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"It Was Beautiful, But It Wasn't Supposed To Be There": Spirituality In The Work Lives of Higher Education Administrative Leaders

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

"IT WAS BEAUTIFUL, BUT IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THERE":
SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORK LIVES OF HIGHER
EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Laura Elizabeth Beer

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Leadership, Policy and Development:
Higher Education and P-12 Education
Program of Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

May 2012

This Dissertation by: Laura Elizabeth Beer

Entitled: *"It Was Beautiful, but it Wasn't Supposed to be There": Spirituality in the Work Lives of Higher Education Administrative Leaders*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in Department of Leadership, Policy and Development: Higher Education and P-12 Education, Program of Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Beer, Laura E. *"It Was Beautiful, but it Wasn't Supposed to be There": Spirituality in the Work Lives of Higher Education Administrative Leaders*. Published Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2012.

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation was to study spirituality in the work lives of higher education administrative leaders, with spirituality loosely defined as an ineffable, elusive concept with values of transcendence, mystery, compassion for all beings, and deep appreciation of the beauties of life at its core. Instead of imposing definitions of spirituality upon participants' experiences and words, I relied upon their explanations and interpretations to guide interview questions and data analysis. A qualitative descriptive case study methodology was selected, and six administrators agreed to participate in the project. A total of 17 interviews were conducted via semi- and unstructured interviews and innerviews, and data analyzed through crystallization techniques.

The investigation required an approach that was focused and eclectic. Due to the lack of previous information on the topic attention was given to spiritual attributes of leadership as well as previous literature and methods of representation and analysis. Diagrams, poetry, stories, and music were created for the purposes of member checking and data representation in order to illustrate participants' transrational and sometimes indescribable conceptions of spirituality. The use of music for data representation called

for special considerations and prompted me to use musical language to frame and describe processes and various elements of the dissertation.

Results of the investigation indicate spirituality is an active force in administrative leaders' work lives and is revealed in how they make decisions, manage staff, and interact with other leaders. Spirituality and a valuing of spiritual qualities were essential components of their approach to leadership, guiding how they performed their professional duties and affecting their internal coping mechanisms for handling challenges and stress. Some may try to argue spirituality does not belong as a topic in discussions about higher education, yet the study and attendant literature review indicate this to be an archaic viewpoint. Implications for incorporating spirituality into higher education administration in concrete and conceptual ways are outlined, and readers are urged to consider how they might be able to integrate suggestions into their own campus environment and work settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION

Conducting this research has been an illuminating process for me on a personal as well as professional basis, and I am indebted first and foremost to my participants for opening their hearts and minds to my queries. You know who you are, but I do not think you know what you have done for me. Thank you.

I am not sure where I would be in life without the love, support, and steadfastness of my life partner Cyndy Pecic. Thank you for enduring the many hours I was either away at class or lost in dissertation writing land. I am constantly surprised by your faith in me, and feel it is my mission in life to live up to it. Our family of Erica, Jeremy, Kaylan, Jim, Crystal, and Bo has enriched my life more than I thought possible, and I am forever grateful to all of you for your open hearts and minds.

The parents I was blessed to grow up with, Ed and Rena Beer, instilled in me their deeply rooted belief in the power of education. This sparked my desire to go back to school and challenge myself to see what I am really capable of doing. Mom, your determination to pursue and obtain a bachelor's degree as a non-traditional and first-generation student is, simply, amazing and inspirational. And I miss you, Dad. Your jokes and antics are still making me laugh, but it was your appreciation of people and ability to live in the moment that has left a void I try to fill with my own family and friends. Your "thinking, always thinking" approach to life has been reincarnated in my writing this tome.

There are numerous other people who have played seemingly small but critical roles in the completion of this work, including Carol S. in the Graduate School office and the people of the Graduate Student Association who approved my award. I am indebted to Greg H., music technology engineer wizard, for your talents and ability to make just about anything sound amazing! Nick Raposo, you have my gratitude for agreeing to my use of "Bein' Green", the beautiful song your father wrote and gave to the world. And to my cohort of Alethea, Jen, Michele, Sean, Erin, and Marianne, thank you for your support and invaluable wisdom.

My dissertation committee of Drs. Rodriguez, Helm, Birnbaum, and Murdock was incredibly supportive and quick with insight when I needed it. To Dr. Katrina Rodriguez, you have been an advisor, teacher, colleague, and friend. I cannot thank you enough for your vision and encouragement that I not just test my abilities but reach beyond them.

I dedicate this work to all these people and to everyone who helps make the world a better, more love-filled place.

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PRELUDE

Driving across the plains of Wyoming, the road leans far into the future,

ribboning endlessly out ahead of me. Dry, scrubby prairie surrounds the car mile after

unchanging mile. Every once in a while the scenery is abruptly broken by a sign listing

the name of a river we are crossing over, and I begin to notice that many of these signs

say the same thing: Platte River. My passenger and I comment on this: "Look, we're

crossing the Platte River." "Did you see that was the Platte River again?", and "Is the

Platte River following us?" It strikes me the road is moving us along towards a

destination while the river marks our journey, seemingly at random points. This river

snakes and undulates around and underneath us, crisscrossing and intersecting our path

many times. Yet if I prefer to look only at the road, or only at the horizon, I would not

even notice its presence.

Looking for spirituality in the work lives of administrative leaders in higher

education is like looking for the Platte River while traveling the Wyoming highway: it

appears at unexpected times, affecting the landscape and journey in definitive yet easily

ignored ways. Like the river, a spiritual focus can be disregarded, hidden, or obstructed

from view, yet is always present.

Spirituality has been a thread throughout the history of higher education, first

defining its mission then rejected as being a non-rational pursuit. Currently, spirituality

is being welcomed back as a vital and necessary part of diversity, social justice, and

education in its finest sense. In this investigation I sought to understand what role

spirituality played in the administration of higher education. I chose to focus on the work

lives of upper administrators, for the culture of any given campus is shaped by those in

leadership roles. The results of the research illuminate the power of shared leadership in

higher education and also bring greater awareness to the intricacies involved in bridging

private and work life identities. I hope the study will also offer you, the reader, insight as

to how your spiritual beliefs and actions can help guide your work as an educator,

administrator, or, simply, supportive bystander.

> *"And if you have love, and faith, and courage and trust, even when you're afraid,*
> *you can find that river and go to it and drink Truth from it and*
> *find some answers for yourself"*
> *(Cameron, 1986, p. 30)*

MOVEMENT I

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is currently experiencing a philosophical and practical shift in how students are being educated and universities operated. Colleges are finding it necessary to adapt to unprecedented financial constraints as well as address the needs of a changing student body (Guido, Chavez, & Lincoln, 2010; Sarath, 2006). In conjunction with this, the traditional style of management in which a president dictates policy is no longer viewed as an effective leadership style (Sarath, 2006). The higher education academy has long been "shaped by hierarchical relationships, competition for resources, and shifting policies" (Reybold, Halx, & Jimenez, 2008, p. 110) and an authoritarian management approach is an archaic and perhaps non-functional model (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). A trend of committing to institutional vision and goals in all areas of operation inclusive of faculty, administration, and student affairs practitioners is gaining strength as an effective way to manage a university system (Alutto, 2011; Reybold et al., 2008).

Dwindling federal monies and fickle public support marks a new era of strict attention to fiscal responsibility for every college campus. Yet at the same time innovative technologies and expanded opportunities for learning have increased the potential of higher education to become the leader in global advancements. This shift has brought higher education to a critical crossroads, one filled with hazards and

opportunities: "regardless of whether one wishes to focus on the dire straits or the vibrant creative potential of contemporary life, there is little question about the need for a vastly expanded vision of human development to guide our educational systems" (Sarath, 2006, p. 1839).

This expanded vision is of students, faculty, and staff having more depth and dimension than conventional labels imply. Here moral, ethical, and spiritual domains of humanity can be considered. For example, with this perspective the purpose of higher education is more than just the inputting of knowledge into students' minds through purely didactic and analytical means; students must be engaged intellectually, emotionally, and with a social justice perspective in order to realize their full potential as socially conscious and responsible beings (Freire, 1970; Palmer, 2007). A whole person approach is becoming widely accepted as the most effective way to educate a student body that is increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, and interests (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Palmer, 2007; Rendón, 2009; Sarath, 2006; Tisdell, 2007).

Changes in classroom pedagogy reflect the growing acceptance of spirituality, for example as witnessed in the rise of adult learning and transformative models of education (Cranton, 2006; Palmer, 2007; Tisdell, 2003). I anticipate these areas of influence will be considered more and more in determining how higher education is conducted. Spirituality does not preclude moral or ethical guidelines, but enhances and expands their meanings. The growing acknowledgement of spirituality and contemplative practices as being integral to higher education marks a possible turning point: American campuses are moving away from an adherence to White, Christian educational ethics and towards a more encompassing system which mirrors contemporary society's ethnic, religious, and

spiritual composition. As a graduate student, former professor, and employee in higher education, it is my belief that with continued analysis and application, spirituality and contemplative practices will increase education's value and make it possible for greater numbers of the public to pursue advanced degrees.

Finding a Common Language

Language is the means by which human beings define our interior and exterior realities. The language one person uses to describe life events can differ greatly from that of someone else, while their experiences may actually be very similar. How we frame our questions, quests, and resolutions speaks to who we are as individuals. In this dissertation it is important that I am transparent in my use of words and phrases, for what is crystal clear to me may be confusing or off-putting to one of my participants or readers. In this section I identify critical terms in order to establish common understanding between myself, participants, and the reader.

Definitions of spirituality, contemplation, and meditation can vary greatly amongst those who consider themselves to be spiritual beings versus those who consider themselves to be rooted in worldly realities. It can be a difficult word to define, as "spirituality often suffers from vagueness" (Speck & Hoppe, 2007, p. 280). Spirituality is entwined with personal beliefs and religious background, and is often enacted through rituals and formal worship. It can include other personally meaningful activities such as hiking, listening to music, writing, or doing yoga. Here spirituality encompasses a contemplative approach to life that integrates certain values into ones' personal, family, and work identities. These values cluster around mindfulness of self and others, respect, commitment to transparency in communications and actions, dedication to diversity,

sense of connection to a power greater than ours, and compassion (Brimhall-Vargas &

Clark, 2008).

For the purposes of this dissertation it is vital to delineate the difference between

spirituality and religion, for the two are distinctly separate phenomena. Spirituality

focuses on personal meaning-making, or the process of finding meaning in life, while

religions are organized faith communities "that, in addition to a concern with nurturing a

sense of spirituality in their members, have far many more aspects involved in them.

They are human institutions, and as such are beset with power relations, politics, and

division" (Tisdell, 2007, p. 539). I do not address religion and religious activity but

instead focus on spirituality as a phenomenon which encompasses religious activity.

Spirituality

What is spirituality? I define spirituality as a uniquely human experience that

engages the heart and mind in a quest to understand one's self, fosters a sense of awe, and

increases the ability to appreciate life's sacred moments. Spirituality is at once a

perspective and a path, a way to ponder and pursue the meaning of life as each of us finds

it. It gives me strength and hope, encompasses and transcends individual struggles, and

helps me to understand my role in this universe. By undertaking spiritual ventures and

maintaining a spiritual worldview I find beauty and purpose in the world, and increase

my own capacity to love. Being a spiritual person does not supersede being a moral or

ethical person, for one can be the latter without being spiritual.

Hallmarks of spirituality include compassion for one's self and others, regarding

life's joys and trials as blessings, and a desire to love self and others (Heron, 2007;

Rendón, 2009). Spirituality encourages a worldview that is deeply personal, strongly

connected to others, and committed to the pursuit of social justice. In terms of higher education, there is little research on the connections between education, spirituality, and teaching for social justice (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Shahjahan, 2010; Tisdell, 2003).

So, again, what is spirituality? Is it a "soft" part of humanity, not connected to logic, reason, and rational order? I believe spirituality is a natural and necessary counterpart to these elements of humanity. This is not to say spirituality functions in subservience to logic, rather it is like the other side of a coin, essential to completing the whole. Without emotion and meaning we become robot-like. Without rationality we become impulsive, chaotic creatures. Both intellect and love in all their definitions are needed in order to fully live this human experience (Fowler, 1981).

Contemplative Practice and Mindfulness

Contemplative practice and mindfulness are necessary components of the exploration of spirituality in the classroom as well as the administration of higher education (Beer, 2010; Heron, 2007). Contemplative practices are the means by which a person embodies spiritual principles and can lead to a steady state of mind in which a person is more balanced, less prone to emotional swings, and able to think clearly more frequently (Miller, 2006). Mindfulness is defined as "living in a state of full and conscious awareness of one's whole self, other people, and the context in which we live and work … it is being awake, aware, and attending—to ourselves and to the world around us" (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005, p. 73). Being mindful is more a state of being rather than a practice to undertake. Qualities of being mindful are consistency, patience, discipline, and humility (Collins, 2001).

Mindfulness is also a distinct attitude about life that "holds the promise of both alleviating our suffering and making our lives rich and meaningful. It does this by attuning us to our moment-to-moment experiences and giving us direct insight into how our minds create more anguish" (Siegel, 2010, p. 5). Cultivating a mindful attitude means becoming more aware of and receptive to what is occurring in the present moment without imposing control (Zajonc, 2006). It requires constant vigilance in bringing oneself back to the present and living as authentically as possible. Becoming more mindful has been linked to decreases in stress and anxiety as well as positive changes in physical conditions (Siegel, 2010). These outcomes have applicability in higher education (Shapiro, Brown, & Astin, 2008) and will be explored in greater detail later in this dissertation.

Meditation is a widely recognized contemplative practice that fosters a state of mindfulness (Miller, 2006). Meditation is acknowledged to be a practice of all major world religions and is mentioned in Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu sacred texts (Walsh, 1999). Sitting quietly and focusing one's attention or breath on a single thought or object has been proven through quantitative studies to increase alertness, decrease symptoms of fatigue, improve cognition, and even increase brain strength (Jha, Krompinger, & Baim, 2007; Lazar et al., 2005). Mindfulness and contemplative practices like meditation are powerful tools in calming the mind, focusing attention, and strengthening collaborative efforts, all of which could have positive value when looking at the role spirituality takes in administrative life.

Naming the Issue

There is a divide separating higher education administration and faculty which is

often competitive and sometimes hostile. Faculty members are regarded as snooty and

unwilling to collaborate (Stone, 2008). Administrators can be viewed as the people who

block faculty promotions and reject proposals for campus growth (Fish, 2007).

Professors view them as the people who wield power through their ability to "approve (or

deny) travel expenditures or research grants; deans recommend approval or denial of a

tenure candidacy" (Perlmutter, 2011, p. A43). Today, many academicians view the

business approaches of chancellors, boards of trustees, and other administrators as only

contributing to "the growing disempowerment of faculty" (Lachs, 2011, A16). Further,

in September of 2010 a blog posted by faculty of the University of Toledo (Bloggie,

2010) announced the creation of a new scholarly, peer-reviewed journal: *The Journal of*

Administrative Antics. The introduction of the journal stated this:

> Recognizing that the temper of our times is increasingly one of vapid self-serving
> excess by administrative "elites" that have adapted themselves to functioning at
> general social expense, this new academic and professional journal is now in the
> process of formation. (Bloggie, 2010, para.1)

Whether this was a well-placed prank or a serious pursuit, the announcement of

this journal's inception brings to light the antagonistic relationship that exists on many

campuses between administrators and faculty. There are several issues that arise from

this antagonism and rivalry, not the least of which is the negative impact such

divisiveness has on the ability of a university to promote a culture of communication and

respect (Crellin, 2010). Granted, most students never hear of this conflict, yet for the

thousands of employees on the payroll of a major university it is a reality, as evidenced

by the new journal announcement. Many administrators are or have been faculty

members, and so any hostility between these two factions does not necessarily stem from simplistic job definitions, but from differences in opinion as to how decisions are made and priorities set.

This points to a lack of information about administrative life and an assumption on the part of faculty that people involved in the day-to-day operations of a university are not, at heart, as committed to education as those who teach (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006). Administration's adoption of business applications and the academic world's rejection of them indicate an essential split and points out the difficulty of bridging this historic animosity (Birnbaum, 1992). The area that lies between the practical sphere of administration and the intellectual sphere of academia is fraught with mistrust and mangled communications. The antagonism that often colors their interaction has deep roots and creates difficulty for anyone who wishes to bring them into a more harmonious relationship.

The perceived lack of awareness on the part of faculty of administrators' hidden spiritual or contemplative motivations and inspirations only contributes to this divisive relationship as well as to a perception that administration is "out-of-touch" with students' identities, strengths, and goals. Kuh and Gonyea (2006), however, found an institution's mission, in conjunction with campus culture, significantly influences acceptance of spirituality and student learning outcomes. This finding lends support to the notion that upper administration's attitude towards spirituality does impact tolerance of diversity as well as student learning.

Significance of the Study

This research project yielded information on how spirituality informed the work of people involved in executive decisions and processes. Results hold significance for higher education leaders in terms of day-to-day operations as well as how students' spiritual needs are addressed.

Administrators and faculty across the United States are engaged in a powerful and potentially negative and destructive dialogue about how to cut costs without cutting services. In essence, this battle is of sacrifice and image: who is going to be sacrificed in the name of new federal aid cutbacks, and how can these sacrifices be done without damaging the public image of providing a full and comprehensive education to all students?

Administrators making these decisions have no prototype to rely upon. It is as if they are creating a new bridge between the past and future simply by moving forward in a conscientious way; each step they take creates another section of the bridge that others can then follow on (Quinn, 2004). No one knows which steps will strengthen the bridge or which could bring it down. How administrators construct the bridge, or how they make and enact decisions in the present moment, is of the utmost importance (Quinn, 2004). This study offered administrators an opportunity to tap into their spiritual wisdom and articulate their work habits and goals in what could be a refreshing and collaborative way. The timing of the study is such that it potentially could have served as a reminder to administrative leaders to stay true to their own multi-faceted and innate certainties.

The past 125 years have brought about a trend in higher education towards secularization and inclusiveness which has in turn led to an increasing acceptance of

spirituality as a contributive force in research and educational endeavors that encompasses moral and ethical precepts yet also exists separately from these (Altbach, 2001). There exists, however, resistance to this inclusion which is based upon the assumption that espousing spiritual values means a campus is promoting one religious view over another. The university I have chosen to study, which for this investigation is called Mountain Vista University (MVU), is an example of a typical university's approach to spirituality: there is a multi-faith coalition of spiritual leaders on campus, but it is loosely formed, has little visibility, and does not have much of a history of working together. These varying spiritual and religious groups have traditionally operated in silos, each keeping to their own office without publicly acknowledging similarities and common points of strength. The question arises as to whether this fulfills higher education's commitment to holistic student development. Students struggle with deep spiritual questions and many do not adhere to a specific doctrine (Lindholm & Astin, 2008) so they may feel, without the presence of a spiritual center on campus, there is no place or person to turn to for support. There is no university-wide modeling that it is okay to grapple with deep questions.

Broaching the issue with administrators, the people who develop and enforce policy and have a powerful impact on campus culture, could have affirming effects on this aspect of student development and prompt them to wonder why these groups do not work together more. Opening a conversation via the interview format about personal spirituality and work has significance for the university's commitment to inclusiveness, religious tolerance, and the acknowledgement of students' spiritual needs.

Rationale for Research

"Future leaders will not only need to possess new knowledge and skills, but will also be

called upon to display a high level of emotional and spiritual wisdom and maturity"

(Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 1)

The adage "the only thing certain is change" applies in higher education, for

"living with change and managing the process is an essential skill for all those in

education both at a personal and professional level" (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009, p. 688).

The skills of adapting to and learning how to benefit from constant change are needed

talents for higher education administrators. Resistance to change is an area I was

attentive to, for though sometimes viewed as a force that can prevent or inhibit

transformation, "resistance is a necessary part of the change process" (Astin & Astin,

2000, p. 94). I attempted to view any expressions or examples of resistance through this

lens. Injecting the topic of spirituality into discussions of budget cuts, slashes in

employee benefits, and reductions in faculty travel might at first glance not appear to be

appropriate or warranted. Yet doing so could bring a deeper level of consideration of

how to navigate such difficult decisions, allow for a multiplicity of voices, and

communicate results in a manner that is respectful and transparent.

Recently the president of MVU called for all areas of campus to change how

operations are conducted and to collectively deconstruct hierarchical power dynamics. In

her speech (Name withheld for confidentiality) she alluded to the need for the university

to be innovative in how it adapts to current needs and said traditional leadership and

governance principles will limit the university's growth and survival. She also shared

how her journey as president has been a spiritual one, and that it is time to talk in spiritual

terms about why everyone is on campus and how they fulfill their work duties. Her

words spoke of a desire for a culture change on campus and a shift in focus from *why*

things are done to *how* they are accomplished. If indeed this is being sought, university

leaders will need to be "concerned with moving the institution's values and belief

systems towards creating a desire to change the way people may behave within the

organization" (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009, p. 698). My preliminary and informal

assessments are that this culture change is actively being sought in upper administrative

circles and has not yet trickled down into middle management. For this reason, amongst

others being discussed here, I decided to focus data collection procedures solely on senior

administrators. Another motivation of this study was to determine whether the

president's public valuation of spirituality was to solicit support for a culture change or if

it was a temporary panacea to serious fiscal and political concerns facing the campus.

A final justification for this research was that spirituality is a topic being spoken

about in the context of university operations and has the potential to transform how

administration is perceived (Beer, 2010). For faculty and staff, universities are beginning

to recognize the importance of allowing employees to bring their whole selves to work,

find balance between personal and professional roles, and be able to work together as a

team focused on the mission of the college (Beer, 2010; Boyle et al., 2003). This whole

person approach is rooted in long-standing educational values and uses an inclusive

approach to higher education as well as to institutional functioning. For example,

spiritual values are being openly acknowledged as essential elements of campus

governance and operations (Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010). One precept guiding this

project is that spiritual development is an integral part of human development, and should

be considered not only in faculty and student lives (Lindholm & Astin, 2008) but also in the lives of administrators and employees of higher education institutions (Beer, 2010). The study I conducted yielded information on how spirituality informs the work of those people involved in executive decisions and processes.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research project was to examine the role spirituality takes in the work lives of administrative leaders at a typical mid-size western university. The study was designed to elicit in-depth and personal answers to questions that probe the intersection between the work identities and interior spiritual beliefs of people involved in higher education leadership. The primary research question I asked was:

Q1   How do personal spiritual beliefs affect the leadership style of senior administrators in higher education?

Secondary questions included:

Q2   How does MVU's administrative culture support (or not) the integration of personal spiritual beliefs into the work environment?

Q3   How can an administrative leader create a departmental climate in which employees feel empowered to share leadership and set their own goals?

Q4   Of what value is including spirituality in the discussion on how higher education is conducted?

Methodological Framework

Any research project is dependent upon its chosen paradigm for guidance in deciding methodology, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mertens, 2005). The choice of paradigms is essentially between one worldview that believes reality is absolute and quantifiable, or another which finds reality to be wholly dependent upon the perspective of whoever is identifying and

defining it. For this study I chose the latter, a qualitative paradigm which encourages

meaning-making and the elucidation of personal experience (Mason, 1996). For

example, each administrator in my study had her own unique definition of spirituality as

well as individualized methods for integrating her work and spiritual lives. I believe it

was vital to the success of the project to respect each viewpoint shared without judgment

or preconceptions. If I had entered into the research with fully formed and pre-

determined views and goals (a quantitative paradigm) I would have subverted the

exploratory nature of the study (Creswell, 2007).

Areas of Consideration

Undertaking this research in such uncertain times presented unique opportunities

and potential obstacles. If a president of a large university were to suddenly introduce the

subject in a speech his credibility and intention might be questioned—is it a genuine

attempt to broaden the university's mission or is it a hegemenous statement meant to

placate stakeholders? Such a statement has the potential to increase support or to erode

executive power and undermine necessary efforts to reform or eliminate under-

functioning areas of campus. For example, calling for shared leadership has a spiritual,

emotional, and intellectual appeal, yet from a practical standpoint "makes institution-

wide implementation of policies and practices more difficult" (Quinn, Lemay, Larsen, &

Johnson, 2009, 140). When approaching the topic of spirituality in higher education,

areas that warrant special consideration include role definition, a perception of

irrelevance, and campus readiness.

Role Definition

Simply talking about how to integrate spiritual principles into administration might be off-putting to some participants for this integration would require changes in role definitions. Schlossberg (1981) says "many, but not all, transitions involve role change" (p. 8) and such a transition could prove difficult for people entrenched in a particular way of conducting business. Talking about spiritual values and principles has the potential to transform an upper administrator's role on campus from that of authoritative figure to servant leader, one who insists upon a collaborative style of management (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Greenleaf, Frick, & Spears, 1996). The president of a college may, for example, be a distant and unknown figure on campus, and by talking about spirituality be expected in the future to "spend time and energy managing meaning, listening and being influenced by others, and balancing conflicting ideas, and interpreting ambiguous situations" (Kezar, Eckel, Contreras-McGavin, & Quaye, 2007, p. 73).

Perception of Irrelevance

Another potential barrier is that this type of study may be perceived as irrelevant to higher education administration. Skeptics could argue that introducing spirituality into a discussion about the purpose and future of higher education would detract from the urgent need to find innovative solutions to the economic issues facing the field. Yet I counter with this statement: without a fresh, holistic perspective that is creative, transparent, and collaborative in nature, worn out reactions to problems will continue to dominate the discussion.

Campus Readiness

Another question to consider was whether the MVU campus was ready to talk openly about spirituality and bring it into staff meetings and classrooms in a more conscious, applied manner. Plested, Edwards, and Jumper-Thurman (2006) have conducted extensive studies on the notion that before social change can be sought, a community's readiness to engage in the change process must be evaluated and intervention techniques developed that are appropriate to that readiness level. There are nine levels of readiness, ranging from level 1, lack of awareness, to level 9, a "high level of community ownership" (Plested et al., 2006, p. 8). The authors' work focused on issues such as HIV/AIDs prevention, intimate partner abuse, and suicide, yet has applicability to other situations like that of questioning the role of spirituality on a college campus.

In essence the Community Readiness model (Plested et al., 2006) provides "a guide to the complex process of community change" (p. 3). By requiring researchers and social change agents to analyze a community's unique concerns, strengths, and resources before initiating interventions, change is approached with specific and culturally fitting procedures. This model informs the present research study by giving the investigator pause to reflect on whether campus constituents are prepared and equipped to authentically speak about spirituality in their work. Unlike other campuses MVU has no center for spiritual life. Searching the internet using key words of "campus center for spiritual life", 27 institutions that have such centers were identified within the first three of 67 pages of results. MVU's lack of space and resources dedicated to the spiritual needs of students indicates a low level of university commitment to this issue.

Conversely, the president of the university has publicly acknowledged spirituality as a force in her work identity (a topic explored more fully in the following section).

Establishing the level of readiness and suitable interventions requires in-depth evaluation. In conducting an overview of indicators as to MVU's readiness to address issues of spirituality, however, it is possible to preliminarily deduce the university is at level 3, of vague awareness that the issue or need exists. The lack of a spiritual center is one factor in determining level 3, as is the president's statement that openly acknowledged a spiritual perspective to her work. Relying upon only one of these factors would have resulted in a different conclusion, but, appropriate to the definition of level 3, "there is a local concern, but there is no immediate motivation to do anything about it" (Plested et al., 2006, p. 9).

According to the model, intervention strategies suited for level 3 cluster around the goal of raising awareness "that the community can do something" (Plested et al., 2006, p. 26). In terms of this study, simply conducting the interviews with administrative leaders held the potential to work towards this goal of increasing awareness. If, after data analysis and representations, the study pointed towards conclusive statements about spirituality as a positive force on campus, the investigator could publish and speak about results, thereby leading the community towards level 4, that of presenting concrete ideas to promote growth.

Motivation for the Study

I was motivated to pursue this topic after speaking with a number of higher education administrators who openly acknowledged the importance of spirituality in their

work lives. Another motivating factor came when I listened to the MVU president's

2010 State of the University Address. In this address she said,

> My journey at [MVU] has become a spiritual one, and one of the things I've
> learned along the way is that's not something we should be afraid to talk about.
> Not only is it OK to talk about it—I think it's essential that we acknowledge and
> celebrate that we are here for more than just the awarding of credit hours and
> granting of degrees. (Name withheld for confidentiality)

This statement has many implications for leadership, governance, and university-wide

goal setting. Bringing spirituality into a professional discussion invites a sharing of

personal revelations, struggles, and inspirations. Her statement allowed me to use an

approach that was contemplative or spiritual in nature.

In reflecting upon the speech I began to wonder if a president's talking about

spirituality had an effect on administrative leaders, and what their experience was of how

their personal beliefs intersect with their work life. Questions that arose included: "From

the perspective of a senior administrator, why would a university president talk about

spirituality?"; "What is its role here?"; and "How do personal spiritual beliefs affect work

life?"

Perhaps the president spoke about her own spiritual process to demonstrate her

vulnerability in the face of the economic realities facing the university and to elicit

support. Not to educe the superficial type of "yes, I am behind what she is talking about"

support, but to encourage meaningful dialogue and action. Is this a wise course? Is it a

necessary course? There are risks with taking this route for it requires a journey into the

unknown. Past research and the success of other institutions in operating with a strong,

concrete application of a contemplative approach to administration makes it clear it is

achievable (Beer, 2010; Quinn et al., 2009; Rendón, 2009).

Personal Perspective

Writing this dissertation gave me an opportunity to weave together two significant interests in my life: higher education and spirituality. The doctoral studies I have been engaged in have expanded my knowledge of higher education in ways I could not have anticipated and also furthered my spiritual growth. I do not separate my development as a student from my spiritual development as I believe the two are one process though they may be expressed in differing ways; this is one of the philosophical foundations of the examination. Here I hope to, with great care and awareness, join my higher education learning and spiritual intelligence together in a way that is historically rooted, sound in terms of research principles, and, ultimately, of benefit to those who work in higher education.

I am and have always been a spiritual seeker: I have looked for God, Love, Compassion, Forgiveness, and Meaning in Christian and Buddhist forms, Judaic symbols, and Hindu practices and paths. I am aware I have not included Islam here; it is not due to oversight but rather because it is not a path I have explicitly explored. What I have found is all these religious forms share a core set of beliefs and principles centered upon the idea that we humans are on this earth for a purpose. And this purpose is to love, to love ourselves, each other, the planet, and whatever God it is we choose to worship. From this love springs principles of respect, tolerance, compassion, forgiveness, and learning, as well as a desire for continual self growth. If I come to truly love myself and God, all these other concepts and practices are brought to life.

I believe spirituality affects every area of my life, and here I take the leap into believing that spirituality helps govern every person's behavior, whether at work, school,

or play. I also understand there are sociopathic personalities that are able to completely separate good from evil and find ways to justify their wicked behavior in moral terms, but that is a topic better explored by moral and spiritual thinkers, philosophers, and criminologists. For most of us, our behavior is rooted in our histories and experiences. We have some modicum of control over our actions. Speaking for myself, I understand my history affects my deeds yet I also continually struggle to understand how and why I do things. The depths of human behavior are vast, shadowy, and sometimes unknowable. I try to offset these dim motivations with as much focused awareness as I can give myself.

My perspective in conducting this research was that bringing the topic of spirituality to light offers people a way to increase their understanding and awareness of how to meld together belief and action. Yet it became a matter not of whether participants in the study would take the chance to become more self-aware, for that would have been a presumptuous and egotistical fantasy on my part, but of my being open to the surprising things they would say and do that I could never have anticipated.

MOVEMENT II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There has been little research conducted on the spiritual aspects of working in higher education student affairs or administrative capacities, and even less on the intersection of work and personal lives for those who are employed in these arenas (Beer, 2010; Shahjahan, 2010). For this reason it was necessary to draw upon varied sources to create a literature review that supports such an investigation. With this in mind, in the following sections I review historical lines of spirituality's involvement in higher education and research, social justice and organizational implications, and leadership perspectives.

Historical Perspective

The United States was the first country in history to commit to mass higher education, and had as its original goals to provide spiritual education and further the moral development of male students with upper-class, Protestant backgrounds (Altbach, 2001; Reybold et al., 2008). In other words, early American colleges largely limited their enrollment to an elite class of White men. This small cadre of students was charged with bringing biblical education to the public and help guide the country with a strong moral and Christian compass. During the colonial period there was little distinction made between educational, moral, and religious training, and the three areas were blended

together. Early institutions were focused on ministerial education and required church attendance at least weekly (Altbach, 2001).

By the nineteenth century higher education had expanded in scope though basic curricular goals had not changed. Universities and colleges began to sprout up in Eastern and Midwestern states that opened their doors to women and blacks. Post-Civil War public universities were created and higher education became a pursuit available to greater numbers of citizens (Altbach, 2001). America's heartland rejected earlier sententious platforms and embraced the middle class's desire to obtain advanced degrees. Protestant, Catholic, and non-denominational colleges abounded. While "the religious impulse was ... responsible for much of the early development of American higher education" (Altbach, 2001, p. 16), the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a loosening of this focus. Separation of church and state was emphasized strongly in public universities which in turn led to reduced emphasis on religious training. At this point a liberal arts focus was introduced and education became service oriented (Shahjahan, 2010). The shift away from religious training and towards the secularization of higher education had begun.

This shift also corresponded with an increased interest in American culture of Spiritualism, a social and religious movement which propounded beliefs in occultism, life after death, and communicating with those who have died (Gornick, 2006).   Spiritualism is different from spirituality in that Spiritualism is a religious form, while spirituality encompasses many traditions and paths. During the 1890's people interested in Spiritualism flocked to psychic mediums and attended lectures on how to contact dead people, and develop their intuitive and healing powers; communities like the one still

active today in Lilydale, NY, were built to provide these services as well as to offer

support to those who believed strongly in their power (Lilydale Assembly, n.d). The

terror of the Civil War left American culture shattered and citizens unsure of their beliefs,

"So what did thousands and thousands of people turn to? Spiritualism. Spiritualism was

astonishing at the end of the century" (Gornick, 2006, p. B2). A rigid adherence to

Christian beliefs was abandoned and the general populace of the US became aware of and

fascinated by spiritual theories and phenomena. But what did this do for higher

education? It helped to release the hold Christianity had on education and make possible

a more inclusive, intellectual discourse and inquiry into the nature of human life.

Without the constraints of a specific morality dictating what could or could not be studied

or researched, the arts and social justice causes became valid and valued components of

higher education life (Bryant & Astin, 2008).

According to Rhoades and Black (1995) the ultimate goal of higher education is,

"For students to develop a critical consciousness, engage in social and cultural

transformation, and help create a more just and equitable society" (p. 413). Higher

education in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is marked by the development of this

critical consciousness. The Vietnam War, Kent State protests, and women's liberation

served to further dismantle the power structure of elitist, White, Male dominated, and

money-focused higher education institutions (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002). Similar to

what occurred in the late 1800's, people during this period turned away from

conventional religions and towards a New Age philosophy which put forward both

eastern and western ideologies, beliefs, and practices, and relied upon psychology to

describe religious experiences (Shahjahan, 2010). During the 1980's and 1990's this

philosophy was scorned by professors and researchers as having no scientific foundation, yet in recent years rigorous studies have demonstrated how eastern practices like meditation and mindfulness have measurable results and can be beneficial to college students (Zeidan, Johnson, Diamond, David, & Goolkasian, 2010).

As was discussed earlier in this paper, spirituality also has a social justice component, so it is no surprise that since the 1990's service learning and the promotion of social justice has increased dramatically (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010). For example, Campus Compact is coalition of universities and college presidents dedicated to the promulgation of service learning in higher education. The group began in 1985 with three institutions and has grown to over 1,100 in 2009, representing approximately 25% of the nation's institutions (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010).

By the mid-1990's spirituality was a topic being presented at higher education conferences and the focus of research projects in peer-reviewed journals (Walker & McPhail, 2009). Students' pursuit of spiritually-enhancing activities like meditation or participation in church activities (Bryant & Astin, 2008), administrative applications (Beer, 2010), and use of contemplative practices in the classroom (Astin, 2004; Cranton, 2006; Palmer, 2007; Rendón, 2009) all became spheres of interest. These areas will be discussed in greater detail in a later section. The evolution of spirituality can also be seen in the advancement of research paradigms and methodologies.

Spirituality and the Evolution of Research

"We may also be entering an age of greater spirituality within research efforts"

(Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 185)

Higher education is heavily invested in research development as evidenced by the plethora of research oriented universities and the prestige they garner. This investment warrants a look at the history of research philosophies and epistemologies as part of the environment scan, for this perspective offers a different and necessary view of spirituality in higher education. Tracing changes and transformations in the field of research mirrors, in several ways, higher education's gradual acceptance of spirituality as an integral part of teaching, learning, and university administration.

Research as a formal application began with German scientists in the 1800's (Mertens, 2005). Scientists attempted to study natural phenomena in order to better understand their processes and establish laws of nature that were immutable. Positivism had as its aim to develop a process of scientific examination that was free of any extraneous variables; this value-free approach was supposed to yield results separate from any interferences. This is reflective of the trend at that time to teach students in a purely didactic manner with the attitude that information is unchanging and must merely be imparted, not analyzed.

Mertens (2005) discussed how a few positivist scientists realized that their personal values and assumptions were indeed impacting their experiments. These scientists subsequently tried to identify and codify personal assumptions in order to reduce their effects. This way of conducting research led to a post-positivist approach

which acknowledged researcher bias as a factor in experimental pursuits, yet spirituality was still disallowed as a relevant factor.

Post-positivists introduced the idea that researchers may be biased in their perception of the phenomena being studied. They proposed knowledge is separate from human consciousness and could be studied in a controlled manner (Alkove & McCarty, 1992). In this context preconceived notions and partialities must be identified before research can commence and it becomes possible for measures to be taken that compensate for them. This ensures, from a post-positivist perspective, that results are valid. The next generation of researchers, however, put forth when it comes to how humans act and interact, quantitative measures fall short. This led to the new school of constructivist thought which expanded the boundaries of research even more.

Constructivists believed knowledge is discovered and created when people interact with their environment and each other. In the human sciences a researcher and the object of study are constantly influenced by each other (Mertens, 2005). Constructivists asked: how can a post-positivist study of human behavior eliminate factors like emotion, reactions, and unconscious assumptions, which by their very essence motivate and guide behaviors? A true post-positivist scientist would respond that emotional responses and concepts like love or compassion have a place in research and education, yet they must be tightly controlled and accounted for. Otherwise they interfere with the overall objective of identifying universal and unchanging laws of science and teaching.

Constructivists cast a wider net inclusive of emotion and personal beliefs yet stopped short of spirituality, and developed tools and philosophies by which to gather

data (Mertens, 2005). Qualitative methodology arose as a valid way to expand the scope of research even further. The basic inquiry aim of any qualitative, constructivist study was and is today "to bring forth individual reconstructions coalescing around consciousness" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 166). This acceptance of the mutability of reality found its reflection in the rise of adult education and transformative learning principles, in which students were expected to actively engage with material and make meaning of it that is personally relevant (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1997).

Contemporary research methods were developed in response to an expressed need to make research applicable to participants' lives as part of a social action agenda (Freire, 1970). Critical, participatory, and transformative research models evolved out of constructivism yet moved towards more adaptability and responsiveness in researchers' intent and choice of design. This more interactive and intrinsically political world view unapologetically demanded that researchers give voice to and empower the people whose experience they are studying (Rhoades & Black, 1995). This worked to promote true democracy by allowing everyone involved in a project to fully participate in the collection and interpretation of data.

The doors separating the people who investigate behavior and relationships from those living the experiences being studied were thrown open with the arrival of social change oriented transformative philosophies and practices. The transformative model advocated for the inclusion of spirituality as part of participant and researcher experiences (Hartelius, Caplan, & Rardin, 2007). For researchers this meant "to incorporate, advocate, and verify the full and expansive measure of any human experience studied, however it presents itself to awareness" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p.

xxvi). An investigator was given permission to open her inquiry to spiritual,

contemplative, and mindfulness practices in order to create complete pictures of

participants and settings, and also to explore her own responses in a more comprehensive,

transpersonal manner. Taking a spiritual perspective helped a researcher understand her

role and limitations, for "representing other human beings must allow these others to

speak for themselves and must include the dignity and respect we give to others by

acknowledging that we cannot fully understand or represent them" (Carspecken, 2009, p.

60). Transformative approaches to research rely upon constructivism yet have as their

aim the elimination of political and societal oppressions.

     To sum up, the field of research has changed and developed as the researcher's

perspective of humanity, her sense of obligation to participants, and mandate to

acknowledge the validity of all participants' experiences has evolved. This process of

change has become one not only inclusive of spirituality, but in some ways reliant upon

the language of spiritual perspectives to study and describe human conditions and

actions. As research evolves, terms like contemplative practice, service, insight,

wholeness, and transcendence can be found in new models of investigative methods such

as Spiritual Inquiry (Heron, 2007), and meaning making is heavily emphasized (Lincoln

& Guba, 2000). In the college classroom this expanded view of research and humanity

finds its counterpart in the inclusion of mindfulness practices and discussions of

spirituality, while in the boardroom including spirituality has other nuances and

necessities (Collins, 2001; Hartelius et al., 2007; Rendón, 2009; Subbiondo, 2005).

Before taking a look at these, however, it is important to understand how higher

education is organized.

Higher Education's Organizational Structure

A university consists of disparate intellectual, artistic, and scientific spheres that unite around one central goal: the education of students. These sometimes non-overlapping areas are held together by the administration of the university's goals, policies, and procedures. Both the academic and administrative arms of a university share one overarching vision as outlined in its mission statement. How this vision is implemented organization-wide can vary tremendously from campus to campus.

A Business Viewpoint

There has been much speculation in recent years about the applicability of business practices to higher education, yet "administration and auxiliary service areas of higher education often function in ways similar to typical service businesses, [while] academic/institutional areas are unlike the business world" (Quinn et al., 2009, p. 139-140). Separating administrative functions from academic pursuits is necessary, for the financial and management processes involved in running a mid-size university are intricate, complex, and require a business-oriented approach in order for the university to be a successful operation (Winston, 1999).

Decreases in federal and state funding, changes in student demographics, retention issues, and the focus on degree attainment versus student development (Engdahl, 2010) translate into a justifiable adoption of a business approach to managing funds and enrollment (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Administrative leaders have therefore been targeted, whether fairly or not, as having only the bottom line in mind and unable to understand the sometimes esoteric needs of academicians (Bloggie, 2010). The balancing of administration's need for a business perspective with the fierce commitment

to independent inquiry that is a hallmark of higher education is an act worthy of an aerial artist yet is a requirement of any upper level college administrator. Incorporating spiritual principles and contemplative practices can potentially make this balancing act easier to accomplish (Beer, 2010). This may be a tricky undertaking, yet makes sense in the multi-layered world of a university.

Organizational Culture

Spoken and unspoken messages within departments, commitment to the university's mission statement, and use of space are all indicators of the workplace culture (Beer, 2010; Tierney, 1988). Fugazzotto (2009) says, "The beliefs, values, and assumptions that organization members hold in common, but that often remain implicit, define culture and group/organizational identity" (p. 286). These shared perceptions lay a foundation upon which actions are performed, judged, and interpreted. Similarly, the culture of a higher education organization is "reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and symbolic level" (Tierney, 1988, p. 3). Studying if and how contemplative and spiritual principles are a part of the symbolic and actual actions of upper administration can reveal how an entire organization operates. What are the hidden messages imparted to staff? What symbols support and underlie these messages? How do the power dynamics within an organization like a university manifest: in an authoritative or dictatorial manner or in a collaborative and inclusive way? These are only a few of the questions that could be explored when spirituality is allowed into the discussion.

In order to fully comprehend a university's workplace culture and how its administration functions, it is helpful to identify the symbols and intentions, both spoken and assumed, that undergird actions and interactions (Tierney, 1988). These symbols include mascots, mission statements, valued words or phrases, and any images displayed as part of a departmental or campus message. Fugazzotto (2009) conducted an extensive literature review on the use of mission statements and campus culture, and found that these statements have the power to either unite segments of a campus or, if the statements are vague and do not clearly state the overarching vision and purpose of a college, contribute to a lack of commitment to institutional goals.

The symbols a college adopts can be indicative of either the actual environment or, more subversively, the environment that top administrators only wish to portray to prospective students and donors (Birnbaum, 1992). Noting what these are and staff attitudes towards them can reveal much information about the inner workings of administration. Hidden symbols, those not obvious or noticeable to a casual observer yet reflective of unspoken assumptions or mind-sets, also reveal how decisions are made and tasks accomplished (Fugazzotto, 2009). An example of this might be as simple as how a room is usually arranged for a meeting by a particular department: is it a circle, or in a lecture hall format? These two set-ups have markedly different effects on meeting attendees (Boyle et al., 2003). Symbols, metaphors, and images shape, whether consciously or unconsciously, the motivation and participation of campus stakeholders.

Leadership Principles and Models

"Good leadership demands a decided, yet delicate, touch"

(Connor, Smith, & Hickman, 2004, p. 165)

There is an abundance of leadership models, far too many to adequately cover in this literature review. The ensuing section is not designed to be an exhaustive review of these models, but to provide a foundation upon which readers can understand the connections between leadership, higher education, and spirituality. Governance models will be explored as part of this effort.

Effective leadership in the academic setting is a combination of institutional culture, integrity, communication, and collaborative effort (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, & Van Meurs, 2009). The era of the patriarchal, authoritative college president has passed, and current times call for leadership that is based not upon personal characteristics or autonomy but attention to institutionally-specific history, culture, symbols, and fiscal needs (Winston, 1999). In recent years there has been a surfeit of business models presented by which to govern higher education institutions, yet these have served only to add layers of bureaucracy without consistently positive gains (Carlson, 2010; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009). This has in turn led to increased pressure on academic and non-academic employees as well as heightened "tensions between management and staff in Higher Education [*sic*] institutions" (Van Ameijde et al., 2009, p. 764). As these business models have come and gone they have created lingering, negative effects. Conversely, they have also brought about a positive trend in

which administrators have had to re-focus on an institution's unique culture and adapt business management principles that fit their particular environment (Van Ameijde et al., 2009).

Every organization, including those involved with higher education, "Has its own culture, character, nature, and identity" (Schneider, 2000, p. 25). A leader who effects constructive change constantly affirms common values and reinforces the need for all constituents to act from their shared beliefs. This kind of leader will also encourage campus members to engage in the governance process, and recognize "organizations are webs of relationships" (Love & Estanek, 2004, p. 21).

The findings of a five-year study on administrative leadership suggest "leadership in higher education rests on a fundamental expectation that authority will be shared" (Birnbaum, 1992, p. xii). The growing belief in today's world is that everyone in a college system can be a leader in their area in addition to being a follower or servant to the needs of others (Astin & Astin, 2000; Greenleaf et al., 1996). A leader "can be anyone—regardless of formal position—who serves as an effective social change agent" (Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 2). The flexibility of the higher education system allows people to move back and forth between being a leader and a follower as necessary. In this way, leadership can be distributed amongst all constituents, but only when information is shared along with accountability and responsibility (Fish, 2007; Jenkins & Jensen, 2010).

There is no one leadership style that guarantees success in the governance of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000). Each institution will have different leadership needs, for every campus is "differently situated with respect to its history and mission; its size; the number and nature of its programs; its relationship to local, state, and national

governments; its legal obligations and attendant dangers; [and] its mechanisms of funding" (Fish, 2007, p. 9). No single approach will accommodate a random selection of universities, though certain characteristics are helpful, including passion, consistency, respect, ability to attune to others, and self-awareness (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Some believe charisma is a needed characteristic (Birnbaum, 1992). Others counter it is a myth charismatic people are the most valuable leaders, especially in higher education: the degree of collaboration necessary to successfully operate a collegiate institution can make having charismatic charms work against a leader (Birnbaum, 1992). For a president, imposing his or her will may result in a return to an autocratic style of management in which employees feel less accountable and empowered.

Returning to the theme of spirituality, current thinkers and researchers are recognizing the need for the inclusion of spiritual principles, reflective thinking, and spiritually oriented traits such as compassion in leadership development (Klenke, 2008; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Schneider, 2000). Astin and Astin's (2000) ground-breaking work *Leadership Considered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*, was commissioned by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation who charged the authors with studying the role higher education plays in the development of societal leaders. One conclusion drawn was that when student affairs employees, faculty, and students are seen as parts of a whole, an institution becomes a holistic learning environment that relies upon all these components to function well (Astin & Astin, 2000). The authors also found leaders are now "called upon to display a high level of emotional and spiritual wisdom and maturity" (Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 1).

The question arises as to whether this is just a theoretical perspective or one grounded in valid research. In 2006 Eddy and VanDerLinden (2006) culled data from a quantitatively designed national survey. Content analysis was used to study the responses of 682 institutions to the question of whether administrators viewed themselves as leaders. A core finding was "administrators are now conceiving of themselves as leaders using expanded ideals beyond just position" (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006, p. 22). The ideals listed included empowerment, inclusiveness, and collaboration. This finding points to an integration of new, alternative approaches such as participatory leadership (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006) into actual practice by administrators. Higher education administrators are transcending traditional role definitions and adhering more to a leadership model that is centered upon transformational change (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006).

Moving beyond styles of leadership, there are several models of governance a campus can adhere to. At the senior levels of administration, a higher education leader needs to be able to negotiate the complexities of these structures. While governance is not the focus of this study, understanding the differences between traditional leadership, shared governance, and shared leadership is important to its context. The following sections explore these governance models in greater detail.

Traditional Governance

"The old definitions of leadership exact power, and the use of power

has always been directly linked to its abuse"

(Chopra, 2010, p. 11)

As noted earlier, higher education leadership was initially authoritative and paternalistic in nature. Figure 1 depicts this early type of governance, with the university president the main focal point of power and administration, staff, and academicians existing as mere satellites. There is no reciprocity in the relationships depicted; the president wields power over these constituents.
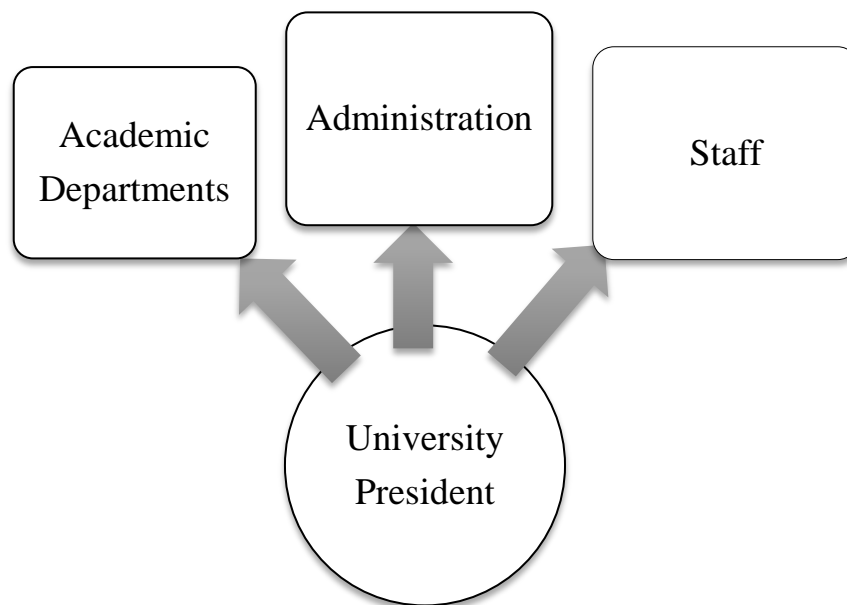
Figure 1. Traditional Leadership Model. This figure depicts a traditional tiered approach to academic leadership. Students are not included in this and the following figures as students' changing needs and demographics would require scrutiny and explanation beyond the scope of this study (Simplicio, 2006); the role of the governing board is also not included due to this study's attention to interactions between staff, faculty, and administrators.

Shared governance

Shared governance is achieved through careful distribution of departmental and presidential control over decision making processes. Each academic department is "the basic building block of governance" (Altbach, 2001, p. 21), and the faculty chair's control over inter-departmental issues is subject only to the president's authority. The president of any university can take the role of authoritarian or of equal participant in terms of how much power faculty and staff are afforded. Historically, however, "the

internal organization of American colleges and universities is based on the idea of a community of scholars and shared governance" (Altbach, 2001, p. 21). Birnbaum's (1992) work suggests "the normative relationship between administration and faculty in a college is considered to be one of shared authority" (p. 115).

Over time, as colleges became more public in terms of enrollment, access, and image, the notion of shared governance was adopted as a means for academic departments to exert more power in deciding issues of faculty status, methods of instruction, curriculum issues, and student life (Fish, 2007). Figure 2 illustrates the power dynamics of shared governance; here it can be seen how academicians have a limited (though sometimes vociferous) voice in budgetary, personnel, and policy issues. In order for their opinions to be heard faculty must negotiate with administration, while administrators (including the president) retain their privilege over academic departments by having a separate influence on university goals and mission. It is not by accident this model does not include staff and employees, for shared governance is a pact made solely between trustees, administrators and faculty, and is based upon "four key principles: faculty authority, inclusiveness, a commitment to tenure, and a commitment to the process" (Jenkins & Jensen, 2010, p. 25). By virtue of the lines of communication, however, academicians in this figure have less power than administrators.
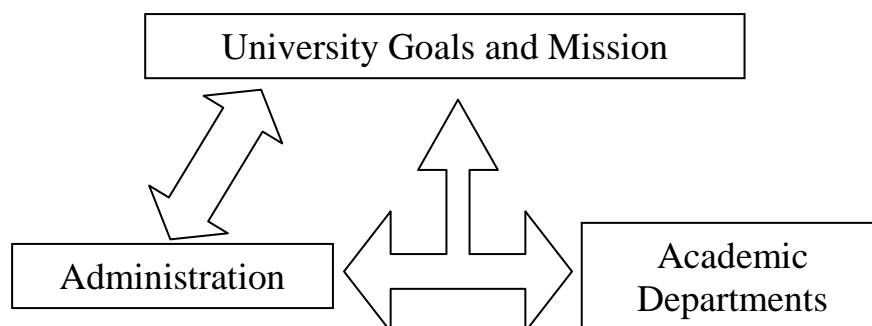
Figure 2. Shared Governance.

In 1966 the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges collectively wrote, "Colleges and universities of the United States have reached a stage calling for appropriately shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution" ("Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities", 2006, p. 135). This was interpreted for several decades as valuing shared governance. Yet contemporary writers like Lachs (2011) believe the shared governance model has become obsolete and detrimental to faculty as evidenced by the increasing amount of control administrators are exerting over faculty operations.

Leadership and the Consensus Process

To be a successful leader in higher education a person must be able to engage a wide range of stakeholders: from trustees to community members, faculty to students, and provosts to entry level administrators (Simplicio, 2006). Each academic and administrative department has its own agenda, philosophy, and non-written rules of conduct. Trying to bring all of these factions to a roundtable discussion is a potentially overwhelming proposition and requires a constant balancing of individual and university needs. Reconciling economic realities, for example, with the needs of the students who do not have the funds to enroll involves everyone in a higher education organization yet demands difficult decisions by top administrators. An effective leader of a university must be able, in short, to initiate and sustain communication between all stakeholders while simultaneously bearing the brunt of criticism (Collins, 2001).

Consensus has its place as an effective tool of management, for if a president is seeking change of some sort, accord between a campus' factions must be striven for. Brimhall-Vargas and Clark (2008) state,

> Consensus process seeks to create bonds of connection between, and "buy-in" from, all participants involved in the decision-making that is being undertaken; in fact, for consensus process to be actualized, all voices must be invited to participate and all voices must accept the invitation. (p. 57)

When not handled well these types of processes can become bogged down and not much gets accomplished. There are times when waiting for consensus "prevents the organization from moving forward" (Fish, 2007, p. 12) and a strong leader needs to step in to make clear decisions. But when conducted fairly and openly, sharing the decision-making can increase a university's ability to adapt to changing economic and social climates in a forward-thinking, sustainable manner. What is problematic here, however, is reliance upon the traditional leadership style where the president is controlling the consensus process. Consensus in this case is still mired in the power-based model of Figure 1.

Studying how spiritual principles such as transparency, integrity, and communication aid an administrator in creating change via consensus is perhaps an intimidating task, yet one that could potentially yield many rich results, for "consensus requires us to be complex beings meaningfully engaged in a complex process directed at addressing the reality in which we find ourselves; a reality filled with endless complexity and opportunity" (Brimhall-Vargas & Clark, 2008, p. 57). Taking a focused and in-depth look at how spiritual qualities interface with administrative decisions could shed light on how these decisions are made, and perhaps create a greater common ground with university constituents.

Moving Away from Shared Governance and Towards Shared Leadership

"Leadership is not something that exists outside of us; rather it is what

we as a community and as a culture decide it is"

(Rogers, 2003, p. 449)

In this dissertation I make a distinction between shared governance, or the defined distribution of responsibilities between administration and faculty, and shared leadership. As has been noted, shared governance is a limited term with specific connotations (Fish, 2007; Simplicio, 2006). It is not inclusive of staff or employees, and does not address how administrative and faculty departments are managed, for example whether in an authoritarian or democratic manner. In a conversation with MVU's president (Name withheld, personal communication, November 2, 2010) she spoke about shared governance and how the term implies a hierarchical arrangement of power and leadership, and an adherence to a system in which a president retains ultimate control over issues and events. Her response to this pyramid of power model was to consider ways in which this tradition of governance could be expanded upon to become more inclusive of all people who work on campus. What she boldly advocated would retain shared governance as a model for administrators and faculty to address issues of tenure and curriculum, yet move overall governance towards a model of shared leadership in which each employee has a voice and is valued for their work and input. In essence, her comments demonstrated a desire that MVU initiate changes that will result in a more interactive, responsive, and committed campus despite resistances that campus constituents may have (Jenkins & Jensen, 2010).

"Doing things differently in the face of resistance is an act of courage"

(Rendón, 2009, p. 111)

Shared leadership.   Shared leadership moves beyond the boundaries of administrative and academic spheres and requires university-wide participation. This type of leadership is more diffuse and asks each department to function independently as well as inter-dependently with every other department. Workforce members share in decision-making, goal-setting, and evaluative measures yet are not separate from over-arching university missions, values, and long- and short-term goals. Figure 3 represents this model in which employees are encouraged to participate in administrative governance and articulate their own goals and objectives. Each department or sphere is subsequently expected to participate in university-wide management and growth, and the spheres overlap in several ways. For example, in this model shared governance becomes part of the common space between academic departments and administration, and these areas also share space with staff. The intersecting space in which all three overlap is the "sweet spot" of accord and congruency of goals and vision, the place where perhaps a university functions at its best.
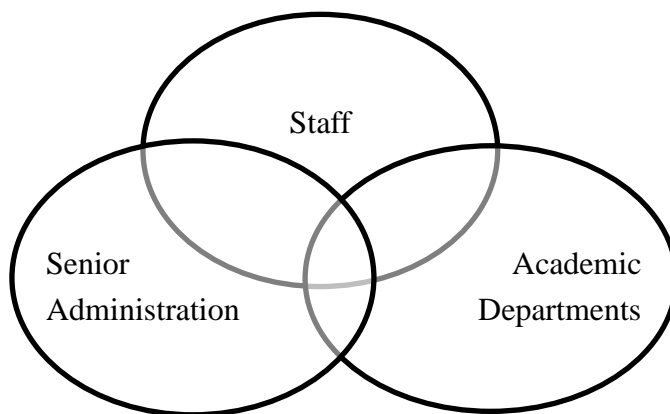
Figure 3. Shared Leadership.

Shared leadership and spirituality. The concept and practice of shared leadership has at its roots spiritual principles and common values. Some of these include: collaboration; respect for self and others; open communication; self-knowledge; empathy; commitment; authenticity; an equalization of power dynamics; community; personal and collective accountability; service; and unconditional regard (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Collins, 2001). Hoppe (2007) purports "spirituality in leadership amplifies and complements the concepts in leadership theories, encompassing and indeed embracing wholeness, meaning, authenticity, and conceptual understanding" (p. 112).

Sharing the responsibilities of leadership in a respectful manner holds the expectation that the entire collegiate community be accommodating and inclusive of others' beliefs and statements (Astin & Astin, 2000; Beer, 2010). Taking a spiritual or contemplative leadership perspective means being practical yet also focused on the greater good (Chickering et al., 2006). Striking a balance between individual and community desires, or departmental and campus-wide needs, while maintaining an

overview of the myriad political and societal pressures, is required of a university's

senior administration in order for this approach to be effective (Fetzer Institute, 2003).

This is a difficult feat yet can be supported by the awareness that the process is,

essentially, at once a personal and collective journey. When an administrator is, for

example, deciding how budgets are allocated or umpiring philosophical debates over the

future of a university, maintaining the awareness that how she governs reflects directly

upon her values can help keep the process grounded and accessible (Beer, 2010). Being

mindful of the need to seek input from varying levels of administration is also important

to a successful implementation of shared leadership.

Empowering Middle Management

Respectful listening and collaboration are crucial to the success of an

administrative leader who seeks to adopt a shared leadership practice (Boyatzis &

McKee, 2005). By paying attention and being open to influence from constituents a

leader is able to deduce current climates and potential areas for change and growth

(Birnbaum, 1992). Collaboration "will be the meta-capability of successful organizations

in the 21st century" (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009, p. 689). This type of transformative

leadership "involves moving others toward a shared perception of reality, toward a

common understanding of where the organization is and where it should be going, and

toward an increased commitment to those ends" (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 16). Shared

leadership entails recognizing and encouraging the development of leadership traits in

middle management folks and, with the support of senior managers, calling upon them to

take a more active role in governance (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009). This model can either

mire a campus in political bickering or bring forth an ability to meet challenges in a

nimble and comprehensive manner.

Spiritual Aspects of Leadership

"The spiritual dimension of leadership is being recognized as a critical

component of leading in a networked knowledge era"

(Rogers, 2003, p. 456)

Effective leadership stems from a combination of personal qualities and

perceptions of followers, or those working for the leader (Birnbaum, 1992). Introducing

a spiritual perspective into the higher education mix of consensus, politics, and policies

requires strength and resilience on the part of an educational leader (Rendón, 2009).

Aside from presidents of institutions that have a specific theological or spiritual purpose,

few administrative leaders openly discuss spiritual values as being part of their work life

(Gray, 2010). Spiritual components of leadership, however, are recognized in the

business world and this area offers support for the inclusion in higher education

administration (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

An efficient and successful leader in student affairs practice and higher education

values dualisms, seeks paradigm transcendence, recognizes connectedness, and embraces

paradox (Love & Estanek, 2004). These traits are often identified as spiritual in nature

with an Eastern philosophical foundation. Rogers' (2003) extensive literature review

showed incorporating such attributes into administrative practice requires courage, for

those who choose to do this must "operate from their souls, from their inner power" (p.

456) and not from fear. Developing a work approach that recognizes the need for

continuous personal change and reflexivity is necessary, as is the ability to live in a state

of "constant flux, ambiguity, and paradox" (Rogers, 2003, p. 457). Integrating personal spiritual values and contemplative practices into higher education administration holds a potential to effect institutional change that is far-reaching and lasting. For example, contemporary research supports the notion that reflective practices are not just beneficial but necessary to the development of leadership skills (Inman, 2011; Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010).

Leadership development programs that use contemplative practices are becoming more prevalent. Sullivan and Wiessner (2010) conducted a qualitative study in which they analyzed journal entries and other data gathered from a 2007 cohort of Fellows in the Hispanic Leadership Program on the role of reflection in constructing knowledge. This group of community college presidents, the number of which was not specified, participated in guided reflections and creative activities, and kept journals that recorded personal observations on their leadership development. Several habits of reflection were identified including mindfulness, discovery of personally meaningful themes and forms of reflection, and authenticity (Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010).

Incorporating reflective pursuits into this leadership development model demonstrated how for some participants reflection came naturally and for others it had to be learned, but with practice eventually became more fluid and instinctive. The authors concluded reflection needs to,

> Become internal, a continuous process, a life-long disposition, and a consciously applied means for greater effectiveness in leadership. Reflection can be hard work, extra work, but its benefits are immeasurable in both personal and institutional terms. (Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010, p. 49)

At MVU, the espousal of shared leadership is directly linked to spirituality as evidenced by the president's reference to her own spiritual journey in her State of the

University speech. It is therefore a logical step to analyze what role, if any, spirituality

takes in the work of senior administrators. The inclusion of spirituality in the president's

2010 speech demonstrated a willingness on her part to take a risk, to speak in a language

the campus had not been exposed to on such a public scale. In a sense, the president

openly articulated a vision for the university; this type of acknowledgement "of shared

values engenders others' trust, and trust induces an increased openness to influence"

(Birnbaum, 1992, p. 185). Her motivation to do so may have had one or more sources:

does it reflect a change of direction dictated solely by the president? Was it simply a

personal revelation not intended to speak to greater potentials? Or, perhaps it was verbal

symbol (Tierney, 1988), an outcome of her listening to campus constituents' hopes for

the future? If it is the latter then she is undertaking a culture change on campus in which

spirituality is a more visible topic.

> *"We all have a still place inside us that is the source of everything that gives our*
> *lives meaning. This is the soul, and it is the place great leaders turn to for their*
> *inspiration, and for the answers to all their important questions"*
> *(Chopra, 2010, p. 213)*

Spirituality, Classroom Engagement, and Campus Life

Spirituality and the use of spiritual practices are playing powerful roles in higher

education classrooms and in campus life. Some professors are turning to contemplative

practices in order to engage students who have a diversity of learning styles, cultural

backgrounds, and developmental needs.

Contemplative Practice and Mindfulness
in the Classroom

Contemplative practices and mindfulness are part of the exploration of spirituality

in the classroom as well as the administration of higher education (Beer, 2010; Rendón,

2009). These practices are physical, mental, and/or spiritual exercises a person undertakes in order to cultivate qualities of peace, compassion, self-awareness, and gentleness. Their aim is to settle the mind, quiet the body, and increase a practitioner's sense of inner control over mind, body, and emotions. They can include meditation, physical (hatha) yoga, being in nature, awareness of breath (prana yoga), exercise of more traditional forms yet with an added layer of focused intention, writing, preparing food, or worship, to name only a few (Miller, 2006). Forms of contemplative practice are as varied as there are people in the world. Each person may adopt a certain practice yet will shape it according to his nature and capabilities. In relation to higher education, research shows a contemplative approach to administration fosters development of these values in the workplace and helps to establish routes for clear communication and collaboration inter-and intra-departmentally (Beer, 2010).

Whether or not spirituality should play a role in the classroom is an issue to consider. Should the spiritual development of students be considered in teaching and learning endeavors? Rogers and Love (2007) conducted qualitative interviews with 32 graduate students to study the role of spirituality in their educational department. One important implication of the work showed "professional preparation programs and faculty need to consider spirituality a critical aspect of identity along with race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, class, and abilities" (Rogers & Love, 2007, p. 703). The authors of this study found spirituality to have a pivotal role in the education of graduate and undergraduate students.

Mindfulness. Mindfulness is a term used more and more frequently to describe an awareness of how thoughts and actions affect a person's emotional life, physical

states, and inner life (Miller, 2006; Siegel, 2010). Cultivating a mindful attitude means

becoming more aware of and receptive to what is occurring in the present moment

without imposing control. It requires constant vigilance in bringing oneself back to the

present and living as authentically as possible. Becoming more mindful has been linked

to decreases in stress and anxiety as well as positive changes in physical conditions

(Siegel, 2010). These types of practices have been linked to increased cognition,

awareness, mental processing, and alertness (Zeidan et al., 2010), benefits useful to

educational pursuits.

Meditation. Today, the use of meditation techniques in the classroom is

receiving attention. There is a growing populace of professors who view contemplative

practices as vital components of teaching and learning (Miller, 2006; Palmer, 2007;

Tisdell, 2007). Rigorous studies have been conducted on both short-and long-term

mindfulness meditation training; these demonstrated significant improvements in

cognitive functioning, memory, information retention, and alertness, and decreases in

anxiety and fatigue (Sarath, 2006; Zeidan et al., 2010). Professors are employing

meditation techniques in order to capitalize on these benefits.

Learning is not a one-dimensional process, but one that touches upon every aspect

of a student's history, culture, and personality. Cultivating the capacity for self

awareness and reflection brings greater depth and understanding to scholarship. Sarath

(2006) views meditation as a necessary part of education, for "meditating students bring a

new level of engagement and investment to conventional and innovative coursework

alike" (p. 1837). Areas of hidden potential and unused strengths can be discovered and

developed in learning environments that include non-rational opportunities to process and

assimilate information: "heightened self-awareness poses extraordinary educational ramifications, for it not only suggests enhanced capacities for introspection but also external creative activity and achievement" (Sarath, 2006, p. 1822).

The benefits of long-term meditation are documented, and a recent active control quantitative study demonstrated advantages in introducing a short-term meditation practice to students (Zeidan et al., 2010). In this study, mindfulness practices done over a span of several weeks were shown to significantly improve cognition and reduce stress levels, anxiety, and fatigue. Executive functioning and mood were also shown to improve, and meditation training helped promote "a balance between a relaxed and vigilant state of mind" (Zeidan et al., 2010, p. 603). This study lends support to professors who wish to use meditation techniques in the classroom; a student does not need to be a long-time meditator to reap the benefits of quieting the mind and body. Teachers who include brief periods of mindfulness practice recognized doing so does more than help stressed-out students relax, "it actually deepens their engagement with subject matter and may even prompt moments of insight" (Gravois, 2005, p. A10).

Critics could argue practices like meditation or journaling do not belong in a collegiate classroom, yet quantitative research done by Sarath (2006) demonstrates how these offer ways to bring a new level "of engagement and investment to conventional and innovative coursework alike. A new basis emerges for conventional notions such as rigor, interdisciplinary learning, and diversity" (p. 1837). Rendón's (2009) qualitative research indicated faculty who tapped into "their inner strength and commitment to remain authentic ... were able to shed at least some of the pieces of the entrenched learning vision based on rationality, disconnection, monoculturalism, and competition"

(p. 112). Higher education goals of increasing awareness of self in relationship to cultural and racial inequities can be powerfully addressed through contemplative and meditative techniques.

Spirituality on Campus

> *"True learning results from a deep and continuous surrender to the unknown"*
>
> *(Rendón, 2009, p. 40)*

Spirituality is active on college campuses and present in student development processes. Bowman and Small (2010) contend college years constitute,

> A critical period in which questions of spirituality, meaning, and purpose are carefully considered and explored. Given the centrality of religion and spirituality in the daily lives of many Americans, this topic is of great importance to higher education research. (pp. 595-596)

A national longitudinal investigation (Astin, 2008) studied students' search for meaning. The study found "while attendance at religious services decreased dramatically for most students between their freshman and junior years, the students' overall level of spirituality … increases" (Astin, 2008, para 1). For example, 42% of freshman wish to integrate spirituality into their lives while 50% of juniors want to, an 8% growth between the two levels (Astin, 2008, sidebar). This finding suggests that students, as they mature and develop critical and reflective thinking skills, become more interested in spirituality as a part of their lives. Eschewing formal religious services and practices, students are also enrolling in large numbers of comparative religion courses in which they can consider deeper questions of faith and meaning (Rooney, 2003). Students are rejecting traditional forms of worship and developing a more generalized interest in finding meaning in the world. This has implications for every campus (Rooney, 2003).

Many students will struggle with spiritual questions during their school years (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003). Bryant and Astin (2008) conducted an analysis of two national college student surveys developed at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and sought to "explore the 'inner' lives of college students: the values and beliefs that guide them, the meaning they derive from their education and the world around them, and the patterns of spiritual development that characterize their college years" (p. 8). The study utilized multivariate regression and factor analysis, and amongst the many results found upwards of 21% of students reported they frequently struggled with understanding spiritual issues, and 18% frequently questioned their spiritual beliefs. Bryant and Astin (2008) concluded "failure to recognize the seriousness of these facets of students' lives is to leave them quite alone on their quest to understand central issues of meaning" (p. 23). These researchers assert higher education must "take note of and seek to appreciate the varieties of spiritual struggling and their significance" (Bryant & Astin, 2008, p. 23). Incorporating spiritual awareness and practices into pedagogy and curricula content can have powerful results for both students and faculty. It invites students to become involved in their communities, encourages a collaborative process in the classroom, and can help facilitate educational experiences that have real-life application and meaning (Brimhall-Vargas & Clark, 2008).

Many professionals, however, believe spirituality and higher education are mutually exclusive. Spiritual development has traditionally been considered to be a personal matter for students, faculty, and staff (Lindholm & Astin, 2008). Nevertheless, over the past ten years spiritual concepts and practices have steadily gained recognition and support as dynamic ways to teach, interact with students, and conduct research

(Gravois, 2005; Lindholm & Astin, 2008; Palmer, 2007; Rendón, 2009). A focus on social justice programs and a broader vision of society and its needs has contributed to spirituality's emerging force. Subbiondo (2005) says, "As Americans move in varying degrees from either an exclusive or nonreligious tradition to a personal spiritual path within or without an organized religion, colleges and universities are beginning to reflect this migration" (p. 19). It becomes an imperative in this era of spiritual questioning for faculty, student affairs practitioners, and administrators to address these needs of students.

National Survey of Student Engagement

Kuh and Gonyea (2006) conducted an analysis of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) with the aim of identifying spiritual factors and implications. In this survey of almost 150,000 students from across the country there were several results of interest. First, students who frequently participated in activities that enhanced their sense of spirituality also engaged in a broader spectrum of college activities. They tended to be more involved in clubs and campus events, and this increased participation led to a deepened comprehension of meaning in life. Second, the results showed "institutional mission and campus culture matter more to spirituality and liberal learning outcomes than most other institutional characteristics" (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006, p. 46). In other words, institutional values and campus culture directly influence how comfortable students are in participating in spiritual activities. Therefore, it is important for university administrators to carefully consider verbal, nonverbal, and symbolic messages about spiritual values like respect, compassion, and acceptance.

Third, students at liberal arts colleges which openly support spiritual and contemplative practices are more apt to interact with students whose spiritual, cultural, and political views differ from their own (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006). Students who actively participate in spiritually-enhancing pursuits interact more with students who are culturally and politically different from them. This kind of interaction with others exemplifies an ideal of higher education. A similar significance was found in a previously mentioned study on spiritual struggles during the college years, in which participation in spiritually focused activities increased students' awareness of social justice causes (Bryant & Astin, 2008).

Fetzer Institute Report

In 2002 the Fetzer Institute (2003) conducted a three-stage research project to study spirituality in higher education. In the first stage, 152 surveys were received from accredited colleges and universities (149 in North America, three international) that held significant results. Of these respondents 77% reported they incorporated spirituality into their classrooms (Fetzer Institute, 2003). Another significant finding was that these higher education institutions relied upon spiritual techniques in teaching, techniques that included collaborative learning, experiential pedagogy, and contemplative practices such as reflection, creative/artistic experiences, and journal writing (Fetzer Institute, 2003).

In the second stage of the study, researchers conducted follow up interviews with leaders in this area to review findings and develop "strategies for change" (Fetzer Institute, 2003, p. 4). The third stage consisted of releasing recommendations for how higher education could bring spirituality into the classroom in a mindful, pedagogically informed, and student-centered manner. These recommendations included increasing

institutional research and funding support, sponsoring course design modifications to include spirituality, developing faculty retreats focused on incorporating spirituality into the classroom, encouraging faculty/student meditation groups, and holding open-forum luncheon discussions on the topic.

Educating administrators of the need for and benefits to integrating spirituality into not only curricula but also student life was emphasized in this study. The inclusion of spirituality in student development and campus life has occurred in a rather piecemeal, sporadic fashion. In order for a more comprehensive approach and philosophy to be implemented the authors of this study recognized the need for administrative support (Fetzer Institute, 2003).

Social Justice and Spirituality

Social justice has become a valued component of higher education in the past 20 years and this in turn has led naturally led to a broadening of perspectives on education (Gravois, 2005; Rendón, 2009). Viewing student development and education through a holistic lens has contributed to the recognition of spirituality and contemplative practice as an integral part of higher education (Lindholm & Astin, 2008; Subbiondo, 2005). Tolerance of spirituality falls within the domain of social justice: "Recently some educators and researchers have argued that religious diversity in higher education should be taken as seriously as racial diversity" (Bowman & Small, 2010, p. 596).

As has been discussed, mindfulness, meditation, contemplative practice, and spirituality are being accepted into the mainstream of higher education (Rendón, 2009). Once shunned as non-conformative and potentially destructive, these practices and approaches are garnering more respect as integral not only to the learning process, but

also as ways to educate non-traditional students, promote deeper levels of discussion and comprehension in the classroom for all students, and bring awareness to social justice issues.

In a recent study Tisdell (2007) analyzed findings from an earlier qualitative research project which explored how 31 educators teaching classes about diversity and equity used spirituality to inform their work. The author included in her work insights from writers who attend to the importance of spirituality in higher education and "draw on cultural story, image, symbol, poetry, and art as a part of their teaching" (Tisdell, 2007, p. 531). Combining these alternative ways of knowing and making meaning with spirituality facilitated not only greater student learning but also an increased awareness of the need for justice in society. Her findings indicated "it is time for a new approach to critical multicultural teaching in higher education ..., one that emphasizes social justice, an end to oppression, and spirituality" (Tisdell, 2007, p. 531).

Critics today argue calling attention to the spiritual needs of students is essentially focusing on personal development and this does not belong in the classroom (Rendón, 2009). With the arrival of new research, however, it is becoming apparent that spirituality is more than mere personal development: spiritual pursuits are tightly tied to social justice actions (Lipe, 2002, Rendón, 2009). Becoming more personally aware, respectful, and compassionate towards one's own self and others is inextricably intertwined with committing oneself to helping society become more just and equitable. Personal peak experiences and epiphanies need to be grounded in work in the world (Rendón, 2009). Lipe (2002) expands upon this thought by saying, "The fruits of such peak experiences must be evident in a transformed life of generosity and caring" (p. 216).

In terms of institutional culture, "research focused on cultural diversity in organizations illustrates that stifling or not acknowledging differences leads to inefficiency, lack of productivity, reduced quality, and the inability to meet organizational goals" (Kezar, 2001, p. 723). Higher education's mission of creating awareness of social justice issues and developing moral and intellectual abilities (Brookfield, 2005) is therefore conducive to the inclusion of spirituality in the classroom, the board room, and the staff or faculty break room.

Spirituality offers a view of the world and of humanity that transcends individualistic limitations of mind. Developing spiritual awareness helps students fuse together personal insight, connection to others, academic learning, and involvement in the community (Rendón, 2009). For example, in light of heated debates over the rights of Muslim people to build places of worship and the increase in religious discrimination across the country, "some campuses have focused on the rise in religious diversity and mending the religious fractures that persist" (Gray, 2010, p. 13). Even traditionally Catholic universities are changing how they approach religious iconography, advocated principles, and forms of worship in order to be more inclusive and tolerant (Gray, 2010). Today, issues of spiritual diversity intersect with social justice principles in very direct ways.

Current Trends of Spirituality in Higher Education

When looking at higher education's history through a spiritual lens, it is clear it was founded upon spiritual models and philosophies. Yet as times changed and a diversity of students flooded campus gates, a movement away from the original White Protestant Christian foundation took place. Spirituality, once the bedrock of higher

learning, was rejected as a motivation for pursuing an advanced degree and replaced with a glorification of reason and critical thinking. A return to spiritual roots, albeit in a very different form, is currently taking place. The rise of contemplative practices in administration (Beer, 2010), the integration of culturally responsive teaching techniques into the classroom (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Palmer, 2007; Rendón, 2009), and the consideration of spirituality in student development (Astin, 2004; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Schwartz, 2010), all help form a picture of higher education that is more holistic and accepting of a spiritual focus.

Perhaps it is time now to acknowledge that higher education has come full circle. Spirituality has returned to campus as an active, illuminative, and sought-after force. A 2003 survey (Astin, 2004) of 1,680 college juniors revealed that 58% place high value on integrating spirituality into their personal lives, 68% report they question their spiritual beliefs at least occasionally, and 77% believe "we are all spiritual beings" (Astin, 2004, p. 38). The search for meaning and pursuit of positive life experiences is active in every area of collegiate life and can be as varied as students are. For what is education other than the process of expanding intellectual and practical limits through focused inquiry, critical thinking, and reflective practices? Acknowledging spirituality in higher education is "a natural consequence … [and signifies] integration of the programs and activities that at the same time supported social justice, diversity, ethics, and service learning" (Subbiondo, 2005, p. 19).

Spirituality is at the forefront of many discussions on the role higher education plays in today's world. Classroom learning should be germane to a student's life. Similarly, "Spirituality is not something to be pursued or experienced separately from

day-to-day existence. Rather, it is the spontaneous integration of transcendence into every breath, every thought, every desire, every action, every interaction" (Sarath, 2006, p. 1828). Tapping into students' innate capacity for self-awareness makes education a more relevant and powerful process (Astin, 2004). For "why shouldn't cultivating this ability to observe one's own mind in action—becoming more self-aware or simply more 'conscious'—be one of the central purposes of education?" (Astin, 2004, p. 34). Some researchers advocate more time be devoted to developing students' interior knowledge in order to balance out the emphasis on "outer" learning of histories, theories, and formulas (Astin, 2004; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

Theorists and researchers find spirituality can play a worthwhile role in addressing needs of non-traditional students, especially those who are in some way historically disenfranchised by society (Brimhall-Vargas & Clark, 2008; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Rendón, 2009). Integrating spirituality into pedagogical techniques and administrative practices nurtures cultural awareness and a sense of responsibility to non-White, non-heterosexual students and employees. Bringing a spiritual focus holds the promise of increasing institutions' accessibility to women, students of color, and students not of a traditional college age (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006). In short, spirituality as a force in higher education has benefitted many people previously barred from the ivory tower, and has developed to a point where it is now poised to help meet the demands of humanity's advancement.

Potential Future

"We may yet reintegrate the sacred with the secular in ways that

promote freedom and self-determination"

(Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 185)

Changes in classroom pedagogy reflect the growing acceptance of spirituality as noted in the rise of adult learning and transformative models of education (Cranton, 2006; Palmer, 2007). The growing acknowledgement of spirituality and contemplative practices as being integral to higher education marks a turning point: American campuses are evolving into systems which mirror contemporary society's ethnic and religious composition. This evolution holds great promise for the future of higher education, but can be realized only if spirituality continues to be valued, studied, and applied in conscientious ways.

Higher education must continually affirm the critical importance of teaching students how to sense, be present to, and realize their own potential in the face of inexhaustible change (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004). Mixing an awareness of spirituality into higher education creates congruency between roles of not only student-person, but also of faculty-personal identification and employee-person (Rendón, 2009; Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010). Accordingly, administrative leaders and faculty need also be willing to not only enact curricula and program changes to foster this development, but also to undertake their own internal revisions. The reality today is that institutions have to constantly modify their academic approaches, and "changing our institutions and programs necessarily requires us to change the academic culture as well"

(Astin, 2004, p. 37). Effectively incorporating service, culturally responsive teaching, and reflective practices into curricula are steps that can be taken to create this change.

Bringing a spiritual focus to the classroom and university operations has the potential to build a stronger foundation for the educational and business aspects of higher education. Spirituality is just now being spoken about in the context of university operations and has the capability of transforming how administration is perceived (Beer, 2010).

Literature Review Summary

The histories of higher education and research reflect a growing recognition of spirituality as a positive force in leadership areas and learning environments. The use of contemplative practices in the classroom, combined with a mindful approach to administration, is transforming how students are taught and universities governed (Beer, 2010; Brimhall-Vargas & Clark, 2008; Sarath, 2006). Altogether, a contemporary picture of higher education is being formed that is accepting of a contemplative perspective. The area of administration, however, lags behind in terms of how spirituality and mindfulness practices affect the workplace environment and employees' engagement in the mission of higher education. Further, there is a marked lack of study on the role spirituality takes in administrative leaders' work lives. Creating areas of research on this topic is warranted and needed.

MOVEMENT III

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Research Paradigm: Qualitative

Qualitative research is at heart an exploration of human experiences and interactions (Glesne, 1999). It bridges public and private domains, traverses the space between sacred and profane knowledge, and rigorously challenges the status quo (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This form of inquiry seeks to make meaning of perceptions, behaviors, emotions, and attitudes by studying how and why we act and interact. Qualitative researchers do not turn to numbers to understand the world around them but rather seek to comprehend how certain people experience different aspects of their environment.

The purpose of this study was to examine the role spirituality takes in the work lives of administrative leaders at a typical mid-size western university. The study was designed to elicit in-depth and personal answers to questions that probe the intersection between work identities and interior spiritual beliefs in higher education governance. The primary research question was: How do personal spiritual beliefs affect the leadership style of senior administrators in higher education? The intent of the project made qualitative design a logical choice.

There are several hallmarks of qualitative research, including use of a natural setting, viewing the researcher as a key instrument, using multiple sources of data,

building interpretations with an inductive approach to data analysis, focusing on

participant meanings, and use of an emergent design (Creswell, 2007). Before beginning

this project I anticipated using all of these elements, some of which have already been

addressed. Before I move further, however, delving more deeply into the ontological and

epistemological frameworks of qualitative research, and distinguishing the investigator's

theoretical perspective is necessary.

Ontology

Ontology refers to reality, which, for me, is a shared experience. It is mutable and

capricious, and highly susceptible to change. A qualitative, constructivist, and

transformative research design seeks to understand the world through an interactive

approach, and the quest for meaning allows for multiple perceptions that may conflict

(Crotty, 1998). Mertens (2005) says,

> Constructivist researchers go one step further [than post-positivists] by rejecting
> the notion that there is an objective reality that can be known and taking the
> stance that the researcher's goal is to understand the multiple social constructions
> of meaning and knowledge. (p. 14)

Meaning is emphasized over numerical data, especially in studies within the human

sciences.

Constructivist Epistemology

Using a constructivist epistemology in this project served as the most effective

way to capture data and themes, as the research project was focused upon the

personalized meaning and significance of spirituality in each participant's work life. A

transformative approach was considered yet rejected due to its emphasis on effecting

political and social change through the research process itself.

Constructivist thinkers believe truth exists within us and there is no way to separate our consciousness from reality. Also, "knowledge within this paradigm is emergent, contextual, personal, socially constructed, and interactive" (Guido et al., 2010, p. 15). Constructivists produce research designs that are flexible, can change with the needs of the participants, and produce generalizable results (Mertens, 2005). Researchers strive to co-create meaning with participants and their personal views are an acknowledged part of this process. Constructivist investigators "bring their individual identity, values, interpretations, and priorities into every situation" (Guido et al., 2010, p. 15). As this was a study that sought to generate meaning alongside participants, control of data, analyses, and written findings were shared to some degree with them. Using a constructivist lens allowed me to be open to varied perspectives, invite participants into the construction of questions, data analysis, and interpretations, and deeply engage with participants to ensure their voices were heard with clarity and authenticity (Guido et al., 2010).

In undertaking this project I was aware I already possessed intellectual, practical, and intuitive understandings of *why* spirituality needs to be acknowledged as part of administrative life, as well as *how* this is to be accomplished. This intuitive grasp had advantages and disadvantages. Advantages were that I started with an appreciation for the non-hierarchical leadership proposed and for the inclusion of spirituality as part of the process being undertaken. A disadvantage was that my personal bias towards the leadership style being implemented may have prevented me from fully understanding some of the difficulties and resistances participants experienced. Later in this movement I present several techniques I used to offset this potential disadvantage.

The participant's definitions and experiences in constructivist research helps to shape the project; it is acknowledged that the interviewee is not only the expert on what is being studied, but also has a voice that should be unhindered, not subject to biased interpretation by the researcher (Fine, 1994). This non-dualistic way of approaching research allows for a constant interplay between researcher and participant that is not bound by the usual focus on solving problems (Fried, 1997).

The idea that research can actually impact and affect those involved in a positive, empowering way is deeply refreshing to me and in direct contrast to how administration and faculty often interact on campus. This can, alternatively, also lead to a tendency to pander to participants in order to foster disclosure and thereby skew data. The researcher's need to empower participants could become an ethical concern and I knew before beginning the project I needed to be watchful for this potential trap. Reflexive activities which helped allay these concerns are described later in this section.

Investigator's Perspective

Establishing who I am in relation to this study was an important step towards creating and maintaining an ability to separate myself from participants' experiences. To explore my own histories and reactions is to embark on a journey of "conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183).

As a qualitative researcher, I need to clearly define my roles (Glesne, 1999). To this end, I am a doctoral student researching a topic I have had a life-long interest in. The people I interviewed were in positions of power, and I needed to be aware of the potential

to shy away from asking tough questions and not ask for clarification on sensitive subjects. Steps I took to mitigate these included self-reflexive activities, and, in a theatrical sense, adopting the role of "researcher" in every interaction. When approaching potential participants, interviewing, conducting member checks, and reviewing visual materials with them, I assumed a researcher's persona that, when melded with my own personality, offered some intellectual and emotional distance from feeling either overly appreciative of any willingness to participate or unduly unconcerned about participant responses. Being ingratiating or stiff were potential reactions in this situation of mismatched power dynamics. My plan was to simply be authentic in my responses and behaviors.

Methodology

Methodology serves as the way in which reality is studied, identified, and described (Mertens, 2005). It is defined as being "concerned with procedures for making knowledge valid and authoritative" (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002, p. 9). The most effective way to conduct this research study was via a qualitative case study methodology.

Case Study

I pursued a case study research project in order to make meaning of participants' lives through manifold methods. The study engaged personal, political, and professional roles that participants play, and was reliant upon accessing their spiritual beliefs, interior emotional lives, and personal histories. Because I was exploring something that was occurring in real life and attempting to capture essential themes and meanings, I approached it as a descriptive case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Baxter and Jack (2008)

find this type of case study facilitates an exploration of a phenomenon "within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood" (p. 544). This type of approach has intuitive and analytical power, and does not rely upon traditional validity, rigor, and generalization. Authenticity replaces validity as a way to establish a study's objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). When approached and checked through a multiplicity of sources the design has trustworthiness and transferability (Creswell, 2007).

The unit of analysis in this study was one university bounded by location and time. Within the case, information was gathered from multiple points across campus with a singular uniting feature that all sources of information were administrative leaders. A cross-section of opinions, roles, and responsibilities within this stratum were sought. The study was descriptive in nature and no specific outcome was anticipated (Yin, 2003).

The assumptions I had as researcher also helped to further bind the study and limit its scope (Baxter & Jack, 2008), hence the previous section on my own perspective and stance as investigator. My suppositions, when acknowledged as a filter through which data is understood and interpreted, shaped and formed the data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For example, one assumption I held before commencing with interviews was that administrators relied upon personal spiritual beliefs for guidance and support in their daily work activities; this guided how questions were formulated and asked. Another was that these same administrators may experience some discomfort in discussing their spiritual lives either with the interviewer or with peers; this informed how I broached confidentiality issues.

Case study and leadership. Using a case study methodology was suited to the purpose of this study, for it "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as leadership processes" (Yin, 1994, p. 59). Interviewing administrative leaders in a direct yet sensitive manner called for the flexibility of the case study design. I expected that this project would be difficult at times, laden with unanticipated challenges that come with navigating such an elite and often hidden realm. This, indeed, was the circumstance in several instances. Case study was a fitting approach for, as Yin (1994) says, "Case study research is remarkably hard, even though case studies traditionally have been considered to be 'soft' research. Paradoxically, the 'softer' a research technique, the harder it is to do" (p. 26). For many researchers interviewing and interpreting the data may seem relatively easy, yet behind the scenes where participants' power dynamics, fears, and unspoken motivations live, these tasks set what was at times a treacherous path for me to travel. Not to belabor the point, but, as Klenke (2008) says, "In the study of leadership, there are too many 'why' types of research questions that cannot be answered by quantitative studies and await answers" (p. 63). Studying leaders via case study was a way to study the "how" questions.

Choosing case study over phenomenology. The decision as to which methodology to adopt required focused attention on my part. Phenomenology and case study both offered philosophies and techniques well suited to the research question. It could be argued that phenomenology, with its emphasis on capturing the essence of a phenomenon (Huberman & Miles, 2001), may have been the better fit for this study.

The question I asked myself was whether an analysis of the meaning and essence of spirituality in administrative leaders' approaches to work would yield richer information than the case study approach. Phenomenology could indeed provide "a deep understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by several individuals" (Creswell, 2007, p. 62), yet in order to undertake a phenomenological study I would have had to assume participants had some common understandings of spirituality, and this felt like an artificial imposition. A phenomenological approach could yield insight into the mechanisms of spirituality in administrative leaders' work lives, yet investigating participants' experience of spirituality in work life, with all of the attendant emotions, beliefs, fears, and desires, would, I reasoned, offer more information and potential for real life application.

Case study presents a genre by which to gather multiple meanings of an experience (Crotty, 1998; Stake, 2000; Wolcott, 2009). This seemed more suitable for the study which had as a goal to understand and explicate participants' personal understandings, motivations, and experiences. After deliberation, I adopted the case study methodology as it gave greater weight to participant experiences over the phenomenon itself.

Methods

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was solicited and granted (Appendix A), though one addendum was added later (to be discussed in a later section). The study relied upon elite interviews, the technique of interviewing only top leaders who are charged with articulating the vision, goals, and objectives of an institution, as the primary sources of data (Seidman, 2006). Interviewing senior administrators at a typical

university about the crossings of their spiritual and work lives yielded information rich in personal revelation as well as institutional policies and unspoken codes of conduct (Seidman, 2006). Another factor in my decision to look to administration in this research project was the knowledge that campus climate is determined by administrative leaders (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006). Elite administrators establish and influence the depth and degree to which a student engages in spiritually enhancing pursuits; their tone sets the campus atmosphere. Giving these people a venue to talk about and explore their identities as a leader and a person with spiritual beliefs brought opportunities for greater insight.

Setting

The setting of the research project was a mid-size Western public university that, as stated earlier, I call Mountain Vista University, or MVU. This university currently has approximately 12,000 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled, and is located in a town of almost 80,000 inhabitants. The town is surrounded by farmland, feedlots, and high desert prairie, and has a view of distant mountains. The majority of residents are White (62%), and there is a Latina/o population of 35% (City Data, 2009, July). MVU itself was founded as a teacher's college and has stayed true to its roots with large numbers of teachers graduating every year. Teaching has been historically valued over research at the university, yet more funds are being funneled into research as a way to increase its visibility and enrollment. Additionally, the president has openly referred to MVU as a research university.

Participants

Participants in this study were all senior administrators who were part of the president's leadership team. At the start I had a pool of 17 potential candidates from

which to choose. I selected six, and when two declined I asked two more who agreed to participate. This gave me a total of six participants. Initially I had planned to seek participants who did not necessarily adhere to a spiritually-inclusive work philosophy in order to gain as comprehensive picture as possible of the phenomenon being studied, yet there was no natural way to do this. I would have had to ask a potential participant whether they believed themselves to be spiritual in nature as part of the request, and this felt too much like a pretense. As it turned out, Andrew presented himself as a person without a strong spiritual belief system.

Targeting such a specific and small group may raise concerns of confidentiality, but the anonymity of data representation and use of creative representation techniques (discussed later in this movement) lessened possibilities of being able to definitively identify a certain participant. Also, the amount of time between data collection and publication of the dissertation further reduced the possibility of identification.

Due to the sensitive nature of the data being gathered, I was mindful in my requests for inclusion in the study in terms of how interviewees would be portrayed. There were three possibilities for representation that were outlined to potential participants: (1) each interviewee would be referred to as anonymously as possible in all textual representations, (2) in data representation, I would not refer to any specific status or job description which would allow for equalization of power and a decrease in the potential for identification, or (3) interviewees could participate in creating a persona complete with demographic information that I would use in publishing the data and findings. None of the participants expressed a strong desire for any of these and verbally

deferred to my ability to be respectful of their information and how it was presented. I

opted to employ all three options as strenuously as possible.

> As an additional safeguard to confidentiality, any IRB forms alluding, either

directly or indirectly, to participants' identity would not be attached to the final

dissertation as appendices. This was approved by my dissertation committee and

included in the IRB's final approval. Final consent for the project is included as

Appendix A.

Saturation

> Reaching a saturation point of information with such a small pool of participants

was an issue that needed to be addressed (Creswell, 2007). Saturation is "the point

whereby additional interviews are not expected to yield new or valuable information"

(Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009, p. 1268). The nature of this research study was

exploratory and as such meant not only that themes and topics were not being identified

before data were collected but also that the interviews might produce divergent themes.

> Before initiating the interview process, the first question I asked myself was how

will I know I have enough information? One clear response to this was I was not looking

for common responses between participants; rather, I sought new information (Brod et

al., 2009). Diefenbach (2009) suggests there is no formula for determining how many

interviews is enough, but that "it is up to the researcher when he or she feels that enough

interviews were carried out" (p. 883). I sought diverse answers to similar questions, and

so the issue of saturation was not as pressing as in other research studies. Additionally,

research has shown that after 12 interviews, upwards of 90% of themes can be identified

(Brod et al., 2009). My strategy of interviewing six participants two to three times, with a total of 17 interviews completed, helped ensure themes were noted.

Data Collection

"Asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first"

(Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 645)

The elite interview format (Seidman, 2006) in this investigation helped me to elucidate a participant's definitions of spirituality and personal choice of contemplative practices (such as being in nature, hiking, yoga, meditation, breathing techniques, or other techniques that bring a sense of peace and well-being), as well as bring forth descriptions of situations in which these manifest. Because of this dependence upon a participant's definitions and perspective, "The interviewee [was] encouraged to structure the account of the [phenomenon] and [was] able to introduce his or her notions of what [was] most relevant instead of relying on the investigator's notions of relevance" (Kezar, 2003, p. 397). This perspective prompted me to listen closely for what an interviewee believed was most important for me to know, and then develop themes from this information.

There was a danger in these interviews of participants giving me typical, preset spiels rather than original and thoughtful answers to my questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). They may be so used to talking in order to further a specific agenda that they would be unable to provide spontaneous answers. There were several approaches I took to mitigate this possibility. One was to actively promote storytelling as part of follow-up questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009), i.e., to say "tell me a story about ___". Storytelling

stimulates creativity and can link memory to speech, and by its nature reveals intimate details.

This was a very purposeful sampling of a small group, for participants were chosen from a specific pool that had a limited number of people in it (Creswell, 2007). I interviewed six administrative leaders for at least two hours each; the sum total interview time was 15 hours and 51 minutes. For ease of understanding I initially approached potential interviewees with the prospect of two to three interview rounds as I was uncertain how many times would suffice for each person. Ultimately, I interviewed five participants three times and one participant twice. Descriptions of all interviewees are provided in Movement IV. Each interview, except one which was re-created immediately following, was recorded with a hand held, professional recording device and transcribed by me.

Interviews and Innerviews

The contemplative focus of the study prompted me to consider alternative names for the interviews. Interviewing is a traditional method that is effective in introducing the topic yet can be, I believe, off-putting to participants for it implies that they will be judged by their words. I adopted the term "innerview" for the second and third rounds of data collection as I thought it was more descriptive of my approach and intent, and I submit this as a research term specific to this study.

With an accent on the prefix "inter-" (Merriam, 2003, p. 463), an interview is interactive, a reciprocal exchange between interviewer and interviewee. Keeping this in mind, the first interview was semi-structured with broad questions asked that were subject to follow up clarification probes (Brod et al., 2009; Seidman, 2006). The use of

an unstructured interview format for the innerview had as its primary aim to "to engage the participants in an in-depth ... dialogue, in which spontaneous, creative and richly descriptive responses would have the optimal possibility of emerging" (Cooper, 2005, p. 89).

In terms of the second and third interview rounds, Diefenbach's (2009) exploration of the methodological problems encountered in semi-structured interviews supports the use of the term innerview. His study asked whether case studies are more than "sophisticated storytelling" (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 875) and explored ways in which qualitative research is vulnerable to subjectivity. An interviewee is apt to be influenced by the interview situation and "her internal, unconscious reactions to being asked 'officially' about certain subjects" (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 880). Using the term innerview implied introspection and a freedom for participants to poke around in the further recesses of the mind. Positioning the second and third interviews as unstructured innerviews offered a way for participants to respond in a more meaningful and authentic manner.

Moving the second interview to an innerview format also meant I needed to take a step back, to not be so interactive and instead encourage my participant to turn inward. The second and third rounds were not as outwardly descriptive as the first one in terms of how spirituality manifested in the participant's life or how they perceived it on campus. The innerview questions were designed to elicit personal responses and information from participants that spoke to the role spirituality takes in their work life and also prompt them to look inward at their own motivations, reactions, and sources of conflict.

Because innerview was an invented term on my part, I did not wish to bewilder participants with this and so I introduced the concept of "innerview" during the second or third interview, sometimes at the beginning and sometimes in the middle. I presented it in a language that was not confusing to participants, framing it as an unstructured interview format with more of an emphasis on letting them respond to questions in a free-form way. This format allowed for an exploration of side themes and potential paths for further study (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Doing this had an added benefit of affecting trust. Trust between any researcher and participant needs to be developed and nurtured (Glesne, 1999) and it was my strong impression that referring to later interviews as innerviews aided in increasing trust.

"Interviewing rests on the practical skills and the personal judgments of the interviewer;

it does not follow explicit steps of rule-governed methods"

(Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 17)

Interview questions. In this section interview questions are divided into two sections, those of initial interviews and those of later innerviews. Potential questions for the first semi-structured interview included:

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?

2. What is your definition of spirituality?

3. Does spirituality exist on MVU's campus, for example in students' lives, faculty rooms, classrooms, board rooms, or staff office? How is it expressed, manifested?

4. Is it nurtured? If so, how?

5. In her 2010 State of the University speech the president spoke about spirituality— why do you think she did this?

6. How do your personal spiritual beliefs affect your work life? How do they manifest?

7. How does MVU's administrative culture support (or not) the integration of personal spiritual beliefs into the work environment?

8. Can you talk a bit about your own spiritual history?

9. Can you define leadership for me, in your own words?

10. Tell me a story that illustrates your leadership style.

11. What are your greatest strengths as a leader?

12. How do you create a departmental climate in which employees feel empowered to share leadership and set their own goals?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add to our conversation today?

Innerview questions. For unstructured innerviews, the following were potential

questions:

1. Why, in many universities, are upper administrators afraid or reluctant to talk about spirituality? What keeps this from being an active part of the discussion about diversity, tolerance, campus culture?

2. Very often spirituality is rooted in personal experiences. Can you tell me what personal obstacles you have overcome in your life to arrive at where you are now, here at MVU? How have your struggles contributed to your sense of spirituality in your work?

3. What is an example of conflict that has happened in your department, and how did you handle this, from a spiritual or mindful perspective?

4. Can you tell me about a person who is a role model for you in how you bring spirituality into your work?

Questions for the second and third rounds were directly tied to responses and perceptions

from the first interview, and had a wide range of approaches and topics.

Participant images. For the second innerview participants were asked to bring

4-5 visual images that represented what spirituality meant to them. These photos were

ones they found either in their personal collection, online, or in publications. Pictographs

included family, scenes from nature, religious icons, and other meaningful sights.

Viewing these afforded me the opportunity to talk about spirituality with participants in a

non-linear, reflective, and introspective manner.

Music. Music portraits were also brought into either the second or third interview

for the participant to listen to. These pieces were created by me and reflected the

participants' non-verbal presentation. This topic is explored in depth later in this

movement.

Trustworthiness

In order to establish trustworthiness the purpose of the study needed to be

examined (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The question of "how much trust can be given that

the researcher did everything possible to ensure that data were appropriately and ethically

collected, analyzed, and reported" (Carlson, 2010, p. 1103) was addressed through

specific techniques. How I chose to establish trustworthiness depended upon my intent:

Did I wish to change public policy or re-write institutional guidelines? Did this study

aim to shed light on an abusive and restrictive situation? Or did I seek to understand a

human phenomenon as it occurred? The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature

and its purpose to understand human experience. I therefore checked for trustworthiness

by triangulating interview and innerview data with documents, written and physical

artifacts, member checks, and observations of behaviors.

One question I asked myself was how would I know people were telling the truth

and their words matched up with actions, or how would I know participants were doing

what they said they were doing? They may speak their truth and be perfectly honest

every time I talk to them yet not recognize that their behaviors are not congruent with their words. More succinctly, their self-perception may not align with their actions.

One way to check participants were being congruent was by conducting the planned series of interviews and innerviews and staying attuned to any discrepancies between them. If philosophies, words, or stories changed or were not consistent from one meeting to the next, I would have a chance to assess this and develop a strategy for handling it. During the interviews I asked questions that were designed to bring forth a measure of truth and honesty. These questions focused on personal history as a way to check current beliefs. A second way to provide impetus for honesty was to portray participants anonymously, in a manner that ensured the greatest degree of confidentiality possible. Towards this aim, in this dissertation I fictionalized titles and refer to participants with pseudonyms.

Trustworthiness can also be obtained through methods like independent coding, coding consistency, and stakeholder checks (Thomas, 2006). I utilized these methods through consistency checks and carefully monitored member checks of transcripts, interpretations, and written analyses.

Member Checking

Before collecting any data I informed participants they would have an opportunity to review what I wrote about them. There was an advantage and disadvantage to doing this: an advantage was they may have felt more comfortable in sharing intimate details. A disadvantage could have been that they believed they had more control over the data and its interpretation than I, as investigator, would have preferred. This required me to find a balance between offering interviewees an opportunity to review transcripts,

themes, music, and writings, and retain some control over how I chose to use the data. The guiding question I asked myself in regards to this was, "What is my responsibility to participants versus my responsibility to the data and the reader?"

Carlson (2010) found there are many pitfalls and potential traps in conducting member checks, some of which are strenuous censoring, participants dropping out because they do not like how they are being portrayed, or, less severely, creating miscommunications. These unseen snares "can easily and at times unknowingly be set during ... member checking, threatening the research/participant relationship and possibly the stability of the study" (Carlson, 2010, p. 1102). Another trap investigators unwittingly set for themselves is that of seeking consensus on a transcript. If a participant edits it extensively, the transcript then "loses the edge of criticism (in its best sense) that makes it useful" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 375). This parallels the earlier stated danger of trying to reach consensus in higher education governance: the person who has final say, whether president or, in this case, me as investigator, loses the ability to make decisions in an informed and decisive manner. It was important to take into consideration the responses of participants but not be swayed to a point where the data changed and possible outcomes obfuscated. As it turned out, no participant expressed a desire to read more than overviews of data and themes. I honored this yet was ready to send any materials requested if anyone were to change her mind (Carlson, 2010).

When I transcribed the interviews I denaturalized the transcripts, a technique suggested by Oliver, Serovich, and Mason (2005). This entailed editing statements so they were grammatically correct and did not have unneeded additives such as "um" while maintaining the integrity of participant responses,. Doing this added a layer of

mindfulness to the analysis process as well as an extra burden of work. I believe it was

necessary in order to present interviewees in a more positive light and, if member checks

of the transcripts were to be conducted, assure a greater level of cooperation and

confidence in the study. I was at all times careful to make grammatical changes that in

no way affected meaning.

One aspect of member checking that has been little considered in qualitative

research is that of inserting reflection into the transcription process (Oliver et al., 2005).

This intermediate step falls into alignment with the contemplative nature of my study,

and advocates "a period of reflection that allows researchers to contemplate transcription

choices and assess how these choices affect both participants and the goals of research"

(Oliver et al., 2005, p. 1274).

Towards this end I did all the transcribing to ensure I would be completely

familiar with the natural speech flow of a participant and feel better able to make clear

choices of how to edit or denaturalize text. I also inserted moments of self-reflection and

reflexivity into the transcription process, taking breaks from transcribing and writing my

own thoughts, perceptions, and ideas for future pursuit. These insertions were written in

italics to delineate my thoughts from the words of my participants. I found this process

helped me more clearly differentiate participants' words from my own internal reactions,

thereby increasing my ability to objectively listen for themes and meaning. When it

came time for member checking I felt capable of presenting the data in a way that

centered wholly on the participant's reactions and thoughts.

Transcribing in this way was an endeavor that helped me to not only accurately

capture the words said, but also gave me an opportunity to note my perceptions of how

things were said, whether with irony, laughter, seriousness, and even tone of voice. I found this style of transcription to be invaluable in terms of creating questions for future interviews that directly related to not only what the participant said, but how he said it.

Self Reflexivity

Self reflexivity was an essential component of this study, and I incorporated it as part of establishing trustworthiness as tightly as a thread is knitted into dense fabric. Lincoln and Guba (2000) call self-reflexivity "critical subjectivity ... [that] is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself" (p. 183). Through this process of self awareness my own orientations were separated from the participants' voices and a measure of objectivity thereby gained (Guido et al., 2010). A skeptic may assert that injecting self reflection into research destroys ethical standards and results in a complete lack of consistency. The constructivist researcher will refute this stance. Her use of reflective thinking, when combined with the mandate to learn from and empower participants, requires her to have stringent ethical standards and work to establish trustworthiness and consistency in language, data analysis, and interpretations.

According to qualitative research guidelines, self reflexivity should be part of any study (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). I did not engage in this process because I was expected to, however; I did so because I had to. Expressing thoughts, frustrations, hopes, and excitement through words and music were how I filtered my own reactions and kept them separate from those of my participants. I felt compelled to do this in order to maintain some semblance of objectivity. To conduct a rigorous self-examination of assumptions, preconceptions, and ideals is to remain vigilant in the research process. In this study,

spanning the worlds of scholarly research and spirituality required me to be authentic and thorough in my scrutiny of my own motives, assumptions, and hidden biases.

Journaling as a Reflexive Practice

As part of the investigation I began a journal to track my own dilemmas, outlying thoughts, and potential areas for future investigation. This was an important part of my writing process. Journaling helped me discern which strands of thought I most wanted to present and which to put aside. Writing in an electronic journal without consideration to flow, grammar, or cohesiveness helped untangle interior arguments and clarify the sometimes murky inclinations for explorations (Janesick, 1999). This type of creative, free-style, and unhindered writing facilitated the separation of participant voices from my own, and lessened my sometimes thunderous and unacknowledged internal critic's voice. Excerpts from this journal are periodically included in the dissertation text.

Self reflexivity also compelled me to constantly question my motives, postulations, and hopes, and reduce my own bias. There can be no complete elimination of human bias in any experiment because the very act of research, of assuming, probing, and interpreting, contains the biases we seek to eradicate (Fine, 1994). This type of journaling, however, served as an exploration of my "lifeworld" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 56), my own preconscious presuppositions and filters of how I experience reality. This was done with the expectation that it would help reduce any distortion I may unconsciously apply to data; in my experience this reduction did occur. In this way, self reflexivity became part of triangulation.

Triangulation

Triangulating interview data with other data forms is a well-known and effective qualitative process for ascertaining trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Stake, 2000). Triangulation "has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake, 2000, p. 443). Towards this end I examined participant proffered symbols and music in order to triangulate innerview data.

Post-modern researchers, however, contend triangulation is limited in its efficacy. The very image of a triangle reflects this limitation: it is a "rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object" (Richardson, 2000, p. 934), incapable of capturing the many facets of participant experiences and investigator's influences. The primary vehicle I chose for data analysis, crystallization, was used for triangulation and so expanded its scope. This will be addressed in the following section on data analysis.

Data Analysis

In case studies it is common to identify "features and systematic descriptions of relationships among data" (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006, p. 91). Data in this project were analyzed using the widely accepted inductive approach. Interviews and visual forms were studied for commonalities and contrasts. From there themes were generated and understandings developed from these sources. More specifically, crystallization was the preferred form to analyze data, with visual and musical analyses playing lesser yet crucial roles.

Crystallization

"Human beings construct knowledge and meaning in powerful and often unconscious

ways through image, symbol, art form, ritual, music, and sacred story"

(Tisdell, 2007, p. 541)

The project I undertook was visually and aurally different from other types of

analyses and therefore outside the boundaries of traditional scholarly works. It required a

nontraditional form of analysis. Crystallization is an emergent and innovative framework

with which to look at qualitative data (Ellingson, 2009; Richardson, 2000). It is an

iterative process, based upon a creative interpretation of material. Crystallization "skirts

the edges of academic publishing conventions, drawing power from art, science, and

endless combinations of artful science and scientific artwork" (Ellingson, 2009, p. 190).

This style of analysis has the ability to illuminate the complexity of a topic and "construct

and articulate multiple lived truths" (Ellingson, 2009. p. xi).

What makes this approach unique is its use of layered voices and combinations of

genres. Creative analytic techniques and representations allow myriad meanings of one

set of data to emerge. It is "a messy, multigenre, paradigm-spanning approach to

resisting the art/science dichotomy" (Ellingson, 2009, p. xii). Given my stated intention

that the study be an exploration without a specific destination, crystallization, with its

tolerance for ambiguity, seemed well suited.

Textual representations utilized narrative/academic prose and at least one other

artistic form. The alternative forms, including song, music, and poetry, weave in and out

of the prose (in Movement IV), "revealing their constructed nature through the

juxtaposition of social science and artistic ways of knowing" (Ellingson, 2009. p. 61). I

engaged in extensive preparation, moved beyond my comfort zone, listened to the data, bracketed negative voices, embraced personal satisfaction by acknowledging the intuitive sense of what fits, and determined it was important to "engage in serious play" (Ellingson, 2009, p. 81).

With the use of crystallization there is more than one, two, or even three ways to approach data, which is how typical research methods triangulate data and establish trustworthiness (Richardson, 2000). The method of crystallization continues the work of postmodern research studies and, like these, is "untidy, experimental, and driven by the need to communicate social worlds that have remained private and 'nonscientific' until now" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 185). This non-traditional approach to triangulation and the depiction of findings mirrors the spiritual nature of the inquiry with its nonscientific classification.

Every facet of data analysis and representation was affected by the use of crystallization: songs and music were not created out of imaginings but were created from the words, intonations, and rhythms I heard. I created poems to serve as condensed and refracted re-productions of scenes, and creative stories became the re-inventions of events as described to me. In this sense I was observer, interpreter, and re-producer of the data, albeit in alternative forms.

Kaleidoscope

Crystallization served as the primary form of analysis yet another image that arose during data analysis was that of a kaleidoscope. I began to realize a kaleidoscope, with its form and purpose, could also guide how I looked at data for it allowed me to consider my influences on the processes of data collection and analysis. Held within the viewing

chamber of a kaleidoscope are stones, bits of colored glass, and other objects that create new images with every turn of the scope. In this research project these objects could be considered data: participants, their voices, and depictions. All of the pieces tumbled into new formations every time I looked at data and considered the impact and import of certain configurations. I, as researcher, become the viewer of data as well as one of the pieces in the chamber being turned and refracted.

Though this approach did not factor heavily into data analysis in this study, the influence of the thoughts generated were strong enough to warrant notice here.

Visual Analysis

"Many commentators have suggested that we have entered a new historical era, one in

which the visual has become most important as a pivotal aspect of social life"

(Klenke, 2008, p. 261)

There are several reasons I explored visual analysis as part of my overall data analysis strategy. First, Western societies put great importance on visual modalities. Our modern era "equates seeing with knowledge" (Rose, 2001, p. 7), as supported by colloquialisms such as "seeing is believing", "I'll believe it when I see it", and "I know what I saw". For this reason I found it necessary to address the power of visuality (Rose, 2001) and the meaning participants found in the images (i.e., pictures, photographs, or artwork) they are surrounded by. As a constructivist researcher I sought multiple truths, truths involved in each participant's experience of spirituality in their work. Visual representations are sources of data (Collier, 2001), and the process of analyzing such data required looking for layered meaning (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2003). In order to fully

explore visual representation as a potential source of data analysis, it is necessary to delve into this specific method.

Berger's (1972) seminal work, *Ways of Seeing*, begins with a statement as to why taking into account our visual environment is important: "Seeing comes before words" (p. 7). We see objects and people before our brains interpret the images, and sometimes, as part of the human tendency towards self-deception or self-preservation, we find words to fit the image that serve us best although they may not be the most accurate interpretation. This gap between what we see and what we think can be a place of uncertainty or of strong connection and affirmation of our version of truth. In research it holds the potential for either interpretive clarity or an opportunistic overlaying of what the investigator believes is the truth. Exploring this space, whether in interviews or photographs, offered a way for me and participants to move beyond automatic responses and explore patterns, thoughts, and behaviors that underlie reactions.

Another argument for including visuality is that the process of visual analysis is in some ways similar to conducting qualitative data analysis. Both emphasize meaning and significance. Each is a "complex process which alternates between stages that require an intuitive grasp of the whole and stages that require the hard work of structured analysis, of careful and methodical checking and double-checking" (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 8). Also, when engaging in visual analysis "interpreting images is just that, interpretation, not the discovery of their 'truth'" (Rose, 2001, p. 21); this is a common theme found in qualitative analysis in general, that interpretation does not equate truth. Context is critical to both processes. Klenke (2008) says, "As a theory, and as a method, image interpretation offers an alternative to researchers who wish to study phenomena in

new ways" (p. 285). In this case study visual analysis was not meant to be a formal

methodology but rather a support to the analysis of interviews and innerviews.

Examining visual data held the potential to enrich descriptions and elicit unexpected

responses from participants.

Photographs, images, and objects. The photographs, images, and objects

participants brought to the second innerview served as discussion points and as ways to

probe the emotional terrain that surrounds their definitions and experiences of spirituality,

both at work and away from work. They also served as data which I could analyze in a

fairly systematic way. For this process Rose's (2001) compositional interpretation

offered a framework within which I found "a detailed vocabulary for expressing the

appearance of an image" (p. 33). I am not versed in the discourse of art history and so

explored the use of specific terminology that helped ground my observations in

artistically accepted terms. Compositionality, color, focus, expressive content, focus,

light, and provenance (Rose, 2001) were terms I considered when connecting the

meaning an image holds for a participant to its visual representation. With objects, I

observed their shape, intent, and purpose. Rose (2001) also suggests a three step process

for this type of critique: take the images and objects seriously, consider the social

conditions and effects, and consider my own way of looking at these.

Visual environment. The objects and pictures a participant surrounds herself

with reflects who she is. What I, as researcher, see as visual context has the potential to

become "direct testimony" (Berger, 1972, p. 10) for the participant, thereby speaking for

the participant through imagery and symbolism. Before beginning this study I

anticipated this might be important to focus on as a primary visual strategy. As it turned

out, the objects and images the participant either brought in or already had in their office held much more personal significance than their immediate environment. One participant stated he did not believe the visual impact of his work space affected his work very much, and this seemed to be true for others. Another participant, however, placed importance on his visual surroundings and was a topic we discussed.

Visual analysis and leadership. Incorporating techniques of visual analysis as part of the data interpretation and representation cycle has particular implications when conducting leadership studies. Klenke (2008) says:

> Qualitative research, instead of decontextualizing research participants and settings, intentionally embeds context in the research design. Since leadership itself is embedded in social and cultural beliefs and values and cannot be fully understood apart from the context in which it exists, image-based leadership research offers a unique lens for examining contextual factors. (p. 263)

Looking at environmental and contextual factors requires in part a sensory approach, for the items a leader places in her environment reflect upon her internal beliefs, hopes, and motivations.

To summarize this section on visual analysis, I turned to visual data to either support or counter data found in transcripts and other artifacts. This data took the form of participant-provided photographs and personal artifacts in their offices. My own history as a musician and creative arts therapist has attuned me to the power of unspoken choices, movements, tonalities, and visual surroundings. I am adamant in my belief that these sometimes non-cognitive, artistically expressed cues are a form of data rich in meaning, symbolism, and implications. My goal was to recognize and acknowledge what I saw and intuited on multiple levels so the words that followed would be as true as possible to the phenomenon being studied.

Data Representation

This project had a high need for anonymity which could have restricted how the data were to be represented. I took a creative approach to representation for this reason, allowing voices to mingle, reactions to be contrasted and compared, and themes discussed in a detailed and unidentifiable manner. Using the traditional format of long quotes is employed as well as more imaginative forms, such as combining voices and journal excerpts to create one voice or perspective, synthesizing transcribed events into stories, or as I term them, counterpoints, and writing poetry that captures the essence of a theme or particularly powerful statement. Janesick (2001) asserts going beyond traditional data representation is essential: "the extra step is to reflect on, describe, and explain the intuitive moments and creative moments in any given qualitative research project" (p. 531). With this creative approach I was able to utilize transcripted voices to create dialogues, monologues, narratives, poetic designs, and a wholly unanticipated form, that of music.

For this study I relied upon portraiture for representation. This allowed me to create songs, pieces of music, poems, and diagrams that related to data gleaned from participants. I do, however, also want to state I believe portraiture, like crystallization, has a blurred boundary between analysis and representation; the following sections on portraiture and music both move between these two areas. There was no clear way to separate out how portraiture and music served as analytic tools as well as representative ones, and so they are presented with markers to help guide the reader through their uses. In the following section I offer portraiture and its subsidiary, music portraits, in the

context of data representation with the understanding that how I synthesized the data gathered was with portraiture in mind.

Portraiture

"Portraits reflect a compelling paradox, of a moment in time and of timelessness"

(Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983, p. 6)

Portraiture grew out of an attempt to study marginalized peoples' experiences with a critical race lens and give these people a "voice" for participation that they otherwise did not have in academia (Chapman, 2005). Taking in not only the words participants speak but also the cultural, political, and financial environments that shape their lives, a researcher who is using portraiture seeks to create an image through carefully chosen themes that captures the essence of their lived experience. Its emphasis on blending participant voices adds another layer of anonymity to the representation of data, which can potentially increase the level of trust a participant has in the project and researcher. Creating a persona that is based upon a composite of several voices adds specificity yet also merges facts and details, effectively disguising personal characteristics.

Portraiture, with its ability to hold paradoxes and dualities, was well-suited for this study of spirituality. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) says, "One of the most powerful characteristics of portraiture is its ability to embrace contradictions, its ability to document the beautiful/ugly experiences that are so much a part of the texture of human development and social relationships" (p. 9). The approach is rooted in the present experience, yet is also capable of informing the investigator and reader of history and of possible future directions.

Portraiture seeks "to (re)present the research through the subjective, empathetic, and critical lens of the researcher" (Dixson, Chapman, & Hill, 2005, p. 17). It offers a way to explore the subtle meanings and nuances of context hidden in a transcript. I used my own self as filter and inventor to create vignettes about spirituality in higher education that were rooted in participants' experiences, and stories and songs that have both personal and universal relevance for investigator, interviewees, and readers. Identifying the conception of the project, creating a scaffold of data and themes, and finding an inspired and imaginative way to unite these was the means by which a portrait was created (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Portraiture and goodness. Another facet of portraiture that made it a logical choice for data analysis in the study of spirituality and leadership is its emphasis on goodness. This method defines goodness as "a complex, holistic, dynamic concept that embraces imperfection and vulnerability" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 142). It focuses not on what is missing or what has failed, but on the strengths and resistances that lead to success. Portraiture counters the historical tendency to study deficits and weaknesses on the part of researchers; this is a release from and movement beyond "the traditions and constraints of disciplined research methods" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 13). The pursuit of spirituality is, I believe, a journey of discovering what is good about people, and so portraiture offered a natural fit for the study.

Portraiture and Artistic Expression

Finding an artistic way to express an interviewee's voice through portraiture was an integral part of data representation. This achieved two aims: it liberated the information from the personal sphere and placed it in a universal one, and gave the reader

a sense of what it was like to be this person. Identifying "emergent themes, relationships, contexts, voice, and the aesthetic whole" (Dixson et al., 2005, p. 18) brought an imaginative quality to qualitative data analysis and representation. This is something I felt essential to fulfilling the goal of this type of research, that of bringing the reader directly into the situation and letting them experience and understand dynamics and themes through their own re-living of it. It was not an easy road to take, for preparing a portrait "is extremely demanding and labor intensive. Virtually every statement in the portrait should accurately reflect the totality of the objective information in the transcripts and the totality of nuances in the passages the investigator has studied" (Witz, Lee, & Huang, 2010, p. 398). Creating and reading portraits is similar to writing and reading contrived stories, but, and this is very important to stress, portraiture is not fiction but a carefully stylized representation of voices, scenes, and artifacts gathered through systematic, disciplined, and closely monitored research methods.

Music in Qualitative Data Analysis and Representation

"We know the other only through our practices of representation"

(Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 17)

Just has little has been written about spirituality and music in higher education (Speck & Hoppe, 2007) there is a paucity of literature on using music as part of the qualitative research process. Playing music is referred to in performance studies yet has not been studied or explored in any depth. It can be unpredictable in the hands of inexperienced researchers (Conquergood, 2003). For the purposes of this study I found it necessary to borrow from and cross the boundary into performative theories and methodologies (Bowman & Bowman, 2006). These have been used and articulated in

ethnography and anthropology for over 20 years and foster an active engagement with the data for researcher and participant alike (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003; Madison & Hamera, 2006).

Performance Studies

Performance studies, performativity, and performative text were born of researchers' attempts to go beyond the quest to accurately capture data and to empower participants with their own words, and impart to an audience a more visceral experience of what it is like to be that participant (Conquergood, 2006; Madison & Hamera, 2006). These formats focus on the creative and imaginative aspects of being human and bring them to life in artistic forms. Plays, poems, paintings, film, music, performance art, vignettes, and skits are presented to the public and rely upon participants' words for relevance (Hymes, 2003; Lincoln & Denzin, 2003).

There are differences between performance, performative text, and performativity that are important to note yet do not bear in-depth analysis as they are not primary to the use of music in this study. According to Langellier and Peterson (2006), artistic performance is normative; it stabilizes a status quo and usually does not involve the audience. Performativity and performative text are based upon participant-provided information and are used to express research data. These forms are transgressive in nature: they challenge the political and cultural mores they seek to express. Another distinction to make is that performance is embodied and, as stated, normative, while performativity is discursive in nature, providing "new possibilities for identity, experience, and performance" (Langellier & Peterson, 2006, p. 157). Performance "seeks merely to confirm, validate, and sanctify a person at his or her present stage of

adaptation" (Wilber, 2001, p. 227) whereas performativity has as its aim to liberate, transform, and elevate people from their current level of growth and development.

Using performative text for analysis and representation of data enlivens a participant's words through the use of multiple voices, imagery, and settings. This in turn activates the participant's as well as the reader's imagination and emotions. Performativity, or a performance based upon data, "helps us participate in the life of the text—not just the lexical meanings of the words, but also its tensions, motives, ambiguities, ironies, and other complexities—in a way that silent reading of the text does not" (Bowman & Bowman, 2003, p. 207). This provides a fuller, richer context for the data to be heard and understood within.

Bolman and Gallos (2011) state "the need to express the intangible through the concrete is deeply rooted in the human experience" (p. 96). Performance studies with their inclusion of performativity and performance text rely upon this understanding, and also draw upon the realization that putting a participant's experience into a performative piece is a powerful validation of that experience. This offers the reader/audience a more defined experience of what the participant actually felt at different times.

Much of performative research that is not visual in nature relies upon reading a text aloud. When an audience speaks the words or hears them spoken they are participating in the meaning-making process: "such participation enhances our knowledge of the text and what it is attempting to do or say" (Bowman & Bowman, p. 207). Providing an aural experience that is musical in nature also augments the reader/listener's comprehension of and relatedness to the data at hand.

Music as a Form of Data Representation
and Member Checking

"The principle point is access, so that other people can look at your material

and come to understand it and share it"

(Margaret Mead, Mead & Bateson, 2003, p. 270)

I view the use of music portraits as similar to that of performative texts and visual re-presentation, though perhaps more specialized in terms of needed skills (to be discussed further in another section). I believe it is also more risky. Music is a highly personal and interpretable art form. By using music as a research tool I take responsibility to not only create, shape, and sound the music I hear in my participant's spoken and unspoken information, but also to provide a context within which the reader/audience can listen and connect to the meanings presented textually. My overarching intent in bringing music into the study was to create listening experiences that "interrogate, criticize, empower, and create the conditions for open and honest understanding" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 375), conditions that invited the interviewee to participate in a meaningful dialogue and the listener into understanding the interviewee more fully.

Here I ventured into a performative zone that Conquergood (2003) views as ethically shaky ground, for I was involved in a process that was research based and also deeply personal. For this reason I found it imperative to play the music portraits I created for participants to solicit their reactions and approval or disapproval of use in the dissertation. In every instance of playback their responses were immediate and profound. In one case the music directly reflected a recent revelation the participant had just that

morning verbalized to a colleague. This added an eerie, almost psychic quality to the listening and verbal processing of the piece.

The playing of the music pieces for participants was also beneficial to the innerview process, for "listening is an interiorizing experience, a gathering together, a drawing in" (Conquergood, 2003, p. 357). Turning their attention to their emotive and spiritual identities became a more fluid process with the aid of music.

Poetic Exploration of Qualitative Music

While writing the section on music portraits I was asked to present this inclusion of music in the data analysis process to a doctoral level qualitative research writing class. In preparing for this I asked myself, "How do I talk about the intersection of music and qualitative research?" In reflecting further, a poem began to take shape in my mind that found expression on paper. I present here the poem as an alternative presentation of my thoughts on the topic. In the spirit of aural expression, I encourage the reader to read it aloud:

<u>qualitative music</u>

> what are words, anyway?
>> streams of letters combining to make meaning of what is
>>> sensed, intuitive, factual

so what is music, then?
  cascades of notes forming
    cadences, aural sentences
      of interpretations,
  heard imprints of events, emotions, evocations

> are they really all that different?
>> one has legitimacy in the Research World
>> one has its home in the artistic world

words are music, i say
  how enunciations are made, melodic phrasings of intent sounded,
    intonations, intimations, exclamations emitted

  these all create impressions on my listener's brain
    and must find expressions that become
      sensible to the reader, the reader
        who is eavesdropping, layering
          her own interpretations upon
            my interpretations

the music is where i meet my participants.
  seems funny to ask someone
    "is this what you sound like?"

but isn't that what we do when we ask them to
  "read what i've written, please—
    is what i think you've said what
      you really said?"

i am not putting words to music
  or music to words
i am doing what any decent researcher does,
  taking note of what the words don't say,
    what is behind, intimated, obstructed
  by viscous verbalisms,
    filtering out my own voices
    and finding an expression of truth
        that is so very personal to my participant
    yet also perhaps known by so many

word is like a god,
  unchallengeable to those who worship it

well, i challenge you, word.
  and ask you to give attention to the
    themes, harmonies, rhythmic emanations
of transcribed truth as heard
  by the heart as well as mind,
    through an other way of knowing,
      through music

according to Drs. Lincoln and Guba,
  i as researcher am
    a human instrument
      so i will tune up, tune in, listen, and play

Like reading this poem, the performance of music portraits has three qualities: "framed, reflexive, and emergent" (Langellier & Peterson, 2006, p. 155). Each piece presented to participants to listen to was framed by their experience and narrative. Every individual music portrait was reflexive because I as performer had to turn the experience first inward for expression, and then outward in order to engage the audience (Langellier & Peterson, 2006), the audience in this case being the participant. Finally, the process of creating qualitative music was emergent because the effect a piece had on a listener changed with each practicing and performance. Every time a portrait is heard it has a different influence on a listener, sparking new and different thoughts and reactions.

Using Music and IRB Approval

I did not include the use of music for data collection and analysis in the dissertation proposal because it did not occur to me. I am glad it did not, for if I had I might have experienced a forced sense of needing to be creative, injecting a sense of artifice into the interviews and data analysis process. Creating this music came as a

surprise, evolving out of a necessity to express my personal reactions to a difficult interview-related event.

This event occurred in the middle of the second innerview with Trey: he suddenly became ill. The innerview was terminated and I had to leave the office abruptly. I knew cognitively that this had been necessary as he needed to take care of himself, yet emotionally and somewhat irrationally I was upset and worried I had left a negative impression. I went home and picked up the Native American flute and improvised music that expressed these feelings. When I felt done with this playing, I thought about Trey and our interactions as well as his expressions. I wondered what his music might sound like. I turned on the recording device and began to improvise while thinking of him, the qualities of his physical presence, and his words. What resulted was a piece of music that, in its strength, movement, and themes, reflected my impressions of how spirituality manifested in his work life (see Trey, Movement IV).

After creating a music portrait for an additional participant I realized I was able to create pieces for five of the six participants, with the exception of one interviewee who offered his own recorded performance. I asked participants to listen to their particular piece as a check of whether what I played accurately portrayed who they were. This presented an alternative way to explore spirituality, a naturally non-rational phenomena, with participants. Before doing this, however, I knew I needed to seek approval from my dissertation committee and ask if an IRB Addendum was necessary. I approached one of the co-chairs of my committee, and upon her recommendation sent this request to the university's IRB Committee Chairperson:

I have had a direction develop with my dissertation research process. I have started improvising music after some interviews and recording it, and would like to bring these pieces in for participants to listen to and comment on. It provides another non-linear way of talking about spirituality. I would not be changing protocol or data collection methods. I think this could be considered a unique prompt for participants to respond to that does not compromise confidentiality or introduce any threat. The music would be used as a form of open-ended "question". Do I need to do an IRB addendum, or would this fall under the data collection protocols I already outlined?

The response from the IRB Chairperson was as follows: "What a great idea. I will attach this email to your file. No addendum." With approval in hand I created, recorded, and copied onto compact discs music portraits for participants and either brought these into the second innerviews or scheduled a third innerview for the purposes of member checking. Wanting to ensure a high quality sound reproduction, I brought a compact disc player to each of these meetings and asked each person to listen to and, if they felt comfortable, respond with their reactions. Participants' responses are detailed in Movement IV.

With this being a new approach to data analysis, I believe it is necessary to include an exploration of the authenticity and soundness of my ability to render such representations.

Authenticity in Musical Data Analysis

The research project I have outlined is replicable. The approach to data analysis using music improvisation to create portraits is not. For anyone who thinks inserting improvised music into the study was a less rigorous path than traditional written data analysis or that it should stay in the sphere of entertainment, they need to understand that "creative work is more systematic than popular mythology might have us believe" (Bowman & Bowman, 2006 p. 217). It was an exhausting and challenging process.

Bringing music to this qualitative research project was uniquely suited to who I am, my musical and work histories, and abilities. No other researcher/musician would be able to reproduce my musical interpretations and portraits. This viewpoint is validated by Braud (2006):

> Because the researcher is likely to be investigating a topic of great personal meaning, because a wide range of research skills will be used in the investigation, and because … the researcher will be taking a more involved, rather than distancing, stance in the research project, the personal characteristics of the researcher are of utmost importance. (pps. 141-142)

I am at heart a musician. I began tinkering with melodies on the piano at the age of four, started violin lessons at age six, and over the years picked up several other instruments. I found it natural to include music in my data analysis procedures as it is an integral part of my work identity, my self-identity, and my way of understanding and managing the world.

I am also a performer, with a deep-seated, almost primal need to share what I create. It is not an egotistical need, for I worry endlessly what others will think before I perform or make any piece public. I fret anxiously over how it will be perceived. It is not an easy process, but one, through much practice, has become more acceptable to my psyche. I do not take what I create so personally any more. I play it and leave it to the audience to resonate, agree, or disagree with.

In adulthood I became a music therapist with advanced training in clinical music improvisation. This specialized work gave me the tools to create musical reflections of clients for therapeutic use. Extending these same skills into creating music portraits for research participants was fairly easy; I felt capable of creating music devoid of personal interest and based solely on the rhythms, tempos, and melodies of spoken phrases of

participants. I strongly caution other researchers who consider taking this path to be realistic about their capacity for such work, for my ability to do this is based upon over 22 years of professional music therapy work and decades as a performer of musical improvisation pieces. The style I have created is unique to me and perhaps a few others in the research world. This work is not "the outcome of uninformed beliefs" (Seale, 2003, p. 181) but built upon theory, experience, and knowledge. The innovative nature of this format prompted me re-term some items, for example calling each section of this work a "Movement" instead of the traditional "Chapter".

A Personal Perspective

I offer here an early excerpt from my data collection journal in order to highlight the congruency I felt between the research process and music. In it I talk of music and my need to play while immersed in the data collection phase of research. This was written in mid-June, just before I began contacting participants:

> *Today, I have determined, is the day to start calling potential interviewees. As preparation for this, I opened my violin case, and played. Practicing for countless hours to make sure I am not out of pitch is a history I have that is my foundation for clarity and creativity. Composing and improvising music is similar to collecting data and synthesizing it—listening closely to heard and unheard voices and nuances, writing down fragments of thoughts, pulling lines of melody/themes out of these fragments, and creating some kind of harmony (whether harmonious or dissonant) from the strands that become sound.*

> *Making it sound. Making the data sound. This is what I want to do, and why I commit myself to playing music throughout this process of listening, questioning, transcribing, and identifying. To give the underlayer of unspokenness a hearing, to bring it into the conversation, to not minimize or overlook it. Make it sound.*

> *I am very used to private practicing in a small room, sharpening my skills for public presentation. Paying attention to the subtleties of tone, pitch, tempo, phrasing, expression so that when I present it, it seems effortless, obvious. Figuring out how to finger a phrase so that it flows easily from my hand, planning the bowing so there are no apparent breaks in a long, lovely melody. There is so much to do, so much to pay attention to, yet I can only tackle one at a time and*

then fit it all together into one coherent piece. How similar is this process to collecting and writing up data! (data collecting journal, June 13, 2011)

Musical Improvisations and Spirituality

Coming back to the dissertation topic, using my musical skills to create portraits provided a way to gain insight into participants' sense of spirituality and work. This approach to understanding non-cognitive processes is supported in qualitative research, for,

> The multiple modes of knowing include not only familiar "left-hemispheric", theoretical, rational, linear, analytic, verbal research skills, but also less frequently emphasized, but equally important, complementary, "right-hemispheric", experiential, ... intuitive, imagistic, and holistic techniques and skills" (Braud, 2006, p. 140)

Music certainly falls into the latter category.

What I sought to do was communicate results and impressions in a way that encompassed the depths, subtleties, and sometimes unpredictable dimensions of spirituality. Spirituality is often a felt experience, not easily expressed in words or concepts yet capturable in melody and rhythm. This gives the reader/listener a sentient re-experiencing of what is behind the words.

Playing the created pieces for participants shifted my position as researcher acknowledging and re-producing their words to engaging, on a very personal level, with their voice, with an essential aspect of their nature. Madison (2003) says "human desire implores that we be listened to, comprehended, engaged, and free to imagine in and with worlds of others" (p. 473). Music offered this type of listening experience.

Legal Considerations

There were few legal concerns in regards to making public the pieces I created as I was the sole composer and performer. One participant's music, however, demanded

special attention. During our first interview Jonathon shared a recording he had made of the song "Bein' Green". This was his interpretation of the song, with his performance of guitar and singing representing a side of him I may not have gotten to know otherwise.

I asked Jonathon if he would consider allowing me to use this song in some way for the dissertation. I wanted to honor his musicality yet be responsive to any hesitations he might have. I offered three possibilities for him to choose from: the song as performed by him, a version with me singing and playing, or for he and I to record it together, with him playing guitar and me singing to prevent identification of his voice. Jonathon chose the first option and gave full permission for me to copy the song as is (see Jonathon, Movement IV). The next step was to secure copyright permission from the original publisher, Raposo Group. A written release was provided by Nick Raposo to reproduce the song and lyrics for the purposes of this dissertation (Appendix B).

Audience Engagement

Bringing musical performance into the research process has repercussions beyond influencing me or participants, for I must suddenly consider the audience of listeners. In hearing the music the reader/listener becomes more involved: reactions, inner critics, and silent emotions are activated in a way that merely reading theories and justifications cannot evoke (Madison, 2003). I believe the benefits outweigh the risks, for playing the music holds the possibility of helping the reader understand in an intuitive way what the participant experienced. This type of artistic presentation in research brings the audience together with the performer and participant, and "the domains of outsider and insider are simultaneously demarcated and fused" (Madison, 2003, p. 478).

The Need for Quality Representation

My artistic instincts demanded that if I were to include music in the publication of this dissertation it needed to be of superior sound quality. The quality of recordings taken with the hand-held device was good, but in terms of public listening left much to be desired. I knew I needed to have a professional recording of the pieces to ensure better reception on the part of participants and the audience of readers. With this in mind, I wrote a grant proposal and submitted it to my university's Graduate Student Association, and was approved to receive enough money to go into a professional recording studio to create a high caliber soundtrack. This pursuit of excellence honored the integrity, honesty of expression, and full disclosure my participants offered me.

Preparing to record was an arduous process. I took notes on the shape, melodic phrases, and rhythmic identifiers that marked the initial improvisations I had created and crudely recorded, all the while planning to retain the original structure yet also hoping to preserve the improvisational nature of the music. I practiced intensely for approximately 20 hours in the three days before going into the recording studio, identifying the themes that arose during the initial improvisation and elaborating upon them in ways that created structurally sound pieces.

Once in the studio I was able to perform the pieces with satisfaction, hearing that they were accurate portrayals of the original musical impulses. Greg, the sound engineer, and I then spent several more hours editing. In this I experienced the agony of endless editing and the joy of getting it right, similar to the writing process I engaged in for this dissertation. With Greg's expertise guiding the way, depth was added to the pieces, tones balanced, instruments faded and cross-faded, and sounds clarified. The musical results

are congruent with how I wanted the pieces to sound. All participants received a copy of "their" song as part of my thank you for their participation.

Ethical Considerations, What Ifs, and Strategies

"Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their

manners should be good and their code of ethics strict"

(Stake, 2000, p. 447)

What if a participant in such a small pool of potential interviewees dropped out? How much information needed to be given ahead of time (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009)? What if a participant decided midway through the project that the topic was too "hot", too potentially damaging in some way? What if an interviewee said I cannot use most of a transcript? These are some of the ethical dilemmas that could have arisen. I needed to be prepared to respond to these situations before embarking on the interview process.

One strategy I employed focused on giving participants full disclosure ahead of time about the research project's purpose, questions, and data collection protocol. It was my hope that participants would, before giving permission, determine whether they were comfortable in exploring the spiritual terrain. The fact that no participant dropped out or asked for special handling of data made these possibilities moot. I think my assurances of anonymity to the greatest extent possible added confidence in participants' willingness to engage and reduced the possibility of attrition.

Having outlined methods, strategies, and data representation tools, the foundation has been laid to introduce the participants in this study. Movement IV focuses on who they are as administrative leaders and how spirituality intersects with their work lives.

MOVEMENT IV

PARTICIPANTS, PORTRAITS, AND SONGS

Discussion of Themes and Possible Meanings

This research project is focused on the experiences of a select group of people who may or may not incorporate a spiritual perspective into their work identity. In interviewing them, I found some participants adhered to an overt spiritual identity, while others did not consciously draw upon this part of themselves to guide their actions and decisions. Each experience truly was unique, and for this reason I have struggled with looking for themes, and searching for commonalities and points of departure. In short, I found it neigh on impossible to create a written compilation that lumped these six lives together. To draw upon the image evoked in the Prelude, each person's life as expressed through the interviews and innerviews was like a river with its own course and destination. It was difficult to write the data up in a traditional manner that neatly tied themes to quotes. For this reason I turned to story-telling, visual representations, creative writing formats, and music to depict what was shared with me. Putting into aural form the themes, rhythms, and phrasings, as described in Movement III, fits with who I am and how I hear people. To paraphrase Berger (1972), I believe hearing comes before words. Music and visual forms of re-presentation offer ways to interpret the data in a holistic and comprehensive way that appeals to our pre-rational, intuitive sensing of life, beauty, and truth.

This movement is focused on presenting each participant's story by way of words, images, and music in order to create realistic and detailed descriptions, and evoke an overall impression of the people I talked with. This is done with the intent of providing a more visceral feel for who these people were and creating a cast of characters from which other stories, or counterpoints, could spring. For each participant's portrait I ask that you read the short description provided, take a look at the corresponding diagram, listen to the specific piece of music, and read the accompanying note that expresses some of my thoughts and impressions (the order of these varies).

Interspersed with these six sections several counterpoints are offered that serve as compilations of interview transcripts. These are amalgamations of data and represent some of the common ground as well as differences between participants. Merging several experiences into a singular story accomplished the following tasks: creating themes or shared meanings, highlighting contrasts, and assuring anonymity. To begin my introduction of participants, I present Trey.

Trey

His desk faces the door with windows on the right that give a view of green leafy tree tops and blue sky. Trey welcomes me in and presents as a compact man with a lively, constantly moving energy. He has a strong handshake and makes sustained eye contact. There is a feeling of spaciousness to his office, not because it is particularly big but because it is set up in an open and inviting way. The room is painted a warm gold color, and one large rectangular window is framed by bricks. Colorful, mid-size art pieces dot the walls. Adjacent to the desk is an area with two dark leather easy chairs and a low table. We sit across from each other at a nearby rectangular work table.

When Trey speaks of spirituality and work, connection is a theme that comes up often. After our second interview I gave this theme more thought and felt prompted to depict it in a diagram. I created a pictograph (Figure 4) and presented it to him in our third innerview.

Figure 4. Trey first diagram.

Trey looked at this diagram and saw immediately that the circles were disconnected from each other. He pulled out a pen and drew lines connecting the outer circles together and said, "Because I just strongly believe that we don't do anything. Everything is linked to one another. It's the web of how we are, who we are. And what lands in your web is relative to each individual". He also considered my inclusion of art as a separate circle, and said "And this one, art, [pointing to the orbit that says art] I might call Culture. Arts slash culture, maybe". The other concern Trey had with this diagram was that the past was not represented in anyway:

> You honor the past of the people who have been here before you, in each of these realms that help you attain and basically be where you are today. But maybe not as a separate bucket. But you are mindful of that.

I incorporated his ideas into the diagram, resulting in a different pictorial (Figure 5).
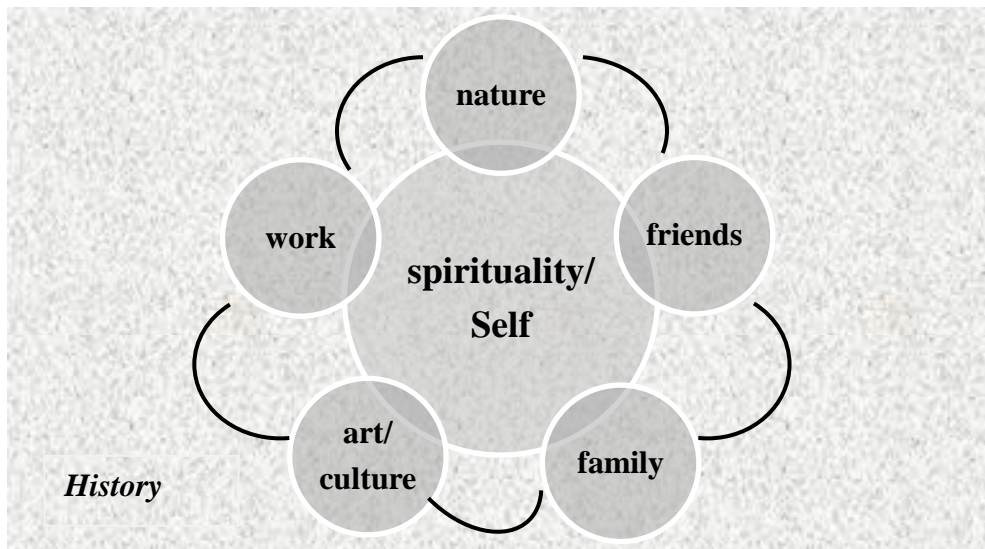
Figure 5. Trey second diagram.

In viewing the diagram, I believe it directly reflects who Trey is as a person and as an administrative leader. His sense of spirituality is closely knitted to his sense of self. The orbits of others, nature, work, art/culture, and family all intersect with this central point of spirituality/Self and with each other. There is a constant loop of information and feedback going on between these parts of him and all of it is grounded in history: his personal history of family and life events. In one of our interviews he talked directly of the need for MVU's campus to become more connected, for feedback to move freely between departments. I am struck by his awareness that the past is a needed component of any future endeavor. His belief that our past/history runs through each orbit of our lives, constantly affecting and shaping who we are and how we are is congruent with how I perceived his sense of identity. But history does not necessarily exist as a separate orb to be focused on, at least from his perspective.

Trey has recently been promoted to one of the top positions at MVU and so our interviews come at a point of transition for him, of moving from one role in which he was actively involved with students to one of constant interaction with other administrators. When I questioned him about this change in roles he said,

> Fundamentally it's about the people, it's about helping them grow and contribute, and feel like they're contributing members of [MVU]. So in my new role it isn't about "well Trey is the Vice-Chancellor now so he'll lead us". It's more of: "Well, Trey's the Vice-Chancellor now and let's all figure out how we're going to move forward".

In our conversations Trey presents as a very thoughtful, deliberate, yet also spontaneous person, quick to respond to verbal and non-verbal cues with wit and a strong sense of humor. There are many moments of laughter in our talks. When thinking about how to answer a question he frequently runs his hand through his stylishly cropped gray hair, a gesture I found telling, indicative perhaps of his professorial tendency to ponder answers and implications before speaking. His responses are sometimes lengthy, dense with meaning and imagery. There are themes that arise through his exploration of spirituality and leadership. These are presented in the following sections.

Spirituality and Visual Representations

During our second innerview I asked Trey what his definition of spirituality was and he responded, "Well, spirituality, you have to operationalize that—what does that mean? It drills down to people, places, things". He seemed hesitant to tender a more definitive definition and instead began talking about the pictures he had brought in that he felt represented his sense of spirituality and leadership. Like gazing at the facets of a crystal, different aspects of his beliefs came through with each picture we looked at.

Having the pictures to refer to prompted many insights that, without them, would not

have been so easily accessed.

Picture 1: Mountains. Trey recently spent some time in the mountains and took

a picture of one particularly beautiful spot. He cannot find this picture on his phone, but

describes it in detail:

> We were in the mountains last week, maybe two weeks ago, and I took the picture that is a standard picture of the meadow, with the flowers, with the evergreens, and the mountains, and the snow, and just that peace and serenity, and that connectedness to our environment. What struck me about it was how beautiful that is, and how I don't get up there much anymore, to be connected with that. But it's that place where you, it represents that calming, centered place where you can be connected with the environment, away from the chaos of the day-to-day work environment. I think we talked last time about the things that help you be centered. And spirituality for me is being in that place, in that mindset, and that place that's beyond the day-to-day, maybe it's the left brain constant going, doing, structured….And then the right brain place where you go and be connected with the world beyond that, beyond the day-to-day.

I asked Trey what it is like for him to be in that place, and he responded:

> Oh, it's very calming, it's very connected. It gives me a sense of the greater, the greater … the fact that as people and humans we're very miniscule in the grand scope of things, of the planet, of the universe. To be a little bit humbled by the fact that we are part of the cosmos but maybe not *the* most important part, perhaps. It makes me feel calm, relaxed, and appreciative of the beauty of the world in which we live, the stewardship that we have to take on with what we've been given. And that bit of, we are here, when you think about it, we are here for a short period of time. And I think it puts a bit of perspective into life …. The work that I do here [at MVU] is hopefully meaningful, but it's just a tiny little blip on the radar in terms of the scope of life itself. So it's good, and that's not a depressing thing, it's sort of, [in a softer, breathy voice that has a touch of awe in it] "yeah, that's right". There's more to it than "did I get the memo out today?" [laughs softly]

Being in the mountains and even merely thinking about being there helps Trey

connect with a perspective of work that is freeing, liberating in its awareness that what he

does in his day-to-day regime is important yet fleeting in the grand scheme of life. This

seems to refresh him and help him approach each day with vigor and enthusiasm.

Picture 2: The Duomo. The Duomo holds special meaning for Trey, and the second picture he presented was of this majestic Italian monument. In lieu of describing the picture and its import, I offer a fictionalized journal account of Trey experiencing what it was like to be in Florence, near the Duomo. Many of the sentences and phrases are taken directly from the interview transcript.

Journal entry: The Duomo. Walking through the hilly streets of Florence, I saw the Duomo in the distance; its rounded basilica called me to come close. I want to savor this view, though, so I stop to sit at a café and have a coffee, and just gaze at it. The church is immense, dwarfing the surrounding rooftops and making even the hills seem small. It looks like a beehive for God. I try to imagine what it was like in the 1400's when it was built. Instead of smooth bricked pavement the sidewalk, if there was one, would be mired in mud and waste. The people would be moving carts through the streets, vendors shouting for sales, and washing hung in lines out the windows above. If they were not of the aristocracy, people worked hard to simply exist.

This is one of my favorite places in the world to be. What this church must have meant to those people in the 1400's! What its construction must have stood for at the time, what it said about spirituality and connectedness for people stuck in this other "survival of life" stuff. It's about what people were striving to do even then.

In their midst this mammoth tribute to God was erected and it inspires people to this day. This takes me out of my very structured left brain "go" mode and makes me stop and think about the history, the beauty, the culture, the connectedness we have in the world with other people and other cultures, and that we're all part of the human race, and we are really connected. And that's important to me. Gives me a sense of

connectedness to others. And an appreciation for the things that they contribute and give

to the collective human spirit.

From a distance, this Duomo is clearly a Catholic church, but looking at only its

dome it could be an Islamic mosque or a Buddhist temple. It cuts across all cultures, all

places. It's just that people have taken it and translated it into what made sense to them

at the time, and the culture of the time just happened to be Catholicism. It could be

Islamic, it could be Buddhist, but clearly there is a connectedness that humans have

about trying to find a place of spirituality, and of "what is my place in the world?" And

"how can I live a life here that is better, everyday?"

I made the mistake of checking my phone yesterday and saw a text from the

President [of MVU]. She had a couple of hard questions, but then asked how my trip was

and what I was going to bring back with me. I texted her that I would bring back a wish

for more pastries and coffee. But in thinking about it now, I think what I will return with

is a sense of humankind and that we're all entwined, a sense of the importance of just

being and trying to make the world a better place.

I like when I come here; maybe it's the pace of life--it's a much less frenetic pace.

People here stop, and they have conversations, and they're connected with family. It's

that typical scene where people are out having coffee and relating with each other, and

it's the small stores on the sidewalks that you pop into and the guy's been running it for

25 or 30 years, or it's been in the family, and you know each other, it's ... I think it helps

me stay linked to what's important. And what's important are people. Are how in the

end, how we take care of each other and our world. And be mindful that we have a

responsibility to do that, and to each other. I really do like being here. It takes me out of

my mode and gets me connected with that.

Picture 3. The third image Trey brings to the table is a sepia-toned postcard of an

old MVU administration building from the 1920's. This, for him, represents a

relationship with the past that supports and informs his work:

> The point of this one is that it's about, again, our connectedness with the past. It's a cool little picture. It is representative of this place, MVU, and our connectedness to the past. I'm thinking about the legacy that we leave, those of us who pass through these doors, work here, then move on and other people come and go—sort of that connectedness that we all have with each other. Even though we have no idea who those people were [in the postcard] and who built the building and all the faculty that were here at the time … But again there's that sense of "we have a responsibility to the past and to the future". And again, back to each other and what we're doing here and why we're doing it and how really important it is. And it isn't just about me. It's about the collective as an institution and as human beings … there's more to it than "well we got this done, and that done", the checklist.

Spirituality and leadership are tied to honoring the past in a way that creates a better

present and future. Being aware of the history of MVU helps Trey stay grounded in the

present.

Pictures 4 and 5. Both of the final pictures Trey brought to the second interview

were of people, one of his parents and the other of a mentor. The picture of his parents

had him in it, grinning and wearing his doctoral graduation robe. His parents flank him,

looking proud and slightly nervous. He spoke of the spirituality of honoring his parents,

and described their dedication to his education this way:

>And these are my parents. This is my mom and my dad. And when you think about success and [pauses]…when you think about people and, … how do I say this? I stand on their shoulders. I'm where I'm at today because of what they were, what they did for me. As parents and the support they gave me. They were people who grew up in the Depression era … people who were very very poor. And they said, "well we never had an opportunity to do x, so we're going to make sure you have the opportunity to do x. We believe in education, we never had the opportunity, we want you to have that".

Being kind, respectful, and mindful of his imprint on the planet are Trey's way of honoring the sacrifices his parents made for him. He acknowledged that he may not share their religious beliefs, but a love of God and of each other kept them all close right up until his Dad passed away several years ago.

The final picture is of an older man, rather portly, with a large white mustache and bushy white hair, standing next to Trey. Trey is dressed in a classic business suit and bent over with laughter. In looking at it, I wonder what he is laughing at. And then I realize it does not matter, for the picture speaks directly to the mentor relationship they had. The image conveys light-heartedness, and full of laughter. Speaking of this man Trey says, "He was that sort of mentor in terms of caring about my professional development. He invested in me, he gave to me. He was a wonderful role model, in an academic sense".

I grouped these two photographs together here because they represent the role models Trey has. I asked him whether he had a spiritual mentor and he said "no, not really". His spirituality is grounded in people, the world, and his work, not in any one figurehead of a religion or sect. His academic mentor provided guidance in his work world, while "my parents were that role model in that sense of community, and giving to others, and caring other people in the world".

All of these pictures hold great significance for Trey. He said,

They're like the ingredients in the stew that end up in the pot. That make up who I am and how I think about my place not only in the world but in the work world and family life.   I'm very grateful, very grateful. It's a good foundation.

Leadership Style

When I asked Trey about his leadership style he said,

Leadership styles evolve, right? I think you might be drawn to one particular characteristic of leadership style, and for myself I think it's evolved over time. I think I can describe my style as one of, more akin maybe to a coach. I did grow up involved in team sports. So even in high school, junior high and that sort of thing, you kind of got a sense that we had to function as a team to be successful. I [also] think my vision of leadership is about empowering people, about helping people self-actualize, in the best way they can, whether they are students, or faculty, gosh even administrators. So I think that my leadership style is about finding ways to energize, facilitate, collaborate. Empower people to do that. And then you have to add a touch of, "okay we have to have policies and procedures, we have to be coordinated and organized". And you have to have guiderails and guideposts.

For Trey, being a leader means being a good citizen of the campus, of our communities, and of the world. Being a good leader is about trying to make the world a better place by approaching work with respect for life and by valuing people and the contributions they make.

As a leader he believes it is important to be informed by data, both qualitative and quantitative, "And then you figure out what you've found and how to proceed". Good leadership "is both an art and a science. It's approaching every day with a toolbox, with different approaches of what each situation might need. Sometimes you need a hammer, sometimes you need a screwdriver. It's being flexible yet intentional".

I think his statement that good leadership requires him to be flexible yet intentional says much about who he is as a person, a spiritual being, and an administrative leader. When combined with his awareness that being a model for others,

this is a heavy responsibility. It is an honor to serve, yet "there's a big element of trust and accountability in that piece. People who work for you are trusting you to help this institution, our faculty, and our colleagues".

Conflict

Dealing with conflict is a part of any administrator's life. Trey's approach to conflict management is that each challenge is serious yet also, in the grand scheme of life, insignificant. Trey spoke of his decision to not become heavily invested in ego battles, for in 10 or 20 years few people other than those directly involved will remember details such as one person did not like another, or that one supervisor blocked a subordinate's advancement. The ensuing story is taken directly from one experience Trey had, with some fictionalized details added to increase confidentiality. It is described using Trey's voice as narrator.

Trey counterpoint: Conflict with no resolution. *You probably have a little bit of a sense of my approach and strategy and leadership style. The challenge to who you are comes in when your immediate supervisor does not value the kinds of things you hold important. This happened to me. I once had a supervisor, and we clearly had polar opposite ways of viewing the world, and being in the world, and treating people. We had completely different and fundamental views on issues of equity and fairness, empowerment and those kinds of things, things that can become incredible leadership challenges. She would come into my office and question why I had treated an employee in such-and-such a way, or why I had worded a memo in, as she put it, "touchy-feely terms". I heard rumors that she talked about me in disparaging terms, and yes, it made*

me angry. But I didn't want to be angry, not only because there was nothing I could do but because I think anger is a corrosive emotion. It eats away at your soul, little by little.

I realized I had to find a way to maintain my professionalism, my integrity, my true north, my way of engaging in the world, and not somehow let her or our interaction alter any of those, compromise any of those values. And it was very very hard, very very hard. Because there was a built in power differential, I was automatically at a disadvantage in the sense of having little recourse on changing that dynamic. Now when it's colleague to colleague, there's a very different set of rules that you can engage in: you can sit down and talk it through, and figure it out. But when there's a power differential it's, it's really really difficult to figure out, "how do I make this relationship work without compromising who I am? And my values?" And that takes a lot of resilience and perseverance. And confidence in who you are and what you are, and knowing that "no I will not cross this boundary or treat this person this way". This experience, though it happened a long time ago, created a great deal of personal development for me [he laughs heartily].

When I think about this experience, I see how I could have easily become outraged or bitter. But what I tried to do was to stay true to my deepest beliefs. Someone asked me the other day what advice I would have for an administrator who has a conflict with someone, and I told them don't ever lose sight of your values. No matter how tempting it might be, or expedient it might be, how much heat you get for it, or how uncomfortable it might be. Because in the long run that's really what you have. That's really it. It is, I think, your values and your integrity. Because if you lose those, I think you lose your ability to be a leader, and I think you lose a little bit of yourself, your sense

of self. So I learned that. And I learned that you need colleagues and support—right?—
when you're in leadership positions, that it's not about only one person saying "I'm the
leader I can do this, I can handle this".

Reverence

In his descriptions of nature, family, and work, there was often awe in Trey's voice. When talking about these topics there was a quality of deep respect for beauty, the universe, the earth, and for those who have come before us as well as those who will come after us. In our third innerview this theme of reverence was present again. I asked him if he could expand upon his earlier statement that one of his strongest values is a sense of reverence. He said, "I like the word reverent. It is a respect, a level of respect and reverence for things. It gives more meaning and purpose to what we do as leaders". Having a feeling of reverence helps him stay "grounded and mindful of just exactly what the point of work is". Throughout our meetings he spoke of his awareness that what he does is not only out of respect for the past and determination to fulfill the potential MVU currently has, but also to create a better future for those students, faculty, and staff that will come after him. Being reverent helps him stay in tune with his purpose in work and in life.

Connectedness

"Connectedness is a critical term in many spiritual traditions. It manifests in various
forms: the circle of life in numerous Native traditions, the Holy Spirit in Christian
traditions, intuition for many nonreligious traditions, spiritual energy forms
in the universe in many Eastern belief systems, and what one
close friend of mine refers to as listening to 'Mother Universe'"
(Chávez, 2001, p. 76)

Feeling connected to a power greater than his sense of self was a theme that arose frequently in our conversations. Trey sought connectedness through meaningful

relationships with others, being in nature, cultural experiences, and approaching his work with the knowledge that stewardship and compassion are essential elements to his being a good administrator. Connectedness is an important principle of living a spiritual life (Chávez, 2001) and one Trey seeks to enact by preferring collaboration over authority, shared responsibility over hierarchy, and communication over dictation. This topic served as part of the inspiration for the music I created for Trey.

Music Portrait: "Connected"

After our second innerview I went home and improvised music, bringing forth the rhythms of speech and tonalities of Trey's voice. I also tried to capture some of the reverence and awe he spoke with when describing the pictures as well as the strength of his leadership convictions. In listening back to the recording it struck me that the Native American flute music had the majesty of the mountains in it, reflecting in aural form their centeredness and solidity. It also had movement in it, strong tones with leaps and trills that I do not usually put into this type of sound. The title for the piece came from a frequent theme Trey spoke of: "Connected".

I brought this recording to our third meeting, and after looking and re-working the diagrams and talking more about topics pursued in previous conversations, I asked if I could play this piece of music for him. He agreed and together we listened to it. The link to this piece is given here:

Connected   **Music Piece #1**

When the piece finished playing there was a period of silence, then Trey said,

There's a real sense of—I'm trying to figure out how to say this—it's a sense of internal connectedness or peace. It brings kind of a calming, a sense of a breath that comes out, and you have a sense of calming and a sense of quiet and solitude. Introspection. I really like it. And the other piece that I, and I don't know why,

but [listening to this] also gives me a pause and a respect for nature, a sense of being in awe of nature, of the spiritual world that nature is and inhabits. So I can see myself on top of a mountain or up in the mountains overlooking the beauty of that, and having that feeling that that brings. I like it a lot. It reminds me of that part at the end of meditation where you're supposed to be still and connected with yourself. With your being, I guess you should say. That really takes me there. So, yeah, I really like it a lot, the wistfulness, there is almost a little bit of …, it's not a melancholy, but it is, maybe it is a wistfulness of it. It's calming but yet it's intentional. I like it a lot. It resonates with me.

Trey's Postscript

The first interview and subsequent innerviews with Trey were rich with meaning, imagery, and wisdom. Connection is a theme that rang through our conversations about spirituality, history (both personal and collective), leadership, and being true to one's values. Living and working have spiritual purpose for him when he feels linked to others, history, nature, and the universe. Staying connected to life by honoring the past and celebrating the present through family, arts, and cultural events all help him work to his fullest capacity. In pondering all of these things he said:

> Well you think about that big cosmic question we have, about "how did we get here? And what is the point?" I do think it is a gift to be here, on this planet. Somehow or another, we showed up here. And I think that there is probably a reason, or if not a reason, a good fortune to be here and to actually experience life and because of that, I suppose I'm not sure what it would be like if you weren't here—I don't know what that would be like!—but it is a wonderful opportunity to, to be here and to be, to experience the things you can experience every day. It just feels, I don't know, it just feels like, it may be random, but it is a wonderful randomness to be here and to be a part of that.

Gabriel

How would I define my spirituality? I think spirituality for me is my faith. And through

my faith is where my spirituality resonates from. Does that make some sense?

(Gabriel, Second Innerview)

Gabriel is a 40-something man who is in a position of power at MVU. He oversees a large team of dedicated people and has to walk the lines of being an administrator, leader, cheerleader for the students and their needs, and mentor to many. I notice right away in our first interview that Gabriel speaks in "we" a lot. He seems to shy away from an "I" voice, preferring to emphasize teamwork. For him, working as a team is the way things get done. It is his job to oversee and guide the team, help them accomplish their goals, and make the university a better place. He is very active in this campus community, showing up here and there, making contact with as many students and staff as possible. I asked him why he believes this is important and how he is able to accomplish so much. He responded:

> I think it's up to me to set the tone. One of my staff members just the other day, which really made my day, said "I'm managing my staff and student staff the way I think you have managed us". Which is a really … I don't think she really knew what she was telling me but that's the kind of stuff that's important to me. I think I am being intentional, there is intentionality to what I do and what I say, how I live. If I was to just do it on the fly I wouldn't get the outcomes that I want because it takes some work, it takes work to not tell somebody off, it takes some work to not be cynical sometimes, to not be negative, so I hope that it rubs off.

Gabriel Counterpoint: Sitting in the Coolness of the Church

A thirteen-year old boy walks out his front door and heads down the cottonwood lined street. The massive trees create a canopy of leaves above his head, and he wonders how old they are. He feels how the early morning chill has begun to fade into the day's 100 degree heat. A few minutes later he opens the door to his church, goes in, and takes a seat near the back. The sun streams through the stained glass, throwing a shaft of deep blue-green light onto his head. He has been coming alone for weeks now, for no particular reason. Unlike so many boys his age he does not need to be forced to go to

church. It has never been an issue for him. Maybe it was growing up with those statues and pictures all over his house, or maybe he just likes the deep silence that washes over him when he walks in. His grandmother's house has one statue he particularly likes, that of St. Jude, the patron saint of desperate causes. Though he likes this one best he doesn't feel desperate. It just feels good to know someone is watching over him, that there is something bigger than him, bigger than even his family. He feels safe in this.

Now, as an adult looking back and marveling at this unspoken drive to be alone in the church, he sees how this has left an imprint on him. It's who he's always been. There was peacefulness in going alone. He can't say he's been the most religiously faithful person—he is unable to recite verses from the Bible, but he and his family go to church every Sunday.

At work he is very purposeful, busy, connected to many people. Sometimes it threatens to overwhelm him and makes him feel tired. Sometimes he feels how this busy-ness throws him off center, causing him to be judgmental about others. He hates it when this comes out, feels a bit ashamed of himself though no one would know it to see him. When this fatigue starts to set in, he walks alone down the corridor to his office, goes in, and sits down in his favorite chair. The room is bright with natural light. In the quiet of this office he finds some comfort. He can relax, and he can let go of the negativity. "Letting go of the bad stuff takes work, don't let anyone tell you it doesn't". Once in this chair he finds a way to plug into his energy, his center, knowing there's something bigger in this world than what any of us do. And that there's a reason why we do what we do. He's never questioned or felt afraid of that. "So much of the time we're running around, doing so much that we don't sit and just be quiet. And think. And listen.

People walk by here sometimes and they see me just sitting here, 'cause sometimes I'm just moving so fast, that I don't even have time to think. And it's when I'm doing that, that I'm probably more destructive."

Like he did as a boy, when this time of inward meditation and contemplation has ended, he stands up, walks out, and goes back to being in the world.

Identity

In our third meeting I showed Gabriel a diagram (Figure 6) I composed that seemed to reflect who he is, how he is at work and at home. He looks at it and sees how "it starts in the middle and moves outward which makes some sense to me." He seems dissatisfied with it, so I ask what bothers him about it. "It's like I'm a sphere by myself. I'm not". I point out the last ring, that of the World as symbolic of his living, with all his layers, fully in the world. The world encompasses his work life. This makes sense to him. It was my interpretation, not his, to put God at the center, with Self and Family moving outward from that core place. He disagrees with this, saying, "but I'm thinking [God] should be merged into all three of those areas. But it starts in the middle and moves outward which makes some sense to me". I ask him if the background should be titled "God" so it is the foundation for these other areas, and he says yes.
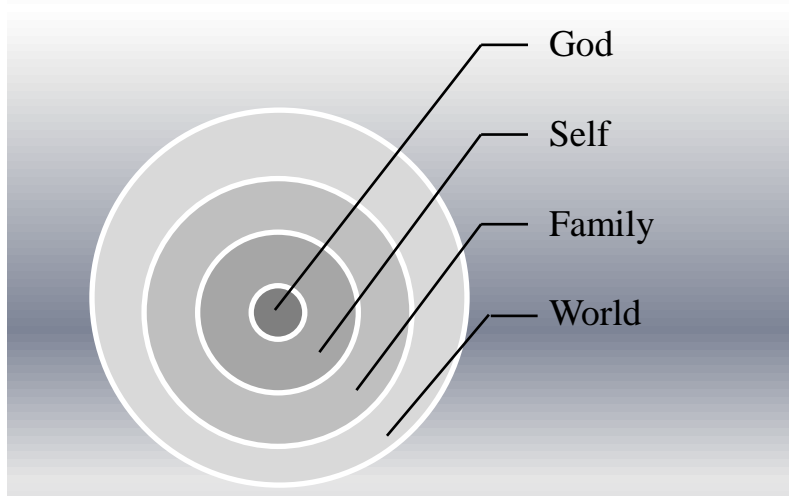
Figure 6. Gabriel first diagram.

I created another diagram (Figure 7) which may be a more accurate representation. In this diagram, God is behind all of these identities, the background that surrounds all of these parts of Gabriel's self. Without the label, God might not be identifiable.
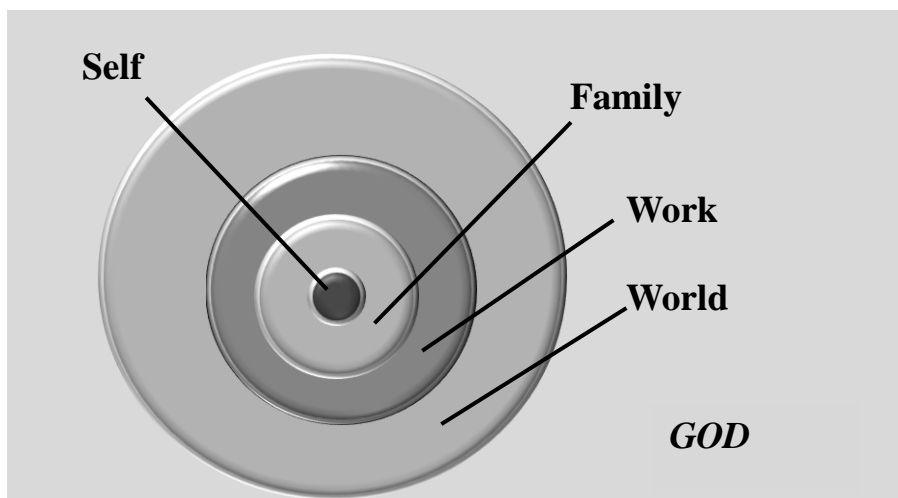
Figure 7. Gabriel second diagram.

On Leadership and Spirituality

I asked Gabriel how the leadership of upper management at MVU is affected or influenced by spiritual principles. He was honest in his assessment of this, saying spirituality is not apparent in many administrators' leadership behaviors and statements. He goes on, saying,

> I think the leadership [at MVU] doesn't embody that spiritual piece in the sense that the thing that attracts me and makes this place so appealing isn't everybody above me, it's everybody at my level and below me that makes this place what it is. When you start talking about spirituality, for me, it is living, it's living life to the fullest. So bringing it to life, there's a spiritualness to it …. The spiritual piece is not just about you and God, if you will, it's you, God, the community and the people you are with. There are certain standards and expectations that go with this. The spirituality piece and living life to the fullest piece is how we treat each other, how we view each other, how we care for each other. All those things are important pieces of the equation.

This made me ask him what is most important about leadership and spirituality, what qualities are essential in leading others with a spiritual foundation. He responded,

> I think there is something a religious piece offers, and it's the whole dignity of the person, respect, compassion piece. At least that's what I think. What I've really relied on if you will. Those people I've seen in leadership positions that don't hold fast or seem to have some sort of spiritual direction, are, not that they're not brilliant, but I don't think in the end will be very good leaders because of how they treat people.

Treating others with compassion, respect, and dignity is very important to him. It is not just what he believes in, it is who he is. He goes on, "the expectations I have for myself are pretty high in how I want to engage others and how to do so".

Gabriel's Song: "I'm Just Me"

After our second innerview, several phrases from both this and our first meeting kept sounding in my head. When I asked myself what kind of music would suit these words and Gabriel's energy, there was no hesitation: a Blues song. For me, a Blues song

captures the feeling of Gabriel simply being who he is, take it or leave it. I reviewed the transcripts and selected passages that seemed particularly potent and then set to putting these to music. Most of the words are verbatim from his interviews, although I did take the musical license of summing it all up into a title: "I'm Just Me". Here I offer some of the phrases that I borrowed from him that helped create and shape the song. They are presented in a random order. After these phrases, a web link to the song is provided to listen to. The song's lyrics are presented immediately following the link.

> **Quotes song was created from.** "The spirituality piece and living life to the fullest piece is how we treat each other, how we view each other, how we care for each other, all those things are important pieces of the equation"
>
> "I have no clue, I just operate on how I think I need to operate"
>
> "I finally just said why can't I just tell them what I think, and this is what I think? And he said 'well that's probably a good strategy too'. You know, why do I have to couch this? I'm not playing a game, I'm not trying to be insensitive, I'm not being disrespectful"
>
> "I just want to be considerate, respectful, and at the same time, just thoughtful you know?!"
>
> "I also think at the same time that there's a set of respect that also goes with that, and dignity and compassion. How do you balance all that? And I think that's where it gets all convoluted, particularly with some leaders"
>
> "I guess who I am isn't just on Sunday"
>
> "And I think that what that did for me was just, trying to always be in control, I was always trying to control everything. And finally getting to a point where I realized I didn't have the control, you know, just better understood that. That was a turning point in my life"
>
> "Retain faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties. And at the same time confront the most brutal facts of your current reality whatever that might be"
>
> "It'll get better, if you just don't lose hope and you don't lose faith in who you are and what you believe in"

"Because you get stuck in that wallowing … you know? And you just get stuck.
And it's paralyzing"

"I have a lot more to grow and trust in order for my spirituality to … it's a work
in progress"

I'm Just Me   **Music Piece #2**

Song Lyrics.   I'm Just Me

chorus:
I'm just me, take it or leave it
I'm just me, from any angle you see
I live life to the fullest
and care for those around me
this is who I am and
what I believe

you gotta say what you mean, and back it up with some action
you should mean what you say, and treat people right
don't bother being cynical, though it can take some work
let your heart be open and your light shine bright

sometimes I have no clue I just go on instinct
I just want to be considerate, thoughtful, have respect
I guess who I am isn't just on Sunday
every day should be the same whether sacred or profane

chorus

I once went through a tough time, a long while ago,
when I saw that I really had no control
I locked myself in a room for 7 nights and 7 days,
just listened to my heart and found a better start

So slow down, and listen, be good to yourself
don't lose faith in who you are and what you believe
you will endure all the bad times
don't get stuck in wallowing
just listen to your heart and find a better start

chorus

sometimes you have to sacrifice
you may have regrets
I've been spiteful at times

to no one's benefit
it's my job to earn peoples' respect
to keep welcoming them in
I'm a work in progress
and that ain't no sin

When I play the song for him in our third meeting his response to it is, "That is awesome! I didn't realize you sang! Can I get a copy?" This is perfectly in line with his selfless nature. When I pressed him a bit more, he said the song did indeed mirror how he felt about himself.

Visual Representations

In our second innerview I ask Gabriel what symbols or pictures represent his work and spirituality. He points to a beautiful dark wood framed triptych of three faces, all looking up at the camera. The photographs of each of his children are stunning, all of them smiling up at the picture-taker with ear-to-ear, knowing grins. I see how this composite, framed and hanging on his wall where he can see it from his desk must motivate and calm him. Drawing from Rose's (2001) work on visuality, the expressive content and lighting combine to give these photographic portraits a feeling of joy and serenity when looking at them. Their faces are close and there is a sense of peacefulness in their smiles. The fact they are looking up makes it seem like they are just emerging into the world. He is their caretaker, nurturer, and father. This is clear in how he speaks of them and their importance to him: "They're the reason I do what I do. They bring me joy and challenge everyday". From a spiritual standpoint these photographs give his office a sense that Gabriel is a man grounded in love for his family; they offer their viewer, whether a guest of the university, student, or parent, a view into his identity that is comforting and reassuring.

The second photo is held on his phone, and is of his wife. She is standing near a mountain stream, wearing shorts, and smiling shyly at the camera. She has a grounded look to her, though perhaps that is in part an effect of the trees and water that frame the photo. Gabriel refers to her as "my spouse, who is my biggest cheerleader. Defender. And I so appreciate that … a lot. She plays an important part in keeping me in check on what our priorities are".

Welcoming others in. The third picture Gabriel shows me is that of a MVU dormitory with a large banner hanging down its front side that says, "Welcome Home" in huge letters no one can miss. He tells me that each dormitory has one of these hanging on it at the beginning of each semester, and that creating them is one of his proudest accomplishments in this job. He says the picture "is very meaningful to me. From a duty, purpose kind of perspective …. Because I don't think we do enough to make sure the students know that this is their place". I prompt him with another question, asking "this is their home?", and he responds,

> Uh-huh. So that is very symbolic for me. When we did that, the reaction that we got when we put those up was very powerful. Very kind of "wowww …. It's so awesome that the university would put this up. It makes us feel good." Parents were saying that during the first week of school, that Fall semester. It means a lot to me. And for the returning students, they know we want you back. We want you here. And for my team it was symbolic in the sense that our office put this together. It's kind of an accountability statement. When you put it up there you'd better back it up.

Gabriel's Postscript

When taking into consideration the words, photographs, images, and music that were gathered in this series of interviews, a composite of Gabriel emerges that depicts a man fiercely dedicated to his family, his work, and his religion. There is little feeling of

separation between these parts of him, and he has committed his energy to being a positive force in the world. Gabriel's words sum up my time with him:

> Because we tend a lot, particularly in higher education, we tend to have a very "oh, it's getting better…" kind of attitude. But then when it doesn't go our way we get very depressed, and our spirit is broken. What I've gleaned from that, and it matches with my faith, you've gotta believe that you will endure, but you have to deal with what you have **today**. You know? And don't sugarcoat it. It will get better, and it's dependent on me to keep that kind of attitude going, and not let my peeps and my other colleagues and my friends get down. It will get better.

Add to this his values of treating each person with respect and dignity, no matter the circumstances, and I find an administrative leader who is very integrated in his sense of spirituality and how it comes into his work life and leadership roles.

"I have a lot more to grow and trust in order for my spirituality to… it's a work in

progress. I still think I don't trust enough. I still think I have a lot to learn"

(Gabriel, Second Innerview)

Counterpoint: Lilly and Nona

This counterpoint is taken from interview transcripts of two participants, one of whom was Gabriel. I added details to the story to further describe events and disguise participants. The narrator, Cara is a fictionalized supervisor and is an amalgamation of several participants' descriptions of people they have worked with.

Life in upper administration can be draining and difficult. There are challenges among leadership styles and perspectives, and many people opt to critique rather than collaborate. They avoid having real, honest conversations about life, each other, and how to best get things done.

Lilly and Nona should have been friends. Each of them thought this. They were both originally from the same Middle Eastern country, had worked hard to achieve their

positions at MVU, and now oversaw large departments. They were of similar ages and had families they were devoted to. Their husbands supported their work and goals unconditionally. But whenever they were in meetings together they could feel the tension and awkwardness of unspoken expectations and misunderstood communications. Do not think they weren't able to work together, because they were fully capable of putting all this aside when it came time to working on the pressing and sometimes crushing issues of budget, enrollment statistics, alumni support, and trustees' expectations. But during the informal get-togethers and occasional times when they would run into each other, frosty is perhaps the best description of their interactions.

I am Cara, their supervisor. I came to campus a year ago on a short-term contract and was given the task of overseeing their work. Soon after I began at MVU I had a chance to talk individually with them. What I noticed was that right off the bat both of them wanted to talk about the other. It was clear to me what had happened between them ran deep. In order to understand what was going on better, I asked for some history.

What I learned was it wasn't always this way between them. Lilly had been at MVU for a long time and had worked her way up, starting as a graduate student working in student affairs then was hired as Assistant Director of International Education. From there she had rapidly advanced to her current position of Associate Vice President and Cultural Relations Coordinator. Her next goal was to go back to school and get her doctorate. When she was promoted to her AVP position Nona, already an Associate VP with a doctoral degree, was thrilled for her and took her under her wing.

Looking back, Nona sees this is where she made a mistake, saying, "Being a woman in this administrative sphere and a Middle Eastern woman on top of it, I felt like I had something to offer her. But I never asked Lilly if she wanted a mentor. I see now that I launched right into trying to counsel her, and I told her some things about her leadership style that she didn't really want to hear. I tried to say these things in a respectful, thoughtful way—Lilly is so talented and bright! But I just felt like the way she treated people didn't let them do their work."

Nona had also gotten feedback from some of Lilly's staff who complained about the display of religious icons in her office and constant referral to praying for the office.

She said, "I just didn't think it was right. So I told her. I told her she should stop."

What Lilly heard, however, was not Nona's words but what she interpreted to be disapproval of her open and intentional commitment to her spiritual beliefs.

Lilly said, "Nona felt she could say these things because she already had her Ph.D. and had been at MVU longer. But I never asked her for her advice. I'm not her little sister."

In one of our meetings Lilly told me, "We should be each other's biggest supporters—we have so much in common! But I think Nona is jealous. Jealous of how far I've come without a Ph.D., of my friendship with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and of the fact that my department is larger and more complex than hers."

This led to a rift that hurt both deeply, but neither knew how to overcome it. They both felt rejected and disrespected. They endured two years of icy interactions when Nona went back home to be with her ailing father. She took an extended leave of absence

and cared for him as his life fluttered to a close. When she returned to MVU, things with Lilly did not change for a long time.

Nona admitted, "I was too proud to try to change things with Lilly."

Talking about it further she said, "When I came back to MVU I was being very defensive, I was being unwilling, like 'I don't talk to her'. I don't know what happened, but I found myself thinking negatively about her—not openly, but there was conflict. I had to bite my tongue when others talked about 'Lilly this, or Lilly that'. But something happened to me and I realized that the way I was feeling wasn't going to help the institution for one. We had to work together. And if I am the one with the most experience it's up to me to do something about it. Because she wasn't going to. So I had to set myself aside, put my ego to the side. I went to her and said, 'listen, I know we've talked a little about this before, but I really want to move forward'. It was a really short conversation, but I had to follow it up with action. I had to earn her respect, where before I didn't feel like I needed to. So the conflict was there, but part of the conflict was me wanting to control her, and when I realized I could only do what I could do, I let go of that. Things opened up then. And today we have a very very good work relationship. There's a very good mutual trust and respect that has evolved."

Nona sees her spirituality in action here. She had let her ego take over to a point where resentment festered and started affecting her work. Her beliefs about leadership were being undermined and who she was as a leader with Lilly wasn't who she wanted to be.

She said, "It's hard doing the opposite of what you want to do or say. But I made myself. It's what I believe, who I want to be in the world. Why go to church and teach

your children right from wrong if you can't approach everyone with compassion and respect?"

So that is Nona's perspective on what happened with Lilly. Lilly sees what happened through a very different lens. She believes Nona was simply trying, all over again, to tell her what to do and how to do it. It had been going on so long that she just accepted that was how things between them were going to be.

Their divergent perspectives on what transpired is amazing and unfortunate, for I am not sure the gap between them is bridgeable. As a supervisor, truly listening to people and trying to uncover their hidden thoughts and reactions is one of the hardest things I have to do, yet in my work with higher education executive leaders it is downright necessary. I see so many administrators walking all over each other and not caring. Getting them to value each other as human beings on this earth is the first thing I try to do.

What I learned from talking to both Nona and Lilly was I need to do my best to bring my own spiritual beliefs about goodness, love, and compassion to work every day, whether I feel like it or not, for this is who I am. But I also need to be very aware to not do this in an overtly religious way. I am an evangelical Christian yet cognizant of the fact that many people reject, sometimes with great vehemence, what I believe to be true. Does this affect who I am as a leader? I hope not. I try hard to accept others as they are.

I had a graduate assistant for a while who was openly and flamboyantly gay. This did not in any way diminish his brilliance and ability to work in ways I saw few other students capable of. Yes, part of me wanted to reject him as a possible assistant but

I felt as if God were giving me the opportunity to put my belief to work—to put my walk

to my talk. He and I are friends to this day, and I am so proud of his accomplishments.

But how do I prompt others to let their actions speak to who they are, to leave the

trappings of their dogma at home?

It was hard to hear that Nona felt really good about being able to set aside her

negative reactions and feelings in order to heal her relationship with Lilly, while Lilly

saw this as another ego trip on Nona's part, as another attempt to be better than her.

They did not connect with or hear each other at all. They both stayed true to who they

were but were unable to mend their relationship. I see that they are professionals,

however, and able to work together to get things done. It is just how they work together

that troubles me.

That is life. There are no guarantees. All I can do is keep trying to work and live

with dignity and compassion for others and hope they see my intentions as true. And

hope that one day these two fine administrators will find a way to truly talk to and trust

each other.

Andrew

Andrew is another administrative leader at MVU, and when I called to ask if he

would participate in my study he asked what the topic was. I explained it to him and he

said, "Well, I'm not sure how much I can contribute. I don't consider myself to be a

spiritual person". I assured him this would make him a valued contributor to the project,

for including his perspective might provide some needed balance. I had been hoping to

find someone who had a different view of spirituality, and Andrew's participation made

this possible.

This did, however, create some added stress in terms of finding questions to ask in the interviews that did not constantly focus on spirituality. The following is an excerpt from my data collection journal:

> *I just finished writing up the first interview questions for Andrew. He has presented me with a need to formulate questions that are broad in nature, more focused on values. This was a bit harder than I had anticipated but has given me pause to look at why I want to include spirituality in the mix of higher education, especially what with the changes coming and financial constraints being faced. What I've come to is the awareness that spirituality plays a role in higher education terms of historical significance and also in terms of how the work of higher education is performed. It is a flexible perspective, capable of holding many different viewpoints within it. Having him participate has given me a much-needed angle to work from. (data collecting journal, July 13, 2011)*

Andrew's Office

Andrew's work space is housed in one of the oldest buildings on campus, one that has been beautifully restored to its earlier Victorian splendor. I have been in many other offices that do not have such warmth and vibrancy. Perhaps that is in part a reflection of the nature of his job: he is the face of MVU the world outside the campus sees. His job is to network with the community of business leaders and alumni. There is a feeling of gracious elegance to the building; his actual office is a bit messy yet has a view of campus that is simply beautiful.

He is a bit of a character: his face is mobile with expressions that change quickly, and his voice frequently shifts in its register and tonalities, often in a lighthearted and whimsical way. Animated might be the best word to describe him. He is also playful in his interactions with me, constantly injecting humor into our discussions. This sometimes translates into an evasion of questions that poke a bit deeper than perhaps he wants to go. I notice the alterations in his voice: when talking about his home life or working with staff he is spirited. When he speaks of being in nature there is an obvious

change, and his voice becomes deeper, his words come out slower and more measured, and there is a sense of reverence and awe in his words.

Spirituality

Andrew is very clear in saying spirituality does not come into play in how he leads his life, whether at work or not. When I asked him what his definition of spirituality is, he turned the question back to me and asked me to "give an intro [*sic*] paragraph that I can react to". I explained the topic and he responded, "So for example, can you give me an example?" I offered up another brief explanation and very softly he says,

> Okay. That's a lot more nuanced than I was thinking. I guess when I think about spirituality, because of the way I've heard it used, with my peers, is that there is more of a faith-based, perhaps a faith-based tradition, or a kind of a concept of a higher power that sits behind that. And that I don't have that *[he says this very quickly]*. I'm kind of, "I see it I believe it" type of person. I don't have that other piece of it.

I notice he is talking much slower here, measuring his words, letting the other, more animated persona drop away. He goes on,

> When you put it in the context of kind of a higher purpose behind what we do, that I completely agree with and that's what motivates me. I believe education frees people to think and do in new and better ways. So although in my area I'm not involved with students much (we're here to support MVU's educational mission) I believe that there's a values-based reason we do that. So in that, if that's what you're calling spirituality, then yes, there's a reason we do this, and there's a higher purpose. This whole concept of broadening your mind through inquiry and knowledge and all that good stuff: I really believe in that.

Spirituality for Andrew is rooted in principles and ideals, and it comes into his work life by giving him a sense that what he is doing is for a greater purpose. About this he said it is important that he feel he is part of an institution that is able to,

Provide opportunities, to provide access and success for students. And I think that's worthwhile. Public universities evolved because common folk couldn't send their kids—they either couldn't afford to or they weren't welcome for a variety of reasons, whether it was economic or the color of their skin, or whatever reason, weren't welcome at the Harvards, the Yales, the Princetons, you know, it was, higher education was conceived in this country initially as a very elite institution for "worthy" people. And that's why I think public universities are so fabulous, and why I feel what we do really does have a values-based dimension, because we're going the wrong way when we increase tuition because we shut off access to people, and we close their worlds down. And so, there you are!

Andrew makes no obvious links between spirituality and higher education administration, yet when I asked about his leadership values, equality, and access to education he has thoughtful and immediate answers. Approaching the topic from a different angle, I asked, "What was your take on the President's state of the university address? She mentioned that her work here is a spiritual journey. What thoughts do you have about her saying that?" He responded in a very soft voice, and said rapidly,

I didn't think about it. And so I'm so used to…I heard that so much for 4 years I didn't even think anything about it. If I had to say what do I think she meant by that, it could simply be that she didn't come out of higher ed [*sic*] professionally and that this has been a journey for her, she kind of caught the flame of what it's all about here.

From this answer, I am not sure if he is simply not reactive to the word spirituality, or if earlier work experiences changed how he heard it. Later in the innerview it becomes clear that it is the latter. Andrew's previous place of employment, a private university, had engaged in extensive soul-searching about equality on campus in terms of spiritual identity. People who worked there were very aware of the need for diversity and had made strides in changing the campus' student population to be more inclusive, yet felt they were unable to openly express who they were spiritually. And so the president of that university mandated a series of workshops and discussions be held to talk about this issue.

Andrew said the president of that institution,

> Wanted to be sure people felt like they could be who they are, that there wasn't a stigma attached to being religious. We had feedback from students through focus groups and also faculty who felt like they could not express their faith, publically on campus, that it was not acceptable. So right there in our little group, and this is a group where you have an African American president, you have a provost who is gay, you have a vice president for student development who's a lesbian, you have several of us who don't have children, you have one of us who is married to someone who has a different last name, you have a real mix of people. And we all felt like any of that stuff could be talked about, but the religion thing made people uncomfortable. But by the fact of having the conversation, that let people know they can talk about it.

Doing this essentially desensitized people to talking about spirituality and Andrew said perceptions and tolerances were transformed as a result of the process. I think this experience reinforced his outlook of "live and let live", no matter the color of their skin, their socio-economic status, or religious or spiritual beliefs. So when MVU's president spoke of spirituality, it was a natural occurrence for Andrew.

I realized early in the first interview asking any other questions about his definition of spirituality would be futile, for he rejected an openly spiritual stance. This lack of attachment to spiritual values is something Andrew evolved into for he was raised by religious parents. He grew up in a church that he came to see as close-minded and oppressive; he now says spirituality is not part of his identity.

Instead of asking questions that required a definition of spirituality I opted for questions that are more general in nature. Andrew is naturally talkative and willing to share who he is and so I took a less active "researcher" role and asked questions that allowed him to go where he wanted to go in his memories and accounts of life. In his talking a picture began to emerge of who he is as a person and as an administrative leader. What became clear is that much of his sense of awe and mystery in life comes

from his love of being in nature. Some people might consider this a spiritual

underpinning, but for Andrew it is simply who he is.

Nature as a source of renewal. I asked Andrew what he likes about being out in

the western states in comparison to having grown up back east. His answer is worthy of

repeating in full:

> We moved here from Georgia, and I remember thinking for about the first year, "I feel like I've moved to another planet." I grew up with big green trees, and you know lots of moisture, and I just kept thinking, "God, what is beautiful about desert?" And then at one point I woke up and thought, "I love it here". There's grandeur and a mammoth scale to the beauty. And it's also tiny: if you're hiking or you're outside, because of the lack of water a lot of the beauty is tiny and it needs to be tiny because of the lack of water. So, if you're observant you can see both the big sky and the mountains and just the awesome nature of it. And then, if you're walking you can see kind of small bits of beauty, and it's, it's (ah!) fabulous!

Photographs and Images

Andrew's connection to nature came up again when he described two of the

images he brought to share.

Image 1. Andrew pulled out a photograph from a folder on the table. This is an

image of a woman standing near a mountain lake with tall snowy peaks behind her. He

says,

> This is my wife. We were down in the southwestern part of the state, and I just saw a little sign that said "State Park that way", and I said "oh let's go!" So I wheeled off onto this dirt road and we found this beautiful little lake. We love being out like that. But it was an absolutely stunning day. Just the clarity. It was a beautiful day, it was probably 75, the sun was shining, the air was clear, it was just gorgeous. But that's the kind of stuff that we do, we like to get off the main road, get out into parks and places where there aren't people.

Andrew says being in areas filled with beauty helps him release stress that builds

up at work. Living in this area of the country is "just amazing, the beauty is

everywhere." The story he shared next is evidence of his reverence for nature and ability

to absorb its power and beauty:

> Near one little city there's Pack Canyon. You can walk up in there and go back
> into this basically sort of slot canyon where they've built in all this metal sidewalk
> so you can walk there, and there is this immense roaring noise of water pouring.
> It's completely enclosed, pouring from the earth. We just stood there, and looked
> at each other, and said "This is the most awesome, in its real sense, full of awe
> experience." We'd never seen anything like it—we just stood there, and it was
> deafening. You couldn't take a picture because it was too dark. To get there you
> walk back into this slot, into this other side of the world! And I said "we probably
> couldn't even have walked in here 2 months ago, because there was so much run-
> off", but it was just like, ahhh! We just stood there—we got there real early in the
> morning and there was nobody around, and we just stood there saying, [whispers]
> "oh my gosh! This is unbelievable!"

After he related this story both of us sat at the table, silent for a minute or two. It

was as if we were both re-living the moment of being completely awash in vibration and

sound, cleansed of all thoughts and filled up with awe and wonder. This was a powerful

moment in our conversation, one that transformed his face and voice and made me feel a

connection to him I had not felt before. The sense of appreciation for what he had

experienced in that canyon was strong.

Andrew also told me a story about one of the Greek mythological characters that

further illustrated his connection to nature:

> There was a monster that this guy had to battle, but as he was battling it he
> realized every time the monster touched the earth it became stronger. He finally
> defeated it by lifting the monster up off the earth. This weakened it to the point
> where he could defeat it. And I feel somewhat like that. Being out like this
> [*points to the picture of the lake and mountains*] is renewing. And coming to
> work every day, being around people, going to events—I mean, finding renewal
> in nature is what I do to let all the stress of people and events go.

Image 2. The next image Andrew produced was a picture of a flooded area with

a red barn in the middle of it. It turns out this is the field right behind his house. The

field does not usually have any water in it, but was inundated by recent storms. The

waters threatened his home and prevented him from going on a scheduled vacation but he found beauty in this: "All that water? It's not supposed to be there! It was beautiful, but it wasn't supposed to be there".

I am struck by this phrase, "it was beautiful, but it wasn't supposed to be there". Somehow this seems relevant to the study and to who Andrew is. Spirituality is beautiful but, according to some, should not be part of higher education. Music is beautiful, but according to others should not be part of qualitative research. But it is here. Andrew is a person affected by nature's power and splendor, even when it holds worry and fear. His denial of spirituality is there, but is countered by the beauty he finds in the world and by his descriptions of it.

This moment seemed like an opportunity to reflect back to him my growing perception that he has spiritual qualities. I say,

> One of the first questions you had for me was how I defined spirituality, and I left that very open. I didn't give an in-depth description because I wanted to listen for what your thoughts and experiences were. And as you are speaking, it's pretty clear to me that yes, there is the whole religion side of things that you do not adhere to, but for me spirituality—I want to interpret a bit, and make sure I'm hearing this right—*is* nature, *is* this ability to stand in Pack Canyon, listening to the waterfall and be overwhelmed by a sense of awe. It is being able to see beauty in a dangerously flooded plain.

As I am speaking Andrew is looking at me very intently, his eyes focused on me more than I'd experienced during all of our time together. He pauses, and then says, "It was very powerful for me. When I'm out on the bike path riding, I'll stop and look at anything for a long time. I just think it's so cool, look at this cool little whatever-it-is". He does not directly respond to my observation. The picture that is becoming clearer of him is that he is a busy and efficient professional at work and in his physical presence, what with the playfulness and the quick-wittedness. But what he likes to do more than

anything is to stop and simply look at beauty around him, however small or large. The

ability to see beyond surfaces and circumstances and into underlying possibilities feels

important to his leadership style, and reflects a capacity to find magnificence and

advantage in situations which appear to be negative or threatening.

Andrew is able to pay attention to the important tasks and issues involved with

running a large university department, yet also able to sit quietly and relax. He seems to

crave moments when he is immersed in an experience of nature. One night on his deck,

> This little hummingbird came up, right onto the deck, right here [*puts his hand right in front of his face, maybe a foot away*], literally, and just hovered there, and chirped at me for 10 seconds. And I looked at it and I said, "I don't have any suet, I'm sorry!" The hummingbird went down and stuck its little beak in one of my flowers. And my wife was sitting over here, and it was so cool. "Look at that little guy! Isn't that cool?!" Yeah! I love it!

I ask if any of feelings associated with this experience came into the office with him, and

he says "I'm fairly calm. I think that comes in with me".

Image 3. The next image is a photograph of Andrew's mother and father, back in

the 1940's when they were young. It was taken in the snows of Minnesota and they are

dressed in heavy winter clothes. I look at this image and think it is glorious. His father

has a wicked grin on his face and his holding snow up to his mother as if he is going to

shove it into her face. His mom is laughing full out, hard, her head thrown back. The

picture holds a strong sense of playfulness. Andrew looks at it and says, "They were

really having fun with each other. My mother loves this photo. She misses him terribly

and this helps her remember him. There is that sense of joy, and it was so fun".

I find it ironic Andrew, in sharing that his parents helped define who he is as a

leader, offered up an image filled with the splendor of deep winter snow. His connection

to nature appears even here. The photograph portrayed their love for each other and

made it clear that his playfulness and spontaneity originated with them. His Dad, a likeable and garrulous fellow by Andrew's account, has rubbed off on him and given him an ability to talk with just about anyone and forge relationships where once there had been none.

Image 4. : Andrew showed me a copy of a poem with accompanying drawings by Ray Bradbury that is about cats and bumblebees, saying "Then there's that! I just think this is beautiful. I love the words. I love the combination, and the language, the flow. It's just very lyrical. It has lots of images that are just gorgeous". I read a line aloud, "His tuna breath was a symphony". It is humorous and complemented by the vivid images of a cat and bees. He goes on, "I think the poem is fabulous. And it's cats!"

This leads us into a conversation about his love for his three cats. He pulls out a picture of them, all sitting on a couch. He tells a story about how a co-worker had a cat that gave birth to a number of kittens and asked him if he would like any of them. His stipulations were that he would take only one and it not be long-haired. Andrew asked the co-worker if he could see a picture of the kittens, and upon seeing them, he and his wife fell in love with them. He said despite his stated conditions, "Yes, I got two, and yes, they're long-haired, and they shed all over everything. But there they are!"

I took a leap of faith and asked if that is part of his leadership approach, to be able to abandon a strategy or stipulation when necessary. He responded, "Yes! Things happen. And you just go with it!"

Leadership Style

When talking about his leadership and management styles, Andrew shared he has

changed over the years.   He says,

> My leadership style has really evolved over the years as I've observed people to
> whom I've reported, and I've tried to take away the best of what I saw in them.
> I've tried to leave behind the things that I saw that I didn't want to emulate or I
> felt were my natural inclination that I don't think is necessarily good.   Yet one of
> the things I said in our exec staff meetings was collaboration is good but "we have
> to have a hierarchy, there has to be a structure that enables us to get our jobs
> done". But where it becomes destructive is when you become hierarchical.
> Where you invite people to meetings only because of their job titles. "Well you
> can't come, because you're just a secretary, and this is not a meeting for
> secretaries". Rather than saying, "who is this person and what do they bring to
> the work that we do? And let's get those people in the room".
> What we do here at MVU we do for a higher purpose. We are not about the
> structure, we're about the ideas and the value of the mission of higher education.

It became clear to me as we talked further that Andrew is pragmatic in his

approaches to work and life. He appreciates taking action and not just talking about how

to fix things.

Leading his staff. Andrew smiled a lot when talking about his staff. He clearly

enjoys working with them and feels an affinity with the work they do. I asked Andrew

about his values specifically as they relate to him being a manager of many people. He

again deflected the question by playfully saying, "Well, you'll have to ask them!" The

nature of the study, however, prevented me from doing this as it would border on asking

his staff to evaluate him as a leader and was outside the study's parameters. He

continued,

> What I say versus what I do, I have my perceptions about that and I may not
> always live them. I want people to feel like what they do is important. I believe
> it's important. I believe that everybody contributes to the mission, regardless of
> what their title is, or what their position is. I think we're all in this together and
> we can always talk about it. I come in to work with a certain set of experiences

that I've gained at other places, but I want people to feel like they're all a part of a group working together to accomplish what we need to do.

I hear his statement as having emphases on equality, respect, and collaboration. When I ask if this is accurate, he says,

Yes. And I also want them to work hard. I want them to see me working hard. And I want them to work honestly, and I want them to steward the university's resources superbly, and I want them to have as much respect as we possibly can and not to assume that the other department isn't working hard.

He also encourages his staff to take a sense of pride in their work but is careful to point out that there is a negative aspect to pride, and sometimes he has to stop himself from reacting when someone in another department does not follow through on a task. He says, "When I want to point out their error I kind of shake myself and say 'stop it!' The piece of [pride] that is bad is the assumption that other people aren't working just as hard as I am or my staff is".

There are themes here of staying calm, not giving in to gloating when other people make mistakes, and encouraging his staff to work hard and honestly, that, in another context, may be viewed as spiritual in nature. For Andrew these are important moral and ethical domains, and he makes me pause to consider the overlap between these areas. There is no one correct answer here to the question of what is spiritual, versus what is simply good ethical or moral behavior. Every person has different experiences, interpretations, and definitions of the values that underpin his life. It is not possible to overlay a spiritual perspective onto Andrew's words but it is possible to draw out themes and commonalities between spirituality and values.

I take note here of the Dalai Lama's (2011) most recent work, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*, in which the Buddhist leader promotes spirituality as a non-

religious framework for ethical and moral living. Filtering ideals, values, and principles for living through the alembic of spirituality's emphasis on goodness and transcendence offers a worldview and way of life that is non-dogmatic and accessible to all peoples, regardless of faith tradition or cultural identification. Andrew's denial of religion as a motivating force in his life and sidestepping of spirituality seems aligned with the Dalai Lama's (2011) purported meaning and intent.

Counterpoint: Andrew and the Angry Dean

The following story is a fictionalized account of an event that happened recently in Andrew's life.

I was across campus in McKinley Hall earlier this week for a meeting and there had been some decisions made that worked well for me but angered others. Before I'd even left the building I had an email come through my phone and I saw I'd gotten a message from a dean, and she was clearly cranky. You try not to read tone into an email, but there was clearly stress in hers. She said some things that surprised me in their negativity and intensity. People feel like they can do that in an email.

And I thought, "oh [sighs]." So I just walked right out of McKinley—I was leaving anyway, and went over to her building. I'd just gotten her email so I knew she was in her office.

Her secretary let me into her office and I said "you know, I just got your email. Let's just sit down and talk about this".

And it was fine, and the dean was fine. But I think had I just responded through email, if I'd just shot out that quick response, the situation would have elevated and we

would have had a problem greater than our disagreement over how the meeting went. It

would have been easy for me to just go back to my office and send her back a nasty email.

But I'd had an experience with responding to a rude email with a snide response

and then had to deal with the chaos that came after, and I thought, "Oh, gosh I've got to

get in front of this. I'm here, just walk the few step to her office, don't wait until you get

back to the office to email her".

Had I been in my office I would have picked up the phone. But even that wouldn't

have been as good. And I could tell that this person was surprised I showed up.

And she said, "thank you for coming. "I'm so glad you came over".

I told her, "I'd much rather be here than send you an email or call you on the

phone!"

And we had a really good meeting.

I share this story because I think it speaks to Andrew's ability to confront conflict.

When there is a problem he reaches out to people directly and does not hide behind

emails or phone calls, and be able to rise above the natural inclination to meet negativity

with negativity. He encourages his staff to defuse stressful situations in the same way.

Where Does Tolerance Come From?

Andrew shared that his father was "slightly to the right of Attila the Hun". His

mother never learned to drive and adopted his father's political and religious views. I

marveled at how liberal-minded he is, and wondered how he got to be that way. He said

sometimes he is surprised by this as well, having been brought up in a household that was

"terribly conservative". Andrew attributes his current perspectives to two things: a "live

and let live" philosophy and education.

Education was the means by which his mind was opened to new and wildly different ideas and ideals. He says being able to have strong beliefs yet accept everyone for who they are is "the mark of a truly educated person", and I see how education shaped him in this way. He is direct, kind, and not just tolerant of other lifestyles and belief systems but willing to learn about them in order to understand and accept them in a more genuine manner. These qualities mark who he is as not only a manager of a department, but an active force in the administration of MVU's mission and vision.

"Change will come gradually through increased awareness, and

awareness will only come with education"

(Dalai Lama, 2011, p. v)

Music Portrait: "Path"

After our first conversation I listened to the recording and heard the mutability of Andrew's voice and its playful quality. When I asked myself what this would sound like musically, a motif immediately came to me that I re-created on the piano. I improvised an opening melody that sounded mischievous, but as the music continued it changed, first becoming more solid with strong chord progressions undergirding the melody, and then lighter and more delicate in character. After improvising and recording this piece, I listened to the playback and had these observations:

> *Playful beginning, light touch. A melody is beginning to evolve. The notes then settle, and a Scottish-type drone in my left hand grounds the melody. The drone switches to rolling chords. This sounds like Andrew's description of the beauty of the West, moving into higher notes, cascading. Things keep shifting then settle again into a single melody playing in right hand with drone in left—simple, clear, lovely. Then moves back into opening playfulness. There are spaces here; the music seems to breathe, and it changes again. Jazz chords, delicately played notes, and unresolved harmonies combine to create an ending ethereal in nature. It ends with a sense of wistfulness. (data collection journal, July 25, 2011)*

I decided to title the piece "Path" to acknowledge the many references Andrew made to the biking and walking path just outside his door at home. This path takes him into the woods and offers a spectacular view of the mountains, and is a metaphor for his need to leave the stresses of daily life behind. Nature helps him achieve a sense of peace. The link to the piece is included next.

Path   Music Piece #3

In our second meeting I presented this piece of music. The following is taken from the transcription of the second innerview:

> *The music plays, and we listen. I do not look at Andrew at all as the music sounds as somehow it feels like a personal moment. When it is finished, I turn the machine off, and there is an extended pause. I wait for him to speak first.*

Andrew says, "How creative you are! What a talent!" I am not seeking praise, so I respond, "I hear so much of you in that music." He is clearly intrigued by this and says, "Really? How? Tell me!" Usually at this point in an interview I would not answer directly but would ask my participant what it is they heard. But there is such a sense of genuineness to Andrew wanting to know what I think that I go ahead and respond. I sing the motif that began and ended the piece and say, "That to me is you. You have a playfulness about you, a lightness".

Andrew quickly interjects, "Doesn't always go over really well in the president's executive staff meetings, I'll tell you!" We both laugh here in commiseration. I go on,

> But then there is that feeling of being grounded when you talked about nature, and your reverence for it. There was also a different quality of groundedness that came through in some of the harmonies that for me reflect your work, your interactions with people. These harmonies were very solid but had an openness to them at the same time. If you noticed a lot of the chords were open, not closed. The piece has a searching quality. I wasn't sure why it ended the way it did, but after speaking with you today I sensed you have a profound appreciation for nature and beauty. When you talked about being awestruck in Pack Canyon and

sitting with a hummingbird, things like that, this comes through to me. Did this piece resonate with you?

Andrew responds "it is beautiful".

The piece "Path" is a non-rational yet emotional and intuitive way to understand who Andrew is as a person, not just as an administrative leader. He is someone integrated in his identity, and to separate who he is at work versus at home seems incongruent.

Andrew's Postscript

Andrew is a man who takes his job very seriously yet approaches the daily tasks with a playful, light sensibility. He is able to deal with negative situations and release lingering feelings, and guide his staff in a direct and respectful manner. His demeanor changes when he talks about being in nature, though, and his voice loses some of the drama he otherwise speaks with. It is clear that taking time to be awestruck by waterfalls, ride his bike on the path outside his back door, and stop frequently to admire the small pieces of beauty he encounters, are what helps him feel whole and balanced in the world. He is not a spiritual person, but holds many spiritual qualities within himself.

Jonathon

The interviews with Jonathon were illuminative of the coterminous nature of spirituality and higher education administration. Spirituality informs much of how Jonathon performs his work duties though it is not by any means an overt or obvious influence. As with other participants, his spiritual and personal histories formed how he approaches his work, interacts with other staff members, manages his employees, and pursues goals.

Early in our first meeting Jonathon shared some details about himself: he had

been a professor of Religious Studies at another institution for many years and worked

his way up the administrative ladder from Associate Dean to Associate Vice President.

During this time, a watershed moment for him came when his home office, with all his

papers, books, lecture notes, research findings, and projects he had nearly completed, was

gutted in a devastating fire. He described this event this way: "It was a great illustration

of the principle of impermanence". He likened this loss to a sand mandala, which is a

spiritually motivated, intricate, and temporary art piece. Mandalas are not meant to be

permanent but are ritualistically destroyed "to demonstrate the fragile nature of life"

(Marshall, 2003, p. 518). In Jonathon's case, the evidence of his life's work disappeared

in a natural disaster. He said this event served as a reminder that everything he does can

be wiped away at any time. The fire precipitated a re-evaluation of his life and career

goals, and he decided to continue his career focused on higher education administration.

He came to MVU as a Vice President just under 10 years ago.

The reason I bring this event up now is because there are themes nested in the

story that re-appeared several times during our conversations: his conception of

spirituality; the circular nature of life; points of stillness; shifting from being a teacher to

an administrator; and how having roots in teaching informed his administrative role.

Spirituality

When I asked Jonathon what his definition of spirituality was, he answered this

way:

> I think that's a slippery definition. People customarily make a distinction
> between spirituality as opposed to religion. I guess I would say that religion is a
> subset of spirituality in a way, there's a circle that is within the circle of
> spirituality, but I guess I would probably define it as the depth dimension, or the

dimension of the most fundamental concerns, … I guess I conceive of spirituality not as "out there", but I can see it as a depth dimension to life where you touch a kind of bedrock of the most fundamental concerns that you have in your life. In the world. Which may or may not be symbolized in conventionally religious terms.

Jonathon's reference to circles prompted me to create a diagram that depicts his

definition (Figure 8). When he looked at this in our next meeting, he said it was an

accurate portrayal of how he viewed spirituality in relationship to religion.
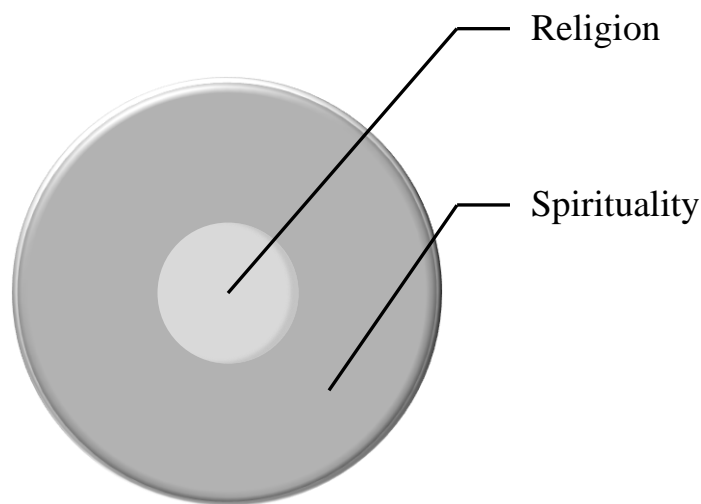
Figure 8. Religion as a subset of spirituality (Jonathon).

Jonathon goes on to say he is,

No longer conventionally religious. I think because I'm a historian of doctrine, a historian of religious ideas, I am a little less able to just buy them wholesale because I know how they came into being you know. So I'm a much more critical consumer of the particular ideas of particular religious traditions. But at the same time I owe such a great debt to having been steeped in thinking in those terms, in thinking about those things … I tend to be a little bit incredulous or skeptical about the truth claims of any one particular religious tradition over or against another as being exclusivist or exclusive of another. I am a reverent agnostic now. But I'm really fascinated at the deep motive of the religious element of human beings. And the spiritual element of human beings, because it can be such a powerful motivator for both good and ill.

He concluded his thoughts on spirituality by linking his spiritual quests to work and how he tries to bring his sense of being a reverent agnostic, or neither believing or disbelieving in God in a respectful manner, into how he leads and manages people. This is similar to Greenleaf's (Greenleaf et al., 1996) decision "to regard all scriptures of all religions as great stories of the human spirit and take them for the insight they yield on that basis" (p. 324). I read Greenleaf's (Greenleaf et al., 1996) statement to Jonathon in our third meeting and he said it resonated with him and how he approaches spirituality versus religion.

Spirituality and work. Spirituality is tightly tied to Jonathon's work identity. He said "I've never really sat down and thought hard about exactly how my formation or background intersects with my work but I'm sure it's there all over the place". When faced with difficult financial decisions, for example, he approaches each situation with the idea that though cuts or hiring freezes have to be made, there is an overall benefit to the students and the campus as a whole. He goes on, "If I am going to have to say 'no', and that's the loud word coming to us from legislators is 'no, no money', I don't want to say no unless it's in the service of a larger 'yes'". When he is put in a position where he must prioritize funds and tasks, he asks himself what he values most and what are the one or two things he can do that are most needed. This ability to step back from a grim situation and see a larger opportunity is rooted in his trust of himself and in the ability to transmute seemingly negative cutbacks into potential growth opportunities. This is spirituality at work for Jonathon.

In terms of how he manages his large staff, he says,

I try to celebrate the creativity of people that work with me, and stay out of the way of it. And trust it. I do think that in any community, and I consider the

university a community, there has to be a foundational level of not just mutual vision but mutual trust. The entire team or the entire organization can't move forward unless I'm willing to just trust that the people who work with me know what they're doing and are people of good will.

Circles and Identities

The circle was an image that arose several times during the interview and innerviews. I pointed this out to him in our third innerview and he was surprised to hear this and humorously reflected, "Wow! I didn't know I thought in circles. I go around in circles…" The figure of a circle first came up when Jonathon described losing all of his possessions in a fire and likened this experience to the impermanence of a sand mandala. Mandala is a Sanskrit word and means circle in English (Marshall, 2003). Its circular shape serves as a symbolic reminder of humanity's cyclical processes.

The image of a circle again arose when talking about spirituality and religion (Figure 8), and also when he talked about the centrifugal nature of a university:

> I often have told people universities are centrifugal, everything flies out to the periphery, it's all distributed out and in a centrifugal atmosphere like that, it's important to have some people who can keep the central vision intact and not just think of the university as the biology dept, the English dept, and the graduate school, but to think of the university qua university and keep your eye on that ball is just as important, and it's hard to do. Because all the energy is going into a lot of different activities. I'm trying to be the still point at the center.

Having a still point at the core of each person is a spiritual principle held by many prominent religions (Wilber, 2001). Being an agnostic, or someone who believes there is no single answer to the question of whether God exists, Jonathon seems to draw upon fundamental spiritual principles to guide him, with stillness being one of them. I created Figure 9 to depict his work identity, with this point of stillness at the center. When viewing it, Jonathon said he agreed that stillness is at the core of his actions and identity as a leader.
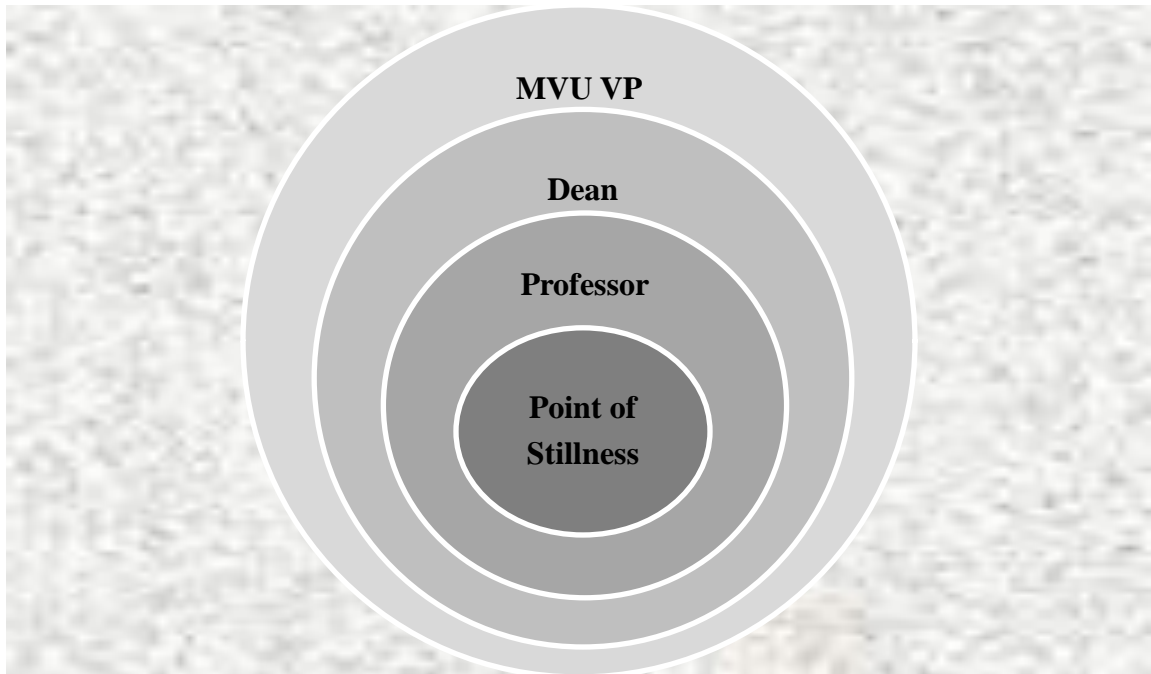
Figure 9. Jonathon work identity concentric circles.

Personal identity. I also created two diagrams that I thought might visually represent Jonathon's various identities (Figures 10 and 11). These were very different from each other but my hope was that they somehow captured some of who he is as an administrative leader. As you will see, they are not circular in nature. He also rejected them as emblematic of how he sees himself.
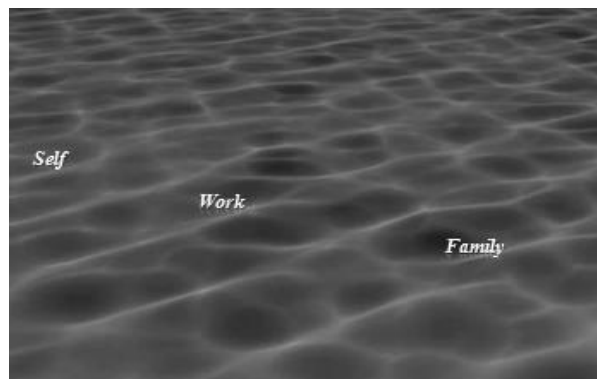
Figure 10. Jonathon's identities #1.
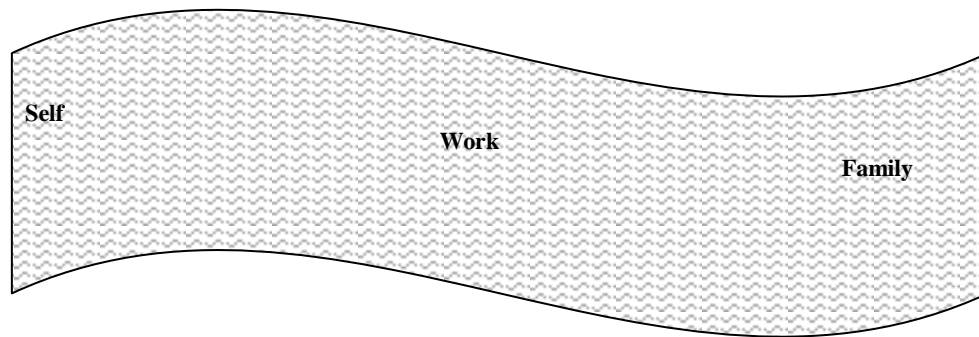
Figure 11. Jonathon's identities #2.

I emailed these images to Jonathon and asked him to send me any responses he

had to them. I did not hear back from him for several weeks. When I did receive a

response, he said,

> Thanks for the images you sent. I must confess that I am not sophisticated enough
> to understand what the visual representations represent. I saw "self," "work," and
> "family," but wasn't clear as to how they were related in the visual. I'm sure that
> is some deficit on my part, but I would welcome any elucidation!

From his response it was obvious I had not hit the mark with these. So I reviewed the

transcripts again, and after taking another look at this theme of circles I created the

following diagram to depict his personal identity (Figure 12).
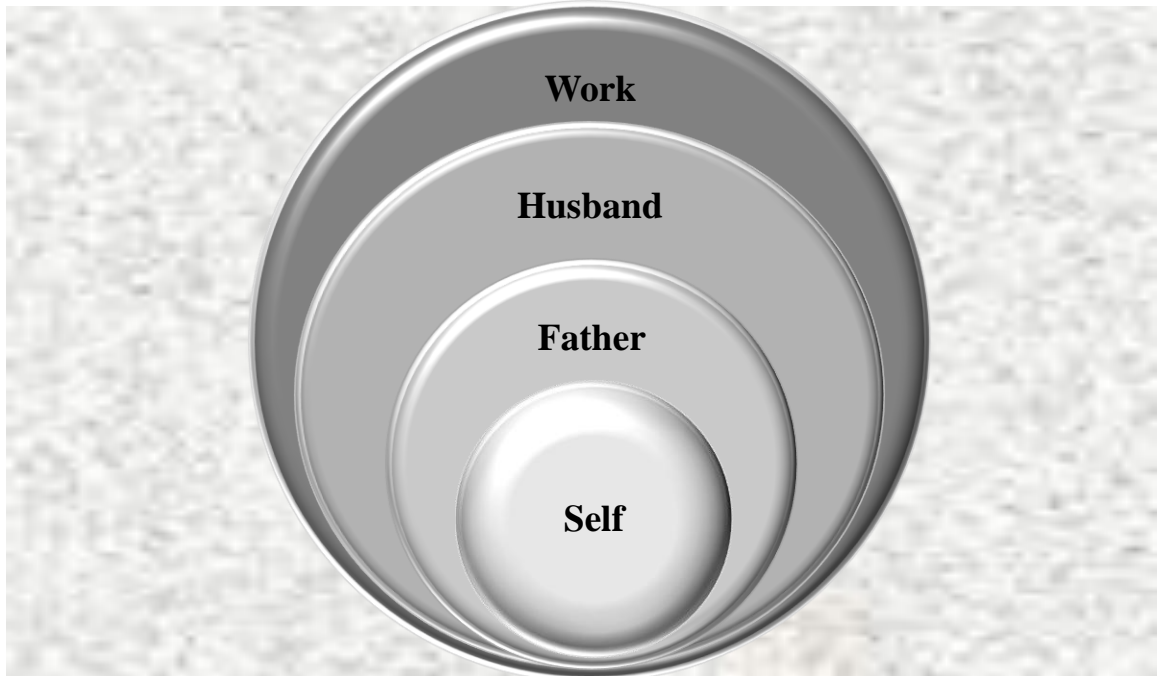
Figure 12. Jonathon's identities #3.

I brought this to our third innerview. His response to the image was, "So this suggests a kind of core, with concentric circles…Yes. The prioritization of my identities, Father is closer to the core than Work. Okay. This makes sense". Having the diagram be three-dimensional in nature was a suggestion he offered and one I attempted to create with this final rendition.

Point of Stillness: The People Whisperer. When describing the centrifugal nature of a university and how there needs to be someone at the center to "keep the central vision intact", Jonathon said it was like being the still point at the center of the circle (Figure 9). Having a still point in the middle of one's being is a belief held by Buddhist, Hindu, Judaic, Taoist, Christian, Native American, and Muslim peoples (Dalai Lama, 2011; Wilber, 2000). It is a principle that says at our core is a point of stillness from which action springs. When we act in the world while connected to this inner place of stillness we are being more authentic and true to our nature (Rendón, 2009). For these

reasons I placed stillness at the center of Figure 9 and depicted all of the outer layers as

circles enclosed within circles, concentrically positioned.

I returned to this idea of stillness in the second innerview and asked Jonathon if

he could describe what the calm point is like for him and how he gets there when things

are frantic. He responded,

> That's a really interesting question. And I'm not sure that I know, except that I
> feel like it is my natural way of being in the world, and some people might be put
> off by it [*laughs*] ….I tend to be very slow to react to things. I'm always trying to
> put things into a larger framework. And trying to get some sense of proportion.
> When the bullets are flying the thing I do is sit back and get behind a rock, and try
> to assess the situation: "okay, now what's really going on here?" One of my staff
> calls me the people whisperer [*we both laugh*]. It used to be the parent whisperer,
> because I used to always have angry parents on the phone who were ready to sue
> the university or pull their kids out or whatever, and I had this long history of
> talking angry parents off the ledge. And now I have a reputation for when one of
> my staff members is about to blow a gasket and they come in here ready to go
> wring somebody's neck, I talk them off the ledge. And I don't know what that is
> all about, except that … I think it's just listening and trying to put things into
> some kind of perspective and not get attached to it, too much. I think it is
> possible to, and I hope this doesn't sound weird, I think it is possible to be not
> attached to something without being detached.

I am struck by this statement, "it is possible to be not attached to something

without being detached". He asks me if this makes sense, and I say yes, that I hear this as

being able to interact with people and lead a full life, yet not be attached to material

things or negative emotions like anger or guilt, or be distant to the point of being

unfeeling. He agrees with my synopsis, and goes on,

> And by detached, I don't mean being cold or unsympathetic, or clinical, or like a
> robot. I think it is possible to be emotionally empathetic and understand peoples'
> concerns, and do problem-solving, without having to get my defense mechanisms
> going, or without having to feel a sense of being frantic or something like that. I
> think it is possible to step back, hear people, come from a place of empathy and
> sympathy, but not step in the middle of the mess. That's kind of what I would
> describe as being the calm point in the centrifugal diagram. Things are flying
> everywhere, and people need a point of reference. People get tunnel vision, their
> world is this big and things are crazy, and they need somebody to say, "look at the

broad scheme of things, this is one little thing that is going on … yes this person is very angry at you, but there are 500 other people who are pleased with you". You don't have to get your ego bound up in the fact that you're getting critical feedback from one person. You have to step back, get a sense of perspective.

As noted, Jonathon shared that his staff call him a "people whisperer", in that he has the ability to talk to angry parents and find a way to calm them down. In a university setting this is a valued skill. He places emphasis on staying even-keeled at work and letting his internal composure guide his actions, especially in conflicted situations. Being able to resolve conflict without resorting to drastic measures or increasing anger is something many administrative leaders find difficult to achieve. For Jonathon, staying attuned to the point of stillness enables him to do this. The strength it gives him has helped him through natural disasters and changes in his career.

Moving from Teaching to Administration

I asked Jonathon what it was like to change his career track from teaching to administration and he replied,

I love teaching, I was pretty good at it, I loved the give and take of the classroom, and loved being able to develop ideas and see the light go on. But at the same much of the fruit of teaching takes a long time to develop, you know, you plant the seed and 20 years later the light goes on. One thing I discovered about being in administration is I was always in a position where I could help people in a very tangible, obvious way. I have people come into my office in tears because some administrative thing was going to waylay them and I could in 10 minutes have them happy. And also the chance to [pauses] … I guess another thing I would say is that you develop, as you move, I don't know if you call it up, but as you change roles, the concentric circles get bigger. The chance to play a role in configuring, aligning all the stars in an organization to make things happen is really cool too … That's what I like about it. I can effect change on a broader scale more quickly now.

I heard him say that as a professor he brought about change in his students' lives, though perhaps in a slower-paced way, while being an administrator affords him opportunities to have a more immediate effect on people and the campus. In an

administrative capacity he is able to make a difference on a broader scale in terms of the wide-ranging issues his university must address. By having a voice in decisions about budget cuts, allocation of funds, and goals for the university, he finds he can be an agent of change in student and staff lives.

Music Portrait: "Bein' Green"

For Jonathon's music portrait I deviate a bit from the improvisation format. During our first interview he shared that he is a musician, and said, "I was reflecting on this upcoming interview and realizing that … of artistic media that appeal to me and inspire me, music is more the case than visual images". I asked him about his affinity for music, and he said:

> It's pure … I guess what I would say is that everybody's task, everybody's purpose, if you will, in life is to create beauty. And people do it in all kinds of ways. Some people can create beauty by creating a welcoming space or a welcoming environment, or some people might have great physical beauty and can make themselves beautiful in a physical attraction sense. But I think there are only two ways that I feel like when I'm doing them I'm creating beauty: one is when I'm writing words, so beauty in words, and the other is music. I think it's a way that I can create beauty.

We talked about our common love of music, and he asked if he could play me something. I said yes. The next excerpt is taken from one of my reflective breaks while I was transcribing the interview:

> *Jonathon types onto his computer keyboard then adjusts the volume on his speakers. Guitar music with frogs ribbiting in the background comes up. It is light, lovely. "It's not that easy being green, you have to spend each day the color of the leaves" is sung in a gentle voice. He turns it down, nervous at first. He says "do you like that?" I say "it's beautiful—is that you singing?" He says "yes, and me playing" and then turns the volume back up. He seems shy about sharing this part of himself and shuts the music off after only a minute or so. (reflective break during transcription of Jonathon's second innerview)*

I listened, a bit stunned, as he played "Bein' Green", the song made famous by Kermit the Frog. There is a specific reason I was stunned that has to do with work a corporate consultant was doing at the time of this study with MVU's executive leadership staff.

Being green in a red and blue world. Around 2008 the president of MVU decided to seek outside assistance to help her executive team work together in a more effective manner. Her vision was to create a tightly knit group of people who shared a similar vision for MVU but were also able to appreciate the differences in their personalities and working styles. After interviewing several firms, a consulting group that focused on leadership and organizational development was selected to help her team achieve these goals. I had the opportunity to talk informally with Bill Schneider, the founder of the chosen consulting company, about his philosophy, frameworks, and approaches to this type of work, and of his experience of working with MVU's administrative leaders. In his years of doing this type of work, Bill has found that "every organization has its own culture, character, nature, and identity" (Schneider, 2000, p. 24). Higher education in particular is a complex phenomenon, for on the one hand there is a culture focused on competence and student success, and on the other there is a culture driven by numbers and sustainability.

Bill's work is founded on four fundamental promises all organizations make to customers and consumers: "Synergy, certainty, superiority, and enrichment" (Bill Schneider, personal communication, July 21, 2011). Any given company or organization is centered on one of these promises in its delivery of goods or services. One or all of the

other promises may be active within the organization, but to a lesser degree than the primary promise.

The promise of synergy is to provide a customer with a tailored product, much like a Public Relations firm does. The color associated with synergy is yellow. Certainty signifies control of a system to ensure consistency and positive effects. The nuclear power industry is emblematic of certainty as the protocols and rules they operate under ensure consistency and safety. The color linked to certainty is red. Superiority, indicated by the color blue, is often technical in nature; this indicates an organization that has "state of the art, one-of-a-kind products or services" (Bill Schneider, personal communication, July 21, 2011). Apple Computers is an example of a superiority company. Finally, the enrichment promise is focused on fulfilling potential and helping people grow and be more complete. A university is at heart an enrichment culture with its primary purpose being to enrich students' lives through education and extra-curricular activities. The color of the enrichment culture is green. Table 1 depicts these promises with each promise's respective color, corresponding mission, and an example of a related industry.

Table 1

The Four Promises Made to Customers

	CULTURE TYPE			
	Synergy	*Certainty*	*Superiority*	*Enrichment*
Color of Culture	Yellow	Red	Blue	Green
Promise Is To Provide:	Tailored Product	Control, Consistency	Technical, State of the Art Product or Service	Growth, Fulfillment of Potential
Business Example	Public Relations Firm	Nuclear Power Industry	Apple Computers	Higher Education Organizations

On a college campus, these four promises can easily be misunderstood or manipulated because a university depends upon more than enrichment for survival. A university like MVU has as its mission education and transformative learning, yet is numbers driven and depends upon proper money and employee management techniques for survival. When representatives from the four promises do not understand each other but believe their way is the right way to manage a university, tensions between departments can quickly arise and employees misinterpret the motivations of others as well as the overall university-wide mission (Bill Schneider, personal communication, July 21, 2011). In his 30 year career in this field, Bill has found collaboration between the people who represent these four types essential for viability and growth.

Universities are typically led by "blue" superiority-oriented people who are committed to competence and being the best. People who are executives or leaders in administrative areas like finance, academic affairs, enrollment management, legal affairs,

and executive leadership are often blue (superiority culture) or red (certainty culture), while professors and student engagement folks tend to be green in nature. Table 2 characterizes how the various departments in a university system fit into the Promises schematic.

Table 2

The Four Promises and University Departments

	CULTURE TYPE			
	Synergy	*Certainty*	*Superiority*	*Enrichment*
Color of Culture	Yellow	Red	Blue	Green
Promise Is To Provide:	Tailored Product	Control, Consistency	Technical, State of the Art Product or Service	Growth, Fulfillment of Potential
Business Example	Public Relations Firms	Nuclear Power Industry	Apple Computers	Higher Education Organizations
University Departments	Academic Advising, University Marketing, Community Relations	Legal Counsel, Finances, Enrollment Strategy	President, VP, Chancellor, Provost, Deans, Directors	Academic Departments, Professors, Student Activities

For many administrators who are essentially red or blue types, being green is not easy. The irony of Jonathon choosing "Bein' Green" to play for me was strong. It was not done intentionally on his part but when I pointed out the connection to the enrichment culture being actively cultivated at MVU's upper levels, we shared a good laugh. I asked if the song reflected a struggle on his part to be green in a blue and red administrative world, and said, "That's a very good insight. I've joked with different members of the

exec [*sic*] staff about that whole thing. People pretty quickly peg me as a green, as

mostly green on those charts. And it can be hard at times".

The clash of colors/types is at the heart of the antagonism between administration

and faculty, for each side works to fulfill divergent promises given to students and

family: administrators promise good value for the money (tuition) and a safe

environment, while professors promise excellence in education. The tendency of each

side to pillory the other has already been documented in this dissertation, and MVU is not

immune to this conflict of styles and values. Jonathon commented on this: "My

observation of MVU is that prior to my coming here there had developed a profound

culture of distrust between the faculty and administration. Or on the part of the faculty

towards the administration. And probably vice versa". He acknowledged the efforts the

president has made to mend this rift, and observed the work the consulting group was

doing would, if successful, help the university become more focused and integrated in its

mission and vision.

Shifting attention back to "Bein' Green", I asked him why he chose the song to

record, and he said,

> Because it kind of speaks of substance over style, a little bit, it's not really about
> being flashy or being upfront or putting yourself on display, but kind of in the
> midst of ordinariness there is still beauty and nobility and grace, in the middle of
> ordinariness. Which is something I've always … I'm not a flashy kind of person.
> It celebrates the beauty of the ordinary. That's why it appeals to me.

"Bein' Green". Next I present the lyrics to the song, followed by the internet

link to Jonathon's performance of it.

<u>Bein' Green</u>

It's not that easy being green
Having to spend each day the color of the leaves
When I think it could be nicer being red, or yellow or gold
Or something much more colorful like that

It's not easy being green
It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things
And people tend to pass you over 'cause you're
Not standing out like flashy sparkles in the water
Or stars in the sky

But green's the color of Spring
And green can be cool and friendly-like
And green can be big like an ocean, or important
Like a mountain, or tall like a tree

When green is all there is to be
It could make you wonder why, but why wonder why
Wonder, I am green and it'll do fine, it's beautiful
And I think it's what I want to be

© Raposo Group

<u>Bein' Green</u>   **Music Piece #4**

"Bein' Green" and an abiding love of music. Jonathon's sharing of the song

brought up his life-long love of music and how his father sang constantly: "It was always

just a presence. [My Dad] sang old Mills Brothers tunes while shaving and stuff, you

know, that generation of songs". He grew up in a household that frequently moved yet

his father provided him with consistency and a strong, sheltering presence. His father's

singing was reassuring in its constancy and beauty. He grew up surrounded by music and

has never lost his love for it, whether via playing guitar, singing, or listening.

Photographs and Images

In our second meeting, Jonathon shared images with me that provided a glimpse into his personal life and history. He had photographs of his Dad and of his children, and also showed me an illustration of a Russian icon.

Dad. This photo is of an older man, in his 70's I'd say, lounging comfortably on a worn couch. A black poodle sits on his lap and stares intently at the camera. Two other little dogs sit off to his side, looking askance at the person taking the picture. The man in the picture is dressed in a sweatshirt, and is grinning.

Jonathon said of this image,

> I have this great photo, because it just captures something … he's smiling, he's surrounded by a bunch of little dogs …. He wasn't in good health at the end of his life, but he was always just a good-hearted, give you the shirt off his back kind of guy. And I grew up as the only child of a single parent, basically. My family was my dad and me in a pickup truck full of all our stuff. We had a very nomadic life; I had a very nomadic childhood. So I didn't have much, we didn't have much, but he was always just the most generous person, and that still kind of shows [in this picture].

I was struck that he grew up moving from place to place, not putting roots down anywhere and constantly having to start over in new schools, with new people. I wondered if his peripatetic childhood led him to be a person who holds on tightly to schedules, routines, and material objects, or someone who does not become attached to things or people.

How he handled the loss of his possessions in the fire mentioned earlier might, I thought, indicate whether he is one or the other. I asked if he had ever considered there to be any connection between this nomadic upbringing and the loss of his possessions in the fire, and he said, "yes, the impermanence thing again. And it isn't such a bad thing". The fire served as a reminder of the temporary nature of his childhood and his survival

skills of letting go and living in the moment. As he grew older these skills transformed into spiritual principles: practicing detachment and not becoming too attached to how he thought things should be done; deflecting any negativity around him so it does not inform his actions; and allowing others their space to be who they are. These principles, from my understanding of him, are integral parts of his leadership style and his ability to remain calm in the face of conflict.

Children. This is a lovely picture of his three children. The young woman in the middle is holding a diploma, and there is a teenage girl and boy on either side of her. All are beaming, beautiful beings.

This photograph is of Jonathon's three children and was taken around 10 years ago at his daughter's college graduation ceremony.   His tone of voice changed as he talked about them and becomes soft, and filled with love. He described each of them to me and shared some of what he learned in raising them. He said,

> Human beings are like acorns; the soul is encoded to become what it is going to become. And despite our best efforts to screw our kids up, they blossom and grow into the oak tree they are supposed to become. Which I found very comforting, because when you go through a divorce and you've got kids, you think, oh, god, who knows how many years on the couch they're going to have. There were all kinds of turns and travails along the way. But what's cool is that they all are unique personalities.

His children have "all turned into these socially conscious, just on their own steam, do-gooder bleeding-heart kind of kids. And it's really cool that their little beings blossomed into something". The details he shared of them and the manner in which he talked made it clear that he is proud of who they are. His family is an anchor point for him, one filled with love and appreciation.

Russian icon. Jonathon handed me a picture of a Russian icon for his third image: "I thought of this because I look at it a lot. It is fairly famous—it's a reproduction of a famous piece. It's Rublov's icon of the Trinity". It is one of the world's most famous 15th century icons. He said that to create a Trinity like this is an incredibly difficult artistic task for a person to undertake because in Russian orthodoxy you are not allowed to draw an image of God. You can draw a depiction of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, but "to try to do the Trinity, it's a little trickier because you can't represent God and there's the danger of blasphemy".

When I asked him why he had this image in his office and looked at it frequently, he said,

> There are a lot of reasons …. This [icon] has a lot of layers of significance for me. For one thing it takes me back to that time when I was just becoming fascinated with the depth of the history of Christianity, which turned out to be the thing that has really been my field …. But it's also kind of a reminder of how much life is imbued with mystery. How the depth dimension of life—the Trinity is an un-understandable doctrine in some ways, but a lot of really articulate and fascinating things have been written about it. But this is a reminder of my own spiritual pilgrimage, [of the] journey I've had into and out of and around faith commitments of various kinds.

He went on to tell me that he has explored many religions not only as part of his professional education but because he sought spiritual knowledge that would provide guidance. This eclectic path led him to become a connoisseur of religions, adhering to no one doctrine but adopting principles of faith and values that have helped him in his life's journey.

From the icon's strength of imagery and his choice to bring it into the innerview, my sense is that Jonathon is a person who has a strong foundation of religious knowledge which has evolved into a mystical appreciation for life, nature, and others. He is rooted

in a personalized faith that has as its tenets compassion, gratitude, understanding of the

impermanent nature of life, and commitment to being non-judgmental of other people.

This faith is directly translated into his administrative leadership style, as evidenced in his

people whisperer stories.

Leadership

Who Jonathon is as a leader has been touched upon several times already: he has

respect and empathy for the staff he manages; the point of stillness from which he works

gives him the ability to stay calm in the face of peoples' anger and other difficult

situations; and the fire he experienced reminds him to not become attached to desiring

any specific outcome to situations. At times he finds it difficult to be an enrichment type

of person (green) in an administrative world filled with people who value consistency,

product management, and regulations, yet with the support of the consulting group's

work, upper administrators at MVU are beginning to appreciate these differences in

management style.

> I asked Jonathon what he thought his primary leadership qualities are, and he said,

> I think in terms of my leadership role I am able to [maintain] a sense of perspective. That's probably the quality that I bring to the table. More than anything else. Because I'm not a whip cracker, I'm not a micro-manager, I try to be more of an observant, perceptive listener. That kind of thing.

> Jonathon also has a specific leadership principle he adopted from a few highly

regarded professors:

> The thing they all have in common is that from the moment they walked in the room you could tell that they basically liked being with you. And wanted to be there …. My default is when I meet someone or come into a group of people, a classroom, whatever it is, my default is always: "I really like these people, I value these people". And if you don't, people can see right through that. So you can't come in and pretend to be friendly. It really has to come from an authentic place

that you like people. My default is valuing and liking people, until they prove otherwise!

This approach to people serves as an external strategy for getting to know people and build trust. He says it "allows me to come into some new situations and not assume people were going to be unpleasant or not like me, or anything like that. Just assume the best of them".

From my perspective Jonathon assumes the best of others and also expects the best from himself. These expectations, when combined with his commitment to listen to others, be non-confrontational, open to other perspectives, and remain grounded in deep yet inclusive spiritual beliefs, create a composite picture of him as a stable and steady leader who relies upon his spiritual beliefs for guidance and support.

Good leadership is good listening. The intuitive sense I had of Jonathon as being able to translate his spiritual values into leadership actions was confirmed in the third innerview. I asked him how he approaches circumstances where he is required to fire someone. He answered:

> When I have to inform someone about a difficult thing maybe to do with their position or their job or task, I try to have a face to face conversation, and remain calm and remain focused on what the driving issue is. And I listen. Just like good singing is good listening, I think good leadership is good listening.
> My experience is, I haven't had that many awful or really difficult things to deal with, but my experience is if people feel genuinely listened to—not just feel but **are** genuinely listened to, then the processing of some of those harder things is easier.
>
> I once got a—this probably says as much about the other person as it does me—I once got a thank you card from someone I had to let go. It was a thank you for the way it came down and the way it was handled. That doesn't happen often. It wasn't just a lay-off, it was a firing.

I do not know of many administrative leaders who ever received a thank you note from someone they had fired. Jonathon's ability to give potentially devastating news in a

way that was transformative for the recipient is remarkable and speaks to his faith in himself and others.

Jonathon's Postscript

Leadership and spirituality are inseparably intertwined for Jonathon. They are both elemental aspects of his identity as a human being. With his history of being both a professor of Religious Studies and administrative leader, talking with him offered a unique opportunity to study the intersection of leadership and spirituality in a different way. He was able to articulate the point of stillness that guides his work, the importance of music in his life, and how his spiritual journey has led him to being a reverent agnostic as well as a leader who, in managing staff, relies upon his belief in the inherent goodness of people to guide him. His history, family, and spiritual beliefs have given him the tools of effective leadership: to act with compassion, have faith in others' goodness, and understand life is transitory. Taking himself too seriously would be nothing more than an egotistical attempt to control what is essentially uncontrollable: occurrences and others.

I asked at the end of our second innerview if Jonathon had any final thoughts and he said,

> I don't have any big closing remarks, but … if I trace all the causation back, I think the fact that I am where I am and doing what I am has ultimately been part of a spiritual journey. Sometimes very explicitly so, sometimes less explicitly so, but the fact that I've had the career that I've had all began from a motivation of understanding more about the spiritual dimension of my own life, and that turned into an academic career. And that turned into, now, an administrative academic career. It has been maybe not an obvious path, but it has been a fairly continuous one for me.

Aylen

*Sharp mind, gentle soul. Fierce lover of God, graceful executioner of an
ancient Japanese art. Confident and aggressive administrator,
compassionate friend, rooted to the ground
(reflective break during transcription of Aylen's second innerview)*

Aylen is a study of contrasts. She presents as a petite woman and carries herself with a quiet dignity. Her movements are measured, deliberate, and her smile is filled with joy and light. Yet from our talks I know she is a practitioner of karate, holding great physical strength in her hands and body. This also gives her a capacity for fierce mental concentration. An image of a deep lake comes to mind when I think of her: the surface is visible to anyone near it, yet its depths are hidden from view. She has a strong and abiding faith.

There are many sides to Aylen. Therefore, one way of presenting data will not suffice. In this section I will talk about Aylen's sense of spirituality, bring forward the objects and images she spoke of during our conversations, tell stories that are fictionalized accounts from her life, and present a piece of music I composed that, according to her, resonates with who she is. All of these facets, like sides of a crystal, create a composite picture that portrays and illuminates the ties between spirituality and her leadership style.

Spirituality

In our first interview I asked Aylen what her definition of spirituality was, and she responded that being respectful of people, constantly feeling gratitude for the life she has been given, and engagement in prayer sum up her spirituality. Being mindful of how she begins and ends a project, striving to learn from each lesson and event, and approaching life with a clear mind are how she enacts her spirituality. She shared, "Those things are

little practices that I think are helpful, and again it keeps my mind focused on what is important to me. And that is spirituality".

I find irony in the fact that while Aylen was the most overtly religious person I spoke with, she had one of the shortest definitions of spirituality. I think this is in alignment with who she is, for she told many stories during our time together and seemed to prefer to let her actions and reactions exemplify her beliefs. My sense was that merely spouting definitions and ideas on what she thought spirituality was would somehow diminish the sense of awe and veneration she has for God and for the mysteries of life.

Photographs and Objects

Aylen brought several images and objects to our second meeting. Each represents a different part of her and is markedly different from the others. With every description a clearer image of the links between spirituality and leadership began to emerge.

Sash. Aylen is a student of karate, and brought the sash signifying her advanced status to our second innerview. I notice as she reaches for it,

> *She takes the sash in her hands and holds it so gently, so softly, and smoothes out wrinkles that aren't there. The sash holds great power; it is something she can look at that symbolizes her strength, her determination, her endurance and perseverance. It is her coming of age symbol. I see her even as a young woman, wearing this sash and bursting with surprised pride, intense pride. (data collection journal, July 20, 2011)*

During the rest of this innerview as well as the one that followed, the image of the sash kept coming back to me. It comes to me that the sash represents a connection between action in the world and inner stillness. It is a physical and symbolic connecting point between movement and calmness. I ask her if this seems right, and she says yes. I go on to ask her whether her practice of karate and how she approaches work are similar in any way, and she responds,

How do we start out the day? Do we start it in prayer, in reflection? A walk, or with meditation? And how do we end our day? Those are the parallels that I would say that karate practice has for me in terms of starting and finishing the day. Starting and finishing a project. Or whatever it may be. I try to, with any project that I have, do that same type of thing. And say to myself, "God give me guidance to this project, give me the wisdom, the understanding, a clear mind". And then I thank Him for the opportunity for either the challenge and difficulty of whatever the project was, or for the greatness of learning from it.

I probed a bit and asked Aylen about the connection between the meditation that

ends a karate session and her practice of prayer, and she responded,

You cannot have a mentality of being loose, ungathered in karate. It's hard to give a description to it, but there is that whole feeling, a feeling of centeredness and focus. And the masters that teach karate are very much centered. And so I look at that with prayer and that you have to be very focused and centered. And understanding what you are praying about, for.

I thought more about the connection between karate and prayer and wondered

where their meeting point is for Aylen. In answer to my question on this she described a

feeling of peace that comes over her at the beginning and end of each karate session when

she sits for brief periods of meditation. She says these times of focusing attention and

quieting thoughts bring her mind and body into alignment. The opening meditation

prepares her so she can "put [her] soul into the next hour of practice. Of action". Going

on, she describes how "The [ending meditation] is what I look forward to while I am

working hard during the karate session". These periods of reflection give her time when

she can work on "perfecting the ability to be patient".

In her administrative role it is as if Aylen wears the sash all day long. From her

descriptions of her daily work life it is clear to me that she approaches every situation

ready to act from a place of stillness and assurance. When she feels out of balance and

her ability to remain calm while performing tasks is out of kilter, she shuts her office

door, sits in a chair away from her desk, and practices the breathing techniques she

learned in karate. Simply breathing brings tranquility to her mind and calms her

emotions.

Grandma. The picture Aylen shows me next is of her grandma (on her father's

side). I follow Rose's (2001) visuality guidelines for viewing images, and look at its

composition, tone, background, and also consider my reaction. The following is my

perception of this photograph:

> *The picture is startling in its contrasts and intensity. Her grandma is standing, body completely relaxed and her face turned up to receive the blessing the priest is giving her. His hand is on her forehead, her eyes are closed, and the look on her face is one of yielding, submission, and grace. The background is very dark and shadows cover the back part of her body, but her shoulders and face are brilliant with light. It is as if she is coming out of the darkness and into the light, being blessed by the Father. Her face exudes peace, serenity. She stands strong though diminutive in stature. The two words that came into my mind upon seeing the photograph were strength and submission. The strength to live this life, birth and raise eight children, work the fields, and endure the unimaginable grief of watching some of her children die. And the ability to submit to God's power, compassion, and will. She leans into the priest's hand, the hand which covers her forehead. He towers over her, yet she is as strong as he. She yields to his touch, to his blessing, fully and without reserve.*
>
> *Aylen has her grandmother's jaw. She looks so much like her, and this is a good thing. Her family does not understand much of what she has done; she is the only one to have gone to college. But they love and accept her unconditionally. She is part of their tribe and fiercely valued. That she has a family of her own now makes them all rest easier; Grandma says her husband keeps her in line! This picture of her grandmother symbolizes faith, family, and love. It is who she is. (data collecting journal, July 31, 2011)*

Book of meditations. The final object Aylen presented was a small, well-worn

book of Christian meditations and prayers. Each page held a thought or practice for the

day. The reading for today goes something like this: Remember every day is a gift.

Every person you meet is full of love and possibility.

For Aylen, each day begins with prayer. As part of her morning practice she

reads from the book, allowing its words to sink in and guide her thoughts and actions.

She refers to it during the day, keeping herself on track with its message. Being aligned in her actions and belief are important.

Aylen Counterpoint: Returning

Who we are is shaped by what has happened to us. But, perhaps even more than what has happened to us, how we react to the events in our lives shapes our identity. This next story describes a part of Aylen's childhood that she shared with me and a recent action on her part that is tied directly to her upbringing.

When Aylen was just a girl of seven her mother left her father. Her little sister was three and doesn't remember much about their mother, but she remembers almost everything. How her mother smelled, her voice when she was happy, her tears when frustrated. There were a lot of tears there near the end, before she went out the front door and didn't come back. She gave no reason for leaving, only saying "I don't want to be married anymore".

As a little girl Aylen took this to mean mommy didn't want to be a mommy anymore, she didn't want to love her anymore.

Over the months after her mother left Aylen slowly realized she wasn't coming back. Mommy never called, never stopped by, never cared. Aylen started to become angry, because so many of her friends had mommies that hadn't left. Some daddies were gone but that didn't matter nearly as much.

"How dare she leave! I didn't want her anyway!" floated through her mind more and more.

But something happened to change this and make her less angry: Her daddy started spending all of his time with her and her sister, playing with them, talking to

them, bringing them to her grandma's for dinner every Tuesday and Saturday night. She loved going to grandma's—the food was always so good and she got lots of hugs and kisses.

As she grew up Aylen thought about her mom less and less. It hurt less and less. Some of her friends got into drugs, and a few joined a gang. They wanted her to become like them—teasing, cajoling, even once threatening her. She went home and told her dad about it.

He sat on the couch, listened to her, and said "Aylen, you have a life ahead of you. God has a plan for you. If you go down that road, you will never know what that plan is".

She did not follow her friends' path but concentrated on school, doing so well it became clear that, if she wanted to, she could go to college. She asked her dad about this.

He again sat on the couch, listened patiently to her, then said, "I don't really get this education thing, but if it is what you want to do, I will help you in any way I can".

So she went to college, went on to get her Master's degree, and finally got hooded as part of her doctoral graduation. The whole way, her dad listened to her, gave advice, and encouraged her to follow those dreams. She went on to become a well-respected and influential higher education administrator.

One day, Aylen went into the city to attend a presentation. She noticed the talk was being held in the neighborhood where her mom's mother, her grandmother, lived. As she walked to and from the presentation she pictured the house as she remembered it. She hadn't seen this grandma for 28 years, but knew from the occasional card she still

lived there. And almost without thinking about it she drove over to the house, parked, got

out of the car, walked up the sidewalk, and knocked on the door. It was time. She was

ready. And she had forgiveness in her heart.

Her grandma answered the door—she looked so different, so old—and said
"yes?"

Aylen wasn't surprised she didn't recognize her. Then she saw a woman standing
behind her grandma, and she wondered which aunt this was.

Aylen simply said, "Hi, Grandma".

Her grandma drew her into the house, hugged her, and said "and here is your
Mom".

There were many tears that day, many questions, some answers. When Aylen
went home she went to see her dad.

He sat on the couch, listened to her, and said, "I'm glad you found her".

A door in her heart had opened and closed all at the same time. And that was
enough.

Releasing into the future. Letting go of past hurts and resentments is something

many people aspire to do, yet in this instance Aylen found a way to concretely do this.

The mere action of walking up her grandmother's sidewalk symbolized leaving her anger

at the curb, opening herself up to new relationships in life, and to healing the hurt that

had plagued her since childhood.

What does this story say about Aylen as an administrator? The fact she was

willing to tell this to me signified honesty that goes beyond courteous involvement in a

research project. If her ability to transcend the pain of the past and expectation of healing

carries at all over into her role as an administrative leader, this indicates she is a person rooted in authentic action. I am not privy to how her staff views her in this regard or whether or not this is who she is as a manager, but again, the telling of the story holds its promises and possible correlations.

Remaining open to new possibilities, even when this requires a release of difficult emotions, is one component of living a spiritual life (Chávez, 2001). Letting go of the past in order to move more fully into the future is a sacred spiritual value held by many traditions, and one viewed as vital to overall health and happiness (Dalai Lama, 2011). This relates to higher education administration in that administrative leaders are no longer able to rely upon old ways and must be able to relinquish outdated tenets of authoritarian leadership. In the current environment of cutbacks and setbacks, higher education is finding that this ability is necessary to survival (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006); administrators and trustees cannot rely upon the old vision of leadership and hierarchy but must be willing to step forward into a new way of working. Finding fresh sources of strength and yet retaining the ability to yield to new realities are essential traits to focus on and develop.

Music Portrait: "Yield"

Music is an important force in Aylen's life. Until our meeting I had no idea she had at one time been a musician. When I asked her about music she said,

> Music? Huge. I have to play it. To keep me calm, you know, to keep me relaxed. It depends on what kind of music it is, but [for me] it is mostly classical music I listen to, always keeping that ambiance and environment. If I could have water fountains all through the office, and the scent of spearmint, I probably would! *[she laughs heartily here!]*

After our second innerview I thought about the words, intonations, and underlying messages of our conversation. For two weeks after the second innerview I heard a certain musical interval in my mind and a melody playing over it. I decided to find out what this really sounded like and so picked up my violin and played what I heard. The interval was a perfect 5th, which is open-sounding and does not indicate whether the music is in a major or minor key; it is neutral and full of possibilities. The melody was slow and measured; it was always contained within the perfect 5th interval. In our third innerview I played this piece for Aylen, and the following is part of our conversation that immediately followed and is taken directly from the transcript:

Aylen: What was the main chord?

Laura: It was an open 5th, those last notes. It's in G major.

Aylen: G major. Okay. And what is interesting is there are certain sounds that appeal to an individual. There's also certain notes that you can, that give you this either upbeat feeling, or calmness, or whatever it may be, and mysterious feelings that I would always have when I would play maybe in D minor, would give that kind of, not eerie, but what's that kind of feeling of mystery?

Laura: Evocative?

Aylen: Yeah, yeah yeah. And the G major is something that I always just found peaceful. Why did this come about again?

Laura: As I was reflecting on the two conversations we'd had, and letting some of the images move through my mind and my heart, I kept hearing that open 5th chord, the G and D, and I kept hearing the *here I sing the opening melody* …. And so, I finally thought "I've got to play it and hear where this goes". To me, for some reason, and I'm not sure I could say exactly say why, but that just seemed to capture some kind of essence of the themes that came up, and it's kind of a feeling of peace, but it's also a movement, and when it moves to the D perfect 5th chord it has a different quality.

Aylen: It's movement and it's also, for me, it is unfinished.

Laura: Uh-huh, it does have that quality.

Aylen: That the last note is not the last note of finish, but it's of "more to come". That's what's interesting.

Laura: And I think I heard the "more to come" in today's conversation. Did that have a resonance for you?

Aylen: Oh, yeah. And I'm really sensitive to sounds and music. It is very interesting. "Not finished". It's something that is interesting that has come about for me over the past month, and that is the feeling of "am I finished here at MVU?" And Denise [a co-worker and friend] and I talked about this, just this morning, and I said to her, "I don't, I know I'm not finished, but sometimes you don't want to wear yourself out, wear out your welcome either. To be very honest, I'm questioning is my work finished here?" The work is not finished here, but am I finished doing the work here? And I've really been thinking about that, just because of a number of things that are, just challenge after challenge after challenge, and you can either ride through those and defeat them, or come to some sort of solution, or whatever, or is it just time?

I'm fighting that because I don't want it to be. Nor have I gotten any signals, it is just something that is in my mind. Maybe it's just a question mark. You know? So when I said "it's not finished", is that the piece?

Laura: One thing, when I listen back to it, it is very contained, and there is a lot of movement, there is a lot of strength there, but it is also very contained. And so, like you said, the piece may not be finished, and it may also be time for you to move out of this container called MVU. And I heard some of that musically in what you were talking about. In some ways I love this piece, and in some ways it bothers me because it is so limited by that chord.

Aylen: Yes, yes! Uh-huh, uh-huh. That's right.

[We both start laughing softly, kind of amazed at what just happened. The music gave voice to Aylen's unspoken thought that her time at MVU might be close to being done]

Aylen: I tell you, we can get deep and deep and deep! You know?

After this third innerview I walked away feeling a bit mystified: the piece I had

instinctively improvised for Aylen captured not only the essence of what we had talked

about previously, but also her feeling constricted at MVU. I pondered this for quite a while and decided to add another segment to the piece. Aylen had already shared she has a great love for the Native American flute instrument, and so I chose to bring it in as the main instrument for the second part. The link to listen to the final piece is presented here:

Yield Music Piece #5

Before putting this newer version into the dissertation, I wanted to make sure Aylen heard the full piece and gave her consent for me to use it as a representation of who she is. I gave her a CD copy to listen to then followed up with an email asking if she'd had a chance to listen to it. Her response was, "The music piece 'Yield' is superb. It captures many moments, thoughts, events … you name it. The native flute brings chills. I love it. In gratitude! Aylen".

Diagrams

In our third innerview I presented Aylen with diagrams I had created that I felt reflected her identity as an administrator. The first diagram (Figure 13) had a center of Self/spirituality/religion, with family, prayer, education, and work revolving around these. I included prayer as an outer circle instinctively; in retrospect I see how it might seem repetitious to have spirituality/religion and prayer as two independent circles. I was unaware I had done so until we met. I believe I placed prayer as a sphere separate from the core of spirituality and religion because of the central role it plays in Aylen's life. This theme is elaborated in a later story.
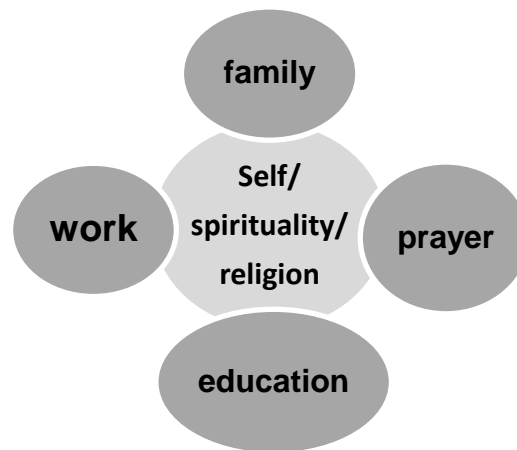
Figure 13. Aylen first diagram.

When I showed her this diagram she said, "Yes, yes I see how this all works. But something is off, something isn't right. The interesting thing is that [the smaller spheres are] not connected out here, beyond the inner circle". I asked her what changes we could make so the diagram more accurately represents who she is, and she said linking the outer spheres might help. So I drew lines between them and she said this was a better representation. The next diagram (Figure 14) depicts this change.

Figure 14. Aylen second diagram.

In this diagram each outer sphere overlaps with the central one of

Self/spirituality/religion, and is also connected to the other orbiting spheres. There is a

continuous loop of involvement, with each orb interacting somehow with the others. A

change in the inner sphere will create a change in the rest. Aylen commented on this

revised version, saying,

> This appeals to me more just because they are connected pieces. These [smaller
> spheres] are already connected in the outer part, but these outer parts make me
> who I am; this is where I am considering myself, being and having these
> components. They are all interacting with each other, they don't need to overlap
> with each other because they overlap in this middle sphere. So this would
> probably speak more to my sense of self.

**Aylen Counterpoint: Conflict and
Prayer**

The main character in this story is based loosely upon Aylen and experiences she

has had at MVU. Most of the quotes are taken directly from her transcripts, while the

situations and descriptions have been altered.

There is a woman on campus that I would like to tell you about, a woman who is a quick mover and sharp thinker. She is a person who understands and does her job as Vice President of Statewide Health Services extremely well yet sometimes gets perplexed by others' reactions to her actions and words. She recently told me a story, and started by saying, "It might surprise people to hear that not everyone gets along in administration. But sometimes we don't". The story goes like this:

A few years ago one person moved up the ranks to become a Vice President for Finances and another was hired as an Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Services, and both of these people thought this woman did not deserve to be in the position she was in despite the fact that she'd worked her way up the rungs and had rightfully earned her place. She looked at them and saw potential colleagues who might understand her struggle to get where she is and could help to make the campus a stronger place, but instead found people who were caught up in their own ambition and had no interest in becoming colleagues. They had come from institutions where clawing one's way to the top was the norm. One day she suddenly realized what was going on: they wanted her job.

She said, "It was clear to me: they were jealous and willing to let it show".

Her life at work became difficult. These two people would not talk directly to her unless it was necessary to do so. She heard from friends they were bad-mouthing her work and denigrating some of her decisions.

She said, "Why are they treating me this way? It's getting in the way of my work! I don't need this hassle—I might just quit if it goes on much longer. I haven't done anything to them—this is all their stuff, their egos, their need to move up the university

ladder. And I am getting stepped on. And I don't like it. But I don't know how to stop it. It is wearing me down, making me tired. Makes it harder to do my job".

This adversarial dynamic went on for months. These two people made frequent complaints about her and she started to feel twisted up inside. She dreaded seeing them on campus, let alone having to work closely with them. Then one day, while on her way to a meeting where she knew these people would be, she began to pray. She prayed for patience. She prayed for understanding. She asked God to help her through the meeting, somehow. She didn't know how. And then she prayed some more. And she kept walking. As she walked, she prayed for help to stay grounded through the imminent, certain-to-be difficult meeting. She prayed to not get weighed down by the negativities flying around her. She thanked God for the good things in her life.

And it began to work. She got through the meeting not too bothered by either of them. It was actually a pretty good meeting. So she prayed some more. While she walked back to her office she prayed for the strength to stay in her heart, to not be affected by the hurtful words others were going to say to her (it had happened enough that she knew it would continue to happen). And it worked again. In the weeks to come she was able to stay calm, to speak her piece without rancor or anger. She did not take on their black cloud of occluded ambition and intense desire for power. She could stay focused on what needed to be done instead of constantly reacting to their dislike, their subversive cuttings.

And so she walked, and she prayed. This was five years ago. She is still walking and praying, because this practice got her through the tough time, and now it enhances

the good times. It isn't all good, of course, but it is easier. Step by step, one utterance of gratitude and prayer at a time.

"But what happened? What came of that tough time?" you may ask.

Well, she did not pray for an outcome or for something to happen. She prayed to keep calm, she prayed to have strength, to just keep going, to have patience. She was trying to survive, but she did not want to pray for someone else's bad fortune. She did not pray for someone to get fired. She did not pray for something to change. She prayed for constancy and for strength. She prayed for the wisdom and grace to be able to yield to God's will.

She says, "I never prayed for something specific".

And even while things were terrible, the praying helped. One outcome was that she felt protected from their venom.

Another outcome, as it turns out, was that one person unexpectedly left the university after six months, and within a year the other person left. Through no will or action of hers, they left. She never had control over what they were going to do or what was going to happen to them, but she was able to ask for help, for help beyond what a supervisor or boss could give (she knew going to her department leader would have fanned the fires). She had already let go of wishing and hoping and was concentrating on just being when, just like that, they were gone. For whatever reason, they did not fit in and moved on.

If you see her walking across campus, you could wonder why she has her head down.

Smiling, she says, "People might see me and have no idea what I'm doing. If they did, they might think I'm crazy. But it helps me feel calm".

Walking past, she may not notice you; don't take it personally. She is in a good place, a fine place.

**Closing Herself Off and Opening
Herself Up**

Aylen had a childhood full of love yet also full of questions as to why her mother left. She built an adult life full of professional achievements and rooted in family and faith, yet she also admitted to a tendency to compartmentalize herself, carefully limiting how much she lets her guard down at work. She says,

> I could sit here [in my office] all day and talk to students, be open and giving and willing to tell them who I am. But when it comes to staff, I hold back. I want to share, but I find it so hard. I am their boss. If I am their friend too, things will be hard when conflicts come up, especially if I have to chastise or reprimand them in any way. I don't think people here [in my department] really know who I am.

She said she understood how this closing off is not congruent with her spirituality.

Aylen expressed a desire to change this tendency to hold back on opening herself up to others, saying, "I know I should be sharing more of who I am with people at MVU. I know I need to. It will make me a better person, and a better leader." When I asked how she might do this, she said it could simply be by telling people about her struggles to get her doctorate, or about her great love for classical music, or how she practices karate. She wants to be more compassionate with others and find ways to express this at work. Going on, Aylen said, "I've been doing a lot of self-reflection, partly from our conversations, and just from my own work. So I have been doing that, and figuring out right moments [to open up to people around me], and right ways to do that".

Aylen's Postscript

Several months after our final innerview I saw a notice in the local paper. Aylen was giving a public demonstration of karate to anyone interested in attending. This feels important. It strikes me that she is now sharing her talents and gifts with the world.

The notice in the paper indicates that the contrasts in Aylen are lessening. In our last meeting she expressed her hope that being more open at work would make her a better leader, one who is able to be fully present with her staff and superiors. From our conversations I know she has great compassion for people and respect for those who are different from her. She does not expect everyone to adhere to her religious beliefs, and celebrates the diversity of students and personnel that is growing ever stronger on MVU's campus. Her spiritual values run deep and shape who she is as a leader, and she is beginning to welcome opportunities that allow her to merge these two facets of her life together.

<div align="center">

Counterpoint: Unintentional Eavesdropping

</div>

This story is inserted here as a pause between portraits, and is not related to Aylen's representation. The event was taken from an experience I had while waiting for a participant to welcome me into her office, and I am the narrator. For the sake of confidentiality, the character Barb is not directly related to any one participant but is a composite of all.

I am nearing the end of the interviews I need to conduct for my dissertation research, and am looking forward to my second meeting with Barb, a Vice President at MVU. I arrive 10 minutes early to have a chance to take in the work environment with its cramped quarters. There is a desk right outside her office with no one at it, and two

other desks nearby are occupied by smiling young women. These are the same two people who talked and laughed loudly right outside the office during my first interview with Barb. I smile back and hope they won't be talking too much today. I visualize going into her large office, with its large desk covered with papers. I remember how the chair I will sit in is a bit tattered and far apart from her. Her desk feels like a barrier between us.

As I sit, waiting, I start to write about the investigative process I've been in. Heaven forbid I waste a chance to get some work done on the dissertation. I write about learning how a university operates, with top tiers of leaders guiding, making policies and financial decisions, middle leaders managing their teams how they see fit, and then on down to the almost chaotic, unconnected strands of academic departments. The whole system is intricate, with so many things going on at any given time.

From my chair, I hear Barb chuckle inside her office. She has an infectious laugh. The outer office is suddenly quiet and I can hear her on the phone. I hear a slightly sarcastic tone before I hear any words. I can hear her talking about the objects and pictures she's brought to today's interview. It comes to me, slowly, that she is talking about my impending interview with her. I get offended at her tone. Maybe she really doesn't take this seriously, maybe she'd rather be picking the lint out of her dryer.

Within a minute I hear, "For the most part I don't get inspired in the workplace by images around me," and then, "Makes me think what language I should use".

I can't understand what she says next, then hear "I have a headache" and sardonic laughing. "A hot shower or a bath at night do more for me in terms of work". I am getting ready to clear my throat loudly or stand up and poke my head into her office

when she hangs up the phone. "Wow!", I think, "She comes across all soft, gentle, easy-going in the interviews, but here is the other side, the acerbic side. Is she poking fun at my study?"

I want to get angry. I wonder, "But what relevance does *this topic have?"*

I have a quick talk with myself and create a strategy: absorb what I heard so I can point my questions perhaps a bit more than I would otherwise, and let my reactions go. Don't let this affect how I am in the interview. Be impartial in what and how I ask my questions. But this begs the query, am I getting authentic answers? I did not have time to think about this, but hearing Barb talk about the impending interview changed something in me—I no longer wanted to ask the safe and touchy-feely questions in deference to her position. I was ready to say "thank you for your time" after a couple of initial questions if I sensed any impatience or lack of involvement in her answers.

So I go in and right off the bat ask, "So what do you think of my topic, spirituality in the work lives of administrative leaders?" What did I have to lose? I don't think doing this stemmed from my need to put her on the spot, but was prompted by a genuine desire to not waste anyone's time, hers or mine, if she was going to respond lightly.

Her answer surprised me: "I think it's … I think it's something people don't pay enough attention to, because when you're dealing with that kind of topic, you're dealing with people at the most basic level of their commitments. And so, kind of peeling back the onion to the deepest motivations of people, … we often don't go that deep when we analyze higher ed and the workplace. We talk about motivation in a kind of a transactional way. You know, how do we get people motivated? By paying them, by

inspiring them? But we don't really get down to the root … so I think it's really

fundamental. It's interesting to me".

Listening to her response I thought, "Yes, I think I am getting thoughtful

answers".

My trust in the study, myself, and my participants is intact. Stronger than ever.

Then I remembered that when I was eavesdropping I heard her say something about "it's

all IRB protected anyway".

So I said, "I look at this second conversation as more of an inner-view rather

than an inter-view. A play on words, I know, but, the first one is about getting to know

you, while this one is more about your inner thoughts and reactions. Everything is still

IRB protected, so I hope you will feel comfortable talking on some deeper topics. I came

up with Miranda rights for participants, where nothing you say will be used against

you".

She laughs heartily at this.

"You have the right to remain silent".

We are both laughing pretty hard right now!

"You have the right to retain counsel and to have someone present in the room".

I know we are on common ground when she says, "As long as I don't have to put my

hands against the wall and 'assume the position!'"

After the interview, I again asked myself whether I was getting authentic, honest

answers from Barb, knowing she had resistance beforehand. Basing my assessment on

the depth of response and the emotion that was at times palpable in the room, I think so.

Barb's engagement in the questions was immediate and her answers full of self reflection. My belief in the worth of this project does not waver.

Vanessa

Waiting for our first interview, I notice the outer office is drab, with lots of dark blue cubicle dividers and little vibrancy of color. It does not reflect at all the dynamism, movement, and growth this department is experiencing under Vanessa's leadership. When she greets me she presents as a smiling, unassuming woman, and there is a sense of hesitancy about her. Appearances, in this case, are deceiving, as I would find out shortly. One thing is for certain: she is very bright, very dedicated, and very much involved in wanting the most for her area as well as for the university. Her perspicacity, commitment to community involvement, abiding appreciation for MVU's faculty, and appreciation for open communication and clear lines of strategy are hallmarks of our talks.

As we walk into her office she says she has not prepared at all, that she does not think she did what I had asked her in my introductory letter to do or bring. I assure her that this is fine and we can look at items in our next talk. Her actual office is a contrast to the drab outer one, with warm saffron-colored walls, a dark wood desk, and some paintings that add swatches of color to the room. It is a long, narrow office, filled with swirly glass orbs, books, photographs of her with people, and small objects that range from animals to art pieces.

Statues, pictures, images, and artwork of goddesses enliven Vanessa's work space in a subtle yet whimsical way. At the end of our third innerview we talked about the images and objects that define her office. Vanessa had this to say about her office and the various objects in it: "I think it's all about focusing one's intentional goodwill and

intentional energy for the benefit of somebody else. This space is a kind of a channel, like all these symbolic objects are. A way to focus and channel my energy". My impression is that all of these pieces and images are like tiles in a mosaic, seemingly random when looked at closely yet forming a clear picture when taken as a whole.

Diagrams

During our third meeting I presented Vanessa with two possible diagrams of how the intersection of her work life and spirituality might be depicted. The first is depicted in Figure 15.
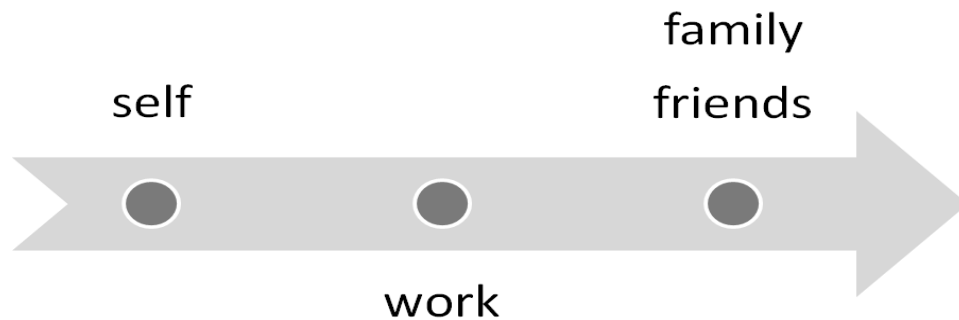
Figure 15. Vanessa first diagram.

She relates that early in her career she approached being a leader in a linear fashion: self, work, and friends were all part of her drive to gain power. In thinking more about it she says,

> When I was young and didn't know better, I saw the accoutrements of power and I got myself a gray 4-door sedan, and I had this funky office and I made it into a professional looking office, and I used to say I wasn't interested in control, I was interested in power.

She goes on, "But I feel very differently now! I'm seeing self and work as being more closely aligned, along with family and friends. I think I have a much more balanced perspective now".

Together we looked at the second diagram (Figure 16), one I had created as an alternative to the first, and this one seems to resonate more with who she is today.
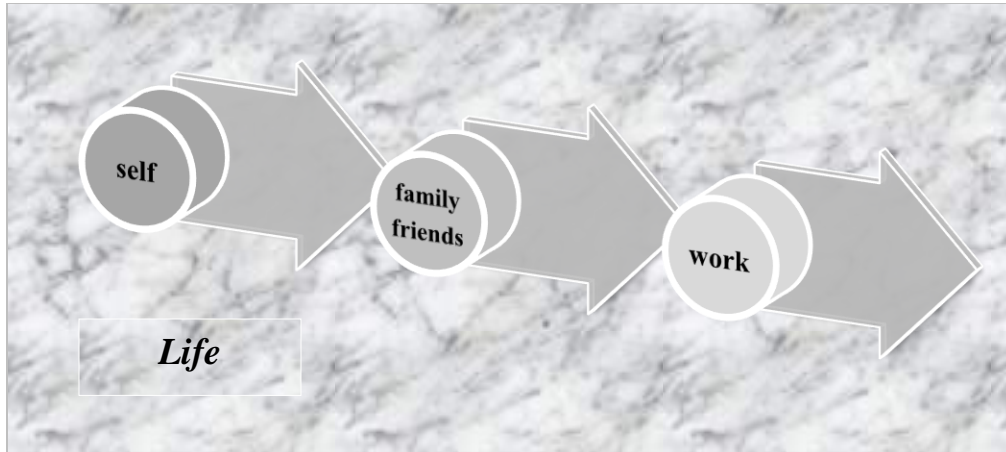
Figure 16: Vanessa second diagram.

In creating this figure I chose self, family, and friends as her primary identities because much of what she talked about in the first two meetings revolved around these topics. They all touch upon each other in this picture, moving in and out of each other's space. The sense of fluidity between the three identities is greater than in the first diagram. She said what was missing from the depiction was an underlying sense of the joy of life and the context this gives to her life, and so I inserted into the background the word Life while we talked. With this addition, she said she could see how self is the beginning point; family and friends, and work come out of this sense of self. Her work is not separate from the rest of her life: "I have the privilege of working in an environment that I love. And has produced a lot of life-long friends. And it's not something that I do from 8 to 5, its part of my joy of life, of learning".

Vanessa Counterpoint: Healing Circle

During our second innerview Vanessa picked up an object that almost seemed out of place in her office. I inquired about it and the story she subsequently told merits retelling. This is taken directly from transcripts, though I edited some phrases for clarity. Vanessa's story was this:

Well, this is a symbolic object. It's obviously a little airplane, made out of a spark plug and some other metal pieces. But I used it once as a symbolic object when I did a healing circle at another university. I was a dean, and there was a lot of angst going on in the school. And some of it seemed to be directed towards me, and some seemed to be just general angst. And we had gone through a lot of change and everything, and I decided to use a healing circle, a way of talking with this group. So I invited everybody over to one of our centers, all the faculty and department chairs and everything, and some of the key staff. And I had the area pre-arranged so all the seats were in a circle. It was 7:00 at night, and it was 50 degrees below zero. So it was dark, and cold, and bad outside.

Everybody came. We sat in the circle, and I started the conversation. And told them basically what I hoped we would do, and that this little airplane would be the symbolic object that we would pass. In my school we had technical training programs, and an airplane/power plant mechanic program and an aviation program, and at Christmas the faculty had given me a flight lessons and a flight log book. So that's why I picked this object.

But the idea was that you could either pass the object or talk. Whoever had the object had the floor, and you could choose to pass or you could speak. And so we started to go around the circle. And some people would say things, or people would pass. Sometimes people would, you know, talk about me, that I wasn't present enough, or some negative criticism of me, and then some of them would defend me, and then when it would come to me, I would say something about how I wanted people to feel comfortable saying what they wanted and needed to, even if they were criticisms of me.

Anyway, we went around this circle for two hours. And we finally unpeeled what was really going on. The bottom line was that people felt really disconnected from each other. And that they wanted to have a stronger sense of community. And they, you know, hadn't been at each others' house for years, or they hadn't done anything together for a long time. It was the most incredible ….

For me, it was potentially a very scary thing to do because I was a relatively young dean. So I just took the risk, because I really wanted us to have a conversation, to get to something that really mattered. And after the first hour

people weren't really talking about me anymore. They were talking about "us" and our sense of community. I guess I borrowed from the Alaskan native tradition of a healing circle, and a talking stick to get us to a real level of conversation and meaning.

[As she shares this story, she is playing with the airplane, moving it lightly across the table in short runs.]

So that was a very very transformative experience for us. That was really transformative for us. It was really wonderful. It changed everything. There really wasn't an agenda, it was ... I don't know what prompted it. Maybe some faculty wrote me a letter, I don't know what it was, something prompted me to feel that something, that this was getting serious and we needed to talk. And, you know, you're a dean, you're in a power position. In a situation like this you know you're going to have a spokesperson who will express the grievances of some people, but how are you really going to get to what's important?

So I just took the risk and did that, and it was marvelous. It changed everything. It changed the feelings about people for each other, it changed how we behaved, the kinds of things we started to do. So I just remembered that.

Poem. This story kept repeating itself in my mind in the weeks after the interview, and I felt compelled to re-create it in poetic form. The following poem is the result.

Goddess

A view of the world rooted in caring, mercy, saving face.
Rooted in listening, looking beyond the surface of words and actions,
where being able to empower others is a source of joy.
"You kind of get over the 'I' thing…
You get out of the 'I' and into 'We'"

In the darkest and coldest of nights,
a healing circle drew together,
feeling at first the sharp heat of fear
that words would spiral out of control,
and then the warmth that comes from
speaking ones' own truth
and being heard in it

To sit as leader, facilitator, meant being able to stay steady,
open, empathic,
looking beyond the initial anger lashings.
Knowing the point of connection is there, somewhere,
and waiting for it to emerge;
when it does it is
at first thin and reedy then stronger as
circle sitters recognize its compassionate voice and possibility
Each adds their words,
joining the communal glow
of release, forgiveness, and
future-leaning vision

I read this poem to her in our third innerview, and her response to it was strong

and immediate:

Wow, wow. That is really incredible. That just captures completely some of my
stories and experiences. Wow. Love that. I love that. You need to publish that.
Well you're going to, I guess. I love that. That is fabulous, fabulous.
[*She suddenly reaches her hand out across the table, stretching her fingers out in
a silent request to hold the poem, to read it. She continues*]:
I love this. [*She taps the table rapidly as she reads it.*] Uh-huh. "Sharp heat of
fear that words would spiral out of control". You know, I think you captured
beautifully the risk that you take, the risk that you take if you trust people, and
you trust that you can get to a better place if you take the time and you listen and
you allow people to really say what they're feeling. Because it's not what you
want them to feel, it is how *they're* feeling, and trying to figure out how you are

implicated in that. And what you can change, and maybe what you can't. I love this. It is fabulous.

Vanessa's healing circle brings up many points for consideration: how does a person in a place of power get people to talk openly about their fears and frustrations without intimidating or scaring them? How can it be done in such a manner that encourages open and honest dialogue? Her story is one example of the power of creating a sacred space, a sacred circle in which everyone sits and is able to speak their truth without fear of retribution. Peeling away the layers of resistance takes time and space, and a leader must know when it is time to do this, knowing if people are willing to engage, positive and lasting change can happen.

Vanessa Counterpoint: Saving Face

The following story was shared by Vanessa and illuminates her belief that people should be shown mercy whenever possible. Most of it is taken directly from transcripts and is in Vanessa's voice, with some insertions made for clarity and ease of reading.

"Most of the objects I have around me also have a very kind of feminist philosophy behind them. But, I often have a Kuan Yin in my office".

This statue is sitting on the table, and she picks it up and holds it softly. It is a beautiful rendering of the Chinese goddess, standing tall and looking downward as her robes swirl around her. A little Fu dog sits at her feet. As Vanessa talks she periodically reaches out to touch Kuan Yin.

Vanessa goes on, "this is a Kuan Yin statue that I've had in my past two offices. It took me about a year to bring her here for some reason. But Kuan Yin is a goddess, and she tends to be the goddess of mercy, or the goddess of healing, things like that. And

I just think that, I like to have that image and that energy around me because I think from

my experiences as a manager there seem to be always two sides to everything".

"What just popped into my mind was a faculty member who had fabricated all of

his teaching evaluations. And a secretary had pointed out to me that in processing all

these evaluations she just happened to notice that all his were in the same hand-writing.

Because I would never have seen them, because they went off somewhere else to be

tabulated, I would never have caught this. Once I did catch it there was a whole process

involved in investigating it, and it turned out he had forged all of them. And we

replicated the surveys, told the students that we were in the process of evaluating the

program and just wanted to make sure we had feedback from everybody. And for people

who had already filled it out not to bother, but anyone who hadn't filled it out should do

so. Well, come to find out nobody had ever seen it. But the evaluations we received from

students were totally outstanding. So he never had to do that".

Vanessa pauses briefly here, appearing to consider the irony of the professor

receiving highly positive remarks. She continues, "even as it became clear he had done

this I was hoping for something from him that would help me understand why he did what

he did. In his case I was open, and I really wanted to know why, what the motivation

was. I wanted to help him understand so he wouldn't let it ruin his life. But he just

couldn't go there and talk about why he'd forged those evaluations, and he resigned. I

had so wanted him to explain why. As a leader, and as his leader, I had the power to

eliminate him from the university. I had the power to humiliate him or help him. My

feeling was, why would I need to kick him again? He's gone. I don't get it when bosses

have to denigrate and humiliate people who are already gone. The only thing I can think

about it is there's some nagging defensiveness about it".

She reaches for Kuan Yin again and moves her gently around the table, making

slow circles as she continues talking. "Even in a case when the person has done

something wrong I think we ought to exercise some face-saving for them, if we can, if it's

not illegal. I think that is really important in organizations, to help people save face.

Someone once told me that when they were crossed by a subordinate they not only didn't

just fire them, they weren't satisfied with destroying their career, they wanted to destroy

their future. It was just such a horrible thing to say about somebody. I've never

forgotten it. People have already lost their job, they've lost their income. How much

more do you have to do?"

Leadership

Vanessa's intention to help her employees even in tough situations is worth

noting. She was willing to take a stance in which the professor in this story did not have

to feel humiliated. As outlined earlier in this work, some leadership styles cite

compassion as an active and necessary component of good leadership, yet how a leader

actually responds to a situation fraught with negative implications and possibilities with

an employee speaks louder than a philosophical musing on the topic. Vanessa's

commitment to empowering people and facilitating growth for them seems rooted in her

image of Kuan Yin, a figure who embodies compassion and mercy (Chávez, 2001).

She also sees how being a leader affords her opportunities to create positive

change. Vanessa said in our second interview, "I'm in some ways an agent of change, or

an agent to try to cause us to do something different, or something new. And so there is a

sort of tension around that". The tension she referred to has to do with conflicts that arise with administrators who separate themselves from other departments and the city within which MVU resides, and refuse to become engaged in these outer yet interconnected communities. She views her role as being a culture broker between her department and others and also MVU and its home city.

Another vital aspect of leadership for Vanessa is that of empowerment. She said,

I get my joy from empowering others. Seeing others' success. I mean, … I'm not so concerned about my own success any more. I get my joy from watching others succeed. Trying to help them when they don't have confidence, see in themselves what I see in them. That sort of thing. Empowering others is where I get my satisfaction. So. It's not so much about me. Maybe that's part of it. You kind of get over the "I" thing.

For Vanessa, being a leader is about having compassion that is actively demonstrated, being an agent of change, and about empowering others. The photographs in her office speak to this desire to empower others, especially women. She described the photos in this way:

Well, I try to get pictures of myself with women of power. This is Margaret Mead's daughter, and this is Meg … she was president of Xerox. I always try to get pictures of myself with women of power. Just because I always see these men with the walls in their office full of pictures of themselves with powerful men.

Her photographs and goddess statues are her way of balancing the power dynamic, of sending a message to women who enter her office that she is there to help them. St. Brigid's Cross and a goddess statue from Venezuela represent for her the transformative power women have, when they choose to acknowledge and exercise it.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness plays a direct role in Vanessa's work life, helping her stay grounded and healthy. The work of the Fetzer Institute (2003) summarized how mindfulness

affected the work lives of administrative leaders, yet hearing her talk directly about it brought an immediacy of meaning to the subject. The following segment is taken directly from the transcript of the second interview and is presented in its original question-answer format:

L: Can you tell me what mindfulness is for you?

V: It would be a practice of being very present. And some of the meditations that I've done [while] practicing mindfulness cause you to concentrate on your breathing, so I've done that a lot of times just to center myself. So that I'm not overwrought or over-controlled by whatever emotional response I might have to something. I also used it to prevent, forever, work disturbing my sleep. Because I used to do this mindfulness practice and it was almost like, if some thoughts were trying to invade, take over my consciousness as I was trying to sleep, I would deliberately say, "no, we're not going there. No, we're not going to think about that now. If you think about that now you're not going to be rested, and you have plenty of time in the morning. And no, we're not going there."

And I just did that for a long time. Work, for years, has never disturbed my sleep. Because of my practice of that. And I know it does for a lot of people. And then they're exhausted.

L: How does mindfulness come into your day-to-day work? If it does.

V: Well I think it makes me try to listen more. And listen longer, and listen deeper …. A situation came up the other day and one of my people was going into a situation where they were feeling, where they were probably going to feel defensive. So I was coaching them to really try to find out what that other person needed. What did the person they were going to meet with need? What was their concern? Not on the surface, not what they say first. Not jumping into what you feel you need to defend, but to take the time and the energy to figure out what was important to them. And see if that could be satisfied in this situation. Because if you have two people fighting over an orange and you end up compromising, and you each get half, you may never know that one person wanted to eat the orange and the other person wanted the zest. So you both could have been total winners. But instead you didn't really get to a level of understanding what the other person really wanted, or needed. So I think mindfulness has been helpful to me that way. It's been helpful to me to relax.

And I do think, I've always felt this way, that my best preparation for something, if it's a very very difficult meeting, or something really really

challenging, my practice and my sense has always been that the best thing I can do is to rest. You know, to just not expose myself to something very vigorous intellectually or physically or anything. And just get to bed at a decent hour, just take care of myself and get to sleep. And trust that if I get to sleep, and have a good seven-eight hours of sleep, I will be able to draw upon my resources and I will be fine. So that has held me in pretty good stead.

Vanessa and I talked about how mindfulness intersects directly with work. As part of this exploration I asked if she could give me a synopsis of her spiritual history. The ensuing story came out as part of her answer, and offers a glimpse into Vanessa's private spiritual life.

Vanessa Counterpoint: Finding a
Spiritual Home

Vanessa and her partner Lynn decided it was time to find a church, a spiritual community they could become part of. They both had come to the very clear conclusion that formal religion was not very accepting of who they are as two women sharing love and life. In researching the various congregations in town, they found the First Universalist Church just a few miles away. She and Lynn went to an orientation for anyone interested in knowing more about the Universalists, as they called themselves, and when they got there a woman approached them and said she would like to talk with them before joining a group discussion. She asked them to tell her a little about themselves, and Lynn said, "We're lesbians. Is that going to be a problem for you?" After a brief pause the woman said "well, that would be fine". Both Vanessa and Lynn heard the hesitancy in her voice and gave each other that sideways "should we get out of here now?" look, but with a shrug of her shoulders Lynn indicated they should stick it out a little longer.

After this initial orientation they were brought into a large room to sit in a circle with people. They were asked to share with everyone why they were there. One couple talked about their son who had recently come out as gay. When they tried to talk with their pastor about it he abruptly cut them off and has not directly spoken to them since. They felt shunned.

Another Caucasian couple got up and said they were looking for a new church because their old one had a pastor who condemned interracial marriages. This was fine until their daughter married an African American man and the pastor said, "I'm so sorry. I will pray for you". They did not want his prayers; they wanted his joy that their daughter had found love.

Another couple announced they had a new grandbaby and were hoping a wedding would follow shortly. Everyone in the circle laughed and cheered.

When it came their turn Vanessa and Lynn introduced themselves as a lesbian couple. The woman who had talked with them shot out of her chair and said, "Oh my God. You're lesbians?! I thought you said you were Republicans!" Everyone roared with laughter. They decided to stay with this church.

About traditional religions, Vanessa said,

I just never buy into any of that. Even in my little Lutheran history, my minister said that my grandparents would never get to heaven because they didn't go to church. My grandparents, who I adored. They were the kindest people in the world. That kind of stuff. I just totally find that something I can't accept. I don't believe in original sin.

[*We both laugh here. She is moving the Kuan Yin statue again, back and forth, in short runs that are slow, deliberate.*] I just don't believe in that stuff.

Being a Positive Person

Vanessa has explored many religions, from Chinese and Japanese traditions, to various goddess-centered groups, to Buddhism. She said, "Buddhism is too focused on suffering. I think I'm more by nature an optimist. A positive type person, you know, my glass is always half full. No matter what, I'm going to see it that way". She holds this perspective as an important part of her leadership philosophy. When strange or difficult things happen, like a recent event where a top administrator basically "disappeared overnight and no mention of him was made in the next executive staff meeting", she may disagree with how things are handled but will set to finding out what the positive is in the situation. She said, "I choose to try to find what I can do. Okay, if this is the new game plan, these are the new rules, what can I do? What can I do to make a difference, to contribute?"

She is very aware that as a leader people watch her closely. And so keeping a positive attitude helps those who work for her. She goes on,

> I think it's important to be on a positive path because I work with a whole group of people who are hard-working good people, and they need to feel like we're on a positive path, that we fit in, that we're contributing something. People are looking for a sense of community, a sense of belonging, and meaningful work. It's nice if it's valued, but if you value it yourself then that's something. And if people you're trying to serve value it, that's something.

Music Portrait: "Meadow Dance"

I met with Vanessa for a third innerview to talk about the diagrams, discuss the "Goddess" poem, and listen to the music portrait I created for her. In improvising this piece I tried to capture the impression I had of Vanessa of her being in constant, steady, and fluid motion. The first section of the music relies upon the guitar being tuned to an open tuning (DADGAD), creating an aural feeling of spaciousness and of non-resolution,

and of constant exploration. I deliberately tuned the guitar so that when the lowest string

was strummed with a bit of force a twanging sound was created. This to some degree

duplicated the sound of a tamboura, an Indian instrument used to ease people into a

meditative state. The guitar section of the piece fades away and a piano synthesizer motif

is brought in that is similar to the rhythm the guitar played, but with a clear melody

sounding over it. This second section, however, is not in the previous and more

traditional 2/4 time signature but is in a more lively, dance-like 6/8 time. I asked Vanessa

simply to relax and listen to the piece, and let any thoughts, feelings, or images arise

naturally.

Meadow Dance   **Music Piece #6**

The following excerpt is her description of what she experienced while listening:

Well, my imagery in listening to the first guitar part is, you know, pretty basic.
Sitting around the campfire, in the mountains or in Fairbanks. We launched a
women's music festival in Fairbanks, AL. Women came from all over the state. I
think it's now a big annual thing, but … in the evenings we would spend time at
the campfire, talking, singing, just listening to the guitar, and feeling the presence
of nature, and the calmness of nature, and the night sky. If it was winter the
aurora would be above us. The music reminded me of this.

During the second section, my total imagery was of dancing, a female figure
dancing in circles, around a sort of a big floral bed in a field. So she was just
twirling around in this floral bed and the whole thing was happy and light. And
eventually when it ended she just sat down in the flowers …. So that was my
image.

After Vanessa shared this I explained a bit more of why I created this particular

music, saying, "You seem to be a very fluid person as an administrator, moving between

roles. Who you are is integrated with your work. I think that is where a lot of the piece

came from. The overall piece has that same constantly moving drone going on

underneath it all".

Vanessa responded,

> Yes, because it started with more meditative type music. And when you created this space for reflection pretty soon I was off dancing! Just enjoying! Just enjoying the present moment, just going with it. It was happy, wasn't it? Both parts had the common, steady, rhythmic piece, and then they were moving in different directions off that. So that was kind of neat. So you had the grounding bass, the foundation, then you had the movement around it. Not too jarring, not too … just right. Just right.

One more facet of Vanessa's spirituality was brought forth in listening to this music portrait, and that was of her strong connection to nature. Some of her last words in our third interview had to do with this:

> It's interesting, though, now that I think about it, in both [imagery] cases I was in nature. I mean, I'm an office drone, in so many ways. But where my sustenance comes from [nature] … I think that's why I got involved with the Universalists, because they are very much nature oriented. Their spirituality is very much drawn from the interaction with the natural world, and respect for the natural world. And being present in it. When I think about it, it is interesting that in both cases I found myself in outdoors. Isn't that funny?

The incongruity of her working in an office that has no windows while much of her sense of spirituality is rooted in the beauty of the natural world is not lost on either of us. The environment in which she works has the potential to negatively influence her administrative style with its lack of fresh air, sunshine, and windows looking out into the world, but it does not. She draws on her deeper spiritual values and connections to keep her moving forward in a positive, respectful, compassionate, and thoughtful manner.

Vanessa's Postscript

I conclude Vanessa's portrait with one of her own quotes:

"I think it's important to model leadership behavior, and it's also important to your own happiness and your work. Why be miserable? And sometimes you can choose how you feel. Why wouldn't you decide to focus on the positive?
So that's my story and I'm sticking to it!"
(Vanessa, Innerview #3)

Movement IV Conclusion

This movement contains the voices of my participants expressed in expository style, poems, stories, visual depictions, and music. It was my intent to offer the reader a peek into their lives and how each of them, in very distinct ways, brings a spiritual perspective to their work. Sometimes this bringing is overt and sometimes it is subtle, but it is always there, like the river running alongside a high desert highway.

My own voice is also always present in these tellings for it is the force that shaped the words and music. Qualitative research encourages the presentation of the investigator's motivations, biases, and reactions as a way to complement the data (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). With this in mind the following section acts as the sounding of my voice and an interlude between Movements IV and V.

INTERLUDE: "SELF AS INSTRUMENT"

In preparing to go into the recording studio to tape the music, I am practicing intensely, moving back and forth between adhering to the original pieces I improvised and letting something new emerge. What works is to respect the music I originally improvised by retaining some of its structures, harmonic, melodic, and/or rhythmic phrases, and also leave space for new insights to emerge. When preparing a participant's music I review their interview transcripts and that gives me a different angle of meaning, a new dimension, to be sounded.

This process of playing, listening, and reading became one motivated and guided by respect for the people I interviewed. When practicing, I play with no other goal in mind but to make these songs worthy of the participants' experience. This is hard work. Very hard work. More detailed than people know—I have to get nuances just right and then practice them without taking away the spontaneity that lives in them. I have to get the chord sequences set and predictable so I can follow them without too much trouble. Phrasing. Bowing. Fingering. Openings and closings. Now I have to cut my nails, too. (data collecting journal, November 8, 2011)

The process of creating and recording music for five participants was arduous, intensely personal, and enriching to my sense of self as researcher and musician. After I finished the five music portraits, I was left asking myself what this whole experience of finding a topic, interviewing people, and creating music meant to me as a person and as a researcher.

I wondered if I had my own music portrait that could reflect the experience of re-creating data. In considering this further and listening internally for musical clues, I heard vague outlines of two sections and set out to express them. The first section is short, and reflects my sense of anxiety about the dissertation process and the worry I felt that I would not find a topic I felt strongly about. The music here is dissonant,

arrhythmic, and has no tonal center. It ends with a single note sounding, a note that becomes the transition into the next section that relies upon a pentatonic scale for structure. A pentatonic scale is comprised of five notes and has no major third interval in it to give it a sense of tonality or stability. It is an open, explorative scale that resists resolution. I believe I intuitively chose that scale because it reflected the explorations my participants and I engaged in.

When listening to the second section you may notice several points where a chord is sounded which invokes a sense of aural satisfaction; these are places where I played a major chord. My intent in dropping these chords into the music was to musically portray the moments when I experienced a feeling of profound connection to my participant. The piece concludes in the spirit of the pentatonic, without resolution. The following hyperlink will take you to the piece.

Self as Instrument **Piece #6**

Drawing upon crystallization for data representation, this music is a way of viewing the data via another, previously hidden angle. For me, the piece has a searching quality yet is also deliberate in its melodic meanderings and harmonic changes. It is held together by the tonality and overall character. This is analogous to the data collected: each participant had their own movement of words and themes, yet the whole project is held together by the principle theme of spirituality and work. The second portion of the piece reflects the sense of calmness and purpose I felt in pursuing the data, and ends with the hint of "more to come". Movement V, in which I highlight themes and differences, fulfills this promise.

MOVEMENT V

SPIRITUALITY AT WORK: MEANINGS, SUGGESTIONS,

AND IMPLICATIONS

A common theme in this dissertation is my reluctance to impose meaning upon my participants' words and experiences. The stories, perspectives, and memories of each are so unique that drawing parallels seems like the artifice of an eager researcher. Having expressed this viewpoint, I do find there are commonalities and contrasts that can be explored. In order to effectively do so I must first return to points raised earlier in the dissertation, including campus readiness, empowerment of middle management, and the president of MVU's mention of spirituality in a university address. From there themes shared between participants are presented and discussed with the overarching premise "Spirituality at Work" holding them together. The movement closes with possible future research projects and suggestions for practice.

Connecting to Earlier Points

When creating the literature review I was aware of the need to build a theoretical foundation upon which an exploration of spirituality in administrative leadership could take place. I researched and analyzed topics I thought would support the need for such a study. In light of the data collected, the literature review contains ideas and proposals that merit reconsideration. These areas will be explored in the following sections: campus readiness for the inclusion of spirituality, empowering middle management, and

the question of whether the president's overt mention of spirituality in context of university operations was meant as a hegemonic panacea or support.

A Return to Campus Readiness

In Movement I, campus readiness (Plested et al., 2006) was discussed as a model that could gauge whether or not a university like MVU was ready to bring spirituality into classrooms, staff rooms, and board rooms in a more definitive and deliberate manner. I initially assessed MVU at being at level 3 of possible 9 levels, where the campus is ready to establish a goal of raising awareness about the issue and is poised to take action. After the disclosures offered by my participants, I find it viable to state MVU is a campus prepared to set goals of bringing spirituality into student and staff lives. Examples of how this could be accomplished are to create a designated reflection space for students and staff or incorporating spiritual perspectives into management training, both of which are discussed in greater detail in ensuing sections.

Most participants stated, however, before spirituality can be concretized on campus other considerations need to be addressed. For example, defining and refining what MVU's mission is, aside from the state mandated mission statement, must be done so that leadership goals can be articulated. A clear vision needs to be established so that alternative modes of pursuing the goals can be explored. Vanessa, Aylen, Gabriel, Andrew, and Jonathon all proffered their views that MVU does not have a clear strategic mission, especially in these times of shifting monetary sources and enrollment needs. Each said they understand the president's mandate to conceptualize options for changing operations, yet do not grasp exactly what changes they should be working towards: does MVU want to become bigger or smaller? Does it want to attract more international

students or focus more on enrolling local students? When three enrollment management

plans are worked on intensively and then scrapped, will a fourth be supported and

enacted? There is confusion about objectives and how to reach them. Vanessa said,

"Even if you propose a goal, it's apparently not the correct goal, although it's never said

exactly. It's just that we start over again, so it must not have been right!"

MVU's purpose and plan for the future must be ascertained before new

approaches to spirituality and leadership can take place. And this must come from upper

management: "If it doesn't start with leadership you're wasting your time" (Bill

Schneider, personal communication, July 21, 2011). The president's self-disclosure of

her work being a spiritual journey certainly suggests she, and possibly MVU's

administrative leaders, is ready to bring her personal views and strengths into the

workplace. The willingness of participants, all of whom were top tier administrators, to

talk openly about the roles spirituality does or does not take in their work lives also

validates the premise that spirituality is a presence on campus, though for some concealed

as a personal perspective. Finding resources to operationalize spirituality through a

physical place on university grounds could signal a strong commitment to this type of

diversity and need in student development. The university could rely upon the talents of

current academicians and staff to conceptualize such a space. Creating a tangible space

like a designated reflection area would symbolize MVU's awareness that spirituality is an

active force in student and staff lives. With this type of visibility, the less intangible

signs and signals that spiritual diversity is supported could begin to emerge.

Both Vanessa and Aylen spoke of their desire to see MVU focus more

specifically on student success and transform the campus culture to one where everyone

from building services workers, to professors, to academic advisors is concentrating on how to make each student feel welcomed, supported, and challenged to grow. Acknowledging and drawing upon spiritual principles could be of help in setting plans and working towards student success. When I write of relying upon spirituality to do this it is not in an ethereal, elusive sense, but rather with the perspective that bringing a spiritual intention to these discussions opens one's mind to creative or "out-of-the-box" possibilities that might otherwise not be recognized.

In reviewing the criteria for the varying levels of campus readiness, I find my initial assessment of MVU being at level 3 still valid. Awareness of the issues surrounding spirituality in leadership, management, and student life is present, yet public objectives have not been set or steps taken to bring goals to fruition.

Empowerment of Middle Management

When reviewing the literature for the dissertation, I touched briefly upon empowering middle management as a subsidiary of the differences between shared governance and shared leadership. Shared leadership calls for the recognition and development of leadership traits in middle management employees. Empowering these staff members to become more connected to the mission of their department and the university and to take ownership of their work is integral to developing shared leadership practices.

After conducting the interviews and innerviews I discovered empowerment was an important part of the managerial role for all six participants, not in the sense of empowering themselves but as actions taken to help their staff become stronger leaders in

their own spheres of influence. Through the conversations with administrative leaders I am able to adduce how this empowerment is implemented at MVU.

Vice Presidents, Vice Chancellors, and Assistant Vice Presidents of typical universities wield power and have authority over many people. The people I interviewed oversaw large departments and were responsible for the work of every person in their area. Jonathon, Gabriel, and Vanessa acknowledged that, as managers of so many, they have the power to either humiliate or help people. From their words it was clear they were committed to staff growth and development whenever possible, and when it was time to reprimand or admonish an employee, to do so with fairness and respect. Jonathon related the example of getting a thank you note from a person he had fired. Gabriel told a story of how he had witnessed, early in his career, his supervisor fire someone in a callous and heartless manner and the employee's devastation over how this had happened. This experience prompted him to make a promise to himself that he would never do this to anyone. He vowed if he ever had to fire someone he would do so face-to-face and with dignity and clarity.

Beyond how to handle firings and reprimands, each participant talked about their commitment to helping their staff develop their potential and become leaders in their own ways. Vanessa tries "to be a coach of people" and help her staff learn how to manage difficult situations. She gave one example:

> A situation came up the other day and [one of my staff members] was going into a situation where they were feeling, where they were probably going to feel defensive. So I was coaching them to really try to find out what that other person needed. What did they need? What was their concern? Not on the surface, not what they say first. Not jumping into what you feel you need to defend, but to take the time and the energy to figure out what was important to them. And see if that could be satisfied in this situation.

Andrew encourages his staff to improve their work abilities and not be afraid to apply for higher level positions. Aylen asks her employees to talk about their successes in terms of team efforts and not fall into bragging about achievements as solitary accomplishments: "I don't like to hear 'I' a lot when people talk about what they've accomplished". Gabriel holds great faith in the abilities of his staff members and gives them leeway to perform their duties as they see fit, and said, "it's interesting to me how given the right situation, people rise". Jonathon relates that he is not a micro-manager but finds trusting employees to do their best in turn creates an environment in which they feel challenged to work to their optimal levels.

Trey also adheres to the notion of empowering his staff members. He referred to his department as being like a volleyball team: each member must not only do their best work but must also be able to work together in order to reach goals. Going further, he said,

> I think that my leadership style is about finding ways to energize, facilitate, collaborate. Empower people to do that. And then you have to add a touch of, "okay, we have to have policies and procedures, we have to be coordinated, organized". And you have to have guiderails and guideposts.

To sum up, empowerment is an essential piece of participants' governing strategy. This is not just a good management policy but is an expression of individual values of respect, dedication to growth and individuation, and appreciation for shared leadership. *"The empower piece of it—when I was first empowered, I finally learned that there was a term for that appreciation and understanding. And that felt good" (Aylen)*

Spirituality in the President's Address:
Panacea or Support?

I have spent countless hours poring over hundreds of pages of transcripts, created music to reflect participants' connection to spirituality, and written much on how these people connect spirituality and work, and believe I have been given the gifts of honesty and authenticity by my interviewees. Before embarking upon this investigative journey I had, to some degree, expected evasiveness and superficial answers, yet for the most part received profound and very personal responses to my questions. Does this correlate in any way to whether the president spoke of spirituality as an attempt to appease her constituents' frustration with hiring freezes and cutbacks or as a genuine indication of understanding and encouragement? I cannot answer this definitively; this would be a question for her response.

What I can do, however, is make a conclusion based upon the depth of answers I received and the support participants have for the president. Each of them grasps the fact that MVU is engaged in a struggle for funding and growth that is historically unprecedented. Each of them also critiqued how the president performs her job, from not having a strong presence on campus to frustration with a lack of overall vision for the university. In our conversations, however, it was clear they have respect and admiration for the president. For example, Vanessa and Aylen praised her support of first-generation and non-traditional students. Others praised her willingness to open up discussions of fiscal sustainability to the entire campus. It was also evident that for most of them their work is directly related to their spirituality: they have this in common with the president's expression that her work has been a spiritual journey.

Whether or not she intended her personal statement to indicate her support of including spirituality in how the campus is managed was a point pondered by the people I interviewed, in varying ways. Trey viewed the president's hiring of a consulting group to engage her top staff members in the challenging and demanding work of self and group analysis as reflective of her genuine commitment to changing MVU's siloed landscape and to helping each becoming a better leader. Andrew and Gabriel said they thought the revelation demonstrated the president's personal evolution in the job, from initially being "very businessy" (Gabriel) and authoritatively setting strategic plans, to now, years later, charging everyone on campus to not just think about what needs to be done, but in what spirit goals will be achieved and how people will work together towards the common purpose of university sustainability.

With these factors in mind I deduce the president publically referring to her work at MVU as being a spiritual journey was done in with the intent of demonstrating her profound dedication to MVU and to encourage others to talk more openly and in innovative ways about their work and visions for the university. As a logical extension, I also view her disclosure as an invitation to include spirituality in discussions of operations and education.

Spirituality at Work

The roots, the foundation, of leadership are spiritual in nature. Seeing the best in people, expecting excellence, exhibiting deep respect, listening closely, developing positive relationships: all come down to having empathy and compassion, having a view of humanity that expands beyond the darker sides of our nature, and having a belief that we can be more than we think we can be. Seeing a greater good. Transcending our limitations. Having a sense of reverence, awe about the world. Not letting bad things get to us. Putting faith in people as being fundamentally good. Seeing the whole as well as the parts.
(data collecting journal, July 21, 2011)

In five of the six interviews spirituality had an explicit role or effect on how an administrative leader approached her work. One participant shied away from using the term spiritual because he associated it directly with religious dogma. As the interviews progressed, however, he became more comfortable with the term once he realized his deeper ethical and moral values matched those of many spiritual traditions. Themes worthy of exploration that arose in the interviews and innerviews include community, circles, the role of family and friends, leadership, and finding internal points of stillness.

"We": The Language of Leaders?

When talking about his work Trey preferred saying "us" over "I": "We are committed to …", "What we are trying to do …", and "When we are working on a project" are but a few examples of this. Gabriel also talked in terms of "we" versus a term of personal ownership. This at first threw me off as an investigator. I thought he and Trey were being evasive and unwilling to be pinned down by definitive statements of what they did or did not do. But in reviewing the data with crystallization as a guide, I began to see other angles and possible meanings. I realized that this linguistic quirk was not to avoid responsibility but to share it. Andrew too used "we" language, emphasizing the collaborative environment he hoped to inspire in his staff. And Aylen was very clear in her statements:

> I've shared with my staff, "don't come in and tell me what *you* [original emphasis] did. I'm going to be more enamored with what *we* did. Because it tells me that you're getting the message that we need to work collectively and collaboratively."

This phenomenon occurred with Vanessa as well, and it was while talking with her I realized the intent behind using "we" is to create a sense of community in the department. Everyone knows she is the boss yet she clearly and articulately stated her

team is just that, a team. This was exemplified in her statement that as one becomes a more seasoned and relaxed leader, "You kind of get over the 'I' thing." Vanessa spoke of a time when objectives she established for her department were high, or, in her words, "ridiculous!" They went beyond what any of her staff thought possible to pull off, yet by creating a sense of excitement around these objectives her staff became motivated to achieve what in years past would have been unimaginable. Like Trey, Vanessa's staff is comprised not of individuals working to reach their personal goals but of people united in their desire to provide excellence in service for their student and faculty customers. She also said, "I work with a whole group of people who are hard-working good people, and they need to feel like we're on a positive path, that we fit in, that we're contributing something."

Sometimes community has to be fostered and created by a leader, as Vanessa did with the healing circle. She said she was prompted to do this when she noticed a trend in her department: "The bottom line was that people felt really disconnected from each other. And they wanted to have a stronger sense of community." It was up to her as their leader and supervisor to initiate this process, and to set up an environment of safety and trust. In doing so, open and honest dialogues were generated that enabled her staff to self-create their sense of community.

Trey offered his insight into this idea of community:

I sometimes envision this campus community almost like an orchestra. And the leader is the conductor. Everybody has a part to play. And I hope this doesn't offend anyone, but you wouldn't want a whole orchestra full of trombone players. You need that kind of diversity of thought and opinion. I think leadership should foster collegiality, civility amongst folks. We have to know how to agree and disagree, and work toward a common concern.

Perhaps this "we" language is the language of leadership. Unless questions were specifically directed towards personal viewpoints or opinions, "we" was how these participants expressed accomplishments, tendencies, and hopes for their department and the university. Gabriel talked about the team effort it took to create and put up the Welcome banners. It was his idea, but enacted only through the mutual work of many people. Being disinclined to talk about personal accomplishments seemed to be a trait of everyone I spoke with.

The notion of community captures the intent of these leaders in using "we" language. Everyone must work together in order to fulfill goals and create new ones. Having a community of co-workers enhances camaraderie, respect, and positive interactions.

Circles

Crystallization helped me see larger patterns between participants' sets of data. For example, I noticed Jonathon used circle imagery frequently in our conversations. For him, they represent his evolution from professor to administrative leader: "Another thing I would say is that as you develop, as you move, I don't know if you call it up, but as you change roles, the concentric circles get bigger." Then I realized Vanessa told the story of the healing circle that transformed how her department functioned. And when Gabriel acknowledged the circular nature of his going to church as a young boy to sit in silence and his need to, as an administrator, sit quietly in his "thinking chair" in order to achieve a sense of perspective on an issue, I saw there was a pattern here. This was reinforced when in his innerviews Trey emphasized connectedness and the importance of establishing "feedback loops of communication" not only between departments but also

between hierarchical levels. He said without feedback people become "disconnected. You get further and further away from the people who are impacted by your decisions."

Circles, connectedness, and loops all speak to the notion expressed by each participant that their work is intertwined with not only those in their departments, but the people who work across campus, regardless of station or rank. As Trey said,

> We're all people, we're all humans, we are all individuals trying to accomplish something. Trying to accomplish something not for us as individuals but for the students, the people that we're supposed to be focused on.

Diagrams. I created diagrams to illustrate my interpretation of five of the six participants' work and personal identities. These participants looked at the diagrams and suggested changes which I then incorporated into modified or completely new pictographs. What is striking to me is that not one person questioned the inclusion of other identities, such as Family or Culture, into the depictions of spirituality and leadership. Religion did not dominate any conversations, and each diagram had a balance of work, family, and spirituality. Having other identities in conjunction to work seemed vital to most participants as these provided a needed complement to the stresses of administrative life.

Each diagram was revised with input from respective participants, yet each ended up being in or containing the shape of a circle. This was not done intentionally on my part, but rather reflects the strong circular theme that arose during interviews.

Balance: Family and Friends

Jonathon's kids are his anchor: he is a Dad. Like Jonathon, Aylen's Dad was a strong, kind, yet firm presence in his growing up years. Trey talked about the importance of family and friends in regards to his work life and how his family keeps him focused

and centered, saying "personal relationships are very important in terms of not just having a bunch of friends but actually having a sense of connectedness." The parents of Andrew, Gabriel, and Vanessa serve as their role models for how to manage life's difficulties. Several times during our conversations Vanessa and Gabriel brought up how vital their family and friends are in being able stay balanced amidst constantly changing work needs and dynamics. Having close relationships factored strongly into the conversations about spiritual values.

Aylen's husband continually prompts her to be more transparent in her reactions to and feelings about things. Doing this, she said, helps her feel more congruent between her home and work lives. Having a family she is connected to keeps her grounded, and her grandmother's strength and resiliency are constant reminders to just keep going, to do her best, and to live her faith at home and at work. Her father helped her become the person she is today, and she still looks to him for guidance and support.

It is worth noting that most participants openly rejected the spiritual beliefs of their parents and upbringing yet retained an abiding respect for them as people with integrity. Andrew related how conservative his parents were, both religiously and politically, and wondered how he became so liberal. In a recent visit home, he overheard his mother say to one of her friends, "Well, you know, I'm so proud of both my children, but I'm afraid they're both Democrats."

Andrew, Vanessa, and Trey all considered the faith they were raised with as limiting and oppressive, and have embraced a spiritual outlook based upon compassion, dignity, respect, and willingness to be awed by beauty in the world. Instead of following

the religion he was brought up with, Jonathon's eclectic mixing of traditions has taught

him this:

> I want to avoid thinking that I can place whatever that mystery is that makes
> religion happen, I want to avoid placing it into too rigid of a box. Because I am
> keenly aware that probably that box is the not big enough [laughs], or is the
> wrong shape or something.

Having a strong support network of family and friends seemed essential to each

participant's ability to perform their work duties in an efficient and conscientious

manner. In some cases like Vanessa's work life and friends can blend. She says,

> I have the privilege of working in an environment that I love. And has produced a
> lot of life-long friends. And it's, it's not something that I do from 8am to 5pm, its
> part of my joy of life, of learning.

Finding a balance between work and home, and inner values and outer expressions of

them was a critical component of interviewees' ability to perform their professional

duties with focus, intention, and diligence.

Leadership and Spirituality

I feel I can solidly conclude that spirituality is an element of effective leadership

for the participants in this study. The musings and stories shared by my participants that

revolved around being professional or being a good leader demonstrated this connection.

Several voiced their explicit belief that having spiritual values makes them better leaders.

Gabriel went on to say,

> If I think to the leaders I've been privy to, those leaders who don't have a spiritual
> bent, they have been very hard for me to work with. Because they fundamentally
> don't treat …, there's—how do I say this?—I think there is something a spiritual
> piece offers, and it's the whole dignity of the person, respect, compassion piece.
> At least that's what I think. What I've really relied on if you will. Those people
> I've seen in leadership positions that don't hold fast or seem to have some sort of
> spiritual direction, are, not that they're not brilliant, but I don't think in the end
> are very good leaders, because of how they treat people.

Here Gabriel makes the link between having spiritual values and how an administrator treats her staff: in his years of higher education experience he has witnessed how not having or displaying these values ultimately shows out in a lack of respect, arrogance, and dismissal of people's right to fair treatment.

Gabriel critiqued MVU's leaders and his perceived lack of spirituality in their behaviors. The top level of management does not "embody that spiritual piece" (Gabriel). He said, "The thing that attracts me and makes this place so appealing isn't everybody above me, it's everybody at my level and below me that makes this place what it is." Having a strong spiritual identity, for him, makes him a better leader. Working with others who share this is enlivening and inspirational for him and so he surrounds himself with employees who share these values, whatever religious form they may take. This gives me pause to wonder what would happen if MVU's executive leadership were to more openly manifest spiritual qualities and behaviors.

Vanessa touched upon this point as well, saying MVU's leadership team sometimes does not "walk its talk". For her,

> It's frustrating if you articulate that the culture [of MVU] is going to be very transparent, and then you turn around and just send out dictates … Which means the people in charge must either believe they are trying to be transparent--surely they're not just being totally duplicitous, but they believe that they're trying to do the right thing and just not aware of how it's coming across.

Being transparent in interactions and congruent between words and actions is something each participant voiced as being important to their personal work style, yet, as has been said, is sometimes missing at upper levels of MVU's leadership. Having a spiritual perspective about their work seemed to help participants in this study frame

what they could and could not accomplish, and better understand their role in the
university system.

Points of Stillness

When describing the centrifugal nature of a university and how there needs to be
someone at the center to "keep the central vision intact" (Jonathon), Jonathon said it was
like being the still point at the center of the circle. This notion of having an internal still
point also arose in Trey's interviews, when he talked about his need to have a quiet place
inside himself which he could tap into for rejuvenation and inspiration. Gabriel spoke of
needing to slow down in order to maintain equilibrium:

> So much of the time we're running around, doing so much that we don't sit and
> just be quiet. And think. And listen. It's when I don't do this that I'm probably
> more destructive. Not only to myself but to my staff, because I'm doing stuff and
> not really being thoughtful about it all.

Relying upon crystallization to re-view the data and identify this common point
(though it took varying forms), I thought about this theme and wondered if helping
administrators cultivate a point of stillness within themselves would be helpful to their
overall approach to work. This cultivation or encouragement would not have to be
presented in a spiritual manner, but in with contemplative terms like "quiet center", or
"point of stillness from which action arises". For Trey, having internal sources to turn to
for self-reflection is important, for this practice "gives you a better understanding of
where your strengths lie, how you can improve, and, it's just being mindful."

Aylen finds these points of stillness inside herself through prayer. She feels
relieved and energized after contemplative moments, and says,

> What I realize is that I need more of those times, the time-outs, throughout the
> day. Because afterwards I can feel myself re-emerging. Just clearing your mind,

and thinking more clearly instead of fretting or stewing on an issue is also healthy.

Connecting to interior points of quietude seems to help interviewees re-focus on what is important and release tensions and emotions that surround difficult issues.

Creating a place on campus. On one of MVU's advertising posters there is a student pictured who is seated in a cross-legged pose, eyes closed, and with hands together as if in prayer. The overall image suggests to the viewer that she is engaged in meditation. The backdrop is a batik wall-hanging with East Indian symbols on it. The picture evokes a feeling of peace and openness; implied in its imagery is a welcoming attitude towards spirituality on campus. But this is the only overt indication that MVU is a place accepting of all faiths and considerate of the many students who question their spiritual and religious beliefs. I asked several participants what they thought about creating some kind of physical space for contemplation and reflection on campus, and each was startled that no such place existed and curious as to what it could look like. Their responses indicated having such a place could serve as a point of both self-reflection and community. In terms of being a gathering place, Trey said it could be "for celebrations, mourning, or whatever you needed to do to be connected to people." It could provide a quiet space for contemplation. This suggestion is explored in greater depth in an upcoming section.

Summary of Themes

Community, circles, finding balance, intersections between leadership and spirituality, and points of stillness are the major themes that were synthesized from the many transcripts. The diversity of participants' experiences and the distinctive history, approach to work, values, and personal spiritual outlook each proffered made it difficult

for me to formulate all-encompassing themes, yet these five seemed to have points common to all. I strongly feel it would have bordered on being disrespectful to interviewees had I shortened descriptions in Movement IV in order to draw more parallels for Movement V or fit a traditional dissertation format, for each person's voice was inimitable and deserving of full attention. Doing so here, in Movement V, provides a greater context for the reader not only to assimilate the information imparted earlier, but to also process and make meaning of her own responses to the written and creative portrayals. With this design, this movement's presentation of themes can help the reader frame her own interpretations.

Suggestions for Practice and Future Research

Determining research questions that could be pursued as a result of this study is a necessary step and one that is open to imaginative turns, given the queries, techniques used, and results of this study. For example, if I were to look at the data with a broad perspective for the next project I could examine specific spiritual qualities in administrators' work lives through a small scale qualitative investigation, or conduct a national survey on the spiritual qualities of leadership in higher education. Other possibilities include conducting interviews and innerviews on how personal beliefs affect the work of university presidents, or creating a longitudinal study designed to mark and elaborate upon the times in an administrator's work life when they relied upon their spiritual identity to guide their actions. This is only a beginning: there are more plans for research and practice to be gleaned from the current study. Each of the possible scenarios outlined next contains within it suggestions for practice and ideas on how spirituality could be more directly integrated into the administration of higher education.

Campus Space for Reflection

One idea to come out of the research was that of creating a space on campus for students, staff, and faculty to come to that is tranquil in nature. Like it is for Andrew and Trey, being in nature or in a place of natural beauty is rejuvenating for many people.

Suggestion for practice. Having a visible place for reflection and contemplation on campus would serve as an identifiable symbol of MVU's commitment to spiritual diversity. There is currently no area of campus where students can congregate in times of trouble or confusion, or for administrators to go to take a step back from the pressures of the office. Nor does a non-denominational or interfaith office exist to serve the great number of students who are adrift and seeking solace that does not come packaged in a religious format.

Creating an outdoor area designated as a "Reflection Zone" or some such term would serve as a gathering place when tragedy strikes or when dreams come true, where both staff and students could come together. When a MVU student recently committed suicide there was no spot on campus other than where he died that was an obvious choice to hold a vigil. Having a safe space, one open to all faiths and inclusive of cultural and religious traditions, could serve as a focal point for somber memorials as well as celebrations. It could also be a place where a student who is feeling overwhelmed but unwilling to seek counseling could go and contemplate his choices. It would be a physical reminder for everyone to take time to step back, reflect on the deeper meaning of what is happening in life, and be soothed by attributes that inspire tranquility.

It is crucial that a space like this be close to where students live and have beauty built into it to inspire a feeling of peace. Equally important is including students'

opinions and suggestions. Circles are powerful and ancient symbols of community and reflection, and so creating a labyrinth is one possibility. Building a waterfall is another. Designing structures that incorporate a campus' unique attributes in some way, i.e., a mascot symbol, would personalize the area even more.

Future research. Conducting research with universities that have a dedicated space for non-religious reflection and contemplation would offer insight as to whether this type of space should be on every campus, or at least on MVU's grounds. Observing behaviors and conducting interviews with students and staff who utilize such a space would touch upon the inclusion of spirituality in student development and address the question of how to support students' spiritual needs as they wrestle with their ever-expanding awareness of the world.

Celebrating the Spectrum of Colors

The inclusion of the song "Bein' Green" prompted an examination of how MVU executive staff members were engaged with a corporate consultant group. This work was designed to help them identify their individualized work style and codify it into colors and categories. One of the purposes of these pursuits was to increase trust and collaborative efforts.

When talking about his participation in this work, Trey said,

It is a non-threatening way for people to reflect on their leadership styles and the culture and the matching of those styles [to others]. And then what does that mean for you? I do think that if I were to be put into an environment where I had to be red all the time, I'd be really bad at it. Sometimes you have to be red, or you have to be green, and you have to honor the blue in people.

Finding a framework such as was provided by MVU's consulting group helped administrative leaders figure out how to blend, complement each other, and increase their individual and collective strength.

   Suggestion for practice. Hiring a consulting firm to transform how the executive leaders of an institution interact is a practice that could change how a university is run. Strengthening lines of communication, celebrating differences in work styles, and establishing a common ground of purpose and intent can increase the smoothness of operations and create a climate of cooperativeness and shared vision. Acknowledging spirituality as part of this work could increase trust and understanding of each other in a genuine, compassionate manner.

   Future research. The engagement of MVU's executive staff in an exploration of individual styles as expressed through the tables in Movement IV creates another sphere of potential research. Red, green, yellow, and blue are all needed to create a variety of colors. These four basic types blend and interact to create otherwise impossible spectrums and nuanced shades. In much the same way, a university needs professors, accountants, managers, and visionary leaders for operations and sustenance, and when these types are effectively blended new forces, ideas, and ways of working become possible. Trey said two benefits of his involvement with the consulting group was first being able to recognize that he is mostly a green type, an enrichment-oriented person, and second have other executive staff members affirm this. When he needs tasks accomplished that are more of a red nature, he does not have to feel bad about not being able to do it himself but knows he can call someone who is a red type to help him. Strengths are celebrated and differences are honored in this approach to teamwork.

Studying the work corporate consultants are doing with executive leaders through qualitative and quantitative methods could yield valuable information on how administration is conducted and how it could be improved. For example, if pre- and post-surveys had been conducted with MVU's executive staff before and after their work with the corporate consulting group, statistics on whether perceptions and actual work practices were effected could have been produced.

Learning to Play Together: Bringing the Arts to Leadership

Art and spirituality have many overlapping points, for both: Illuminate and challenge status quo; provide a sense of mystery and awe; express emotions and potentials in ways that confound the intellect and fill the heart; and bring beauty to everyday life. Incorporating artistic expressions into leadership circles holds the possibility of finding new ways to communicate, express thoughts and ideals, and interact with each other.

After Trey listened to the music I had created for him, he said, "what I like about music is that it takes you to that [calming] place. Whatever it happens to be, it takes you to that place that is about the spiritual sense of self." Incorporating reflective listening into leadership exercises holds the potential for staff members to consider more deeply their own roles in the university and also their relationships to each other.

All of my participants had meaningful pieces of artwork in their offices that directly reflected who they were. Vanessa had one such poster that had been created for her by a graphic designer at an institution she previously worked at. The joy and wonder in her voice as she described what it meant to her gave me pause to consider what it

would be like for administrative leaders to engage more directly in artistic reflections and activities.

Suggestions for practice. Whether by hiring professional musicians and artists trained in working with groups of people, or tapping into the wealth of talent already present on many campuses, creating opportunities for non-linear modes of expression as part of leadership training could increase flexibility, bonding, and awareness of one's own limitations and potentials. Like spirituality, working with these modalities offers a non-linear and transrational means to engage people in leadership exercises.

Other suggestions include active listening to music or reading poetry as jumping off points for discussions on vision statements, collaborative efforts, and goals. Many people are afraid of the prospect of creating their own work of art, whether visual, written, or musical, and it is important not to force this as an objective. Using pre-composed materials is a less threatening way to involve people in artistic endeavors. Another possibility is for the facilitator to create a piece, whether in musical, written, or movement form, from words and sentiments given directly from group participants. For example, after an exercise of active listening to contemplative music, participants could spend several minutes free-writing their thoughts. During a time of verbal sharing of the writings the facilitator would need to take notes and during a break create a poem, movement piece, song, or other artistic reflection that captures the essence of what was shared. Reflecting back to participants their own words via an artistic medium can provide powerful moments of awareness and community.

Future research. Another suggestion for future research is to study the use of creative arts as vehicles to enhance spirituality in higher education professionals' work

lives. Bringing participants together in groups to express their values, styles, and beliefs using formats like visual art, music, creative writing, movement, poetry, or the creation of a play, could yield results that increase our understanding of how spirituality intersects with work life on a more artistic and visceral level. Focus groups would be a natural choice for this type of study.

A project that looks at leadership and spirituality could also study whether the arts, when introduced thoughtfully and carefully, affect leaders' interactions. I think it ironic that many people will have a knee-jerk reaction of, "Bring music or art into an executive staff retreat? Ridiculous and demeaning!", despite the fact that these same leaders are focusing their energies on providing an education well-rounded and inclusive of the arts. Studying how and why artistic expressions affect leaders' interactions and actions through a mixed methods approach could strengthen commitment to the university's mission and increase understanding and appreciation of different leadership styles.

A Final Thought on Future Research

The results of this study lead to another question: Is the mission of higher education an intrinsically spiritual one, what with its emphasis on transformation, fulfillment, and the elimination of boundaries that separate human kind? Based upon the responses of my participants, I believe so. This is a question for future research, whether through carefully worded surveys, interviews and innerviews with other leaders, or creating focus groups of administrators who engage in guided conversations on the topic. Breaking this new question down into more manageable portions is one tactic, yet I

believe there is merit in having the courage to focus on the question as it stands. It is time to ask big questions in order to encourage and support wide scale change.

"When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision,

then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid"

(Audre Lord, 1997, p. 13)

Implications

Focusing on spirituality as an element of higher education administration is like opening Pandora's Box and polishing Aladdin's lamp all at once. Reactions and ideas are released that can wreak havoc or make wishes come true. Responses such as rejection of spirituality as a religious pursuit and calls for collaboration and increased appreciation are concomitantly brought to the forefront. Despite the fears and biases surrounding the inclusion of spirituality in discussions of leadership and management in higher education, most participants in the study openly acknowledged the role spirituality plays in their governance and management styles. Deconstructing these prejudices via authentic explorations of the intersections between spirituality, higher education, and leadership could expedite the cooperative process needed for the field to have a sustainable future.

Shared governance is a strong structure already built into the university system yet differs from shared leadership. This study implies it is possible for academia and administration to move to a new level of shared leadership, yet this would need to begin with the upper echelons of administration. Without executive staff members' modeling the creation of lines of communication and collaborative efforts based upon respect,

mutual agreement, and authentic appreciation of each other's strengths and weaknesses, change will be slow to come.

Drawing upon the rich spiritual heritage represented on college campuses across the country and bringing a spiritual focus to administration would enhance the teamwork necessary for survival. American campuses are full of varying cultures and beliefs, yet there are core values that are unitive in nature and purpose. Social justice movements are based upon values of equality, equity, and a desire to celebrate our human differences. Principles of transformative learning rely upon the human tendency to reach towards health and wholeness to support its mission of nurturing different learning styles and the development of each student's potential. Emphasizing spiritual values like compassion, unconditional regard, and honesty could help university leaders understand that though they may have different styles and methods for getting things done, they share a common purpose. If they can find ways to work together that are more interrelated and cohesive, perhaps the chasm that separates them from academic departments could also be bridged.

In this study I found six people intensely committed to the mission of higher education. They are leaders who possess qualities that reach beyond fairness and egalitarianism and include kindheartedness and gratitude. Each stated their work holds a purpose greater than their own ambitions and goals. Being connected to the university mission not only frames and supports their work, but also compels them to want to rise above personal negativities and become better people. All six rely upon a personal brand of philosophy and/or spirituality that gives meaning to what they do. Their belief systems and practices are divergent yet have commonalities of themes and qualities. In essence, they exhibit spiritual qualities in their leadership style. Does this make them

spiritual leaders? No, not at all. Though being a spiritual leader means having forgiveness in one's heart much as Nona did for Lilly and Aylen for her mother, and genuinely welcoming others, like Gabriel did for students and parents through his banners. It means being able to transcend one's personal reactions so that transformative growth may come about, much as Vanessa accomplished in her healing circle and Andrew did when dealing with the angry dean. Being a spiritual leader also means managing conflict effectively, which I saw in how Jonathon handled distressed staff, and in Trey's response to the unreasonable demands of his supervisor.

These actions do not make them spiritual leaders, but, and I feel I can say this with confidence backed up by their own words, does make them leaders with definite spiritual qualities. Living a moral life and having strong ethical values is part and parcel of being an administrative leader. Transcending personal views for the greater good, however, transports leadership from an ethical to a spiritual realm, especially when this is imbued, as it was for my participants, with an almost mystical awareness of their work as being necessary to fulfilling higher education's ultimate purpose, that of optimal student learning and development.

Each participant was dedicated to fostering transformative growth in students and employees, engaging in self-reflection, and transcending personal preferences and reactions. They were able to become fully absorbed in their work yet also retain the awareness that what they do is just a small part of what is necessary in order to further the cause of higher education and the transformation of students. With little prompting from me, each participant talked about having experiences of being filled with awe and reverence, whether by being in nature, engrossed in spiritual or cultural communion,

finding inner points of stillness that rejuvenate them, or feeling deeply connected to other people.

Finale

This research project had a specific focus: spirituality in the work lives of administrative leaders, yet due to the dearth of available literature on the subject I approached it with a combination of traditional and innovative tactics. Finding supportive literature, conducting interviews and innerviews, analyzing data through a crystalline lens, and representing the data through inventive textual, visual, and musical techniques helped to establish trustworthiness, and, possibly, transferability.

What I discovered was MVU is a vibrant university with a mission that sets it apart from other colleges in the state. The research project provided glimpses into the inner working lives of some of its top administrators, probing the personal spiritual identity of each and ways in which this identity connects to their work.

Drawing upon the image that opened this work, if a point of confluence could be created that allowed each person's spiritual "river" or identity, to join with other rivers, it would be possible to generate a powerful force by which change is brought to the archaic and non-functional top-down style of university management. The American university has drastically changed from what it was 100 years ago, even from 20 years ago. Finding new ways for leaders to work together and create sustainable university structures is not just a good idea, it is imperative to higher education's continued existence. Embracing spirituality with its attendant foci on justice, equity, parity, compassion, and a desire to cultivate human development is a good place to start the journey.

The time has come, I believe, to put aside the rift between administration and academe, and for each faction to come to a point of appreciation of the other. This may seem like a Pollyannish pipedream to some, but the results of this study indicate administrative leaders are ready to move forward to create a more united campus system that exists solely to better the lives of those who come there to study and learn. This appreciation will not come easily or lightly, for there will be factions on each side dedicated to the failure of any such undertaking. It will take the concerted, enthusiastic, and committed work of many people who are willing to break out of their respective roles and departments. Creating spaces on campus which acknowledge the diversity and importance of spirituality is one way to do this. Opening dialogues that blend together the voices of staff and faculty is another. Including students in conversations is vital to building lasting change.

Spirituality offers a comprehensive framework that, when devoid of religious and dogmatic trappings, creates a common ground of values and practices from which a shared vision can be built and enacted. Higher education is in need of an approach to change that is suited to today's demands; past ways of working are obsolete. This study demonstrates the willingness and capacity of administrative leaders to embrace such an approach based upon an investment in spirituality that does not dilute beliefs and traditions but enhances our collective understanding of our selves and each other. It is my hope others who read this will be inspired to bring their deeper values into their daily work so that transcendence of individual styles and personalities can be achieved in service to the advancement of our higher education system.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY *of*
NORTHERN COLORADO
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

May 5, 2011

TO: Wendy Highby
University Libraries

FROM: Maria Lahman, Co-Chair
UNC Institutional Review Board

RE: Expedited Review of Proposal, *Spirituality in the Work Lives of Higher Education Administrative Leaders,* submitted by Laura E. Beer (Research Advisor: Katrina Rodriguez)

First Consultant: The above proposal is being submitted to you for an expedited review. Please review the proposal in light of the Committee's charge and direct requests for changes directly to the researcher or researcher's advisor. If you have any unresolved concerns, please contact Maria Lahman, Applied Statistics and Research Methods, Campus Box 124, (x1603). When you are ready to recommend approval, sign this form and return to me.

I recommend approval as is. _____   5-19-11
          Signature of First Consultant   Date

The above referenced prospectus has been reviewed for compliance with HHS guidelines for ethical principles in human subjects research. The decision of the Institutional Review Board is that the project is approved as proposed for a period of one year: _5-26-11_ to _5-26-12_ .

_____   5-26-11
          Maria Lahman, Co-Chair   Date

Comments: _____

APPENDIX B

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

From: nickraposo@gmail.com [nickraposo@gmail.com] on behalf of nick raposo
[info@raposogroup.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2011 3:08 PM
To: Laura Beer
Subject: Re: Bein' Green Copyright

Dear Laura,

If you're not expecting thousands of downloads from the digital distribution of the song, I

can grant you gratis permission for this educational use.

Best,

Nick