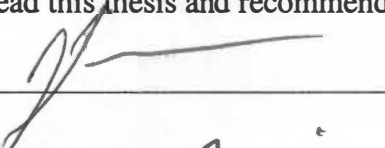


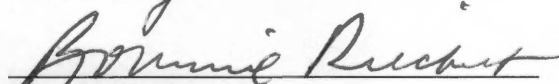
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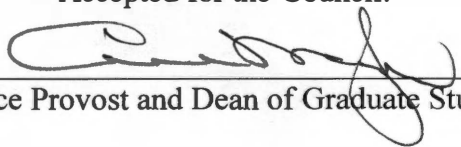

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**Transmitting Organizational Culture: The Process of Assimilating Female
Freshmen Student-Athletes at The University of Tennessee**

A Thesis Presented for the Master of Science Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

**Andrew Mason Parrish
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Abstract

Organizational culture is the interconnected pattern of norms, values, beliefs, and symbols within an organization that give an organization its identity. Organizational assimilation is the process of communicating that culture to new incoming organizational members. The women's athletic department at The University of Tennessee relies on a strong assimilation process to prepare freshmen collegiate student-athletes not only for the normal stress of college, but also for the pressures of being an elite Division 1 athlete. This study examined the assimilation practices the women's athletic department used to assimilate 58 female freshmen student-athletes into the culture of the department.

This study focused on the socialization aspect of assimilation rather than on the individualization aspect. The scope of this study included the first two stages of the assimilation process, anticipatory and encounter, and did not address the metamorphosis stage.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Semi-structured interviews with key athletic administrators helped define the cultural constructs for the women's department. These cultural constructs were enriching student-athletes' lives outside sport, maintaining a family oriented department, and being nationally competitive in athletics. These constructs were used to produce a survey that was administered twice to the freshmen life skills class in order to determine their understanding of the values and expectations of the department. Those three cultural constructs were operationalized into seven research questions that focused on family atmosphere, national competitiveness of athletic department, academic progress towards

graduation, career development, personal development, and health of mind and body.

The results reveal that female freshmen student-athletes possess a strong understanding of what the department values and what is expected of them before they arrive on campus. This indicates that female freshmen student-athletes at UT experience strong anticipatory socialization. The most significant source in communicating these values and expectations was the head coach of the student-athlete's team. There is very little statistically significant change in understanding of values and expectations over time.

The only statistically significant decrease was a decrease in perception of feeling a part of the Lady Vol family.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how organizational culture is transmitted in The University of Tennessee's women's athletic department to incoming freshmen. Understanding transmission of culture will contribute to the design of an ideal first-year student-athlete life skills transition class. This class would be an interactive, optimally socializing, yet genuinely individualizing structure that allows the student-athlete to both be influenced by and to exert influence on the transition process of leaving high school and entering UT.

Organizational culture is the interconnected pattern of norms, values, beliefs, and symbols within an organization that give an organization its identity. There are competing definitions as to how organizational culture should be classified. Is it a metaphor or is it a theory? The answer to that question depends on the person that is asked. Regardless, every organization has a culture, weak or strong, and this culture shapes the way people behave within that organization. In turn, people can also shape the culture of the organization, but research shows that the organization influences the individual more than the individual influences the organization (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. 1996; Ashforth and Saks, 1996).

This study will focus on the socialization process of the women's athletic department that occurs during the first two stages of assimilation: anticipatory and encounter. The anticipatory stage is how the individual is socialized before they arrive at the organization. It includes any information or feedback that the individual receives

from employees, brochures, Web sites or office visits. The encounter stage of assimilation is how the individual is socialized once he or she has entered the organization and “encounters” the culture of the organization for the first time. This stage usually lasts over a period of six to eight weeks. The last stage of assimilation, metamorphosis, is when the organizational member individualizes his or her experience and truly becomes enmeshed in the organization’s culture.

Both of these stages are well developed in the women’s athletic department. Assimilation of the student-athlete begins during the recruiting process when coaches and athletic department administration visit student-athletes in their home. It continues when student-athletes come to campus for official campus visits and meet with academic advisors, coaches, athletic administration, and other student-athletes. When student-athletes arrive for classes in August, there is a two-hour orientation session for them where they are introduced to all the department staff and a back-to-school picnic for all Lady Vol student-athletes (incoming and returning). There are also various team meetings with compliance staff, athletic trainers, academic advisors, and the CHAMPS/Life Skills office staff. Socialization continues throughout the semester as the student-athletes develop relationships with their coaches, teammates, and the athletic department administrative staff.

This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four administrators in the women’s athletic department and then qualitatively analyzed to determine the cultural constructs for the women’s athletic department. Those constructs were then used to develop a survey questionnaire that was administered to the freshmen in the Lady Vol freshmen life skills transition

class, which is taught every fall, and is composed of all first semester female freshmen student-athletes. The number of incoming female freshmen student-athletes varies but usually includes about 50 student-athletes. The class is taught by an assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center and is required for all first semester female freshmen student-athletes.

The survey instrument was administered to the life skills class twice during the fall semester. The survey, using both Likert-scale and open-ended questions, asked the freshmen student-athletes how they learned about the various aspects of the women's athletic department such as the importance of their academic matriculation, the development of a future career outside their sport, their development as a person, and the maintenance of the health of their mind and body.

The structure of this study will be as follows: a literature review of organizational culture and organizational assimilation will first be presented. The literature review will be followed by listing the research questions:

R.Q. 1

How do incoming members know what is expected of them when they first arrive on campus?

1b. How well do incoming members understand what is expected of them when they first arrive on campus?

1c. How does that understanding change over time?

R.Q. 2

How successfully is the value of a family atmosphere communicated to incoming members?

2b. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 3

How is being one of the top departments in the country, a value of the women's athletic department, communicated to incoming members?

3b. How successfully is being one of the top departments in the country, a value of the women's athletic department, communicated to incoming members?

3c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 4

How is the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation communicated to incoming members?

4b. How successfully is the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation communicated to incoming members?

4c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 5

How is the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport communicated to incoming members?

5b. How successfully is the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport communicated to incoming members?

5c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 6

How is the value of development of as a person communicated to incoming members?

6b. How successfully is the value of development of as a person communicated to incoming members?

6c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 7

How is the value of health of mind and body communicated to incoming members?

7b. How successfully is the value of health of mind and body communicated to incoming members?

7c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

The research questions will be followed by the methodology section, which will describe the manner in which the surveys were created, pre-tested, and distributed; describe the women's athletic department and the sample of 58 freshmen female student-athletes; and describe the procedures used to analyze the data. The methodology section will be followed by the results section, which reported that strong comprehension of the women's athletic department's values and expectations was found from the first survey. One significant change ($p < .05$) from the first survey to the second survey in the freshmen's level of understanding of the women's athletic department's culture was a negative change in perception of feeling a part of the Lady Vol family. This study will conclude with a discussion of results and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Organizational culture is a complex phenomena to describe because there are competing camps of researchers that seek to define it in different ways. One perspective is to view it as a metaphor. Researchers who contend it must be understood as a metaphor say so because it seeks to compare two otherwise unlike things—organizations and culture. Alone, each symbol represents something different. One represents a structure through which individuals cooperate systematically to conduct business, while the other represents the unique values, norms, and symbols that are intrinsic to certain groups of people around the world. Used together, both symbols stand for a new way of understanding the internal structure of an organization.

If organizational culture is a metaphor, then it is certainly a complex one. Its usefulness is sometimes criticized because it is not parsimonious. If organizational culture is to be understood as a metaphor though, then it is not necessarily to be held to the same criteria as what constitutes a testable theory. One of the main uses of using metaphor to depict the life behind an organization is that it provides many different perspectives from which to view an organization. Unlike a theory, which has set criteria by which a phenomenon is explained, a metaphor allows for some ambiguity. While this might be considered a weakness, the ambiguity a metaphor allows does possibly represent an organization more fully than a succinct yet narrow theory. Although there is no unilateral consensus on what represents organizational culture, the ideas it provokes is

quite possibly valuable enough to wait for a set of comprehensive criteria to eventually evolve.

Other researchers contend that because theories seek to group and organize thoughts about phenomena and how phenomena interact, then organizational culture has characteristics of a theory because organizational culture seeks to explain how the phenomena of values, rituals, tradition explain and predict organizational life. Wieck and other researchers approach organizational culture as coming from the organizational communication field, which gives it credibility coming from a strong theoretical background. Wieck's (1979) theory of organizing would be an example of someone who approaches organizational culture from this perspective. Proposing that organizations should not be understood as structures made of positions and roles but as structures of communication activities, Wieck (1979) provides a theory that explains organizations as something that people accomplish through a continuing process of communication.

Although there are many aspects of organizational culture, this literature review will examine the following: symbols, values and ethics, use of ritual, storytelling and organizational assimilation.

Organizational Assimilation

Organizational assimilation is the process of transmitting an organization's culture—the norms, values, expectations and symbols—to a new incoming member. One of the inherent truths about organizations is that organizational members come and organizational members go. When they arrive at an organization, they bring with them a little bit of each previous organization's culture that has affected them. When they go, they take a little bit of the organization's culture with them onto the next. Having

experience with previous organizational cultures does not exempt the new organizational member from learning the new organization's culture, nor does it excuse the organization from teaching it. Without knowledge of an organization's culture, a new member will never be fully integrated into the organization.

Organizational culture has been defined as "the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give members of an institution meaning, and provide them with the rules for behavior in their organization" (Davis, 1984, p. 1). If organizational culture is what the organization is really like on the inside, then organizational assimilation is the process of how that person learns to become an "insider." Van Maanen (1975) defines organizational assimilation as the process by which individuals learn the values, norms, and required behaviors that allow them to participate as members of organizations. The two interrelated sub-processes through which individuals learn those values, norms and required behaviors are: socialization of the newcomer and employee individualization (Hess, 1993). Although socialization dominates most of the organizational assimilation literature, individualization is considered equally important from an assimilation perspective (Jablin, Krone, 1991).

Investigative Worth of Organizational Assimilation

Organizational assimilation's worth as a field of research lies in the practical value it brings to an organization. If organizational assimilation is ignored by an organization, then dysfunction probably awaits. Providing new employees the correct task information for their position, yet neglecting to introduce them to the norms, values and ethics that characterize an organization invites stunted performance potential, uncertainty in interpreting organizational situations, and even possibly identity problems

(Hess, 1993). On the other hand, employees who are exposed to socialization tactics are “more apt to feel committed to an organization, feel more satisfied with communication, experience confidence in their superior, and perceive less ambiguity relating to their role in the organization” (Mignerey et al., 1995, p. 77).

Contrasting Forces of Organizational Socialization and Individualization

The assimilation of new members into the culture of an organization is carried out through two contrasting yet interrelated forces known as organizational socialization and individualization. Jon Hess notes J.A. Chatman’s definition for socialization in his article *Assimilating Newcomers Into an Organization: A Cultural Perspective*: “Socialization is the process by which an individual comes to understand the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge that are essential for assuming organizational role and for participating as an organizational member” (Hess, 1993, p. 194). Organizational socialization basically consists of a one-way street—the organization influences and the new member is influenced. This is due to the fact that individuals are particularly susceptible to influence during transitional periods such as organizational entry because of the tremendous uncertainty involved in the individual’s role in the organization (Ashforth and Saks, 1996). This imbalance in power has caused Tompkins and Cheney to coin the term “partnership of unequals” (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. 1996, p. 382). Because of the enormous power that the organization has in comparison to the individual, it is far too often that the organization “forgets” that the experience between the organization and the member is shared and should be mutually beneficial for both. Forward and Scheerhorn (1996) make the case that “far too often organizational insiders presume that newcomer silence or coerced conformity indicates understanding and

acceptance” (p. 387). Although the organization does do most of the influencing, the individual usually does have some room to negotiate his new role.

Mignerey, et al. (1995) list Porter, Lawler and Hackman’s operationalization for individualization in their article *Organizational Entry* as “a process whereby the employee attempts to change the environment to meet personal needs. It involves a newcomer’s need to repress, redefine, and reconcile conflicting values, expectations, behaviors and inaccurate information” (p. 56). Simply stated, in the individualization process, the organizational member engages the organizational issues that give him or her the most trouble. He engages in interactive sense making and role negotiation and seeks to try to personalize the work circumstances surrounding him (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. 1996). This can be as simple as putting family pictures on the desk or can be as complex as asking the department head for the opportunity to teach a class that would require a shuffling of classes taught among veteran faculty members (Hess, 1993). Whereas the organizational socialization process socializes the organizational member, the individualization process socializes the organization. These two processes have been represented in many models, but the most representative one is the three-stage model from Van Maanen (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. 1996).

Three Stages of Organizational Assimilation

The Van Maanen model includes three stages: anticipatory socialization, encounter phase and metamorphosis. Jablin and Krone (1991) note Van Maanen’s operationalization of the anticipatory stage: “Anticipatory socialization describes the degree to which individuals are prepared, prior to organizational entry, to occupy organizational positions” (p. 713). Anticipatory socialization occurs before the potential

organizational member enters the organization and involves the member communicating with contacts from the organization (Hess, 1993). Information about the organization can also be gained from interaction with family members, peers, part-time jobs, educational experiences, and even media depictions (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. 1996). While the organizational member gains more information and possibly establishes a rapport with the organization, he or she is simultaneously establishing expectations of his or her experience within the organization (Hess, 1993). Because newcomers clearly do not arrive as “blank slates” with no prior conceptions or expectations about the organization’s culture, organizations face a potential conflict when describing their culture to applicants (Cable, et al., 2000).

Every time organizations talk to potential members, they have a serious dilemma on their hands. On the one hand, organizations should communicate accurate information about their cultures because members will use these expectations “as standards for judging and evaluating their experiences in the organization” (Hess, 1993, p. 199). On the other hand as Cable, et al. (2000) note what Johnston says, “openly discussing unfavorable cultural attributes can turn applicants away, thereby limiting firms’ selection ratios and their ability to hire new employees” (p. 1). This poses a true ethical dilemma. Although the temptation is to provide as positive a picture as possible of the organization, Cable, et al. note that Cable and Judge and Wanous and Colella have found that when applicants join organizations on the basis of inaccurate beliefs of the culture and find those expectations unmet, they experience dissatisfaction and are likely to quit (Cable, et al. 2000). When an organization does not accurately disclose its culture, not only is it unethical and harmful to the incoming employee, but it poses serious financial costs in

having to re-recruit new employees. Organizations end up spending more money in the long run than if they had been more honest in their depiction of their organization in the first place. Cable, et al. (2000) describe it as “trying to attract as many applicants from competitors as possible rather than allowing applicants to self-select on the basis of accurate cultural information” (p. 7). The encounter stage is when the possible deception becomes obvious.

The encounter stage of organizational assimilation is where the “rubber meets the road.” It occurs during the initial weeks or months of a person’s employment and typically “involves a pattern of day-to-day experiences in which the individual is subjected to the reinforcement policies and practices of the organization and its members” (Porter, et al., 1975, p. 164). This stage of socialization is considered a breaking-in period and Forward and Scheerhorn (1996) note that Hughes characterized it as “reality shock” (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. p.373). As newcomers spend more time in the organization they begin to form organizational self-concepts, self-esteems and links to the organization (Hess 1993). Hess (1993) notes research by Cumming that an individual’s identity is not static, but constantly being confirmed, reshaped, or reconstructed, and by Cooley, McCall and Simmons that the identity is not dictated but is created, negotiated and sustained through interpersonal and group communication. This process of negotiating one’s identity within the organization is an aspect of the encounter stage and at the heart of the metamorphosis stage.

The metamorphosis stage signals the point at which the individualization assimilation process takes on just as much importance as the continued socialization process, which is not a brief episode but lasts throughout career progression (Fogarty,

2000). Forward and Scheerhorn (1996) note Jablin's description of the metamorphosis stage where he describes it as the time "when newcomers react to the pull of conformity and begin to assert themselves in negotiating the role they will fulfill in the organization...This organization/individual interface is at the center of the assimilation process and is the point at which issues of socialization, identity, and individualization converge" (Forward and Scheerhorn, eds. p. 374). Ashforth and Saks (1996), in their article *Socialization tactics: longitudinal effects on newcomer adjustment*, provide additional insight on research by Katz on the metamorphosis stage:

"As newcomers begin to develop a more stable sense of their roles and what is expected of them, other desires, such as for challenge and growth may emerge. Accordingly, many newcomers may become less responsive to institutionalized socialization and more responsive to other stimuli in the workplace. Indeed, the welcome security that institutionalized socialization initially represented may come to represent smothering paternalism" (p. 12).

Indeed, once the new organizational member is not so new anymore he or she finally feels comfortable enough to really begin to mark his or her own territory and push on some organizational barriers that he or she previously wouldn't have touched. Like organizational assimilation, individualization lasts the course of employment within the corporation because no one ever becomes completely assimilated (Newman, 1974). Newman (1974) goes on to mention that complete assimilation would "mean that one's role is totally and finally defined, accepted by all concerned and performed as such with complete satisfaction and satisfactoriness" (p. 130). That is highly unlikely. The tactics through which socialization can be enacted will be examined next.

Van Maanen and Schein's Model of Socialization Tactics

Ashforth and Saks (1996), in their article on socialization tactics, say that Van Maanen and Schein's model of socialization tactics is one of the best-developed models of socialization (p. 1). The model proposes six tactics: collective (vs. individual) [grouping newcomers and putting them through a common set of experiences rather than handling each newcomer alone], Formal (vs. informal) [segregating a newcomer from regular organization members during a defined socialization period rather than not segregating them], Sequential (vs. random) [refers to a fixed sequence of steps that leads to the assumption of the new job role, compared to an ambiguous or changing sequence], Fixed (vs. variable) [provides a timetable for the assumption of the role, whereas a variable process does not], Serial (vs. disjunctive) [process in which newcomer is socialized by an experienced member, compared to if a role model is not utilized], and Investiture (vs. divestiture) [affirms the incoming identity and personal characteristics of the newcomer rather than denying them and stripping them away] (p. 1).

Ashforth and Saks (1996) note that Jones furthered this research by grouping the collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture tactics and labeling them institutional socialization because those tactics encourage newcomers to passively accept preset roles and thus maintain the status quo (p. 2). Jones referred to the tactics of individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture as individualized socialization (p. 2). In his research on the tactics, Jones found that the six tactics associated with institutionalized socialization were negatively associated with role ambiguity, role conflict, and intentions to quit and were positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (p. 2). In addition to research on

socialization tactics, Anakwe and Greenhaus have also initiated research on socialization effectiveness.

Organizational Socialization Effectiveness

Although there has been a large amount of research on organizational socialization, there has been little empirical study on socialization effectiveness (Anakwe and Greenhaus, 1999). Because there is not a general typology of the information that newcomers must acquire upon organizational entry, Anakwe and Greenhaus constructed five content categories built off of previous studies—Chao et al. 1994; Feldman 1981; Fisher 1986; Louis 1990; Morrison 1995; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993; Schein 1980—in order to evaluate socialization effectiveness (p. 2). Those categories are task mastery, functioning within the work group, knowledge and acceptance of organization's culture, personal learning, and role clarity. In their study, Anakwe and Greenhaus predicted that a more institutionalized socialization strategy (represented through training, experienced colleagues, and co-workers) would be positively related to the aforementioned socialization content categories (Anakwe and Greenhaus, 1999). The study's results found that using experienced colleagues as a socialization tactic was significantly related to teaching the skills of task mastery, success in functioning within the work group, knowledge and acceptance of culture, and role clarity (Anakwe and Greenhaus, 1999). The other two measures of socialization, co-workers and training, were not significant contributors of organization effectiveness (Anakwe and Greenhaus, 1999). Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999) thus concluded that the availability of experienced organizational members during newcomers' early organizational experiences should contribute to their effective socialization and long-term career success.

Considering that most of organizational assimilation literature is management dominated, it is surprising that more research has not previously been done on organizational effectiveness. Because most managers would probably adopt a functionalist perspective of organizational assimilation, and socialization effectiveness is a functional way of observing assimilation, there appears to be a strong rationale for future and continued research into socialization effectiveness. If managers want to be truly efficient with their management practices, more research into assimilation effectiveness, or at least socialization effectiveness, could only help them become more accountable to what they set out to do.

Origins of Organizational Culture

In order to fully understand organizational assimilation, the history and research surrounding the broader topic of organizational culture should be examined. Organizational culture became a topic for scholarly research in the early 1980s. Organizational communication had been dominated during the 1970s by functionalistic system theories designed to make organizations look like “goal-oriented structures” that used “information systems” to carry out “decision processes” (Ott, 1989, p. vii). Rational and logical thought played a very large role during this decade of result-driven “goals, roles, technologies and linkages” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 499). Each part of the organization (employees, equipment, space) was categorized and charted in order to promote the most efficient use of resources possible. Functionality reigned supreme. Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, regarded as two of the foremost early contributors to organization culture, describe the period: “In the late 60's and early 70's, systems theory had captured the attention of the scholarly world....Thus communication became

the act of transferring, processing, and storing subsystems of environmental information, and organizations became information processing systems. But... (eventually) systems theory sputtered” (Pacanowsky and O’Donnell-Trujillo, 1983, p. 126, 127). As systems theory lost favor, the study of organizational culture began to increase.

Organizational culture has roots in a variety of disciplines including cultural anthropology, ethnoarchaeology, social psychology (particularly phenomenological sociology), organizational communication, psychology, business administration, public administration, and educational administration (Ott, 1989). The fact that organizational culture contains so many social sciences in its roots indicates some of its distinct qualitative elements. Unlike systems theory, organizational culture does not focus on the organization as a structural entity with immovable parts, but rather it highlights the various elements of the organization that provide the organization with a sense of meaning and identity. At this point organizational culture thus offers a chance to understand, rather than to predict. It offers a lens for a person to view the inner workings of an organization through, in order for the person to understand, for example why the office has casual dress Fridays and what people are doing when they gather around the lounge’s coffee pot. Thus, this metaphor seeks to examine how organizational interaction provides the structure an organization needs to survive and thrive.

The use of a metaphor to explain something as intricate as how new employee X learns not to sit to either the immediate left or right of the CEO during board meetings, unless he wants to be bombarded with overwhelming questions, is a unique facet of organizational culture. These intangible tangibles of work are what constitute an organization’s culture. Metaphors help explain these complex occurrences. Deal and

Kennedy describe the importance of metaphor as it relates to organizational culture: “The purpose of theories—or of metaphors—is to make strange things familiar or to make familiar things strange. Through metaphor, we can understand a complicated reality that otherwise would escape us” (Deal and Kennedy, 1983, p. 499). The comparison of two seemingly unlike symbols—organizations and culture—allows the process of understanding to reach a new level than previously allowed by other theories.

Steven Ott advises in his book *Organizational Culture Perspective* that “regardless of the future of the perspective, organizational culture itself is a permanent feature of organizations. It affects organizational behavior. It will not disappear. It can not and should not be ignored by serious managers or students of organizations” (Ott, 1989, p. ix). But it wasn’t always so. It took nearly a decade for the perspective to gain a foothold in organizational communication. For much of the 1980s, organizational culture was not backed by any sort of empirical research that would give it credibility.

Only 16 books about organizational culture appeared in The University of Tennessee’s library catalog from the 1980s. In the 1990s that number rose to 120. Almost 2200 of the scholarly journal articles of the more than 7600 that appeared in UT’s periodical search have been written in the last four years. New research is exploding in multitudes of areas in everything from study of cross-cultural organizational culture to the effect of surveillance on employees.

Use of Symbols in Organizational Culture

One way that organizational life can be understood is through the use of symbols. The use of symbols in organizations “provides its members with a symbolically integrated framework that regulates social interaction and goal attainment through the

creation of cultural meanings” (Lee and Barnett, 1997, p. 395). Through the use of symbolic messages, meaning becomes contextualized in the symbolic structural framework. The use of symbols provides a cultural backdrop that allows for everyday, natural circumstances to be properly interpreted. Without the use of symbols in the workplace, communication could not occur and there would be no mutual understanding among members of the organization of what is valued.

Lee and Barnett (1997) note the power of symbols to paint the organization’s overall purpose: “Communication creates the reality of the organization. It plays a central role in forming organizational culture. It is the basis of all organizational culture” (p. 395). Everything within an organization revolves around its use of symbols. For instance, 3M is a company whose priority is innovation. It prides itself on the products that it produces, and it has sought out television airtime to convey this pride. One commercial relates how Dick Fosbury was an innovator in track and field as he was the first person ever to arch his back over the high jump bar rather than straddle kick over it. 3M uses this symbolic image because it wants to be viewed like Dick Fosbury as a group of innovators whose highest value is innovation.

Importance of Ethical Values in Organizational Culture

A further use of symbols is their ability to dictate what is right and wrong within an organization. Communicating ethical values is becoming more important for organizations. Ethics reflect organizational culture because they build upon a system of values that are critical to behavior within an organization and determine how members will perceive problems and make decisions (Stevens, 1999). Providing clear ethical codes is becoming more standard in organizations because they help identify problem

areas and strengthen the fabric of the organizational web (Stevens, 1999). Possessing strong boundaries gives the organization a tighter grip of what goes on inside it. When an organizational member clearly understands what is expected of him, it allows him to feel less ambiguous about his position and be more highly motivated. He is more highly motivated because as ambiguity decreases, his understanding of his task increases, thus raising his confidence and competence level. The basic strength of an organization rests on its ability to communicate its culture to its members. The better an organizational member understands his organization's ethical values, the more he will identify with the organization, and the more cohesive he will become with the organization. When this happens with masses of organizational members, an organization can become quite effective.

Recent researchers in the area of ethics have asked the question: "How can ethical values be communicated most effectively to employees?" (Stevens, 1999, p. 114). Stevens found in her research that the best ways were through training programs and coaching other employees (Stevens, 1999). What separates these top two methods from others is the level of involvement. Reading manuals and other documents is far less involved than being trained by a facilitator on appropriate work place behavior. The effectiveness of the using training programs early on in the employee's organizational entry indicates that the earlier a person is taught appropriate behavior, the earlier management can expect that behavior to be displayed in the workplace.

Coaching is an effective means of transmitting ethical values because an employee is often more willing to follow what a peer does than an organizational leader who seems out of touch. While the established employee is teaching, or coaching, the

other employee, he or she is actually reinforcing to him or herself what he or she believes as well: "One person responded, 'If I have to tell someone else I want to make sure I'm right'" (Stevens, 1999, p. 115).

Use of Ritual in Understanding Organizational Culture

Another aspect of organizational culture that allows people within the organization to become more cohesive is the use of ritual. The use of ritual within an organization is a useful tool in analyzing its culture. Not only does examining ritual reveal the actual structured organizational routines, it also depicts a relational process that unites organizational members. One purpose for ritual is to provide organizational members with a firm idea of how to handle everyday life. For instance, in the journalism field, using such practices as presenting both sides of the issue and attributing statements of opinion is a ritual that helps journalists shield themselves from criticism and be able to "respond to charges of bias or unfairness by pointing to these routine procedures" (Ehrlich, 1996, p. 4). By imposing these routines into their work, journalists are adding some level of control to their field, which allows them to be less anxious when writing a possibly explosive story.

Furthermore, ritual allows organizational members to unite under its common principles as ritual should not be confused with mere routine. Routines are a part of ritual, but the core aspect of ritual goes much deeper. Ehrlich makes the point that mere routine is only means-end oriented, but ritual, such as the use of objectivity in journalism, "is valued highly in that it is a manifestation of the highest professional ideals of journalism" and this deeply felt quality of objectivity is one that goes much deeper than surface level production (Ehrlich, 1996, p. 6). Ehrlich goes on to say that "ritual is

symbolic” and “pays homage to a sacred object or principle while enacting and expressing a participant’s close identification with the symbolic code of a group” (Ehrlich, 1996, p. 6). It can be seen here that ritual hits upon more than just the technical level of production that routine gets accomplished. Ritual hits upon deeper running currents that are intrinsic to a certain organization’s culture, and by embracing those currents organizational members unite in the kinship of sharing similar values.

Role of Storytelling in Understanding Organizational Culture

A last criterion for examining organizational culture, and another way of how group members unite in sharing common experiences, is the use of storytelling within organizations. Storytelling allows organizational members to engage in a producing a collection of stories that propagate important historical events and memorable happenings within the organization. These stories are a key part of members making sense of what their organization is all about. But it can also provide a cohesive element to the organization as an informal means of team building through humor (Baje et al., 1997, p. 632). An organization’s “institutional memory,” which represents all the commonly told stories, is an important factor when analyzing organizational culture because stories explain a lot about the way an organization is run (Baje et al., 1997).

Deal and Kennedy note one particularly interesting story in their book *Corporate Culture*. It involves S.C. Allyn, a retired chairman of the board, and his company—the National Cash Register Corporation (NCR):

It was August 1945, and Allyn was among the first allied civilians to enter Germany at the end of the war. He had gone to find out what had happened to an NCR factory built just before the war but promptly confiscated by the Germany military command and put to work on the war effort. He arrived via military plane and traveled through burned-out

buildings, rubble, and utter desolation until he reached what was left of the factory. Picking his way through bricks, cement, and old timbers, Allyn came upon two NCR employees whom he hadn't seen for six years. Their clothes were torn and their faces grimy and blackened by smoke, but they were busy clearing up the rubble. As he came closer, one of the men looked up and said, 'We knew you'd come!' Allyn joined them in their work and together the three men began cleaning out the debris and rebuilding the factory from the devastation of war. The company had even survived the ravages of a world war. A few days later, as the clearing continued, Allyn and his coworkers were startled as an American tank rumbled up to the site. A grinning GI was at its helm. 'Hi,' he said, 'I'm NCR, Omaha. Did you guys make your quota this month?' Allyn and the GI embraced each other. The war may have devastated everything around them, but NCR's hard driving, sales-oriented culture was still intact (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 3,4).

When the story is told, NCR employees are going to think that loyalty, determination and sales quotas are important qualities. The more the story gets told, the more those enduring qualities become fixated in the company's culture. A company will tell what it wants to remember and likely forget what remains a blemish on the organization. In this case, this story reinforces a positive vision that through thick and thin a NCR employee should stand firm like previous generations of NCR employees have stood firm. If the NCR employees over in Europe can sustain the company through the deadliest war the world has ever known, then surely the company can survive a recession or two.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) expanded on this story suggesting it is a practical example of why organizational culture is important:

To us these stories mean that businesses are human institutions, not plush buildings, bottom lines, strategic analysis, or five-year plans. NCR was never just a factory to the three men who dug it out of the rubble. Nor was it to others like them. Rather it was a living organization. The company's real existence lay in the hearts and minds of its employees. NCR was, and still is, a corporate culture, a cohesion of values, myths, heroes, and

symbols that has come to mean a great deal to the people who work there (p. 4).

This is what makes organizational culture different from reaction to systems theory.

While systems theory does not examine the emotional, living, and visceral qualities of this organization, organizational culture embraces the intangible currents that pulse through organizations.

Just as the NCR culture had a strong impact on individuals, it is also possible for an organization's culture to have exactly the opposite effect on individuals inside the organization. Deal and Kennedy say that every business has a culture, and "whether weak or strong, culture has a powerful influence throughout an organization; it affects practically everything—from who gets promoted and what decisions are made, to how employees dress and what sports they play. Because of this impact, we think that culture also has a major effect on the success of this business" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 4).

Value of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is not only vital to understanding the internal elements of organizations; it is vital to the bottom line. Although there has been little empirical research that supports this, people respond to and are motivated by people. Extrinsic rewards such as corner offices, fancy titles and money hold limited value. But being positively reinforced with one's culture might raise a person's willingness to work harder. Over time, more effort gets more accomplished, which raises productivity, which eventually possibly means increased profits.

This is not a new idea, but was not documented as a communication theory until the early 1980s. The early leaders of American business such as Thomas Watson of

IBM, Harley Procter of Procter and Gamble, and General Johnson of Johnson and Johnson believed that strong culture brought success (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Deal and Kennedy go on to say that those businessmen “firmly believed that the lives and productivity of their employees were shaped by where they worked. These builders saw their role as creating an environment—in effect, a culture—in their companies in which employees could be secure and thereby do the work necessary to make the business a success” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 5). The values and ethics, stories and rituals that distinguished one organization from another gave each organization and a “sense of its own” and he or she wants to feel that they have a sense of place and belonging. Those lessons didn’t die with those early fathers though. Indeed, “The lessons of these early leaders have been passed down in their own companies from generation to generation of managers; the cultures they were so careful to build and nourish have sustained their organizations through both fat and lean times” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 5). Besides the value of the economic impact of organizational culture, organizational culture also serves as a guide for individuals to diagnose the relational fit between their personality and the organization’s culture.

Deal and Kennedy deal with this topic by saying “People at all stages of their careers need to understand culture and how it works because it will likely have a powerful effect on their work lives....The culture shapes their responses in a strong, but subtle way” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 16). The idea that Deal and Kennedy develop is similar to the idea of erosion. If a rough, jagged rock is moved from a field to a stream, it will eventually be worn down like the other rocks in the stream. It is just a matter of time. The same is true with people and their environments. People must be

aware of the effect an organization's culture will have on them or there can be consequences—both for the individual and the company. Deal and Kennedy (1982) explain it this way:

Culture can make them fast or slow workers, tough or friendly managers, team players or individuals. By the time they've worked for several years, they may be so well conditioned by the culture they may not even recognize it. But when they change jobs, they may be in for a big surprise. Take an up-and-coming executive at General Electric who is being wooed by Xerox—more money, a bigger office, greater responsibility. If his first reaction is to grab it, he's probably going to be disappointed. Xerox has a totally different culture than GE. Success, and even survival, at Xerox is closely tied to an ability to maintain a near frenetic pace, the ability to work and play hard, Xerox style. By contrast, GE has a more thoughtful and slow-moving culture. The GE culture treats each business activity seriously--almost as though each activity will have an enormous impact on the company. Success at GE is a function of being able to take work seriously, a strong sense of peer group respect, considerable deference for authority, and a sense of deliberateness. A person of proven success at GE will bring these values to Xerox because past experience in GE's culture has reinforced them. But these same values may not be held in high esteem elsewhere. Bright young comers at GE could, for example, quickly fizzle out at Xerox--and not even understand why. They'll be doing exactly what they did to succeed at GE—maybe even working harder at it—but their deliberate approach to issues large and small will be seen by insiders at Xerox as a sign that they 'lack smarts.' Their loss of confidence, self-esteem, and ability will be confusing to them and could significantly derail their careers. For Xerox, the loss of productivity could be appreciable. This is no imaginary scenario. It happens again and again at Xerox, General Electric, and many other companies when managers ignore the influence of culture on individual approaches to work (17).

This example shows that it is possible that an employee's unhappiness is not directly the employee's nor the organizations' fault. It was the mismatch of personality characteristics and the organization's culture. The importance of an organization's culture is not something to be underestimated.

Other Aspects of Organizational Culture

A newer research stream in the study of organizational culture has been the development of more understanding of what constitutes organizational culture, rather than how can it be maximized for bottom line profit. The long held idea of “management and organizational communication...taught from a functionalist perspective as a series of skills to be mastered and replicated” is being crowded with the presence of a more open-minded philosophy seeking to discover the creative, artistic and emotional aspects of organizing (Wendt, 1998, p. 361). Researchers are suggesting that a more risk-friendly environment that nurtures trust, risk and open sharing of ideas should be incorporated into the culture of everyday business practice (Wendt, 1998). The long time approach of productivity and results and how these can occur more often, is slowly being challenged by an idea that the process is at least as important as the bottom line. As researchers seek to understand culture more in terms of what goes into the process rather than what comes out, they find themselves seeking to understand rather than change.

Another aspect of organizational culture that is changing is that the old top-down hierarchy is transforming into a more employee empowered and responsible structure where more brainstorming and independent thinking is encouraged (Wendt, 1998). This open-ended structure places more responsibility on the individual, thus giving them more room to create, and thus increasing ownership of the task. Although this takes some of the power away from the supervisor, it creates a culture of trust and empowerment that will do more for the organization in the long run than an overbearing supervisor.

Organizational culture researchers have known that power relationships, the supervisor/subordinate relationships that span the organizational hierarchy, are very

important to individuals' happiness within an organization. What they are finding out is that the way those power relationships occur throughout various national cultural contexts is very diverse (Lee and Barnett, 1997).

Cross-Cultural Differences in Organizational Culture

Recent research into cross-cultural differences in organizational cultures throughout the world has been a growing topic of scholarly research. Among the American, Taiwanese and Japanese organizational cultures that were examined in Meihua Lee and George Barnett's research, it was found that organizations operate differently cross-culturally. This is based on the fact that what is deemed important in each of their national cultures is different. A good example would be employees' perceptions of their supervisors. In their study, Lee and Barnett observed that the Americans do not socialize with their supervisors nearly as much as the Japanese or Taiwanese employees did (Lee and Barnett, 1997). This was attributed to the fact that Americans perceive individualism to be more important than the Japanese and Taiwanese do (Lee and Barnett, 1997). This idea is not considered a part of the culture in either Taiwan or Japan.

In Taiwan, employees perceive that success can only be attributed to good interpersonal relationships with their coworkers. This idea is based upon Confucian philosophical principles, which stress avoiding confrontation and advocating harmonious relationships (Lee and Barnett, 1997). In Japan, employees socialize with their supervisors more than the Americans do, but less than the Taiwanese. Part of this is due to Japan's national culture. Japanese business holds that participatory small-group decision-making sessions where the supervisors are intensely linked to their employees

are very important to business practice. Due to this, employees are more likely to be satisfied with their employers, but they are also more likely to be more respectful of authority and power than any of the other two contexts (Lee and Barnett, 1997). Japan's extremely high emphasis on respecting authority transfers to the way that business is done and expectations are formed on the organizational level. The most important point that can be gained from Lee and Barnett's research is the understanding of how national cultural norms are imprinted on the organizational culture that exists within it.

Role of Emotion in Organizations

Recent research into the role of emotion in organizations has revealed that each organizational context has a different scripted way to use emotion. Greg Fiebig and Michael Kramer (1998) describe Hochschild's research: "Hochschild describes role expectations mandated by the organization context as the commodification of feelings. For example, managers are expected to provide an atmosphere of enthusiasm and flight attendants are expected to provide an atmosphere of reassuring warmth despite contrary circumstances or feelings" (p. 539). Each organization can expect a different display of emotion even within the same field of expertise. For example, within the flight attendant industry American Airlines may pride itself on the courteousness of its attendants as being above the other airlines' attendants. If this is the case, then the expected emotional display for those who wish to work at American will be high.

Other times though, emotional display is restricted and must be managed as Hochschild noted: "Hochschild conceived of this as 'emotion work' in which individuals decide to express specific emotions that may conflict with internal emotions due to organizational expectations. Occupational norms influence emotion expression as

individuals enact desired behavior through self-monitoring” (Fiebig and Kramer, 1998, p. 543). Organizational culture is powerful. It is powerful enough that it causes people to decide what emotions to express and what emotions should be tucked away to display somewhere else. Over time, excessive self-monitoring may wear on a person’s nerves. This is why understanding if the organizational member’s personality and the organization are a good fit is so important. Otherwise, the organization’s culture may not wear well on organizational member.

Purpose of the Study

Understanding that organizational culture is a broad area, the scope of this study was narrowed to examining the anticipatory and encounter phase of the socialization process in organizational assimilation. While the individualization aspect of organizational assimilation is an important part of assimilation, neither this aspect nor the last phase of the socialization process, metamorphosis, was a focus of this study.

Organizational assimilation is crucial to easing new members’ transition into new roles within an organization (Mignerey et al., 1995). Neglecting to introduce new organizational members to the norms, values and ethics that characterize an organization invites stunted performance potential, uncertainty in interpreting organizational situations, and even possibly identity problems (Hess, 1993). Considering that the women’s athletic department is an organization and that female freshmen student-athletes are new members of that organization, the rationale to study their assimilation into the culture of the women’s athletic department is justified.

Based on the literature review the following research questions were formulated to examine how organizational assimilation occurred within the women's athletic department.

R.Q. 1

How do incoming members know what is expected of them when they first arrive on campus?

1b. How well do incoming members understand what is expected of them when they first arrive on campus?

1c. How does that understanding change over time?

R.Q. 2

How successfully is the value of a family atmosphere communicated to incoming members?

2b. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 3

How is being one of the top departments in the country, a value of the women's athletic department, communicated to incoming members?

3b. How successfully is being one of the top departments in the country, a value of the women's athletic department, communicated to incoming members?

3c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 4

How is the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation communicated to incoming members?

4b. How successfully is the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation communicated to incoming members?

4c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 5

How is the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport communicated to incoming members?

5b. How successfully is the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport communicated to incoming members?

5c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 6

How is the value of development of as a person communicated to incoming members?

6b. How successfully is the value of development of as a person communicated to incoming members?

6c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

R.Q. 7

How is the value of health of mind and body communicated to incoming members?

7b. How successfully is the value of health of mind and body communicated to incoming members?

7c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study used both qualitative and quantitative analysis to gain a better understanding of both how people are assimilated into an organization's culture and how effective that assimilation process is. The first stage consisted of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with four administrators in the women's athletic department, and then qualitatively analyzed to determine the cultural constructs for the department. These cultural constructs were subsequently used to create a survey questionnaire that accurately reflected cultural knowledge the freshmen would be expected to learn. The survey was administered once at the beginning of the fall semester 2002 and then again two months later. Descriptive statistics and statistical tests including paired t-tests and chi-squares were run to assess any change in understanding of the department's culture from the first survey to second survey. In this study, cultural knowledge was operationalized as being the values and expectations of the department that incoming freshmen student-athletes were expected to learn.

Stage One: Interviews and Qualitative Analysis

The first stage of research consisted of semi-structured interviews with four administrators in the department. The goal of this stage was to accurately interpret the culture of the department in order to design a survey that accurately assessed the freshmen Lady Vols' understanding of that culture.

The four administrators that were chosen were the women's athletic department athletic director; an assistant director for the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center; the

current CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinator, and a current women's athletic department graduate assistant and former Lady Vol tennis player. Three interviews were done in the administrator's office and lasted approximately fifteen minutes. The fourth interview occurred over the telephone. Each administrator was asked to define in her own words the culture of the department. Follow-up questions were asked when appropriate. After all the interviews were completed, the researcher compared notes from each interview and grouped together similar statements of related meaning. The top three recurring themes in describing the culture of the department were:

1. Enriching student-athletes lives outside sport
2. Inclusive atmosphere (family oriented)
3. Being nationally competitive in athletics

Many times these themes were described differently, but got at the same topic.

For instance, all four females described a family-type atmosphere within the women's athletic department but each used a different means of describing it: "When I think about what the women's department is about, I think of Joan, of leadership, of team building and coming together." "I think of women into hospitality—making people feel good when I think about the women's athletic department." "In general, people are pretty kind." "What are some words I would use to describe the women's athletic department? Excellence, winning, tradition, caring, family oriented, focused." Using these recurring themes, the researcher designed a survey questionnaire that accurately conveyed the department's culture and would assess how well the female freshmen student-athletes understood that culture.

Ways to Measure Values

There are many different measures that can be used to elicit values from organizations. One way is to perform a content analysis of values that emerge from narrative texts (Meyer, 1995; Kramer and Berman, 2001). Another way is to perform a textual analysis (Meyer, 1995). Many different questionnaire instruments have been developed to measure an organization's cultural values (Sheridan, 1992). Due to the fact that socialization entails personal change and situational adjustment, survey questionnaires are a productive way of getting around the lack of exterior evidence (Fogarty, 2000). Some of those questionnaire measures include Windsor and Ashkanasy's Managers' OC Perceptions instrument (based on O'Reilly et al. OC questionnaire), Forsyth's Ethics Position Questionnaire, Hunt et al.'s five-item Corporate Ethics Scale, and O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell's Q-sort procedure (Subramaniam and Ashkanasy, 2001; Douglas et al., 2001; Sheridan, 1992).

The researcher could not find a measure that reflected the general values that a university's athletic department wants its student-athletes to know. The measure that would possibly come closest to measuring the values this project intends to measure would be O'Reilly et al.'s Q-sort procedure. The reason is that the measure utilizes a more descriptive approach whereby respondents develop a personalized profile of values describing their organization. Due to the constraints of time, the researcher decided a less time-consuming means should be used. Thus, it was decided the next best way to measure transmittance of organizational culture was to administer a survey questionnaire to the freshmen life skills class and rely on self-reported data.

Operationalization of Values

Values have been operationalized in a variety of ways. Douglas et al. note that Rokeach operationalized values as a classification of the hundreds of thousands of beliefs that individuals consciously or unconsciously hold about the world in which they live (Douglas et al., 2001). Rokeach also said that values are enduring beliefs that certain modes of conduct and or end-states of existence (i.e. equality) are preferable to the alternatives and that they guide judgments and actions across specific objects and situations and beyond immediate goals (Douglas et al., 2001). Values are statements of directed meaning that an individual or group thinks are important.

Sample

The female freshmen life skills class, which is taught every fall, is composed of all first semester female freshmen student-athletes. The number of incoming female freshmen student-athletes varies but usually includes about 50 student-athletes. This year's class contained 65 student-athletes, which yielded 58 useable surveys. Student-athletes come to UT from 38 states and 12 different countries and have various demographic backgrounds. The class is taught by an assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center and is required for all first semester female freshmen student-athletes. The class is a semester-long class and meets on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the team meeting room of the Neyland-Thompson Sports Complex. The class brings in speakers from all over the campus to talk to the female student-athletes about such topics as study skills, time management, nutrition, dealing with high stress, sexual issues, eating disorders, and injuries.

Stage Two: Survey Questionnaire Design

The survey questionnaire consisted of 20 questions that included both open-ended questions and 5-point Likert scale questions. To increase the reliability, the survey went through four revisions in an effort to streamline the questions into precise language that clearly asked what the researcher wanted to know. The survey was pre-tested on five upperclassmen Lady Vol student-athletes after the initial four revisions. Very few revisions were made after the pre-test. One revision was that an identification section was added where the student-athletes listed their birth date, first name initial, and their sport so that the researcher could pair the initial and post-test surveys in order to run paired t-tests.

The anticipatory socialization questions on the survey questionnaire were asked in order to ascertain how much the freshmen were socialized before they arrived on campus. This information helped separate what the freshmen had learned through the recruiting process before they arrived at school (anticipatory socialization) and what information they had learned from the department since they arrived on campus for fall semester classes (encounter stage). See appendix A for the complete questionnaire.

Questionnaire Implementation

Sixty-two questionnaires were handed out at the first survey period during the second life skills class of the fall semester in order to determine what values the student-athletes already understood were important to the department. This provided an initial benchmark to compare with data collected at the end of the semester to see what changes in cultural understanding had occurred. The second set of surveys was administered to the life skills class two-thirds of the way through the semester. The second survey was

exactly the same as the first except for one question that did not relate to the student-athletes in October (“How did you learn what was expected of you as a Lady Vol before you arrived on campus for fall semester classes?”). Fifty-nine surveys were handed out at time 2 and 58 of those matched up with surveys from when the first survey set was administered. One survey was handed back that did not match with an initial survey and was destroyed. Surveys were paired by matching the ID section at the top left hand corner of the page on both surveys. The ID section asked for the respondents’ first name initial and birth date. SPSS plus a qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were also used. Statistical tests such as paired t-tests and chi-squares were run to assess any change in understanding of the department’s culture from the first survey to second survey.

Chapter 4

Results

Of the 65 possible respondents, 58 completed questionnaires that could be paired together from the first survey and the second survey for a response rate of 89 percent. Of the 58 student-athletes included in the final sample set, 13 were from swimming and diving, 3 from golf, 2 from basketball, 4 from cross-country, 10 from rowing, 2 from soccer, 15 from softball, 3 from tennis, 4 from track and field, and 6 came from volleyball.

Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were run to analyze the percentage of student-athletes who learned of the department's culture through sources the researcher provided. The statistical significance in change of how they learned of the department's culture from first survey to second survey was also analyzed.

Paired samples t-tests were used to analyze the Likert-scale questions and any significant change between the first survey and the second survey. Both the mean score and the p value were looked at for each Likert-scale question.

The open-ended questions were used to understand how a particular value was communicated to the female freshmen student-athletes.

Research Questions

R.Q. 1: How do incoming members know what is expected of them when they first arrive on campus?

This research question was measured through open-ended question number two on the questionnaire, which asked how female freshmen student-athletes learned what

was expected of them before they arrived on campus for fall semester classes.

Respondents were allowed to list as many answers as possible.

As table 1 indicates, almost 70 percent of the freshmen indicated that they learned what was expected of them through conversations with their coach sometime during the recruiting process. Approximately 16 percent stated they learned through talking with team members during the recruiting process. Fifteen percent stated that they learned what was expected through informational pamphlets and letters sent home. Ten percent listed their academic advisor, and 10 percent listed the assistant director of the Thornton Center for Lady Vol academics as a source. Seven percent responded they learned through common sense. Three percent indicated they learned through past student-athletes and 3 percent indicated they learned from knowing the reputation of the school.

One response of note was from a freshman that said something that varied significantly from most of the responses: "Practically all of the learning started when I got here. Some of it was shown through recruiting trips but not reinforced then." This comment will be dealt with later in the discussion section.

R.Q. 1b: How well do incoming members understand what is expected of them when they first arrive on campus?

To measure research question 1b the questionnaire contained an item (question #6) that asked the freshmen to rate on a scale of 1-5 their understanding of what the department expected of them in the areas of academic performance, athletic competition, development as a person, and health of mind and body. As table 2 indicates, there was a fairly strong understanding of what was expected of them before they had been on campus at the first survey period.

Table 1

**Percentage Of Sources Listed As Means Of Communicating What Is Expected Of
Them When They First Arrive On Campus**

Source of Learning What is Expected of Them When They First Arrive On Campus	% of Student- Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	70 %
Team Members	16 %
Brochures and Letters	15 %
Academic Counselor	10 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	10 %
Common Sense	7 %
Past Student-Athletes	3 %
Knowing Reputation of School	3 %

Table 2

Mean Scores for Understanding of Departmental Expectations

	First Survey Mean	Second Survey Mean	p value
Expectation 1 Academic expectations	4.69	4.55	p=. 103
Expectation 2 Athletic competition expectations	4.69	4.67	p=. 811
Expectation 3 Personal Development expectations	4.29	4.26	p=. 735
Expectation 4 Health expectations	4.33	4.19	p=. 197

* Likert scale of 1-5; 5 means strongly agree

R.Q. 1c: How does that understanding change over time?

Paired samples t-tests were run to analyze the data. As the mean scores from the second survey period reveal in table 1, student-athletes' understanding of the expectations placed on them remained high. There was no significant change in student-athletes' understanding of departmental expectations between the first survey and the second survey (see table 2).

R.Q. 2: How successfully is the value of a family atmosphere communicated to incoming members?

The effectiveness of the department in communicating the value of a family atmosphere to freshmen was measured through survey question #8, which asked freshmen how much they felt a part of the Lady Vol family. The mean score from the first survey was a 4.02, which indicates a fairly strong consensus of feeling a part of the Lady Vol family.

R.Q. 2b: How does understanding of this value change over time?

Paired samples t-tests were run in order to analyze the data. The mean score from the second survey was a 3.75, which reflects feeling somewhat a part of the Lady Vol family. There was a significant change ($t=3.301$, $df=57$, $p=.027$) from the first survey to the second survey as to how the freshmen felt they were really a part of the Lady Vol family, but not in the expected direction.

R.Q. 3: How is being one of the top departments in the country, a value of the women's athletic department, communicated to incoming members?

Freshmen student-athletes' understanding of the value the department places on being one of the top departments in the country was measured through questionnaire item

12, which asked the respondents to circle or write in all the various ways they learned of this value. Since student-athletes could circle more than one answer it was possible for there to be multiple sources of learning of this importance.

As table 3 indicates, learning from their UT coach during recruiting was the clear number one choice as 53 of the 58 respondents circled this option (85 percent). Forty-eight percent circled that they learned of this value through department administration, 45 percent indicated they learned of this through former or current Lady Vols, 39 percent indicated they learned through current teammates, 27 percent indicated they learned through both watching TV and from internet Web sites, 16 percent responded they learned from the newspaper, 5 percent indicated they learned from high school coaches and 3 percent listed other sources for learning of the importance the department placed on being one of the top departments in the country.

Table 3

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Women's Athletic Department Being One of the Top Athletic Departments in the Country

Source of Learning Value of Dept. Being One of Top in NCAA	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	85 %
Departmental Administration	48 %
Former or Current Lady Vols	45%
Current Teammates	39 %
Watching TV	27 %
Internet Web sites	27 %
Newspaper	16 %
High School Coaches	5 %
Other	3 %

3b. How successfully is being one of the top departments in the country, a value of the women's athletic department, communicated to incoming members?

To measure research question 3b, the questionnaire contained item number 11, which asked respondents to rate on a scale of 1-5 how important it was for the department to be one of the top athletic departments in the country. The mean score on the first survey was a 4.91, which indicates a very strong understanding of this value.

3c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

The mean score from the second survey was a 4.90, indicating virtually no drop in understanding of the value of the women's department being one of the top departments in the country. There was no significant change in understanding from the first survey to the second survey ($p=.742$).

R.Q. 4: How is the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation communicated to incoming members?

Measuring how the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation was communicated to incoming freshmen was accomplished through open-ended survey question number 14. Respondents were allowed to list as many answers as possible.

As Table 4 indicates, the following responses were gathered from the first survey: The most frequent response (40 percent) was that the female freshmen student athletes learned the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation from their coach. The second most frequently listed source was the academic counselor at 20 percent. Fourteen percent indicated they learned this value from the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center for Lady Vol academics, 14 percent indicated they learned it through various meetings, 12 percent through the number of academic

Table 4

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Maintaining Academic Progress Towards Graduation (first survey)

Source of Learning Value of Maintaining Academic Progress Towards Graduation	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	40 %
Academic Counselor	20%
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	14 %
Meetings	14%
Academics Services Offered Student-Athletes	12 %
Thornton Center Staff	9 %
Teammates	5 %
Women's Athletic Director	3 %

services offered them, 9 percent through Thornton Center staff, 5 percent from teammates, and 3 percent from the women's athletic director.

As table 5 indicates, the responses from the second survey revealed that the coach had an even more profound effect upon the female freshmen student-athletes learning of the value of academic progress at the second survey time period as 52 percent indicated they learned of this value from their coach. Twenty-eight percent indicated they learned of this value from their academic counselor, 14 percent from athletic administration, 14 percent from the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center for Lady Vol academics, 10 percent through the number of academic services offered them, 9 percent through teammates, 7 percent through the freshmen life skills class, 5 percent through the Thornton center staff, and 5 percent through the women's athletic director.

Table 5

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Maintaining Academic Progress Towards Graduation (second survey)

Source of Learning Value of Maintaining Academic Progress Towards Graduation	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	52 %
Academic Counselor	28 %
Athletic Administration	14 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	14 %
Academics Services Offered Student-Athletes	10 %
Teammates	9 %
Freshmen Life Skills Class	7 %
Thornton Center Staff	5 %
Women's Athletic Director	5 %

R.Q. 4b. How successfully is the value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation communicated to incoming members?

The value of maintaining academic progress towards graduation was communicated very successfully according to the mean scores for five-point Likert-scale question number 13, which asked how important their academic progress towards graduation was to the department. The mean score for the first survey was 4.95, which indicates very strong understanding of this value.

R.Q. 4c: How does understanding of this value change over time?

In order to analyze this data, paired samples t-tests were used. The mean for the second survey was 4.78, which indicated a very strong understanding of the value of

academic progress towards graduation. There was no significant change in understanding of this value from the first survey to the second survey ($p=.214$).

R.Q. 5: How is the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport communicated to incoming members?

Open-ended question item number 16, which asked how the respondent learned that developing a future career outside her sport was important, measured the means that the department uses to communicate the importance of a student-athlete developing a future career outside her sport. Female freshmen student-athletes were allowed to list as many answers as possible. Respondents listed a lot more sources of learning of the value of developing a career outside a student-athlete's sport on the first survey than they did for the second survey.

The responses for the first survey are as follows: As table 6 indicates, the most frequent answer (34 percent) was that coaches communicated the value of career development to the freshmen. This was followed by 19 percent listing their academic counselor as being a source for learning this value. The other listed sources on the first survey were: 10 percent said they didn't know or hadn't learned this value, 7 percent said they learned this through the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center who is over all Lady Vol academics, 5 percent said they learned this through the career center, 5 percent said they learned this through their teammates, 5 percent said they learned this through the CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinator, 3 percent said they learned this through their parents, 3 percent said they learned this through athletic administration, 2 percent said they learned this through professors, 2 percent said they

Table 6**Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Developing a Future Career Outside a Student-Athlete's Sport (first survey)**

Source of Learning Value of Developing a Future Career Outside a Student-Athlete's Sport	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	34 %
Academic Counselor	19 %
Don't Know	10 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	7 %
Career Center	5 %
Teammates	5 %
CHAMPS/Life Skills Coordinator	5 %
Parents	3 %
Athletic Administration	3 %
Professors	2 %
Trainers	2 %
Thornton Center Staff	2 %
Women's Athletic Director	2 %

learned this through trainers, 2 percent said they learned this through the Thornton Center staff, and 2 percent said they learned this through the women's athletic director.

As table 7 indicates, on the second survey 31 percent revealed that they had learned of this value from their coaches, 28 percent indicated they learned this value through their academic counselor, 10 percent indicated that they learned this through the life skills class, 10 percent indicated that they learned this through athletic administration, 10 percent indicated that they learned this through the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center who oversees all Lady Vol academics, 9 percent indicated

Table 7

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Developing a Future Career Outside a Student-Athlete's Sport (second survey)

Source of Learning Value of Developing a Future Career Outside a Student-Athlete's Sport	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	31 %
Academic Counselor	28 %
Freshmen Life Skills Class	10 %
Athletic Administration	10 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	10 %
Didn't Know	9 %
Career Center	3 %
Teammates	2 %
CHAMPS/Life Skills Coordinator	2 %
Women's Athletic Director	2 %
Brochures	2 %

they didn't know or hadn't heard of this value, 3 percent indicated that they learned this through the career center, 2 percent indicated that they learned this through teammates, 2 percent indicated that they learned this through life skills coordinator, 2 percent indicated that they learned this through the women's athletic director, and 2 percent indicated that they learned this through brochures.

One of the more interesting responses to the question was the short reply "injury."

R.Q. 5b: How successfully is the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport communicated to incoming members?

The success of how the department communicated the value of developing a future career outside a student-athlete's sport was measured by five-point Likert-scale question number 15, which asked freshmen to rate how important the development of a future career outside their sport was to the department. The results indicated that the value was strongly communicated at the time of the first survey, as the mean was a 4.53.

R.Q. 5c: How does understanding of this value change over time?

Paired t-tests were used to analyze the data. The mean at the time of the second survey was a 4.38, which indicated a strong understanding of the value of developing a future career outside the student-athlete's sport. There was no significant change in understanding from the first survey to the second survey ($p=.268$).

R.Q. 6: How is the value of development as a person communicated to incoming members?

This question sought to measure how the value of personal development was communicated to incoming female freshmen student-athletes. This question was measured through open-ended questionnaire item 18, which asked freshmen to list how

they learned of the importance the department placed on their development as a person. Female freshmen student-athletes were allowed to list as many answers as possible.

As table 8 indicates, the most frequent response on the first survey was that they learned of this value through their coach (38 percent). The rest of the responses were as follows: 12 percent listed their academic counselor, 7 percent listed their teammates, 7 percent listed that they didn't know or this hadn't been revealed to them, 5 percent listed athletic administrators, 3 percent listed former Lady Vols, 3 percent listed current Lady Vols, 3 percent listed meetings, 2 percent listed athletic trainers, 2 percent listed Team Enhance, 2 percent listed their recruiting trip, 2 percent listed women's athletic director,

Table 8

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Development as a Person (first survey)

Source of Learning Value of Development as a Person	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	38 %
Academic Counselor	12 %
Teammates	7 %
Didn't Know	7 %
Athletic Administration	5 %
Former Lady Vols	3 %
Current Lady Vols	3 %
Meetings	3 %
Athletic Trainers	2 %
Team Enhance	2 %
Recruiting Trip	2 %
Women's Athletic Director	2 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	2 %

and 2 percent listed the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center who oversees all Lady Vol academics.

As table 9 indicates, the second survey revealed that 46 percent of the freshmen listed their coach as how they learned of the value of their development as a person, 9 percent listed athletic administrators, 9 percent listed the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center who oversees all Lady Vol academics, 7 percent listed their academic counselor, 5 percent listed Team Enhance, 5 percent listed teammates, 5 percent listed the freshmen life skills class, 2 percent listed athletic trainers, 2 percent listed the women's athletics director, 2 percent listed available resources,

Table 9

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Development as a Person (second survey)

Source of Learning Value of Development as a Person	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	46 %
Athletic Administration	9 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	9 %
Academic Counselor	7 %
Team Enhance	5 %
Teammates	5 %
Freshmen Life Skills Class	5 %
Athletic Trainers	2 %
Women's Athletic Director	2 %
Available Resources	2 %
Current Lady Vols	2 %
Meetings	2 %
Brochures	2 %
TeamVOLS	2 %

2 percent listed current Lady Vols, 2 percent listed meetings, 2 percent listed brochures, and 2 percent listed TeamVOLS.

R.Q. 6b: How successfully is the value of development of as a person communicated to incoming members?

The success of how the department communicated the value of each student-athlete developing as a person during their time at Tennessee was measured by five-point Likert-scale questionnaire number 17, which asked how important was the student-athlete's development as a person to the department. The mean score for the first survey 4.48, which indicated a strong understanding of this value.

R.Q. 6c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

Paired samples t-tests were run to analyze the data. The mean score for the second survey was 4.36, which indicated strong understanding of this value. The student-athletes' understanding of this value over time did not statistically change significantly ($p=.404$).

R.Q. 7: How is the value of health of mind and body communicated to incoming members?

The value of how health of mind and body was communicated to female freshmen student-athletes was measured through question number 20 on the questionnaire, which asked how did you learn the level of importance the women's department places on the health of your mind and body? Female freshmen student-athletes were allowed to list as many answers as possible.

As table 10 indicates, the answers to the first survey were as follows: The most frequent answer (48 percent) was that freshmen learned of the value of the health of their

Table 10

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Maintenance of Health of Mind and Body (first survey)

Source of Learning Value of Maintenance of Health of Mind and Body	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	48 %
Training Room	29 %
Services Available	10 %
Teammates	9 %
Nutrition Class	7 %
Academic Counselor	7 %
Athletic Administration	5 %
Strength and Conditioning Program	5 %
Sports Medicine Doctors	5 %
Don't Know	3 %
Freshman Life Skills Class	2 %
Recruiting Trips	2 %
Meetings	2 %
Family	2 %
Sport Psychologists	2 %
Former Lady Vols	2 %

mind and body to the department from their coaches. This response was followed by 29 percent listing the training room, 10 percent listed the services available to them, 9 percent listing their teammates, 7 percent listed the nutrition class they were required to take, 7 percent through their academic counselor, 5 percent through athletic administration, 5 percent through strength and conditioning program, 5 percent through sports medicine doctors, 3 percent indicated they hadn't been taught this value, 2 percent listed learning this value through meetings, 2 percent listed recruiting trips, 2 percent through the freshmen life skills class, 2 percent through family, 2 percent through the sport psychologist program, and 2 percent through former Lady Vols.

As indicated in table 11, on the second survey 36 percent indicated they learned the value the department places on their health through their coaches, 28 percent through the training room, 10 percent through Team Enhance, 7 percent through athletic administration, 5 percent through teammates, 5 percent through the nutritionist, 5 percent through the life skills class, 5 percent through their academic counselor, 3 percent through provided services, 3 percent through the strength and conditioning program, 3 percent through the sport psychology program, 3 percent through the assistant director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center who oversees all Lady Vol academics, 2 percent through meetings, 2 percent through their recruiting trip, 2 percent from their trainers traveling with them on trips, and 2 percent from the women's athletic director.

R.Q. 7b. How successfully is the value of health of mind and body communicated to incoming members?

The success of the department in communicating the value of upholding the health of the mind and body of the student-athlete was measured through five-point Likert-scale

Table 11

Percentage of Sources Listed as Means of Communicating Value of Maintenance of Health of Mind and Body (second survey)

Source of Learning Value of Maintenance of Health of Mind and Body	% of Student-Athletes who listed this as a source
Coach	48 %
Training Room	29 %
Team Enhance	10 %
Athletic Administration	9 %
Teammates	7 %
Nutritionist	7 %
Freshmen Life Skills Class	5 %
Academic Counselor	5 %
Provided Services	5 %
Strength and Conditioning Program	3 %
Sport Psychology Program	2 %
Asst. Director of Thornton Center for Lady Vol Academics	2 %
Women's Athletic Director	2 %
Recruiting Trips	2 %
Trainers Traveling with Team	2 %
Meetings	2 %

questionnaire number 19, which asked how important the health of the mind and body was to the department. The data revealed that the mean score for the first survey was a 4.78, which indicated a very strong understanding of this value.

R.Q. 7c. How does understanding of this value change over time?

Paired samples t-tests were run to analyze the data. The mean score for the second survey was a 4.46, which indicated strong understanding of this value. The student-athletes' understanding of the value of health of mind and body did not statistically change significantly over the time ($p=.069$).

Chapter 5

Discussion

How Organizational Culture was Communicated

This study found that the organizational culture of the women's athletic department is communicated in many different ways. Student-athletes listed approximately 16 different possible sources for transmitting some aspect of the culture of the women's athletic department. The most recurring sources of information for communicating the values of the department were coaches, academic counselors, athletic administration, teammates, and the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center assistant director for Lady Vol academics.

Importance of Coaches as a Source of Communicating Culture

By far the most influential source of communicating culture was the coach. Freshmen listed their coach about three times more than any other possibility as a source for communicating the values of the department. These results are not surprising. The coach is probably the most influential person in the student-athlete's experience. The coach invests a great deal of time recruiting the student-athlete in high school, and in college the student-athlete spends more time with her coach than any other person on campus besides their teammates. The coach is basically the student-athlete's parental figure for four years and is responsible for her well-being. This means that the coach must ensure that the student-athlete has every opportunity to be happy, well adjusted, and to be successful. This also raises an implication that if there are elements of the women's athletic department's culture that are not being communicated, the coaches are the

appropriate people to be told which aspects are missing so that they can convey this to entering freshmen student-athletes.

Importance of Life Skills Class in Communicating Culture

One note of interest was the impact the freshmen life skills class had over time on the female freshmen student-athletes. On the first survey only one student-athlete on one question mentioned the life skills class as a source of communicating culture. On the second survey, however, multiple student-athletes mentioned the life skills class as a source for communicating culture for each question. This increase in the number of times that the life skills class was listed can be attributed to the impact the class had on the freshmen student-athletes. At the first survey the female freshmen student-athletes had only been enrolled in the class for two weeks. By the time the second survey was passed out, the freshmen student-athletes had spent seven weeks in the class and the impact of the class is noted by the percentage of student-athletes who listed the class as a source for communicating culture that did not list it on the first survey.

Teammates as a Source for Communicating Culture

A result that is surprising from this study is that teammates were listed as the second most influential source of communicating culture in general, but were not mentioned very often by the student-athletes when asked how freshmen learned of each of the individual cultural constructs of the department. The researcher supposed that teammates would have been right underneath the coach in importance in communicating culture, since the freshmen spend more time with their teammates than anyone else (including the coach). The researcher figured that the freshmen would have respected the experience of the older teammates enough that they would have had more influence on

them than was revealed in the study. One would think that peer influence would be much greater than an administrator's influence. According to the data though, this is not true. Maybe administrators, academic counselors and those that teach the nutrition, study skills and life skills classes have more expertise and are respected by the student-athletes more than the researcher anticipated. The connection in communicating culture from teammates to new incoming freshmen is certainly less than supposed.

Success of Women's Athletic Department in Assimilating Incoming Freshmen

The high initial mean scores at the time of the first survey (Sept. 3) indicate that the women's athletic department did a great job in assimilating the incoming student-athletes before they even arrived on campus for fall semester classes. Almost every question averaged at least a four on a five-point Likert scale, which meant the freshmen understood the values and expectations of the department fairly well. There was virtually no significant change between the first survey and the second survey for understanding of the various expectations and values of the women's athletic department, indicating that the understanding the freshmen had at the beginning of the semester was basically the same understanding that they had towards the end of the semester. This was surprising because it was anticipated that the encounter phase (second phase) of the organizational assimilation process would be where most of the socialization occurred, and thus mean scores would increase, but according to the data the socialization actually took place during the anticipatory socialization phase (first stage).

Although there was no widespread statistical significant change in the mean scores from the first survey to the second survey, one interesting note is that the means

did marginally decrease in understanding for every survey question in this study. They did not statistically change significantly, but there was still a decrease in understanding. What does this reveal? Are female freshmen student-athletes unlearning the department's culture? The researcher believes this could be the case as they have to unlearn what they previously understood in order to replace that understanding with what they have discovered through more recent experiences.

One might expect the freshmen to have a stronger understanding of the values and expectations of the department at the second survey period than at the first. But according to the data this is not true. One reason for this is that special groups could require special socialization, which is a more complex notion of assimilation. Considering that female freshmen student-athletes are a special group of people hand-selected to fulfill a certain athletic function within this university it would make sense that they would need special socialization to be assimilated into the culture of not only The University of Tennessee but the women's athletic department as well. Thus, due to this special socialization of female freshmen student-athletes, assimilation may not move in a linear fashion with freshmen student-athletes progressively learning more and more every day. There might be some backtracking before the means progressively jump higher and higher indicating increasingly higher levels of understanding and comprehension of the women's athletic department's culture.

It could also be that the culture of the women's department seemed more simplistic or cookie cutter during the recruiting process, so the freshmen felt they had a tight grasp of what the department valued when they first arrived on campus. But as they spent more time in the department though, they realized there were a lot more gray areas

than they anticipated and thus became possibly confused in their understanding of what was truly valued in the department. For instance, if a coach tells a student-athlete during recruiting trips that academics are highly valued and their progress towards graduation is extremely important, yet when the freshmen arrives on campus and realizes she trains so much that she barely has time to study, her understanding of the importance of academics decrease.

How Anticipatory Socialization Relates to the Women's Athletic Department's Assimilation Effectiveness

The literature on organizational assimilation would say that the freshmen student-athletes were anticipatory socialized very effectively. Anticipatory socialization "describes the degree to which individuals are prepared, prior to organizational entry, to occupy organizational positions" (Jablin, and Krone, 1991, p. 713). In this study, the results speak for themselves. The freshmen student-athletes apparently felt very comfortable with what was expected of them when they arrived on campus. Much of this could be attributed to the extensive relationship building that occurs during the collegiate recruiting process. Student-athletes take official campus visits, unofficial campus visits, get visited in their home by coaches and athletic administration staff, talk to their coaches on the phone and receive letters and packets of information from them, and talk to many of their peers who are being recruited by the same school. During this process coaches have the opportunity to be very honest with the high school athlete about what their role will be on the team, where they will need to improve skill wise, how much playing time they will see, what is expected of them in the classroom and how they are to handle themselves outside of athletic competition. Some coaches are very truthful during the

recruiting process. Others are not so truthful. Apparently at The University of Tennessee, most coaches and administrators appear to have been honest and candid in what was expected of Lady Vol freshmen student-athletes. Otherwise the mean scores would have started out low, or would have been initially high and then statistically dropped significantly as they found out what life was really like inside the department. Neither of these two possibilities happened.

The result that reveals the possibility of expectations being initially high and then statistically dropping significantly, is the data from the family atmosphere question (question number 8). The question asked how much did the freshmen feel a part of the Lady Vol family. This question was the only one that statistically significantly decreased ($p = .027$).

This change could be attributed to natural causes. It is natural for a “glow period” to exist at the beginning of any relationship. When one does not truly have a realistic perspective on the relationship, it is difficult to truly gauge realistic expectations. This is due to the fact the person has not experienced the relationship in the variety of circumstances that life presents. It could be that the freshmen student-athletes encountered some relational “bumps in the road” between the first survey and second survey and consequently fashioned a more realistic perspective on how much family atmosphere truly existed in the women’s department.

Another cause could be that there really isn’t as strong a family atmosphere in the department as the student-athletes initially thought. This explanation does not hold as valid though when it is noted that the mean score only dropped to a 3.75 for feeling part

of that family atmosphere. This mean is still almost a four, which indicates that the freshmen feel that they “almost completely” feel a part of the Lady Vol family.

A final explanation of the decreased perception of feeling a part of the Lady Vol family could be attributed to the “boot camp” analogy where student-athletes realize that they might not have earned the right to be a part of the Lady Vol family yet. After all, they are just first semester freshmen. But, if they put in their time, persevere, and earn the respect of others, then they will eventually earn the right to call themselves lasting members of the “Lady Vol family.”

Explanation of Differences in Student-Athlete Understanding of Expectations

It makes sense that student-athletes would understand better what is expected of them in the classroom and in the competition arena more than their development as a person and the health of their mind and body. The reason is student-athletes are recruited foremost for their athletic talent. That is what separates them from every other possible high school athlete. Next they are examined for their potential for academic success. If these two aspects are of high importance to coaches, then it makes sense that they would communicate what they expect in these areas more so than any other area. The mean scores for academic and athletic expectations correlate with this point.

One reason for the focus on potential for academic success is the necessity of the student-athlete to remain eligible to compete in her sport. If she is not completely comfortable with the academic expectations that will be placed on her, then the coach will not want to waste a scholarship on her. Academic success is also a part of the cultural norm inside the women’s athletic department. The Thornton Athletics Student Life Center Assistant Director over Lady Vol academics described the department’s

approach to academics as: "There's a mentality that women want to get their degrees here." Women's basketball has a 100 percent graduation rate for females that complete their eligibility. The collective G.P.A. for all female student-athletes is above a 3.0 and above the campus average. All of this is a part of the Lady Vol culture, which according to the mean scores for understanding of academic expectations is communicated very successfully.

A couple of the open-ended responses for "How did you learn the level of importance that the women's department places on your academic progress towards graduation?" indicated that by the end of October the freshmen had learned that they were accountable for their actions. One freshman responded how she learned the importance of academics when she wrote: "When I realized how closely we were watched with our classes and Thornton Center (study hall) hours." Another one spoke a little more frankly: "If you mess up they are up your butt forever." Apparently it did not take long for this student-athlete to see that the women's department means business.

The lower mean scores for freshmen's understanding of the department's expectations of their development as a person could also be attributed to the fact that this is not a departmental expectation. Through initial interviews the researcher believed this was an expectation. After further analysis though, the researcher realized that the department valued this, but did not necessarily *expect* this in its' student-athletes. The department is not going to punish a student-athlete for not developing as a person at the rate they should. They will hold a student-athlete accountable for not competing at a high enough level or for missing class, but they do not necessarily have stringent specific expectations for a student-athlete's growth that she must abide by. This might explain

the lower mean score for student-athlete's understanding of what was expected of them in the area of personal development.

The lower mean score representing freshmen's understanding of the department's expectation of the maintenance health of mind and body can be possibly explained by the fact that mental and physical health are a little more ambiguous than academic and athletic expectations. A coach can say, "We expect you to maintain a 2.0 G.P.A." and "we expect you to be running at least a 2:01 half-mile by the Sea Ray Relays," but how does a coach operationalize maintenance of health? We expect you to be 75 percent happy most of the time? It is a little easier to quantify expectations for physical health by stating how many ounces of water should be consumed daily, number of calories to be consumed, and number of repetitions to be lifted in the weight room. This difficulty in operationalizing health expectations could lead to more ambiguity in student-athletes knowing what was expected of them.

Institutionalized Socialization vs. Individualized Socialization

Ashforth and Saks, in their research of socialization tactics, noted that Jones found that the six tactics associated with institutionalized socialization (collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture tactics) were negatively associated with role ambiguity, role conflict, and intentions to quit and were positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ashforth and Saks, 1996). Ashforth and Saks did not mention any research that described the effectiveness of individualized socialization (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics) but this project discovered that there are more individualized socialization opportunities than institutionalized opportunities. In the women's athletic department, 14 of the 16

sources that student-athletes listed for learning the culture of the women's department could be labeled individualized socialization tactics:

Individualized Socialization:

Coaches

Academic counselors

Thornton Athletics Student Life Center

Thornton Center assistant director over Lady Vol academics

Athletic administrators

Teammates

Athletic director

Freshmen requirements

CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinator

Women's senior associate athletics director

Sport psychologists

Professors

Doctors

Training room staff

Institutional socialization:

Nutrition, Study Skills and Life Skills classes

Meetings

The only two that would not be considered individualized are the three class opportunities— nutrition, study skills and life skills classes— and the meetings that occur, which include team and department wide meetings. The three class opportunities meet in a formal class-like, large-group setting during a structured time on a structured day with a set agenda of what will happen in a logical progression. The meetings, although not as regularly structured still bear the qualities of an institutionalized style of

socialization. All other sources of communicating culture were more informal, less structured and more focused on answering questions and solving problems as they arose rather waiting to provide answers during a specific time.

As far as effectiveness goes, the institutionalized tactic of using a class structure to communicate culture was usually listed right in the middle of most frequent sources for communicating the culture of the department. With the exception of learning the expectation of maintaining a healthy mind and body, nobody listed a class as learning values and expectations of the department on the first survey. On the second survey, however classes were listed quite frequently as sources for learning each value and expectation of the department.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study point towards several recommendations that could be used in modeling future assimilation practices. To begin with, it was obvious from the results that the head coach of the student-athlete's sport was by far the most influential source of communicating culture. This is important because if there is important information that student-athletes need to know then the head coach is the first person that needs to receive it and deliver it. Due to the fact that coaches are perceived as such important sources of communicating culture, a training session on what message is being sent by head coaches might be conducted by athletic administration to ensure that student-athletes are receiving the correct message in the most effective way. More research could be generated on what the head coaches are communicating as the culture of the women's athletic department.

The researcher believes the optimal assimilation experience for the student-athlete would be an interactive, optimally socializing, yet genuinely individualizing structure that allows the student-athlete to both be influenced by and to exert influence on the transition process. This means that there should be ample opportunity for student-athletes to be both taught the culture of the department and also to openly process their reflections on the culture. This practice of individualization should be incorporated as much as possible into the fabric of assimilating student-athletes as this is how full immersion into an organization's culture occurs.

Each athletic administrator in the women's department has a responsibility to encourage freshmen student-athletes to engage the culture they have been taught and then ask questions when they are confused. By corporately encouraging the freshmen to engage with the culture they are learning, in turn student-athletes can approach an administrator on their own time to question why something is the way it is within the department. This thus removes a "cultural roadblock" in the student-athlete's understanding and enhances his or her experience.

This tactic of encouraging freshmen student-athletes to think of what they might question about the department's culture and then asking an administrator on their own time is an example of individualization. This assimilation stage of individualization is also similar to the tactic of individualized socialization. Individualized socialization and institutionalized socialization are two socialization tactics that differ on the approach to socializing organizational members. The question of what is the best combination of institutionalized and individualized socialization tactics for an organization is very appropriate at this point. Institutionalized socialization offers the advantage of learning

in a group setting from other's questions and experiences while building community amongst a group of people that probably lack significant relationships with fellow incoming members. It also makes assimilation of the incoming member a priority by giving it a structured time on a structured day with a set agenda. Individualized socialization offers strength in that people such as coaches, academic counselors, and teammates are accessible throughout the day for whenever a student-athlete needs personal attention to a specific issue. Times such as these are tailored to the student-athlete's exact needs and time is not wasted on issues that do not need to be dealt with.

A disadvantage of institutionalized socialization is that a degree of interpersonal richness is sacrificed in the large-group setting. Another disadvantage is that a class is usually only offered once a week and is not nearly as accessible as an individual that can be accessed any time of the day. A disadvantage of individualized socialization is that the student-athlete may possess a narrower understanding of the culture of the women's department than if they were in a larger group setting listening to issues that other freshmen had and how they were dealing with them.

Thus the optimal assimilation experience for freshmen student-athletes would include both institutionalized socialization opportunities such as a freshmen life skills class and individualized opportunities such as one-on-one meetings with the head coach and academic counselor.

Institutionalized socialization tactics such as a freshmen life skills class could get student-athletes thinking about the culture they have entered. They should then be encouraged to talk with administrators on their own time when parts of the department's culture confuse them. Opportunities for individualization also could exist within an

institutionalized socialization framework such as freshmen life skills class. This could be accomplished by having student-athletes engage in small group work, make presentations, and write journals about experiences they have had thus far. Bringing in a panel of upperclassmen student-athletes and then allowing freshmen to ask questions would also allow more of an individualized component to an institutionalized type setting. An ideal life skills class would utilize these strategies and thus combine the benefits of individualized socialization within an institutionalized socialization framework to enhance the last stage of the assimilation process, individualization.

Limitations of Study

A potential drawback to these results is that significant changes might have occurred if more time had been allowed to elapse between the first survey and the second survey. Due to the necessity of finishing this study in a timely matter, the second set of surveys had to be administered on October 22. Another potential drawback is that a seven or a nine-point Likert scale might have been more appropriate. If it had been anticipated that virtually everyone was going to circle fours and fives for the five-point Likert scale questions, then a seven or nine-point Likert scale might have been more appropriate in order to increase variability and receive more precise answers.

Direction of Future Research

This study could be expanded in several ways. One, due to the time constraints of the study, only the anticipatory and encounter phase of the assimilation process were studied. Future research could focus on the individualization process that occurs during the metamorphosis stage in order to have studied the full assimilation process. Future research could also hone in on further studying sources that proved to be vital in

communicating culture to incoming female freshmen student-athletes. Inquiring why these sources were so essential in communicating culture would provide more in-depth information about the specific assimilation practices at Tennessee.

Conclusion

This study focused on how the women's athletic department at The University of Tennessee assimilated incoming female freshmen student-athletes during the anticipatory and encounter phase of the organizational assimilation process and communicated to them the values and expectations of the department. It sought to explore how organizational culture was communicated to new incoming members and how successfully that culture was communicated over time. It was anticipated that the encounter stage would be where the most socialization occurred, but actually, most student-athletes were socialized to what the women's athletic department expected before they arrived on campus for fall semester classes. This indicates that they were strongly influenced during the anticipatory socialization process, which occurred during their recruitment out of high school.

In hindsight, this makes perfect sense. The recruiting process is an intensive process full of interaction between the high school athlete and the coaching staff, athletic department administration and academic support areas. One reason for this is that the department is competing against other universities, and the more an student-athlete understands about a university, the more equipped that student-athlete will be to make the best decision. Another reason is that if a department is going to invest a scholarship on a student, they need to ensure the student fully understands what is expected of her before arrival on campus. The survey data indicate that most female freshmen understood what

the department stood for and what was expected of them as Lady Vol student-athletes. The freshmen rated their understanding as a four on a five-point Likert scale for most questions.

This study was completed in order to enhance the freshmen student-athlete assimilation experience. Hopefully this study will serve as a building block for the formation of future assimilation practices and aid athletic departments nation wide in communicating culture to freshmen student-athletes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire

ID (Birth date & first name initial) _____ Sport _____

This questionnaire addresses how organizational culture is transmitted. The survey is about three pages and takes about 10 minutes to fill out. These results will be used to better serve future Lady Vols in the transition process from high school to UT. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What is expected of you as a Lady Vol?

2. How did you learn what was expected of you as a Lady Vol before you arrive on campus for fall semester classes?

3. Do you feel any conflict between the expectations you had about being a Lady Vol before arriving to campus for classes, and your experience thus far? If yes, please explain:

4. Joan Croanan, women's athletic department athletic director, has four goals for the women's department at UT. Name Joan's 4 goals for the women's athletic department:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. How clearly do you understand the following: (Please circle one answer)

The goals of the women's athletic department:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

The values of the women's athletic department:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

The expectations of you from the women's athletic department:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

6. How well do you understand what the women's athletic department expects of you in the following areas:

academic performance:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

athletic competition:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

development as a person:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

health of mind and body:

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 fairly well 5 perfectly

7. Do you think that a family atmosphere exists in the women's department?

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 definitely

8. How much do you feel you are a part of the Lady Vol family?

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 almost completely 5 completely

9. What would make you feel more a part of the Lady Vol family?

10. How much do you feel that you are valued as an individual by the women's department?

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 completely

11. How important do you think it is to the women's athletic department at UT to be one of the top women's athletic departments in the country?

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 very important

12. How did you learn of the importance UT's women's athletic department places on being one of the top athletic departments in the country?

(circle or write in all that apply)

My UT coach during the recruiting process

Women's department administration during the recruiting process

My high school coaches

Watching TV

Reading Internet Web sites

Reading the newspaper

Talking to former or current Lady Vols

My current teammates

Other _____

13. How important is your academic progress towards graduation to the women's department?

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 very important

14. How did you learn the level of importance that the women's department places on your academic progress towards graduation?

15. How important is your development of a future career outside your sport to the women's department?

1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 very important

16. How did you learn that your development of a future career outside your sport is important to the women's department?

17. How important is your development as a person to the women's department?
1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 very important

18. How did you learn the level of importance that the department places on your development as a person?

19. How important is the health of your mind & body to the women's department?
1 not at all 2 very little 3 somewhat 4 a good bit 5 very much

20. How did you learn the level of importance the women's department places on the health of your mind & body?

Appendix B: Approval of Form A

FORM A

IRB # _____

Certification for Exemption from IRB Review for Research Involving Human Subjects

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(s) and/or CO-PI(s): (For student projects, list both the student and the advisor.) Andrew Parrish Dr. Candace White

B. DEPARTMENT/UNIT: School of Journalism & Public Relations

C. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF PI(s) and CO-PI(s):

301 Woodlawn Pike F17
Knoxville, TN 37920

D. TITLE OF PROJECT: Organizational Culture: The process of assimilating female freshmen student-athletes at The University of Tennessee

E. EXTERNAL FUNDING AGENCY AND ID NUMBER (if applicable):

F. GRANT SUBMISSION DEADLINE (if applicable):

G. STARTING DATE: (NO RESEARCH MAY BE INITIATED UNTIL CERTIFICATION IS GRANTED.) September 3, 2002

H. ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE (Include all aspects of research and final write-up):

I. RESEARCH PROJECT: November 15

1. Objective(s) of Project (Use additional page, if needed.):

To discover how the values of the women's athlete dept. are transmitted to freshmen and how clear they are at the beginning & end of the semester on what

2. Subjects (Use additional page, if needed.): those values are, Kerry Howland's first-year transition class of female freshmen student-athletes. The class consists of about 50 members.

3. Methods or Procedures (Use additional page, if needed.): A three page survey questionnaire will be administered at the beginning and end of the fall semester. Surveys will be identified by having subjects write their birth

4. CATEGORY(S) FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH PER 45 CFR 46 (see reverse side for date and categories): First initials on the survey

J. CERTIFICATION: The research described herein is in compliance with 45 CFR 46.101(b) and presents subjects with no more than minimal risk as defined by applicable regulations.

Principal

Investigator _____

	Name	Signature	Date
Student	<u>Candace White</u>	<u>Candace White</u>	<u>8/27/02</u>
Advisor			
	Name	Signature	Date
Dept. Review	<u>CE Caudill</u>	<u>CE Caudill</u>	<u>8/29/02</u>
Comm. Chair			
	Name	Signature	Date

APPROVED:

Dept.	<u>CE Caudill</u>	<u>CE Caudill</u>	<u>8/29/02</u>
Head			
	Name	Signature	Date

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM A

PLEASE TYPE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED ON THE FRONT OF THIS FORM

Provide the required information in the space available if at all possible. If additional space is necessary, attach a separate sheet. Submit one copy of this form to the Chair of your Departmental Review Committee for review and approval. [PLEASE NOTE: This form may be reproduced on a personal computer and printed on a high quality printer (e.g., LaserJet, DeskJet). Form A was originally created under WordPerfect 6.1 and printed on a HP LaserJet III printer using a 9-point CG Times font.]

ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE ORIGINAL on this form. When certified by your department or unit head, a copy of the signed Form A will be returned to the Principal Investigator and a copy will be returned to the Compliance Section, Office of Research.

I.1. OBJECTIVES: Briefly state, in non-technical language, the purpose of the research, with special reference to human subjects involved.

I.2. SUBJECTS: Briefly describe the subjects by number to be used, criteria of selection or exclusion, the population from which they will be selected, duration of involvement, and any special characteristics necessary to the research.

I.3. METHODS OR PROCEDURES: Briefly enumerate, in non-technical language, the research methods which directly involve use of human subjects. List any potential risks, or lack of such, to subjects and any protection measures. Explain how anonymity of names and confidentiality of materials with names and/or data will be obtained and maintained. List the names of individuals who will have access to names and/or data.

I.4. CATEGORY(s) FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH PER 45 CFR 46: Referring to the extracts below from Federal regulations, cite the paragraph(s) which you deem entitle this research project to certification as exempt from review by the Institutional Review Board. 45 CFR 46.101(b): Research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in

one or more of the following categories are exempt from IRB review:

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as: (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

PLEASE NOTE: *An exemption cannot be used when children are involved for research involving survey or interview procedures or observations of public behavior, except for research involving observation of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed. [45 CFR 46.401(b)]*

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (2) above, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Federal Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminants at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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For additional information on Form A, contact Brenda Lawson by email at blawson@utk.edu or

one at 974-7697.

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Comments or suggestions to [Zoë A. Hovle](#)
at the [Office of Research](#)
at the [University of Tennessee, Knoxville](#)
Revised January 14, 1999

Vita

Andrew Mason Parrish was born in Nashville, TN on March 12, 1978. He attended high school at Brentwood Academy and graduated in May of 1997. After graduation, Andrew entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the fall of 1997. While at UT, he realized his passion for athletics was translatable into a full-time position in athletics administration.

After graduating Summa Cum Laude in May of 2001 with a B.A. in speech communication and a minor in public relations and journalism, he interviewed for a graduate assistantship in the newly created Thornton Athletics Student Life Center and was offered the opportunity to work with the CHAMPS/Life Skills program. He was also accepted into the Master of Science in Communication program and decided to concentrate his studies in public relations. He will graduate Summa Cum Laude in May 2003.

His career ambitions are to advance into athletic administration with a Division 1A athletic department within a major conference.