kentucky (includes community colleges)

- State of Louisiana Board of Trustees for the State Colleges and Universities

- The Board of Regents of the University of Maryland System

- Board of Trustees of Nebraska State Colleges

- Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges

- Tennessee Board of Regents of the State University and Community College System

- The Texas A&M University System Board
- The Texas State University System Board
- Board of Trustees of the Vermont State Colleges (SHEEO member)

- The Board of Directors of the State College System of West Virginia (SHEEO member)

Appendix B: State Survey Instrument (Template)

Survey of Formal Evaluations of
Statewide Coordinating and Governing Boards

This survey is intended for completion by the senior executive (or his or her designee) of selected primary statewide coordinating and/or governing boards in each state. The following information is necessary so that we may correctly analyze the responses.

Name of board:_____

Name and title of
person completing survey:_____

Office address:_____

City, State, Zip Code:_____

Telephone number:_____

FAX number:_____

Please answer the following questions concerning the board named above as completely as possible. Please feel free to use any format you wish (including additional pages) which provides at least the requested information, and to include any additional information which you believe may be relevant for the purpose of studying the effectiveness of formal evaluations of coordinating and governing boards.

Has the board named above gone through one or more formal evaluations in the past ten years?

_____ YES, the board has been evaluated in the last ten years. (Please answer the following questions for EACH evaluation. Feel free to use additional pages if necessary. Please explain the answer to any question as fully as possible if necessary.)

_____ The board has been evaluated in the past, but not in the past ten years. (Please give the date(s) of the most recent evaluation(s)and as much information as is available on those evaluations.)

_____ NO, the board has NEVER received a formal evaluation. (Please return the survey. The questions listed below will not apply; however, you are encouraged to provide any other information which you feel may assist us in our study.)

(This survey continues on the reverse of this page.)(over, please)

When was the evaluation conducted? Please be as specific as possible concerning the duration of the evaluation, beginning and ending dates, and when the final report or other final product was prepared.

Was the evaluation required by policy or law? If so, please identify the source of the policy or law as specifically as possible.

Why was the evaluation conducted? Please be as specific as necessary concerning the purposes and goals of the evaluation, as well as how those purposes and goals were determined.

(This survey continues on a second sheet.) (next page, please)

Please identify and describe as fully as possible the evaluator(s) involved in each evaluation (more than one of the below-listed answers may apply; please check as many as apply and identify/describe below).

_____ Current members and/or employees of the board itself

_____ Other state employees

_____ One or more external teams, firms, and/or consultants

Please describe as fully as possible the process used to select the evaluator(s) (if not included in earlier responses).

(This survey concludes on the reverse of this page.) (over, please)

Please indicate what reports or other products exist as a result of each evaluation.

Please provide copies of any such products which you may legally provide based upon this request without charge. If there is a charge for these products and/or if another form of request is required, please provide information on which products are available at what price and how we may order these products.

Please return this survey in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope or FAX it to (615) 974-6146. Please provide copies of any products requested above to the following address:

Maurice A. Ottinger, Graduate Assistant
Leadership Studies in Education Unit
The University of Tennessee
245 Claxton Addition Building
Knoxville, TN 37996-3400

Telephone: (615) 974-2216

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

Maurice A. Ottinger Graduate Assistant

E. Grady Bogue
Professor and Director of
Dissertation Research

Appendix C: State Survey Cover Letter (Template)

(Letterhead and address)

Dear (title and name):

I am conducting a study in the field of higher education governance; more specifically, an exploratory study on the evaluation of coordinating and governing boards. I am expecting this exploratory study to lay the foundation for dissertation research. In order to complete this study, I need your help.

As an important part of this research, I am asking you (or an appropriate individual in your organization) to complete the enclosed survey concerning formal evaluations which your organization has gone through in the last ten years.

Completion of this survey should take no more than thirty to forty minutes of your time.* If you wish, you may call me at (615) 974-2216 and give your answers to the survey by phone. I know that you are very busy, but I hope that you will support this project. I will see that you get a summary of the results of this study which I believe will be of interest to you.

Because I am anxious to move ahead, I would appreciate your response to the enclosed survey by June 1, 1995. I have enclosed a postage-paid envelope for your use or, if you wish, you may FAX the survey to me at (615) 974-6146. If you have any questions or need additional guidance in completing the survey, please call me at (615) 974-2216. I greatly appreciate your help in this project and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Maurice A. Ottinger
Graduate Assistant

E. Grady Bogue
Professor and Director of
Dissertation Research

* As an option to detailed completion of the survey, if the answers to various survey questions appear in a report or other product of which you can provide a copy, please feel free to simply provide this document and reference it in response to the survey question.

Appendix D: State-by-State Responses to Survey on Formal Evaluation of Coordinating and Governing Boards

The following is a state-by-state listing of detailed survey information. In most cases, it is a near-verbatim transcription of the written survey response. In cases where no written survey response was provided, it is a researcher summary of the relevance of other documents provided. To ensure ease of reading, no attempt has been made to distinguish between exact verbatim transcription and paraphrasing. The researcher has (and will retain indefinitely) all documents from which the following information has been transcribed, and will provide any needed clarification upon request.

Alabama

A senior staff member of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) reported the following:

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education has had six quadrennial evaluations since its inception. The last three evaluations (conducted within the last ten years) have resulted in formal reports in March 1987, March 1991, and March 1995. In each case, the evaluation usually began in July or August (not including the time spent in putting the team together) and concluded in time to issue a report in March of the following year. The process generally involves several team visits to the state for interview purposes.

These quadrennial evaluations are required by state law (Act 74-461, Section 16, Code of Alabama). The statute simply states that the purpose of the evaluation is "to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Commission and to recommend changes as needed." In effect, the evaluations also gauge the effectiveness of the higher education system as a whole, and recommendations relate to ACHE, state government, and the institutions. The evaluations have been extremely helpful.

ACHE tries to get out-of-state consultants who are (or have been) significantly involved in higher education. ACHE seeks to find well known & highly respected persons, and has been extremely successful in doing so. Typically, ACHE uses former or current college/university presidents, coordinating board executive officers, system chancellors, and well-known higher education consultants, researchers and writers. ACHE likes to include at least one member to represent the two-year sector. [RESEARCER'S NOTE: As shown in the present study, ACHE has arguably not always been successful in having at least one member to represent the two-year sector on each evaluation committee.] ACHE is also mindful of the need for racial and gender diversity. Along with the external consultants, ACHE usually includes in-state leader-type laypersons.

In the case of each quadrennial review, ACHE seeks nominations for both in-state and out-of-state individuals to serve of the evaluation team. The in-state persons are usually prominent citizen-leaders, while the out-of-state consultants are professional educators. Nominations are sought from Commission members and staff, institutions of higher education, legislators, and government and business leaders.

From among the nominees, contacts are made to determine which ones are available and interested. The staff then recommends the persons it feels would make a good team to the Commission for final selection.

Alaska

An executive assistant with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education reported that the commission has never received a formal evaluation.

A representative of the University of Alaska reported that the University of Alaska Board of Regents has never received a formal evaluation.

Arizona

A staff representative of the Arizona Board of Regents reported the following:

The board was audited once during the last ten years. The 1990-1991 audit was authorized June 14, 1989. It was conducted from August 14, 1990 to September 1991. The final report number 91-9 was issued by the Auditor General.

The evaluation was required by law: Arizona Revised Statutes 41-2351 through 41-2379. Arizona has a Sunset Review Statute and the Board of Regents came up for review in the normal course of reviewing all state agencies. A performance audit was conducted that focused upon the Board of Regents system-wide oversight and accountability responsibilities. The audit focused on the role of the Board and the responsibilities and operations of the central office. The report includes findings addressing the following areas:

- The Board's role and the need to increase the time the Board spends on significant policy and system-wide issues;
- The effectiveness and efficiency of the Board's current efforts to provide system-wide fiscal and academic oversight and accountability;
- The need to clarify and formally articulate the governance role of the central office, the Council of Presidents, and the universities; and
- The need for the Board to ensure full compliance with Arizona's Open Meeting Law.

The evaluation was conducted by the State of Arizona Auditor General's Office. The performance audit was conducted as part of an Arizona Sunset Review Law. The Joint Legislative Audit Oversight Committee requested that the Auditor General perform the audit. The Auditor General issued a report in 1991 and the Board of Regents responded to that report in September 1991.

Arkansas

A senior staff representative of the Arkansas State Board of Higher Education reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

California

A programs analyst for the California Postsecondary Education Commission reported the following:

The California Postsecondary Education Commission is the coordinating and planning board for higher education for the State of California. The agency has never gone through a formal evaluation.

Its role has been discussed in conjunction with a review of California's Master Plan for Higher Education, as was the role of all of the governing boards of each of the systems of public higher education in California. This was not a formal evaluation of the functions we perform or our effectiveness, but rather addressed the broader policy issues such as how California ought to structure its higher education system and which agencies should be responsible for meeting the various needs of the state.

Colorado

A senior staff official of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education provided a copy of a June 1982 Sunset Review Committee Report, which represents the most recent evaluation of the commission. The transmittal letter of this report indicates that the commission appointed a sunset review committee in December, 1981 "to hold public hearings and receive testimony relative to the performance of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education" and to critique the commission's executive director's own sunset report. The committee report's introduction indicates that the Colorado General Assembly amended the commission's statute in 1977 to include a provision which would have terminated the commission on July 1, 1983 unless continued by the General Assembly, and which directed the process outlined above for sunset review.

Connecticut

A senior staff member specifically declined (in writing) to respond to the survey on behalf of the Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education.

Delaware

A senior staff member of the Delaware Higher Education Commission reported that the commission has never received a formal evaluation.

District of Columbia

A senior official of the D.C. Office of Postsecondary Education, Research, and Assistance reported that the agency has never received a formal evaluation.

Florida

A senior official of the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission provided copies of both a Sundown Act Review by the State Senate Committee on Education (January, 1990) and a Sundown Report by the State House of Representatives Committee on Regulatory Reform (February, 1991).

As indicated in the introductions to both reports, the Florida Legislature adopted the Sundown Act of 1978 as a supplement to the Regulatory Sunset Act (formerly the Regulatory Reform Act) of 1976 to provide systematic review of the need for and benefits derived from entities such as the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission. These laws require the Legislature to review such entities to determine which, if any, should be reestablished in the public interest; and provide that no such entity may be established or created for more than ten years. The commission, which had been scheduled for sundown repeal on October 1, 1991, was reestablished following these reviews.

Georgia

A senior official of the Georgia Board of Regents reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Hawaii

An administrative officer to the Hawaii Board of Regents reported the following:

The board has conducted self-evaluations twice in the last ten years, in 1986 and 1992. These evaluations are not required by any policy or law. The evaluations were conducted based upon the desires of the chairpersons of the board (in each case, shortly after assuming duties as chairperson). The questions used in the self-evaluation were devised in both cases by the chairperson and secretary of the board; Association of Governing Boards self-evaluation materials were used as a guide for one of these evaluations. The process in both cases was limited to current members and/or employees of the board itself, with no external or legislative involvement whatsoever. The results of these self-evaluations were discussed at board retreats but are not available to the public.

Idaho

A senior staff official with the Idaho Board of Regents reported the following:

The board conducted a self-evaluation in May 1994. This evaluation was facilitated by an external consultant using the Association of Governing Boards' self-evaluation materials, and was conducted in conjunction with work and planning sessions for the upcoming year.

This official also provided a copy of a document that provides summaries of four higher education governance studies conducted in Idaho between 1983 and 1985. These include a study commissioned and

financed by the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry ("IACI Report" issued November 1983), a study compiled by Governor John Evans' Task Force on Education ("Governor's Report" also issued November 1983), The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges' (NASC) Evaluation Committee Report on the Idaho State Board of Education ("NASC Report" issued October 1984), and The Proceedings of the Idaho Legislature's Ad Hoc Committee on Higher Education ("Legislature's Report" including material gathered in hearings from June through December 1985).

Illinois

A senior staff official of the Illinois Board of Higher Education reported that the board had never received a formal evaluation (at least not in the last fifteen years).

Indiana

A senior official of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education provided a document prepared by the state's Legislative Services Agency, which conducts "sunset" audits of each state agency. The official indicated that this report represented the last formal evaluation of the Commission. While the report itself is undated, the material indicates that it must have been prepared in the mid-1980s, probably in either 1985 or 1986.

Iowa

A senior staff official of the Iowa State Board of Regents reported the following:

The Board of Regents (and its institutions) received an organizational audit from KPMG Peat Marwick Main & Co. of New York.

This audit began in 1987, and resulted in a formal report from Peat Marwick dated November 7, 1989. Subsequent Board of Regents reports dated September 11, 1990 and March 12, 1991 deal with the status of actions that the board and its institutions took as a result of the audit. This evaluation was not required by policy or law, but was conducted at the request of the Board of Regents.

The purposes of this audit (from the Board's perspective) were fourfold: to develop a strategic planning process for the Board and its institutions, to evaluate the Board's organizational structure, to review the methods by which the Board deals with changes to institutional programs, and to examine areas of potential program duplication.

Kansas

A senior staff official with the Kansas Board of Regents reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Kentucky

A senior staff official of the Kentucky Council on Higher Education reported that the council has never received a formal evaluation.

Louisiana

A senior staff official of the Louisiana Board of Regents reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Maine

An administrative assistant to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Maryland

A senior staff official with the Maryland Higher Education Commission reported the following:

The current Maryland Higher Education Commission (started in 1988) has never received a formal evaluation. The former Board of Higher Education (which existed from 1976 until 1988) received a formal evaluation around 1980-81. This official's secretary promised to send a copy of the report from this evaluation if one still existed; but the researcher never received a copy of the report.

Massachusetts

A senior official of the Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council reported that the Council has never received a formal evaluation.

Michigan

A senior official with the Michigan State Board of Education indicated that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Minnesota

A senior staff member of the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (MHECB) provided copies of two reports based upon formal board evaluations. The M & H Group Study Team (an external consulting firm) conducted an "Agency Performance Audit" on the MHECB between May and September 1986, in response to the board's request. In addition, the board conducted a self-study (with external assistance) between May 1994 and January 1995, in response to a state legislative directive issued in 1994.

Mississippi

A representative of the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Missouri

A senior official of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Montana

A senior official of the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education reported that the board had never received a formal evaluation.

Nebraska

A communications coordinator for the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education reported that the commission has never received a formal evaluation. (It had only been in existence for three years as of June 1995.)

Nevada

A senior official of the University and Community College System of Nevada reported the following:

The Board of Regents commissioned a self-study conducted by outside consultants in 1992. This study remained in-house and did not result in any written products available to the public. The primary purpose of this study was to assess and redefine the role of the Chancellor; more specifically, the study concluded that the Chancellor's role should become one of governance (similar to that of a

CEO) relative to the system's institutions rather than one primarily based in coordination efforts.

In June 1995, the Nevada Legislature directed that the State Department of Audit conduct a performance audit of the Board of Regents and the system administration. This audit (for which the Legislature has budgeted $70,000) is concerned primarily with budget and expenditures in the wake of the negative political fallout over unusual events in college athletics within the state (e.g., the $1.8 million buyout of the UNLV basketball coach in October 1994 and the allegations that this was done without proper authority). The official does not believe that this audit will be the beginning of any form of regular, formal evaluation.

New Hampshire

A senior staff official with the New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission reported that the commission has never received a formal evaluation.

New Jersey

A senior staff official with the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education reported the following:

The current commission (created in 1994) has never received a formal evaluation. The former Board and Department of Higher Education (replaced by the commission and a Presidents' Council under reorganization) had not received a formal evaluation at least since 1988 (extent of current institutional knowledge).

New Mexico

A senior staff official with the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education reported the following:

The last formal evaluation of the commission was in the very early 1980s, conducted by staff of the state's executive finance and administration agency. This evaluation was conducted based upon an administrative decision and not based upon any formal law or policy. The evaluation resulted in a brief written report that no current staff member was able to locate. (None of the current commission staff were with the commission at the time of the report.)

New York

An official with the New York State Education Department reported that the Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York has never received a comprehensive formal evaluation. (The official explained that because of the size and complexity of the board's operations, many smaller scope evaluations occur on a regular basis.)

North Carolina

An administrative staff member at the University of North Carolina reported that the University of North Carolina Board of Governors has never received a formal evaluation.

North Dakota

[No response.]

Ohio

A senior staff official with the Ohio Board of Regents reported that the board had never received a formal evaluation.

Oklahoma

A senior official with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education reported the following:

The State Regents conducted a self-evaluation with the assistance of an AGB mentor in March 1994. Tailored AGB questionnaires were sent in advance of a Regents meeting. Responses were tabulated, summarized, and reviewed by the mentor and Regents prior to a four-hour Regents meeting. This evaluation was not mandated by policy or law, but was done in response to a recommendation, contained in a legislatively mandated study of higher education governance, for the State Regents and all other state higher education boards to conduct self-evaluation. The AGB mentor used to facilitate the evaluation, Harold Enarson, was selected due to his familiarity with Oklahoma higher education. (Enarson was the lead consultant in Oklahoma's governance study.) [RESEARCHER'S NOTE: Enarson was also a member of the ACHE Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee.] This self-evaluation resulted in a summary of survey results and minutes of an evaluation session, neither of which are available to the public.

Oregon

A secretary for the Oregon State Board of Higher Education reported that the board had never received a formal evaluation.

Pennsylvania

A representative with the State System of Higher Education reported that the Board of Governors had received a formal review in late 1992 in accordance with the state's sunset law. The researcher requested but never received a copy of that report.

Puerto Rico

A secretary to the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education reported the following:

The Council has never received a formal evaluation. The Council was created by law as a coordinating higher education board in June 1993. Formerly it was the governing body of the public university system; it has the additional function of overseeing (licensing) private higher education institutions in Puerto Rico. The new law assigned to the Council licensing, accrediting, and planning functions, as well as supervisory responsibilities for the state student assistance funds available.

Rhode Island

A senior official with the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education reported the following:

The board has an on-going process of self-evaluation, the most recent phase of which was done in Spring 1995. This self-evaluation process is not required by policy or law; its purpose is to help the board conduct business more effectively and efficiently. Evaluators include one or more external teams, firms, and/or consultants plus the members of the board and the senior staff of the office. Selection of evaluators is based on good references and good past experience. This evaluation process does not result in formal reports, but it does generate a list of priority areas which needs attention. Products from the evaluation process are mainly house working documents not available to the public.

South Carolina

A senior official with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education provided executive summaries of two formal evaluations conducted within the past ten years. The earlier study is entitled Higher Education in South Carolina: An Agenda for the Future. An external consulting firm (Augenblick, Van de Water & Associates [AVA] of Denver, Colorado) conducted this study at the Commission's request. The state legislature funded the study through a state bidding process and review of proposals by the Commission. The purposes of the study were:

a. to examine overall status and structure of higher education in South Carolina and to recommend how it could be improved; and,

b. to examine the Commission on Higher Education and recommend how it could be improved.

The AVA study began in July 1985 and ended in January 1986; the report is dated February 1986.

The more recent study was based on an internally-developed survey instrument which the Commission administered to other state employees, legislators, institutional personnel, and other categories of individuals who were expected to have fairly strong familiarity with the work of the Commission. The Commission developed this survey in response to a plan to examine, on a regular basis, how well the Commission on Higher Education was perceived to be fulfilling its mission in terms of specific goals and functions. This effort was scheduled as part of a total process for regular evaluation approved January 1990 but not fully implemented due to lack of funds. The

survey was conducted in June 1992 and reported to the Commission in August or September of 1992.

South Dakota

A senior staff member of the South Dakota Board of Regents reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

Tennessee

An executive assistant to the commissioner of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) provided a copy of a state compliance audit performed on THEC by the comptroller of the state treasury for the years ended June 30, 1994 and June 30, 1993. The comptroller transmitted the final report of this audit to the governor, members of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of THEC on July 5, 1995.

The audit was conducted pursuant to Sections 4-3-304 and 8-4-109, Tennessee Code Annotated, which give the Comptroller of the Treasury broad powers to conduct such audits on all agencies of state government at any time s/he feels is necessary or appropriate. The objectives of this audit were to consider the Commission's internal control structure; to test compliance with certain laws, regulations, contracts, or grants; and to recommend appropriate actions to correct any deficiencies. State employees of the Department of Audit and Division of State Audit conducted the audit.

Texas

A senior official for media and governmental relations and public information of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reported the following:

Texas has a sunset review statute (Texas Government Code, Chapter 325, "Sunset Law") that requires evaluations of state agencies once every twelve years. The review of the Coordinating Board covered a two-year period between legislative sessions in 1987 and 1989. The review was conducted by a Sunset Commission (a state agency) with Coordinating Board employees providing statistics and other information regarding the board's operations and activities. The Sunset Commission can recommend, after its review, changes in or termination of state agencies that no longer serve a purpose. The Legislature must enact the recommendations, however. The Texas Legislature reauthorized the Coordinating Board in 1989.

In addition to the sunset review process, there have been several other less comprehensive evaluations from time to time. For example, the State Auditor's Office periodically conducts audits of Coordinating Board operations. Some of those touch on larger policy issues about how the Board operates. Still another evaluation that sometimes touches on the Coordinating Board's programs and activities is the biennial Texas Performance Review (TPR). The TPR, conducted by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, reviews all of state government and makes recommendations for changes in state programs to make them more efficient and/or effective. The Texas Legislature considers these recommendations as it meets every other year.

Utah

A senior official with the Utah System of Higher Education State Board of Regents reported the following:

The board has never received a formal evaluation, although there has been some recent discussion about doing so. The board does review its process and functions every few years. A recent review resulted in Policy R220, Delegation of Responsibilities to the President and Board of Trustees. In addition, Policy R209, Appraisal of Chief Executive Officers, also established a process by which the Commissioner is evaluated. (The official enclosed copies of both of these policies with her response.)

Vermont

A member of the institutional studies staff of the University of Vermont reported that Vermont has no statewide coordinating and/or governing board. Each of the three Vermont public higher education entities (The University of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges, and The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation) has its own separate board of trustees, and these boards are independent of each other.

Virginia

A senior representative of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia reported the following (and provided a copy of the final draft report from the review described below):

The most recent evaluation of the Council was conducted between January 1994 and December 1994. The Council received an exposure draft of the final report in November 1994. The final draft was completed and presented to the Governor and General Assembly in December 1994.

The Code of Virginia provides for periodic evaluation of state agencies like the Council of Higher Education in Section 30-58.1. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) establishes the

timing of such evaluations. JLARC sets goals for the evaluation in keeping with the Council's statutory responsibilities and established policies, evaluating the Council's efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out these responsibilities. The JLARC staff is comprised of state employees and is overseen by a legislative commission.

Washington

A senior staff official with the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board reported that the board has never received a formal evaluation.

West Virginia

A senior official of the University System of West Virginia reported the following:

The Board of Trustees of the University System of West Virginia has never been formally evaluated. Its predecessor, the Board of Regents of West Virginia that embraced all the institutions, was never formally evaluated. However, the Board of Regents, the one central governing board, was abolished in 1989 and two boards created; one board overseeing the state colleges and one overseeing the universities. This statewide look at higher education and legislative action focused on how higher education should be governed rather than specifically on the Board of Regents. However, a major motivating factor in the creation of two boards was the displeasure with the operation of the existing Board of Regents.

Wisconsin

[No response.]

Wyoming

A policy advisor for the Wyoming Postsecondary Education Planning and Coordinating Council (PEPCC) reported the following:

PEPCC is an advisory body that both meets and serves at the pleasure of the Governor, rather than as a coordinating or governing board in the traditional sense. PEPCC has existed since 1991 and has never received a formal evaluation, although the state legislature has directed its continued existence as a result of a recent sunset review.

Appendix E: State Survey Bibliography

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Appendix F: Dissertation Survey Instrument

SURVEY ON ACHE QUADRENNIAL EVALUATION PROCESS **ID#** _____

The purpose of this survey is to solicit your views concerning the degree to which the quadrennial evaluation process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) has resulted in meaningful change within the Commission and within Alabama higher education. **For each question requesting a numerical response, a "1" indicates a high degree and a "5" indicates a low degree. Please circle the appropriate number or "N/A" if you have no opinion or no basis to judge the issue.**

To what degree has the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process contributed to the Commission's ability and willingness to perform its assigned roles in each of the following areas?

1. **Master planning and policy issues (state-wide long-range planning; study, analysis, and evaluation of present and future higher education needs):**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

2. **Finance and budget issues:**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

3. **Issues related to new academic programs and the prevention of unnecessary program duplication:**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

4. **Issues related to new campuses, centers, and other facilities:**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

5. **Issues related to the development of a State University and College Information System to track the activities and performance of institutions:**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge

PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE QUESTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THIS PAGE

The next two questions ask you to describe benefits of the process and changes needed. Please provide as much information as you feel is necessary to answer these two questions from your perspective. Feel free to attach one or more additional pages if necessary.

6. **Please identify and describe the greatest benefit(s) that you believe the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process has provided to the Commission and/or to Alabama higher education.**

7. **Please identify and describe the change(s) that you believe are most needed to the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process in order to improve its value to the Commission and to Alabama higher education.**

8. **The next set of items asks you to indicate the degree to which each of the six quadrennial evaluations has been of benefit to the Commission and to Alabama higher education. Please provide responses only for those you feel you have a basis to judge, and feel free to answer some, all, or none of them based upon your knowledge of each one:**

High degree		Moderate degree		Low degree	No opinion or No basis to judge
1st Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1975):					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2nd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1979):					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3rd Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1983):					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1987):					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1991):					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6th Quadrennial Evaluation (Report dated 1995):					
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE FINAL SECTION ON THE NEXT PAGE AND REMEMBER TO INCLUDE BOTH PAGES IN YOUR RETURN ENVELOPE

SURVEY ON ACHE QUADRENNIAL EVALUATION PROCESS – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This final section is your opportunity to indicate whether and to what degree you would be willing to participate further in this study, and to give us some data so that we may correctly analyze your responses. **Please indicate by checking the appropriate lines whether you would be willing to participate further in this study through any of the following activities:**

	YES	NO
1. **Completion of one or more additional surveys.**	_____	_____
2. **Participation in a telephone interview.**	_____	_____
3. **Participation in a personal (face-to-face) interview.**	_____	_____

If you are willing to participate further in this study in any of the ways described above, we will need the following information in order to contact you. Please use office and/or home address and telephone number, specify which is which, and let us know your preference in how to contact you if you provide both. **Please be assured that we will not publicly identify your individual responses to this survey based upon this information.** This page will be removed from the rest of the survey upon receipt, and only its coded identification number will identify the survey when the responses are analyzed.

Name and title(s): _____

Address(es): _____

City/state/zip code(s): _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Regardless of whether you are willing to participate further in this study, we will need the following information concerning your present and any former position(s) in Alabama higher education and/or public life to correctly analyze your responses. **Please mark all categories that apply with a "C" (for current status) and/or an "F" (for former status):**

_____ Member of Alabama Commission on Higher Education

_____ Member of ACHE Staff

_____ Member of an ACHE Quadrennial Evaluation Committee

_____ Faculty/administrator in 4-year college or university

_____ Faculty/administrator in 2-year college

_____ Member of campus or system board of trustees

_____ Member of Alabama State Legislature

_____ Other state government official

_____ Civic, media, or business leader

_____ Other (please specify)_____

Please return both pages of this survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. If this envelope is not available, you may mail the survey to Maurice A. Ottinger, 118 East Woodbine Avenue, Condominium E, Kirkwood, MO 63122-6139. Thank you for your participation in this study.

Appendix G: Dissertation Survey Cover Letter (Template)

MAURICE ARMAND OTTINGER
118 EAST WOODBINE AVENUE
CONDOMINIUM E
KIRKWOOD, MISSOURI 63122-6139

(Date)

(Name [and title where applicable])
(Organization)
(Address)
(City, state, and ZIP code)

Dear (appropriate salutation):

I am conducting a study on the benefits of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) quadrennial evaluation process to higher education in Alabama. Specifically, I am attempting to determine to what extent the quadrennial evaluation process of the Commission has resulted in meaningful change in Alabama higher education. In order to complete this study, I need your help.

As an important part of this research, I am asking you to complete the enclosed survey. I have designed this survey to provide maximum opportunity for you to express your views concerning the value of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process to Alabama higher education. I am requesting your participation in this research because I believe that your views will make a significant contribution to the quality and utility of this study.

Completion of this survey should take no more than fifteen to twenty minutes of your time. I know that you are very busy, but I hope that you will support this project. In addition to fulfilling the requirements for my doctoral degree, I am planning to share the results of this study with appropriate individuals in Alabama and other states so that they may be used to improve the impact of evaluations of ACHE and other statewide boards of higher education.

The confidentiality of information about you will be maintained by the use of code numbers on all materials. The data gathered will be reported in summary form with no reference to you personally. Individual data and participant identities will not be shared with anyone. Return of the completed survey constitutes your consent to participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary with the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Because I am anxious to move ahead, I would appreciate your response to the enclosed survey by (date). I have enclosed a postage-paid envelope for your use. If you have any questions or need additional guidance in completing the survey, please call me at (314) 592-0000 extension 4265 (office) or (314) 909-0302 (home), or e-mail me at OTTINGERMA@aol.com. I greatly appreciate your help in this project and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Maurice A. Ottinger
Ph.D. Candidate, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Appendix H: Informed Consent Statement

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Title of Project: The Value of the Quadrennial Evaluation Process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE)

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to determine the value of the Quadrennial Evaluation Process of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to the Commission and to Alabama higher education.

INFORMATION

1. The procedures involved in this study include surveys and interviews. As you know, you were asked to participate in this study initially when you received a survey to complete with a cover letter explaining the study. When you completed that survey, you indicated an initial willingness to participate in one or more interviews. The purpose of this form is to give you further information concerning this process, to ensure that you still consent to being interviewed, and to record that consent.

2. It is anticipated that this initial interview will take no more than fifteen to twenty minutes of your time. While the need for one or more additional interviews is not anticipated, it is possible that you may be contacted for clarification of statements made during the interview or to be asked if you would participate in an additional interview. If you are asked to participate in an additional interview, you will receive another statement similar to this one to ensure that you consent to that interview.

3. Approximately 225 adults have been given the opportunity to participate in this research. Although this many individuals have been asked to participate, it is anticipated that significantly fewer will actually respond to the survey, and that even fewer will be interviewed.

4. The researcher may ask if you are willing to have the interview tape-recorded. Your interview will only be tape-recorded if the interviewer requests you to allow it and you specifically consent to this request. (You will be asked for your consent as part of the taped conversation.) If this happens, the tape will be used only to ensure that an accurate written transcript of the interview is available for analysis. It will be held in locked storage and will be erased as soon as an accurate written transcript of the recorded interview is produced or confirmed.

RISKS

This study holds no foreseeable physical, psychological, social, legal, or other risks to any persons.

BENEFITS

It is anticipated that this research will be of benefit in increasing the body of knowledge concerning the value of the ACHE quadrennial evaluation process to ACHE and to Alabama higher education.

_____ Participant's initials

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Maurice Armand Ottinger, at 7300 Cedarpost Road, Apartment H-10, Liverpool, New York, 13088-3825, phone (315) 453-9921. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Compliance Section of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Office of Research at (423) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

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

CONSENT

I have read and understand 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 _____

Vita

Maurice Armand Ottinger was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on July 10, 1962. He attended Powell Primary (Dante), Elementary, and Middle Schools; and graduated from Powell High School in June 1980. The following September he entered Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee; in May 1984 he graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree (*magna cum laude*) in Music Education and was designated as a Distinguished Military Graduate of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

From June 1984 until May 1993 he served on active duty as a U.S. Army officer, holding several key command and staff positions in the fields of personnel and administrative systems management and Army bands. During this time he studied at Georgia State University and at the Redstone Graduate Center of the Florida Institute of Technology; and in August 1986 received the Master of Science in Administration degree from Central Michigan University. He also served as a Lecturer in Business Administration and Finance and as an Instructor in Data Processing for the military education programs of Saint Leo College and Georgia Military College, respectively; and studied at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army Computer Science School.

In June 1993 he entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) to begin doctoral studies in education. During his resident studies, he served as a mathematics tutor with the Veterans' Pre-College Program, a graduate assistant with the Leadership Studies Unit, and a statistics tutor with the Education in the Sciences, Mathematics, Research and Technology Unit. He also served (as a

Captain in the U.S. Army Reserve) as the Administrative Officer for the 3292d U.S. Army Reserve Forces School (located on the UTK campus).

Following his resident studies, he returned to active duty. He was promoted to major in May 1996, and served for four years as a systems automation officer in the St. Louis (1996-1998) and Washington, D.C. (1998-2000) areas. Since June 2000, he has been a student and military liaison (senior military officer) in the Army Comptrollership Program Class of 2001 at Syracuse University. This highly selective, MBA-producing program prepares military officers and government civilians for service as the Army's premier resource managers. He is scheduled to graduate from that program in August 2001. He has been married for over fifteen years to the former Lorie Lee Spin of Huntsville, Alabama; and they have two children, Emily (13) and Allan (12).