# SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST? THE REBRANDING OF WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION

## EXCERPT: CHAPTER FIVE: REACTIONS TO THE "COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY" CHANGE

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# CHAPTER FIVE: REACTIONS TO THE "COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY" CHANGE

*If you want to make enemies, try to change something* – Woodrow Wilson (n.d.).
*The only human institution, which rejects progress, is the cemetery* – Harold Wilson (n.d.).

In 2001, Toma and Morphew conducted a qualitative study of two private institutions that underwent a "college-to-university" change. One school, an unidentified Midwestern university, had a smooth transition because it consciously involved key constituent groups in the process. By interviewing groups of students and community leaders, Midwest Metro University (as Toma and Morphew identified the school) understood the "opportunities and pitfalls associated with changing their name and they intended to research the relevant variables well prior to the name change" (2001, p. 18).

One of the primary groups Midwest Metro interviewed was military personal who were distance-learning students at the school's many sites nationwide. Important to the process, this group represented 60 to 70% of the college's revenue stream. The various focus groups provided valuable information to the school and allowed administration to build a case for the change and to understand how such a transistion would benefit its most important stakeholders. When considering rebranding, Kaikati and Kaikati (2003) recommended the significance of assessing stakeholder reactions prior to instituting a new brand. Engaging the reactions of key constituent populations is founded in a business assumption called "stakeholder theory" (Freeman, 1984; Kaler, 2006).

An early proponent of "stakeholder theory," Freeman (1984) defined it as "groups and individuals who can affect the organization, and . . . managerial behavior taken in response to those groups and individuals" (p. 48). According to Kaler (2006), the basic idea of "stakeholder theory" is that corporate decisions and organizational management

are grounded in the best interests of its stakeholders rather than in the primary interests of its stockholders (i.e., to increase profits). While proprietary institutions are geared toward stockholder interests, not-for-profit institutions have no corporate investors that benefit from a well-managed profit margin. Although this level of control is missing from many institutions, there is no guarantee that profits are being ignored. Legislatures, governing boards, and religious denominations may require at least fiscal responsibility and a constant eye toward the bottom line. Failure to do so may place the institution in jeopardy, and it may begin operating in survival mode (see Chapter 2).

While the extent that stakeholder influence has upon the viability of a college or university is not known, this does not diminish the importance of stakeholder acceptance of a proposed change. To involve stakeholders in the process, administrators need to identify their institutions' key stakeholders. Cooper and Argyris (1998) defined the stakeholders in business and industry as "any group or individual, which [sic] can affect or is affected by an organization. This wide sense of the term includes suppliers, customers, stockholders, employees, communities, political groups, governments, media, etc." (1998, p. 612). Cooper (2005) asserted, "In higher education, the list of stakeholders usually includes at least students, staff, employers of graduates, clients of consulting services, industry, venture partners, and regional communities. They also may include other interested parties such as professional associations, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies, parents, and education and training bodies" (p. 126-127). Notably missing from Cooper's list are alumni.

While not current consumers of an institution's academic mix, alumni can serve in important positions as board members, administrators, faculty, legislators, parents of

students, donors, and in other roles directly related to the institution. Often, alumni and other stakeholders have strong emotional ties to the institution. Lewison (2001) asserted that "[s]takeholder relationships with organizations may be based on emotional and psychological phenomena, and may not necessarily result from rationalized, calculating, utilitarian, and instrumental processes . . . [S]takeholders may have irrational and emotional ties to organizations, and organizations must manage these types of relationships as such" (p. 2). Mercatoris (2006) detailed that alumni often base their financial support of their alma maters on their favorable and emotional memories of their own college experiences. These emotional ties may apply to institutional decisions including rebranding. Martin and Hetrick (2006) noted that key stakeholders must react positively to an organization's brand for it to be successful. It would appear that stakeholder approval of an institution's rebranding efforts is critical.

Often stakeholders have contributed an important role in the decisions that occur at colleges and universities. The administration of West Virginia University witnessed this often as a variety of stakeholders voiced opinions concerning a number of university related initiatives. The issues included the following: the absorption of West Virginia Tech, Glenville State College's unsuccessful request for WVU affiliation, the reduction of Potomac State College from branch campus status to divisional status, the failed proposal to move the WVU Tech's engineering program to South Charleston, and the restructuring of WVU Tech from branch campus status to a division of WVU. One administrator illustrated the various stakeholder roles:

> So, there are all these other actors – there are all these internal constituencies . . . I asked the dean of the Harvard faculty, who was the

> teacher when I went to the Harvard School for New Presidents, "Who owns the university?" He said, "Son, that's a question that should never be asked, let alone answered." So the legislature plays in these decisions. They may be playing for competitor schools like Fairmont, Marshall, [and] West Virginia State. They might be trying to influence a decision that is being made at Potomac State – for political reasons in their hometown. The alumni play in it. Students play in it. The faculty plays [sic] in it. Administrators play – when I say "play" – have a role to play; and so you just see different results.

While legislative issues were covered in Chapter 4, this chapter addressed the other stakeholders and their respective reactions to the "college-to-university" change at specific institutions. According to Fort and Schipani (2004), "The individual best able to identify the significance of an action to a particular stakeholder group is the stakeholder group in question rather than a manager attempting to hypothesize what the impact might be" (p. 50). While an administrative perspective was sought from surveys and interviews, these opinions and perceptions of stakeholder reactions were analyzed post-change.

## Data Collection

Data collection for this chapter included quantitative and qualitative information culled from survey results from participating universities. At beginning of data collection for this project, 51 presidents of institutions that experienced a "college-to-university" name change were invited to participate. These institutions were from 10 states that have counties designated as being in Appalachia; however, only 12 of the schools were actually

in Appalachian counties. The population of schools included those rebranding to a university during the years 1996 to 2005. Three successive mailings produced a return of 67.66% of the surveys, which represented 34 institutions. Institutional presidents or their proxies were asked to rate specific statements on a 4-point Likert scale. Scores on this scale were computed as 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Five groups were categorized based on whether they supported the name change. These segments included faculty, administration, alumni, the community, and the institutional board. Additional ranking questions and open-ended questions related to other relevant stakeholder issues.

The survey results illustrated the importance of involving stakeholder populations in the decision process. Of the 34 participating institutions, 23 or 67.64% of these administrators recommended to others preparing for the "college-to-university" change to "have input from all stakeholders" and to "address alumni issues first." Eleven of the schools addressed stakeholder involvement, seven recommended consultation with alumni, and five counseled other stakeholder groups. Additionally, eight other administrators not represented in the above number indicated that their institutions experienced issues with a variety of stakeholders and/or suffered from political interference in the process of the "college-to-university" change. Altogether, 31 (91%) university administrators signified that stakeholder issues existed at some level in their specific institution's rebranding process.

An examination of the institutional surveys indicated the pervasive nature of stakeholder issues related to a "college-to-university" name change. Institutions representing all nine states from which survey returns were collected reported stakeholder

difficulties. In Virginia, all four new universities experienced concerns relating to their constituent populations while seven of the nine participating Georgia institutions indicated stakeholder difficulties with the unilateral name change of all state colleges to universities in 1996 and 1997.

In addition to the survey results, full interviews ranging from 30 minutes to 90 minutes in length were conducted with 21 administrators and one legislator. Specific question requests of an additional 48 individuals were also utilized to provide information rich data. Responses were gathered via email (23), in person (13), by telephone (11), and through the postal system (1). Many administrators were candid with their responses. Historical data and media reports added to the overall data gathered concerning the 10 West Virginia colleges that became universities and one currently working through this process. Specifically, this chapter addresses the reactions to the "college-to-university" change by the following constituent bodies: students, institutional governing boards, administration, the community at large, faculty, alumni, former employees, and other institutions. While in many cases several stakeholder groups exerted a combined effort in their reaction to the change, each group will be addressed individually.

## Reactions of Students

Although the student enrollment is the lifeblood of the institution, it is difficult to pinpoint the amount of influence the student body has in regard to rebranding issues. As consumers of an institution's primary resource – its educational products – they are often overlooked in the rebranding process. There are several instances, however, where students have weighed in against a proposed name change. At Mary Washington College, students joined with faculty and alumni in protesting the prospective name change to

Washington and Monroe University. The suggested name would honor both Mary Washington, the mother of America's first president, and President James Monroe. In addition, the combined name was suggested as a merger of the institution's undergraduate campus in Fredericksburg, Virginia and its James Monroe Center for Graduate and Professional Studies located in Stafford County, Virginia.

Stakeholders complained that the dropping of Mary Washington's first name as well as the addition of Monroe's bordered on sexism. At a 2003 rally, students chanted, "Who's the Bomb? George's Mom!" and "Hell No, Wash-Monroe!" ("New Name," p. 21). While the name change committee slightly favored (10 to 9) the proposed name and the Virginia Senate voted 38 to 1 in recommending it, the school's board of visitors rejected the proposal following the overwhelming opposition to the name. In a survey sent to students and alumni, 90% of the students and 75% of the alumni favored Mary Washington University as the choice. This specific name, however, was rejected by the committee because of the redundancy in the names of the undergraduate school as Mary Washington College of Mary Washington University. The compromise name of the University of Mary Washington became official on July 1, 2004 (Broida, 2004; "New Name," 2003).

### *Initial Stakeholder Reactions in West Virginia*

While West Virginia schools did not experience the type of student indignation seen at Mary Washington, there is at least one example where students initially rejected the new name of a university. Only the change from Morris Harvey College to The University of Charleston brought any public student reaction to a university rebranding. One alumnus of the institution speculated about the student and faculty reactions: "I

resent the cunning way the decision was made and then announced before the Christmas break – giving students time to mellow in their reaction before returning to the college. Who is left to object? College personnel would be fired if they objected" (Toner, 1978, B1). Some students, however, did have the opportunity to voice their displeasure. One Madison, WV senior stated, "I don't think it's a good idea. Everybody knows that the school is in financial trouble. I don't think changing the name will solve their problems. I've been here three years and I'd rather graduate from Morris Harvey College than The University of Charleston. If they had to do something I wish it would have been Morris Harvey University" (Gadd & Gries, 1978, p. A1). A New Jersey sophomore explained, "I don't like it. I came here to go to a small college. I prefer to graduate from the same school that I entered" (Gadd & Gries). One student from Long Island complained, "I don't like it . . . There will be too many changes – there already have been too many changes . . . I'll always say I went to Morris Harvey" (Gadd & Gries).

By the beginning of the new semester, students opposition to the new name appeared to wane. In January 1979, *The Morris Harvey College Alumni Publication* reported a positive spin from the student body: "Progress must be made for growth and this is a good beginning." "I'm for anything that will enhance the performance and status of our school." "I was very much opposed to the changing at first; I felt the change to 'University' changes the image of MHC. But now that I've gotten used to it, it doesn't sound so bad. So, I will always support the school because I like the atmosphere and believe in what MHC, or UC stands for" ("Students Enthusiastic," p. 1).

Within another month, another bombshell hit the campus. Morris Harvey College's deficit was at $1 million and it was projected to exceed $1.25 million by the end

of the fiscal year. By June 30, administration expected losses to swell to an amount 12 times what it was during FY 1975-76. Although the school had consistently lost money over the years, desperate times called for drastic actions. Board chair Sidney P. Davis announced that local banks were willing to loan the school $2 million on a 90 day note. In addition, 20 faculty members (six with tenure) were terminated, 10 individual programs were cut, and the entire music department was eliminated (Mullins, 1979; Johnson, 1988).

Within a week of the cuts, The *Charleston Daily Mail* interviewed 14 students and 13, while not happy with all of the changes, indicated that the cuts were necessary for the school's survival. A lone student was unsure of MHC/UC's survival and did not commit to a definite position on the matter. Only one student indicated that he was disconcerted over the forthcoming name change (Friedman, 1979). Morris Harvey did survive and students began to accept the school's new identity.

With the exception of Morris Harvey College's rebranding as The University of Charleston, there were no other major problems with student acceptance of the changes at the other West Virginia institutions. Most schools did not consult the students in regard to the decision. One Shepherd University administrator explained the feedback received from individual students and the leadership of the Student Government Association,

> I don't have any numbers because we didn't survey [the students]. Based on what students told me when I talked to them . . . I would say maybe 70% in favor [and] 30% against. But it wasn't a burning issue. I mean nobody rallied and they didn't have demonstrations. There were a few articles in the school newspaper – some for it, some against it – but I think

now if you ask the student body today, I would say it would probably be at about 95% [for the change].

At Wheeling Jesuit University, the student body benefited from the Jesuit and University additions to the institution's name. One Wheeling Jesuit administrator recalled,

> I think they liked it. I think they saw it as a – from their point of view – they saw it as it going to be on their diplomas as university – Wheeling Jesuit University. They like the word Jesuit because that helped them. Because they have all these alumni all over that they could see. Wheeling College – since it was the least known of the Jesuit colleges – the smallest – if they met another Jesuit person, they might not know that it's a Jesuit college. "Oh you went to a Jesuit college?" [The change] to Wheeling Jesuit University, I don't think I had any dissent regarding that change.

At the smallest of West Virginia's new universities, Ohio Valley students greatly supported the change. One administrator explained,

> [The students'] response when we did the student survey was overwhelmingly positive. We had a very few that were very vocal saying, "You're too small." Some supposed that it was too small to do something like this. The reality is we are small when you look at the colleges in West Virginia. I think we are effectively the smallest school in NCAA Division II in the country. That makes us somewhat unique in a sense. So if you

want a small college experience, you're not going to do any better than this place. So we use it as a selling point, and use it to our advantage.

Another OVU administrator spoke of the immediate positive student reaction:

> Oh man, that was the thing that blew me away. I was commenting to somebody the other night about that. I still get goose bumps from that . . . The day after we made the change . . . I just happened to be out here watching one of our teams practice . . . At the end of the practice, all the girls gathered around and did their little chant and they ended it with "OVU – OVU – OVU." Wow, they already had it and it just happened. They've already got that worked up and they were proud of it . . . [Students were wearing] a number of T-shirts. One had Ohio Valley College with a red line through college and scribbled on it "University." I mean that first week – that's all you saw the students wearing, and they were proud of it. They were proud of this university.

In another turn of events at Ohio Valley, a student who disapproved of the name change was stifled by his fellow students.

> I heard one little story that happened the month we changed. I'm not sure if it was right before or right after, but students were having a get-together off campus at night. It wasn't a formal school event and one said, "This is the stupidest thing I ever heard, becoming a university." The other ten students just killed his negativity. "What do you mean?" They started

> defending it and didn't know why. That made me feel good about it how the students embraced it.

### *Cultural Shift*

Although not one of the "college-to-university" institutions, Potomac State's experiences may illustrate the level of new student acceptance that may also be evidenced at WVU Tech with the July 1, 2007 status change from a regional campus to a division of West Virginia University. Potomac State students have overwhelming supported the newer relationship with their parent institution. One administrator clarified the reaction since 2005.

> Students love the fact that when they go into Mix [the WVU student portal] that up pops the WVU page. It's very clear that they are a part of WVU. You go to their bookstore, the alums complain that there's none of the sweatshirts that say Potomac State anymore because it is all WVU, but because that's all the students will buy. The students don't want to buy the Potomac State T-shirts and sweatshirts. They just wanted to buy WVU shirts. Now, some say Potomac State with the WVU logo on them. Those go [and] that clearly shows a shift in culture. They now really see them as a college of WVU.

### *Direct Student Involvement*

While most of the newer universities in West Virginia did not involve students in the process, at least four did. The student government associations at West Virginia Institute of Technology, Concord, and West Virginia State had the opportunity to vote on

the issue. At these schools, student representatives voted in favor of the name changes and the institutions' changes in status. Ohio Valley students, however, were more involved as members on the exploratory committee to discuss the move to university status and the selection of a name. Although important stakeholders, most West Virginia institutions did not include students in the decision process, as did Ohio Valley University. This is in contrast with Pulley's recommendation: "Don't underestimate the desire of students to have a voice in how marketing efforts represent the institution. If you don't include them, they will be vocal in their criticism" (2003, p. A30).

## Reactions of the Institutional Boards

Since an institutional board plays a key role in the governance of an institution, it is necessary for administration to secure board support. According to Perkins (2007), "Governing boards play a critical role in the lives of all institutions, but particularly with small tuition-dependant schools. The board ultimately selects the president, and the solidarity and consistency of the board are significant factors in the president's ability to function as a successful change agent" (p. 9).

### *Board Composition*

When James Gallagher became president of Philadelphia College of Textile and Science in 1984, he faced a board resistant to change. In addition, the individual board members did not understand the business of higher education. During his 22-year term, Gallagher was able to change the composition of the board. This allowed him freedom to lead the institution and to be insulated from board micromanagement (Garvey, 2007).

Over time, Gallagher successfully replaced the "old guard" of the board with individuals who were not resistant to change. Many former board members were from the textile industry – an industry and a program at the college that was in decline. Replacing these individuals was necessary to discard the "textile" identification as part of the institutional name and to adopt the university designation. This had been Gallagher's vision since 1984; however, it did not come to fruition until after the school conducted market research and the board supported the change (Garvey, 2007). In this process, as well as at other schools seeking to make the "college-to-university" change, board support was necessary for the change to occur.

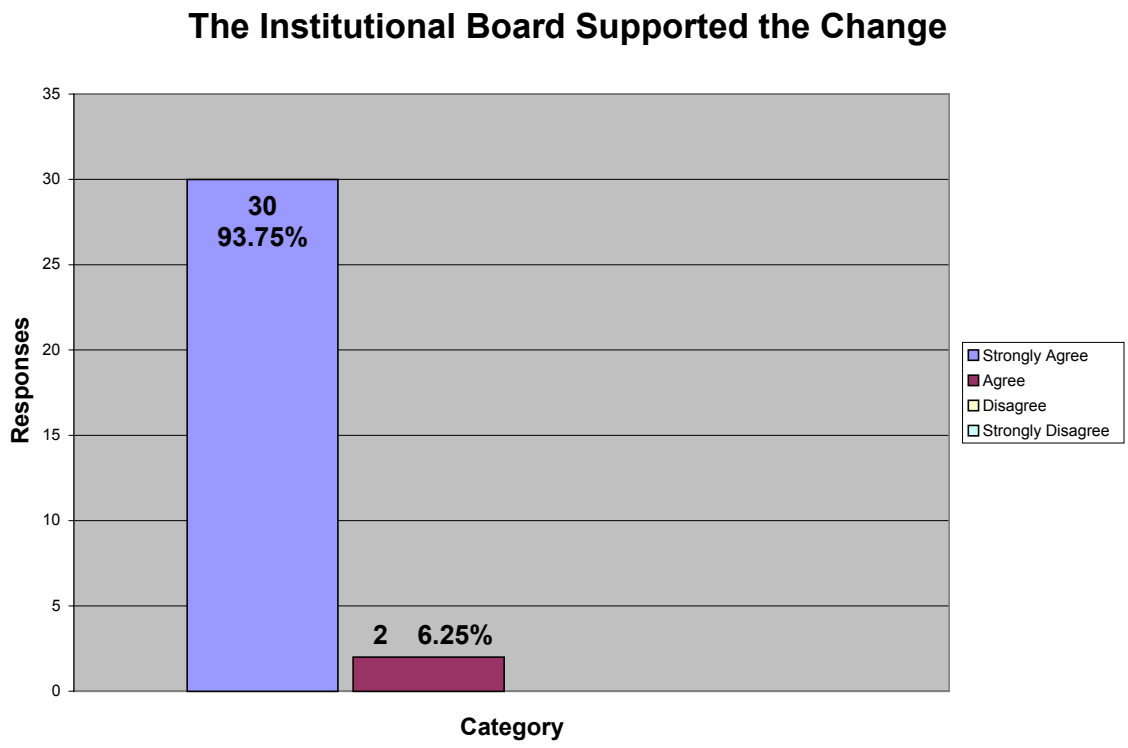
***Evaluating Board Support***

With the survey results from 34 institutions, the most positive stakeholder reactions were attributed to the area of board support. Out of a possible 4.00, the average score for the participating institutions' board support was 3.94. While two institutions abstained from this response, the remaining 32 institutions either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that their respective board supported the "college-to-university" name change (see Figure 5.1). This occurred at institutions where other constituencies disfavored the rebranding.

The board support at the various institutions can be typified by the results experienced by Cincinnati Christian University (CCU) when it transitioned from Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary during the fall of 2004. The difference between CCU and most institutions in this study is that the board, and not the president, was considered the primary change agent for effecting the "college-to-university" transformation. H. David Hale, CCU's board chair and Logan County, WV native,

explained: "The new name was a unanimous decision of the Board of Trustees in an effort to highlight the wonderful opportunities our school offers students wishing to pursue their education in a Christian environment" (Cincinnati Christian University, 2004, p. 4). West Virginia institutions largely mirrored their regional counterparts and indicated that their boards generally and unanimously supported the change.

Figure 5.1
*Board Support for the "College-to-University" Change.*




***Board Processes***

As with the experience at most institutions, the governing boards worked through the process at scheduled meetings and eventually passed resolutions to effect the change. In most cases, the boards discussed options regarding the institutional name. At The College of West Virginia Board of Trustees meeting of October 17, 2000, for example, the board discussed the problems surrounding the working name "University of West

Virginia" and its prior usage. With the administration's having compiled a list of possible names, board chair Mona K. Wiseman requested that the trustees examine the names and provide their selections to the president's office. At the board's annual meeting on December 14, 2000, the trustees passed a resolution stating,

> That the name of The College of West Virginia, Inc. will be Mountain State University, Inc. effective August 20, 2001 and that the President or his designate, is hereby authorized to conduct all activities necessary to prepare for the name change and to execute all documents necessary for purposes of changing the name through the West Virginia Secretary of State's office (The College of West Virginia Board, 2000b, "Name change" section).

Similarly, Concord College's Board of Governors at a scheduled teleconference on October 31, 2003 reflected upon a report by President Jerry Beasley regarding Concord's having met the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's (HEPC) criteria for university status. Vice Chair Dan Dunmyer moved that a resolution be adopted to request that the HEPC confer university status on Concord, explore the prospects of adding "university" to the institution's name, commit to the name "Concord," and to affirm the school's "commitment to high quality undergraduate education" (Concord College Board of Governors, 2003, "Resolution" section). A copy of this resolution was forwarded by board chair Margaret J. Sayre to HEPC Chancellor J. Michael Mullen on November 4, 2003. Following legislative approval, Concord's Board of Governors passed an additional resolution on April 20, 2004 renaming the school as Concord University. This became effective at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

When Ohio Valley College's board voted unanimously for the change in status and name to Ohio Valley University on June 4, 2005, they combined the signing of the official resolution with a press conference. President James A. Johnson explained, "We have been diligently exploring this opportunity for some time and it has always been an expectation that we would declare university status someday" ("Transition to University Status," 2005, p. 12). The resolution was signed by Dr. Johnson; Dr. Gail Hopkins, board chair; Dr. Joy Jones, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs; and Ron Laughery, board secretary.

Due to the merger with Teikyo University, Salem College's board voted unanimously in June 1989 to rename the institution as Salem-Teikyo University. With this merger, the Board of Trustees was restructured to a smaller board of five individuals: three Japanese members and two American members. "A larger Board of Directors, appointed by the Board of Trustees, would handle management policy, with the trustees making major policy decisions" (Salem-Teikyo University, 1990, p. 6). One administrator explained the composition of the larger board:

> Our board was predominantly American. We had representation from the Japanese, but our board was predominantly American. We had great board members: the president of United Airlines, the president of Martin-Marietta, and a head of a major stock brokering company in New York City. [We had] really, really, really good people on the board. Both of the Japanese people who were on our board were independent of Teikyo. One was the former minister of finance for the Japanese government.

***Board Difficulties***

Unanimous board approval, however, did not occur at every institution. Of the ten West Virginia colleges that became "universities," two had some slight difficulties in regard to board approval. For Wheeling Jesuit Universtiy, the greater difficulty was not in the transition from a college to a university. One administrator recalled the issues regarding securing permission from the Jesuit Provincial to add the Jesuit brand to Wheeling College.

> When I came, it was a struggling college and [we] made it grow quite nicely. They [faculty and the board] saw this as part of the growth. Because the name Jesuit is a specific name, it's has kind of a trademark on it. I had to go not only to the board of directors, which happens with any name change, but I had to go to the Jesuit superior and say I wanted to change the name. I had four possible names: Wheeling Jesuit College, Wheeling Jesuit University, the Jesuit University of Wheeling, or the Jesuit College of Wheeling. When I went to the superior, he was taken aback and said, "It's not a university." I said, "that's not the issue I'm discussing . . . You don't really have a choice whether I call it college or university. That's the board of directors' decision. The only thing I'm coming to you is about is the name 'Jesuit.'" He was worried about what to do if the college went under all of the sudden when it has the name Jesuit. "What do we do?" And I said, "probably not do a thing. I'm trying to build it. It would be like not allowing Proctor and Gamble to put their brand name on a new product it is trying to sell." So in the long run, he agreed to allow

me to do it. So, that was a struggle there. He by the way was a Provincial – Jesuits are made up of 10 provinces. He had to get the approval when they had their meetings. I got that. That's basically what we did and why we did it.

Nine years later, Wheeling Jesuit transitioned from a college to a university and needed permission from its board of directors. One administrator recalled the initial opposition of the board: "I mentioned [changing the name to a university] to a couple board members who said, 'You're going to have a hard time proving that to us.' But I did. I took it to the board, gave them a one-page rationale and they passed it overwhelmingly just like that."

For the University of Charleston, President Tom Voss made the initial decision to drop the Morris Harvey brand as the institutional name. Initially, the board had very little input into the overall decision – but in its role as trustees of the institution, the board needed to approve this change. According to Voss, "I had two choices. I could close the school down with dignity. Or I could get *carte blanche* from the board of trustees for total renewal" (Watkins, 1982, p. 5). Voss worked through the process of achieving board consensus at a clandestine and hastily arranged meeting. Each (of the 32 board members that attended) was contacted by telegram to attend a "Special Meeting" (Gadd, 1978; Morris Harvey College Board, 1978a & 1978b). According to one administrator,

President Voss called a meeting of the board and they met at the McJunkin Headquarters up on the hill and not here on campus. As they walked into the room, the first thing the president said to them, "Today may be the

most historic day in the history of the institution because before you leave this afternoon you will change the name of the school."

In addition, board minutes reveal that business was actually conducted in two successive special meetings. Called to order at 12:30 PM, the 27 voting members unanimously agreed in the first meeting to "continue to operate an independent institution of higher education on the present campus of Morris Harvey College" (Morris Harvey College Board, 1978, ¶ 6). The Board then agreed to President Voss' recommendation "to reorganize and restructure Morris Harvey College" (Morris Harvey College Board, 1978, ¶ 7). A motion for the chief financial officer to prepare a financial pro forma and a financial projections sheet by February 1, 1979 also carried unanimously. In the final act of the first meeting, acting board secretary John Ray introduced a resolution to change the name to The University of Charleston, Inc. The board agreed that, "The proposed amendment be submitted promptly to a vote of a Special Meeting of the Members of the College" and the meeting was adjourned (Morris Harvey College Board, 1978, ¶ 11). The exact differences between the two groups (the Morris Harvey Board of Trustees and the Members of Morris Harvey College) could not be ascertained, as it appeared that voting members of both groups were identical.

Immediately, the second meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM and the motion to change the name was passed unanimously (Morris Harvey College Members, 1978). One administrator explained the order of events:

It was in December of '78, and they just did it [changed the name]. When they walked into the room, there wasn't an agenda to the meeting. Obviously, therefore, no one else in the constituency of the institution

knew what the meeting was about, what the agenda was, or that this was even a possibility. This was a December meeting and it [the process to begin the change] went into effect beginning in January. It was bang, bang, bang. So the feeling of alienation and the feeling of the imposition of somebody's agenda was severe. Many people at the time thought the name Morris Harvey was quaint, different, [and] distinctive. The University of Charleston had none of those characteristics. It was generic. It sounded like a public institution. I understand some of why he [Voss] did it. Other reasons why he did it were inappropriate.

Within days, some board members suffered from buyer's remorse and questioned the decision. An administrator recalled the situation:

Any of us can be moved by an emotional speech. With any great debate about any subject, there are arguments that can be made that are compelling if you don't think about the alternative. I can talk you into thinking that the world was flat. Somebody wrote a book about that. But, we really know that the world is round. So that's the problem with making decisions too quickly. Snap judgments are not necessarily the best judgments. The entire board made a snap judgment that we ought to do this. They didn't do the background work. They didn't look at the alternatives. They didn't look at strategies for implementation. They didn't know where they wanted to go. You want to have a strategy for how to do this. "How do we get there in the best possible way?" There was no thought given to that.

One of the board members, emeritus trustee Leonard Riggleman, openly questioned the unanimous decision: "That doesn't necessarily mean that it was unanimous. I think the group was somewhat stunned and surprised" (Hendricks, 1978, p. 5D). Riggleman had a long association with the school. He graduated from Morris Harvey with an A.B. in 1922, became a part-time instructor in 1928, and chaired the religious education department in 1930 until he became the institution's 20th president in 1931. Riggleman was responsible for moving the school from Barboursville to Charleston. He additionally secured and began building on the present campus site in Kanawha City. Having served as its chief executive for 33 years, Riggleman continued as an emeritus board member from the time he retired in 1964 (Anderson & Burrows, n.d.; University of Charleston, 2007).

Although Riggleman remained silent during the meeting, he later vocalized, "If it couldn't go along with what it has, I don't know how it could succeed as a university. Building a university from scratch is a new approach as far as I'm concerned" (Hallanan, 1978, p. 2A). This was not the first time that Riggleman publicly criticized the board's decision. He previously attacked the 1974 plan to the offer Morris Harvey to the state and subsequent decisions regarding the raising of tuition. An administrative faculty member explained:

> Yes, at that point [1974] he never saw this as a state institution. The mission had been to provide an alternative to education. Part of the reason that the tuition wasn't raised over the years is that the goal was that anybody who was a good student and their family wanted them to go here should be able to afford the tuition. When the tuition crept up, he voiced

> concerns that we were excluding more and more of the community, although in 1975 it was $300 a semester; but you know, it was still excluding more and more of the community. Students had the option of getting classes for $20 and hour or even $12 an hour at that time [at the state institutions]. We had more than doubled that and it was starting to exclude some people. So, his philosophy and his beliefs were very critical.

While not an active member of the board, the former Morris Harvey president had considerable influence over those on the board who were voting members. Other board members who had supported Voss' rebranding agenda, however, apparently influenced Riggleman. One administrative faculty member provided the common theory on why his open criticism to the rebranding abruptly ended.

> My understanding was that Dr. Riggleman went on some trips to a university-owned cabin up in Canada. He would go up there and fish. He had a couple meetings and fishing meetings with members of the board who had known him for a long time. They had brought in the necessity of the concept and talked to him. Now this is anecdotal, as I wasn't there, but I heard that this process took place. He was not very happy and understandably so. He had shepherded the transition and built this campus from scratch. If there was anybody who was going to have a strong identification with Morris Harvey, it was Dr. Riggleman . . . I think that he could have been more vocal, and this is what causes me to believe, to some extent, that some of these anecdotal stories that were relayed [about this] had truth at the base. You could talk to him how different things were

> [now as opposed to then] and how it was necessary. You could talk about how we weren't going to destroy the tradition of Morris Harvey College. However, if he had decided to lead an organized opposition to the changeover, it might not have happened. It might have been harder then [for Voss] to get the support needed for the name change.

Although the boards at all of West Virginia's universities all eventually supported the changes, board support is not automatically granted in this type of decision. When the president at Whittier College in California desired to move to university status, the board had the primary role in allowing or denying this strategic move. Since Whittier's board had many alumni members, another key stakeholder group, its support was absolutely necessary. According to Perkins, "Often board members are alumni, alumni parents, or local business leaders, and so have previous friendships with constituencies on campus. These individuals are highly compassionate [sic] about their role and can have a distorted understanding of their roles as trustees" (2007, p. 9).

Seeking to alter the name in order to appeal to international students, Whittier's president could never garner the necessary support from the trustees to make the change. One administrator explained:

> He never made the case and – whether he didn't bother to or he just couldn't – he never made the quantitative argument of how this would increase enrollment. It was just his gut sense that it would succeed and was never backed up with numbers. There were many ways he was successful with his gut instinct, but not always. But he tended not to have what you call evidence-based decision-making. I think he believed that by

> sort of talking about it, it would get a ground swell of support. That didn't happen and part of that was because the board of trustees had enough alumni on it who had an emotional connection to the word "college." He could never make a business case for it, which is what needed to be done.

### *The Board as the Change Agent*

Although Coleman (1997) suggested that boards are often the motivators for strategic change, this was not the norm for West Virginia schools or even from the larger surveyed region. Nearly all of the West Virginia administrators indicated that the institutional president (with board support) was the primary instigator of the "college-to-university" change. In the survey results from the 34 institutions from states containing Appalachian designated counties, the majority of responses (19 or 55.88%) identified the chief executive officer as being the primary change agent in regard to rebranding as a university.

Universities that identified the institutional governing board as the primary change agent represented only a small percentage of institutions (3 or 8.82%). Although not representing all of the religious-controlled institutions that participated, all three of these schools were church affiliated institutions. Even with the president's role of having been the primary change agent, this did not diminish the fact that the board members needed to ultimately support the change even if they had not led the charge.

## Reactions of Administration

While the president was often viewed as the primary change agent, it was necessary for the chief executive officer to have support from a cohesive administrative

management team. In characterizing rebranding efforts, Krell (2006) advised, "The first step in getting employees on board is to get leadership on message" (p. 52). For leadership to direct successful change, presidents had to build this unique lineup. Frequently, this was at the expense of existing administrators. As the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Sciences transitioned to the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, Allen Mishner did just that. Described by Rosenthal (2003, p. 77) as an "entrepreneurial manager," Mishner envisioned the institution'a moving from its "mom and pop" operational style to a business model approach. In order to do this, restructuring was necessary to move the school in new directions. These new initiatives included a new status and a new name. This resulted in administrators who supported the president's plan. Over time, Mishner reorganized the composition of the senior staff and replaced its members (Rosenthal, 2003).

Simultaneously across town, President James Gallagher at the Philadelphia College of Textiles was instituting similar modifications. According to Garvey (2007, p. 105),

> Gallagher has organized the institution in such a way that it can make changes quickly and can bring new programs to market in a short period of time. A clear organizational hierarchy was put in place that streamlined the decision making process. Equally important, he created a culture that would not slow change by reducing dialogue and, consequently, dissension.

In a similar fashion, several presidents at private institutions in West Virginia made changes to administrative leadership. Having more latitude in operation than their

public counterparts, these presidents were able to make administrative changes at will. Often such alterations were a necessary evil to attain the goals envisioned by the chief executive officer.

At Morris Harvey College/University of Charleston, Dr. Thomas Voss began his presidency by making changes to the structure of the institution within a month of his arrival. He then began to build a university structure. Most recently, Dr. James Johnson at Ohio Valley had to confront issues at the administrative level to move from a college to a university. One administrator explained the challenges at OVU:

> When this school first started, it was a two-year college. Organizationally, it was probably run like a good junior-high church camp. When it merged [with Northeastern Christian Junior College], it became a four-year college. They had almost a perfect organizational model of a good two-year college. They conducted themselves as a two-year college. Their administrative policies, their administrative structure, their faculty load, their compensation, everything. It was right in line with what a two-year college would be like. I needed to jack that up – I said we're going to become a university . . . I needed that as my leverage because when I first came here the board asked me what I thought was going to be a biggest challenge a new president would face. And I think everyone thought that the answer was obviously going to be the finances and that's not it. The biggest challenge is going to be the perception.

***Early Adopters***

One of the interesting reactions at two institutions was the urgency to start using the new name by administration and staff. A West Virginia State University administrator explained:

> I'm going tell you something that was quite a surprise to me because I know this campus very well. The governor signed the bill for university status in April 2004. I thought that people would want to gradually change signs and . . . we'll change over the summer. I was completely caught off guard at how instantly people wanted to change the signs. It was a nice feeling to know that people didn't want to gradually do it.

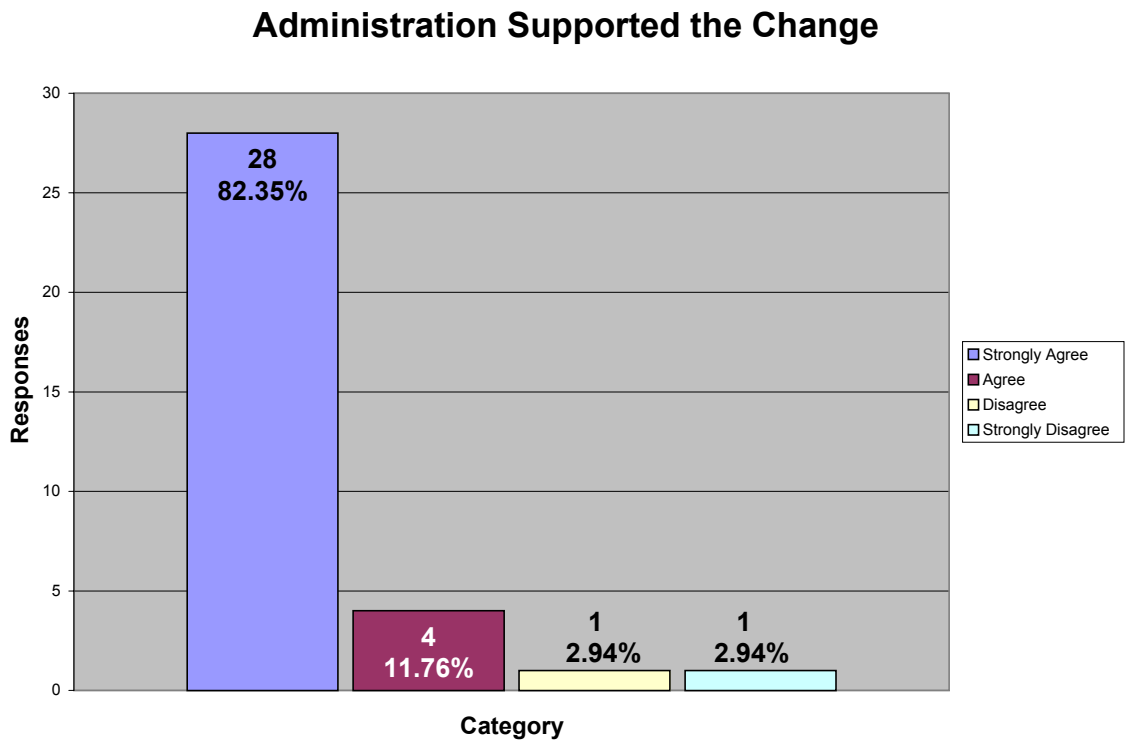
Similarly at Ohio Valley University, the school replaced "College" with "University on the main sign and were going to gradually start replacing other materials bearing the former brand. One administrator revealed the level of staff enthusiasm for the new indentity,

> The next thing I know is that everybody is talking about money. The board said, "We've got to ease into this. We're not going to instantly replace everything." Then people began to buy things out of their own pockets. The mats when you come in the front door – those big rugs that say Ohio Valley University – they were down that week. I looked out the window and there's an OVU flag flying on the flagpole. Then the students were walking down the hall with [OVU] T-shirts already made and just like that – overnight we became OVU.

The urgency to move to new status and name was similar to the experiences at other schools in the larger region surrounding Appalachia. In the category "the most interesting component of the process of changing the institution's name to a university," administrators rated the "urgency to complete the process" as third behind "alumni reactions" and "the name selection process." While 11 administrators identified this category as important, three listed it as the number one most interesting component.

***Survey Results***

Figure 5.2
*Administrative Support for the "College-to-University" Change, n=34.*




Although some administrative changes occurred at West Virginia schools, administrative support mirrored the larger survey area. On a 4.00 scale, administrative support averaged at 3.74. Of the 34 participating institutions, 32 schools (94.11%)

expressed that schools' administration supported the change, with 28 respondents strongly agreeing that "administration supported the 'college-to-university' change." Four administrators agreed with the statement, one disagreed, and one strongly disagreed (see Figure 5.2).

### *A Rainy Night in Georgia*

The two administrators that responded negatively to the statement "administration supported the 'college-to-university' change" were both from Georgia. While the other six participating Georgia public institutions indicated that administrative staff supported the system-wide name change, several schools did not have administrative support. Outside of wanting the prestige associated with the "university" designation, part of the reason that most administrators supported this move is that Chancellor Stephen Portch expected the institutions to comply with his decision on the choice of institutional names. At the June 1996 Board of Regents of University System of Georgia meeting, Chancellor Portch met privately with the individual presidents prior to releasing the name change recommendations to the Regents. One administrator relayed what was reported to have occurred behind closed doors:

> The chancellor handled this very poorly in that he told the presidents, as he called them into a meeting, "These are your new names for those of you who are getting new names." He said, "Now what we are going to do is we're just going to go out and say this is it. We're not going to ask for feedback [from the Board of Regents]. We're not going to ask for a vote. We're not going to do this or that." Kennesaw College was elated to be called Kennesaw State University, as that was a promotion for them.

> Everybody [at Kennesaw] was happy with that. Now when they went out, most of the colleges were that way except for [a handful of schools].

A second Georgia administrator recalled that the primary motivating factor at his institution was the "Political pressure [from] the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia." While some campus administrators were involved in the process, a third administrator speculated that the participation in the process had a minimal effect:

> There was some input, but I believe it was fairly scattered and not done in any kind of consistent way. I think most of the consultation was at the upper administrative level of the campuses. On some campuses, there was some level of faculty involvement because that was an institutional choice. But there's sort of a black box between the campus input and consultation and what the name ended up being . . . There was a sense of how the process was one more example of how the institution was asked for input and then there was no evidence that any attention had ever been paid to it.

The vast majority of the Georgia institutions, however, accepted the new name as a fourth administrator recalled, "This was a system-wide (i.e., state-wide) policy decision to make sure that the names reflected the nature and programs of the schools. The new name was selected over the old name by the Board of Regents. It was a very quick and smooth change here." Minimizing the impact of the change, a fifth Georgia administrator commented, "The change was in practice, just nomenclature."

Not all institutions, however, responded in the same manner. A sixth administrator explained the differences on how the decision was received by the various institutions:

> The status change was part of a state-wide public higher education governing board decision based on input from a committee with external expertise commissioned by the chancellor. The recommendation was made to elevate all colleges that offered graduate programs to university status. The most challenging events that followed were institutional in scope (i.e., selection of a name). Some institutions had a difficult time with internal constituents' deciding on an acceptable name – alumni are very, very important as one moves in this direction – whereas, other institutions had essentially no problem with the change.

Where the name change was viewed negatively, the emotional response heightened. An administrator at a school with a compromise name brokered by Chancellor Portch with various stakeholders concluded that the process resulted in an "ultimate selection of a compromise name that pleased almost no one and confused almost everyone." At another school with a brokered name, an administrator opined, "The name change was not successful because everyone universally hates the 'new' name. The 'new' name is a hybridized combination of the old name and the change in status from a college to a state university and it serves only as an irritant for every faction – alumni, students, faculty, staff, etc. Hence, in my view, the change was an abject failure."

The ultimate success of the 1996/1997 changes at the 13 Georgia universities may be gauged by the current status of these institutions' names. Two schools have since rebranded again. In 1996, West Georgia College became the State University of West Georgia. Nine years later, the Board of Regents approved the name change to the University of West Georgia on January 12, 2005. According to an institutional press release, "The name 'State University of West Georgia' is longer and more cumbersome than students and other constituencies would like. The new name is more appropriate to the times and the stature of the University" (University of West Georgia, 2005, ¶ 3).

In addition, stakeholders widely supported this newer appellation. West Georgia president Beheruz N. Sethna added, "Rarely have I seen as much consistency of opinion on any issue as I have on the matter of the desired name for our University. Alumni, faculty, staff, students, supporters, and friends from the community were all strongly supportive of the change of name to the University of West Georgia. We have actively sought this change since 1996" (University of West Georgia, 2005, ¶ 2). Another administrator revealed an additional reason for the dropping of "State" from the school's name: "because of the unfortunate acronym [SUWG] of State University of West Georgia was being pronounced as 'sewage.'"

Within months of West Georgia's rechristening, Clayton College and State University received permission to change its 1996 name, as one administrator revealed, "in order to clean up that awkwardness." According to an official press release, "The proposal by the University to shorten its name . . . was the result of a groundswell of opinion that began as far back as the University's November 1996 name change from Clayton State College to Clayton College & State University" (Clayton State University,

2005, ¶ 3). President Thomas K. Harden explained, "The name Clayton State University is the product of a considerable input from all of our constituencies – students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, [and] community. I consider this to be another step in the evolution of the University" (Clayton State University, 2005, ¶ 4).

Unlike Clayton, two additional institutions handled their brokered names without officially changing their institutional names. Like all of the colleges offering graduate degrees in Georgia, North Georgia College was to transition to a new name in 1996. One suggestion was the State University of North Georgia. Administration had the foresight, because of the acronym SUNG, to request the other possible choice of North Georgia State University. Stakeholders, however, were divided on tampering with the name. One administrator explained the process of the cumbersome naming of North Georgia College and State University,

> Basically, you had two factions. You had what I would call the alumni faction and really, to be honest, they had more political power. They were unwilling to move from North Georgia College. Then you had the other faction – the "state university" faction that was unwilling to stay with North Georgia College. And the chancellor, I believe, and I was not in the room, but I believe in the final analysis he threw up his hands and said if these people aren't willing to compromise, this is what it's going to be. He made the decision.

The institution today copes with its name by using a shortened from of its primary brand, as one administrator illustrated:

> We just refer to ourselves as North Georgia. We even changed all of our athletic logos. Our athletic logos used to be NGC and we changed our athletic logos to NG. We refer to ourselves as North Georgia. But the standing joke around here is that we cannot use it on billboards because an effective billboard should only contain 8 words and our name has six. [laughs]. So, everybody hates it. Nobody knows what it means when you say it. "NGCSU" is what we say around here along with "North Georgia." But, when you say "NGCSU" and people say, "What is that?" And you say, "North Georgia College and State University." "Oh, you're part of the University of Georgia." They hear "Georgia" and "University" and they don't get it. They don't understand that it's separate. It's a horrible name. It does not say what we are or what we do. Its one of those things that we just struggle with constantly. It's remarkable that we've been this really ridiculous name for 10 years . . . Goodness, if you write the name out on a windshield decal, you've got to have a Lincoln to get it on the window – a Volkswagen won't hold our name. It's an ongoing kind of a sore spot for everybody.

Likewise, Georgia College suffered the same fate as Clayton and North Georgia with the brokered name of "Georgia College & State University." When the name change process was instituted, it did not start with this name. Georgia College originally became Atkinson State University; however, this name only lasted for only one day ("Georgia College," 2004). The current name, however, has been a source of contention and confusion. According to Georgia College & State University spokesperson Mitch Clark,

"I think there are a lot of people on campus who think the name is horrible. It's awkward. It's clumsy, and it's confusing to a lot of people. So, I think there are probably people on this campus who have wanted to change it since the day we adopted it . . . . Trying to get people to understand who we are is difficult. A lot of people confuse us with Georgia State University, for instance" ("Georgia College," 2004, ¶ 4 & 8).

While the door was opened in 2004 for the school to rename itself, administration decided to retain the name; however, they would use it sparingly. One administrator explained that they "formally use the new name where they have to for legal things; but as much as they can, they still revert to the old name . . . [The name] "Georgia College and State University" is incredibly awkward. It's a school that's been around a long time and has lots and lots of alumni who were offended by having to change the name of their dear alma mater. It's sort of passive-aggressive, but they just say "Georgia College."

Two other institutions had name choices that were not accepted on campus. Southern College of Technology became Southern Polytechnic State University. One administrator admitted that the institution had no say in the "Polytechnic" designation, that "Polytechnic was never really part of the discussion . . . that kind of came out of left field when everything got approved all at once." Although a proposed name was Atlanta Polytechnic State University, spokesperson Ann Watson indicated that stakeholders "wanted to keep 50 years of tradition and keep Southern in the name" (Coleman, 1996, p. F7).

On the short list of names projected for Armstrong State College was "Georgia Atlantic State University." Having experienced ridicule with a change in mascots from the Pirates to the Stingrays in 1994 and the unfortunate initials applied to Armstrong State

Stingrays, administration realized that acronym GAS-U had as many (if not more) problems. In 1996, the school officially became Armstrong Atlantic State University and it readopted the Pirate mascot ("At Armstrong Atlantic State," 1997).

At some Georgia institutions, a number of stakeholder groups, in addition to the administration, questioned the names. Faculty and alumni tended to be the major critics of the rebranding. Although the systemic changes in Georgia are unique, administrative support was necessary for a successful integration of the new name by stakeholders. The lessons learned regarding the Georgia experience would be to secure constituent consensus prior to adopting a new or an adjusted brand name.

**Reactions of the Community**

When Penn State McKeesport sought in 2006 to change its name first to Penn State Allegheny and then in 2007 to Penn State Greater Allegheny, it created a firestorm of opposition from the local community from which it will likely never recover. Although outlined in detail in Chapter 9, this institution sought to rebrand because it wanted to distance itself from the reputation of its host city. The price it will pay locally will be far greater than the cost of signage and stationary. While not a "college-to-university" change, this rebranding signified the connection and pride a local community has in an institution bearing its own name ("Brewster resigns, 2006; Cloonan, 2006a & 2006d; Pittman, 2006; & Zajicek, 2006).

Likewise, when Hayward, CA officials got wind that California State University, Hayward President Norma Rees was planning to eliminate the city's name from the university's identification, the city mounted a campaign. Called "Yes to CSUH" (2004),

the city sponsored a Web site (yestocsuh.org) to protest the proposed rebranding to California State University, East Bay. While disapproving of the name change, Hayward allowed proponents to post their opinions as well. While opponents outnumbered those in favor of the new name 631 to 49, Hayward was not successful in blocking the regional identifier from replacing the city name in January 2005 ("Number of Respondents," 2005).

While opposing the change, Hayward residents kept their collective sense of humor with a David Letterman type list: "Top Ten Reasons why changing the name of 'California State University, Hayward' to 'California State University, East Bay' is a bad idea" (2005). The list included the following:

8. "California State University, East Bay - Hayward Hills Campus" will never fit on a T-shirt.

6. If university administrators think Hayward is an unknown, wait until new students try to find "East Bay" on the map.

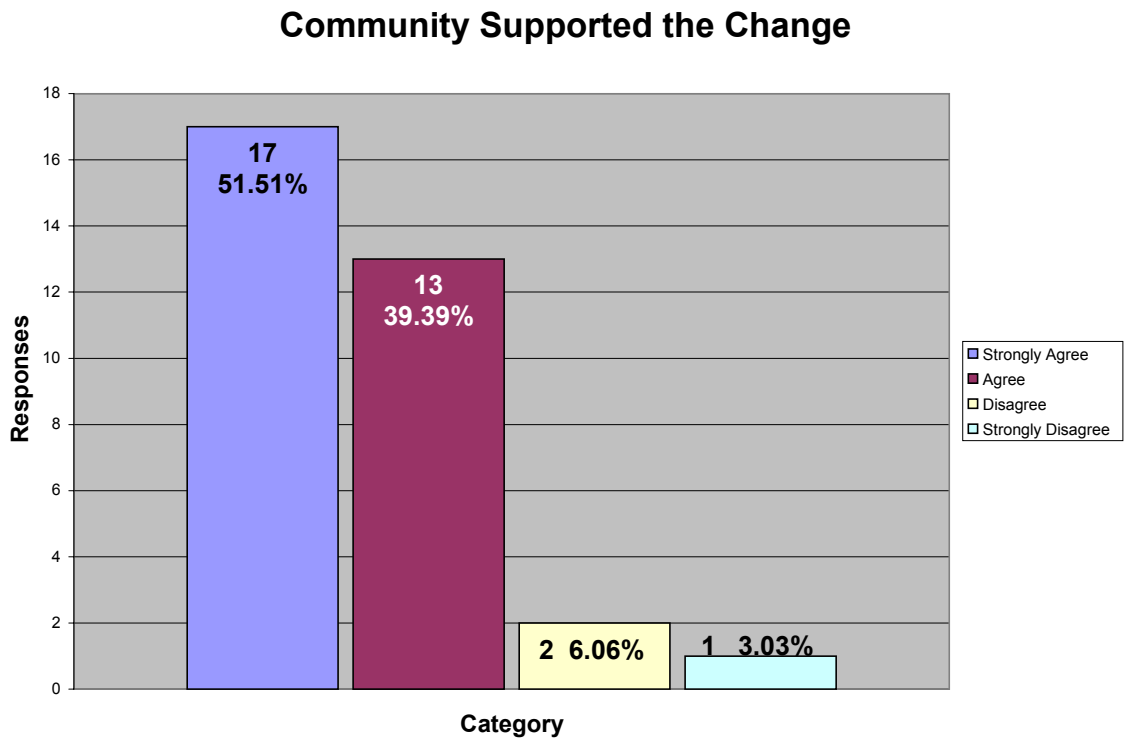
3. Before too long, the new name will become affectionately shortened to "CSU, EBay" and get confused with an online auction site. (That should increase enrollments!).

***Community Support vs. "Community Sarcasm"***

While Penn State Greater Allegheny and California State University, East Bay represented instances where the community radically opposed a rebranding, is this generally the case with a "college-to-university" rebranding? To determine how important local opinions contributed to the process, 51 institutions in states containing

Appalachian counties were invited to participate in this research project. "The local community supported the 'college-to-university' name change" was one of the statements that administrators were invited to rate on a four-point scale. Of the 34 administrators that responded, only one did not rate this statement; however, elsewhere in the survey this same administrator indicated that "community sarcasm" was the most interesting component of the change. It appears that this particular institution had some difficulty with community support of the change. Of the remaining 33 schools that rated this statement, 17 (52%) "strongly agreed," 13 (39%) "agreed," two (6%) "disagreed," and one (3%) strongly "disagreed." Ranking third behind board and administrative support, the average ranking for this statement was 3.39 on a 4.00 scale (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3
*Community Support for the "College-to-University" Change.*



Of the two schools that disagreed (one in Virginia and one in Georgia), these institutions had strong opposition from a number of stakeholder groups. In both cases, stakeholder protests were well publicized. The only school that "strongly disagreed" was a Kentucky institution. The nature of the community's opposition to this specific name change is not known, as the respondent did not elaborate and a search of a variety of news archives provided no illumination of this issue. The same school, however, has been widely criticized for other reasons since that time.

Table 5.1
*"Community sarcasm" as one of the top five most interesting components of the change.*

| | Schools Reporting that Community Sarcasm as One of the Most Interesting Aspect of the Name Change | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Number 1** | **Number 2** | **Number 3** | **Number 4** | **Number 5** |
| **Schools:** | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| **States:** | GA | KY (2); VA | GA; MD; PA | NONE | GA |

In addition to the "community support" question, eight schools indicated that "community sarcasm" was one of the top five interesting components of changing the name (see Table 5.1). Of these eight schools, only one represented one of the three that "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement concerning community support. While it is not known why this discrepancy occurred, it is possible that while "community sarcasm" was an "interesting component" of the change process, those criticizing the name change were not of a significant number to alter whether the local community as a whole supported the change or not. Likewise, those "disagreeing" or "strongly disagreeing" that the "community supported the change" could indicate that while the local community did not support the change, there was not a significant amount of community sarcasm. In the Penn State McKeesport/Greater Allegheny 2007 change, the

community did not support the rebranding; however, the residents and city officials did not denigrate the institution either (see Chapter 9).

### *Community Support in West Virginia*

***Doing the Charleston.*** In West Virginia, community support was not an issue in most cases. When the local community had issues with the name change, other variables were present. For example, The University of Charleston's inclusion of the city name aided in support from the local community. Part of the support was due to UC's President Thomas Voss' visibility. One administrator explained:

> Tom Voss was popular in the community. He had a group of people who thought that he was changing the institution to meet their needs. Every time he had a board meeting, he had a community dinner and would feed lots and lots of people and bring 'em in. He took board members on international trips [whispers] paid for by the institution. He was not very good with numbers. He misreported numbers of budgets and student enrollments to the board to make them feel good. So there were lots of things going on that were not accurate and the institution's health suffered. But there were people in the community who were his supporters, and that kind of dichotomy was there.

The other aspect of local community support was the Charleston identification included in the institutional name. One administrative faculty member explained:

> I think that the acceptance was much quicker because we added the Charleston name. Now, this was their school. Morris Harvey College could have been anywhere. Community support and recognition had not been any different than a school 50 or 100 miles away. There wasn't as much interest in this school. When it became the University of Charleston, there was that community linkage. So, I think it was an easier transition. I think that the community leaders were pleased as part of the overall marketing structure. "Do you have schools in your area?" "Yes, we have the University of Charleston." So I think it was much easier and certainly that was the master stroke for the linkage and more community support. 'Cause Morris Harvey [the individual] was not from Charleston, he was from Fayette County. Morris Harvey College was in Barboursville when it became Morris Harvey College so there was never a strong linkage to this community.

While community opposition existed, it came from outside the Kanawha Valley. The City Council of Fayetteville, hometown of benefactor Morris Harvey, sent a resolution to the institution formally stating its disapproval of the removal of the Morris Harvey name. John L. Witt, Jr., the mayor of Fayetteville, complained: "We're really upset at this, and we're going to do everything we can to block it [the name change]" (Williams, 1979, p. 1B). Councilman Charles S. Weatherford added, "We feel that Morris Harvey contributed a great deal to Fayette County and the college . . . We don't understand the reasons for the change of name. I know he was instrumental in the keeping the college going, and it seems to me that the college should respect that"

(Williams). One student echoed the sentiments of Fayetteville when asked what Morris Harvey would have thought about the name change. "He'd turn over in his grave, that's for sure" (Morris, 1978). Ironically, Harvey's prophetic epitaph at his gravesite reads: "I would not live always: I ask not to stay" (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4
*Morris Harvey monument, grave, and epitaph at Huse Memorial Park, Fayetteville.*


***You can't take the country out of Salem.*** Unlike the situation at The University Charleston, the Salem, WV community did not have issues with the new name, but rather with the international students who were attending Salem-Teikyo University. Following the merger with Teikyo University, the opposition came from former World War II veterans who were concerned with the influx of Japanese students into their town. In an NBC report of the merger, Salem Mayor Donna Stewart explained, "It all goes back to

World War II, really. There are some people, believe it or not World War II, [who believe that] you're supposed to carry this forever" (Kur, 1990). Local resident Corlis Brewer, nine years after the merger, reflected: "A lot of the people here haven't been out of the hollows forever, and we still have a lot who are fighting the Japanese. So you just put all these Japanese students in the middle of it, and it's really interesting to sit back and watch" (Martel, 1997, p. A10).

In the beginning, there were some miniscule problems from local residents in the treatment of Japanese students. Anti-Japanese graffiti touting "Jap, Go Home" appeared in several campus restrooms and a resident pushed ahead of some Japanese students at Dairy Queen shouting, "This is our country and they can wait" (Martel; Uzelac, 1991, p. 3A). Salem VFW Post Commander Richard Stamm reminisced that the situation could have been worse: "There were worries about retaliation, that maybe some radical [individual] would do something they shouldn't" (Martel).

Fortunately, the animosity was short lived. Early on, businesses realized that the Japanese students enhanced the local economy. In the very first group of students, a young lady purchased a car with $10,000 in cash (Kur, 1990). This influx of capital to the market became the rule rather than the exception, as Uzelac reported, "Perhaps the most obvious change on campus since the Japanese students arrived is the parking lot: It looks like an automobile showroom, with the emphasis on sports cars. It's not unusual for Japanese students, most of whom come from affluent families, to pay cash for a car" (1991, p. 3A).

In time, the students became accepted as Salem resident, Tish Dunkle, recounted: "The world is changing. We need unity instead of separation. This is a small town with

small-town attitudes. But when the Japanese came, it opened our minds. For me, I can't imagine it without them here. Besides, can you think any other small town in West Virginia where you can get sushi?" (Uzelac, 1991, p. 3A).

One Salem administrator explained that many of the negative perceptions reported in the news media were an attempt to balance both positive and negative aspects of the merger.

> The people who had concerns were minimal. It was only a problem when the news media came . . . when we did this [merger] and when we did a whole variety of different things. They had to find both the positive and negative. By and large, the Salem community is a terrific community of people. They really, really are – they're just great people. They opened their hearts, they opened their homes, they participated, and they did special programs [for the students]. We did all kinds of summer camp activities, as well as programs during the academic year. They [Salem residents] were very good to us. It's like anything else. All of the sudden you've got a new major partner and you can't help but wonder what they [Teikyo University and the Japanese] wanted out of this. "Why are they doing this?" "Why are they giving us so much money?" "What it is it that they want from us in return?" It took a while before they realized that what they wanted, they already gotten. They got a foothold in which we could legitimatize their activities in the United States. Subsequently, they went to four other institutions.

***WVU's march to Montgomery.*** When West Virginia Institute of Technology came under WVU's banner in 1996 as a regional campus, the community generally supported the transition. Ten years later, however, the attitude shifted with the proposal to relocate the engineering program to South Charleston. Additionally, the public opposed the legislative redefinition of Tech as a WVU division. Although the South Charleston move did not occur, divisional status was effected on July 1, 2007. One WVU administrator contrasted the local attitudes in 1996 and 2006: "In '96, it was wanted in Montgomery; in 2006 it was not wanted. The change was not wanted." Another administrator added, "What really caused the firestorm was not them becoming a [WVU] division, it was the proposal to potentially moving engineering to Charleston." Another administrator explained the economic impact of moving engineering out of Montgomery: "Because all of the students would buy their lunches locally. They would be housed locally. You know it would be a big economic loss for Montgomery . . . Charleston was anxious to have all of those engineers going to school in [South] Charleston. They thought it would be good for businesses to have those interns."

When Governor Joe Manchin's proposal to move the engineering department was shelved, the legislature slated WVUIT's downgrade to divisional status for the next year. Much like Potomac State's loss of autonomy in 2005, WVU was able to consolidate back-room operations and save operating costs. Montgomery residents, however, feared this change, as one administrator explained:

> The townspeople, if they lose control of the computer system and their daughter works for the computer system down there [in Montgomery] and that job no longer exists, it becomes a call to [Fayette County delegate

> John] Pino. Moving the engineers or attempting to move the engineers to a much better facility at Tech caused political flack for the governor. These things generated a political layer of unrest . . . But the problem is a classic business or organizational problem with a merger, and if I said anything, we did not have the power to do the merger in the way we said we did. We did not have the power to order up the things that should have been ordered up 10 years ago. We've been negotiating with our own people to get things done for a decade. I think that since we've moved in that [divisional] direction, which I think is because of [WVUIT former president and current provost] Charles Bayless's leadership, they understand that it has to be done. It's been a lot easier for everybody and things are getting better.

***The state of "State."*** In only one other instance, a minuscule issue with an additional West Virginia "college-to-university" rebranding was overshadowed by the institution's base of support. Early in the process, West Virginia State began receiving endorsements from a variety of stakeholders and community organizations, as one administrator admitted:

> There was something that took place that I think was somewhat unique. We kept a list of organizations that wanted West Virginia State to become a university. The first time that it surfaced, I think the year was 2000 at an alumni conference in Chicago, IL. The alumni made a motion for this administration to seek university status. The second organization to pass a resolution was the state NAACP . . . We ended up with a list of about 24 or

> 25 [supporting] organizations. And the thing that makes that list, in my opinion, so impressive is that we did not ask one organization to endorse our university status – not one . . . In every single case, those organizations volunteered to support this move.

One of WVSC's greatest supporters was the *Charleston Gazette.* While supporting State, it did not support the three other institutions simultaneously seeking university status. In a 2003 editorial, the *Gazette* expressed,

> West Virginia cannot afford and does not need to puff these schools up in name only. A name change does not mean students or the surrounding communities are better served. If Fairmont, Shepherd and Concord become universities, what's to prevent the rest of West Virginia's four-year colleges from pursuing the same ego-boosting change? . . . However, West Virginia State College is an exception. It truly deserves elevation to university rank. When the Legislature addresses this matter next month, we hope State gets special consideration, by itself ("Real U," 2003, p. 4A).

While West Virginia State University had overwhelming support from most constituents, some local legislators fought the change. Of those in State's primary service area, two Republican Senators, Steve Harrison of Kanawha County and Lisa Smith of Putnam County did not support West Virginia State on this issue. Their dissent, however, did not prevent the legislature from granting university status to State, as well as to Concord, Fairmont State, and Shepherd ("Senate Agrees," 2004).

***What was that name again?*** While most schools typically had support from their local constituents for the rebranding, Mountain State University's (MSU) former brand had difficulty gaining local recognition. A Mountain State administrator spoke of the differences between the 1991 and 2001 name changes.

> We went for 10 years with The College of West Virginia as a flag, and I don't say this derogatorily, but the old guard of Beckley who had familiarity with it just could not make the break and they never did with Beckley College to The College of West Virginia. While we accomplished a lot with changing the name, particularly from an external point of view, internal in this community, I am not so sure how significant that was. We dealt with The College of West Virginia – it was a good name. It was reflective of what we were at the time. But, I think it outlived its usefulness after a 10-year period.

Another Mountain State University administrator felt a surge in community support with the new name. "You don't hear many people calling it Beckley College anymore. When it was The College of West Virginia, that's all I heard. For the community, it was a really good move." A third administrator elaborated on the success of the 2001 name change.

> Ten years earlier, we made the change from Beckley College to The College of West Virginia. While there was no opposition to this change that I knew of at the time, the name just never caught on locally. For whatever reason, in the minds of the community and even with some of

> our students, we remained Beckley College. After we announced the name change to Mountain State in January 2001, there were two experiences that led me to believe that we would not have the same problems. The first encounter occurring a month after the announcement at a Mardi Gras themed Business After Hours on our campus. At the beginning of the event, the president of the local Chamber of Commerce got up and said something to the effect of, "Beckley is getting its own university, let's have a big round of applause for Mountain State University." To which, the crowd responded with overwhelming enthusiasm. The second event happened in June of 2001. I was standing in line at a local McDonalds and was privy to a conversation between an elderly customer and a young female counter worker. Obviously, they were acquainted but hadn't seen each other for some time. When the man asked the woman what she had been doing, she responded, "I'm studying to be a physical therapist assistant up at the college." Then she added, with obvious enthusiasm, "And they're becoming a university this fall!" I knew that we had finally shed the ghost of Beckley College and that we had made the right decision with the new name. I can't say that we've ever had to look back.

***Brand expansion.*** Likewise, Ohio Valley University received community support from outside of its religious brotherhood. One administrator noticed an acceptance by the Parkersburg and Vienna communities.

> It's been great. One of our initiatives was to become a regional institution and more of a community partner. They [the community] really embraced

> it. That was one of the stellar things we have done. Now did the fact that we became a university change any of that? Yeah, a little bit. I think it just showed them that we are gaining in quality. This year, it led to one student whose dad is a prominent community leader and is on every board in town. He's one of our students here, but he's not a member of the church [Church of Christ]. We have the mayor's son as a student here. He's not a member of the church either. Basically, the mayor remarked, "I didn't know all of what you had out here." He didn't understand what was going on here. So, it's been a vehicle to get our foot in a lot of doors that we've never been through before.

***California here we come.*** While there has been no evidence of the public's having any impact upon institutional name changes in West Virginia, the community can be an influential stakeholder. In nearby Southwestern Pennsylvania, the public at large had significant influence in blocking a proposed name change. At California University of Pennsylvania, President Angelo Armenti, Jr. announced in 2001 a proposal to change the institution's name in honor of a local businessman and philanthropist, Robert E. Eberly. Although having donated over $50 million to a number of institutions, including California University of Pennsylvania, the Eberly name change was not to be considered a *quid pro quo* for promised future support. Armenti reasoned that the very name of the school located in the Borough of California, Pennsylvania was confusing to potential students who assumed the university was a West Coast institution. According to Armenti, "The name-change is essential if we are going to survive" (Beveridge, 2001, ¶ 3).

From all appearances, most stakeholders were against the proposal. Some of the more vocal opponents, however, were the local citizenry. One resident argued, "If it is a 'problem' explaining our location, how will that be solved by a name change? The school is still in the borough of California, Pa. How will the change transcend location? Will the next step be changing the borough's name to Eberlyville?" (Folmar, 2001, ¶ 5). A Washington, PA newspaper editorialized, "The junking of a historic name to honor a present-day benefactor seems disrespectful to the past" ("Don't Tinker," 2001, ¶ 6). Pam Morosky of Fredericktown commented, "It's nice of Mr. Eberly to donate money to the college, but there's a building named in his honor. I think he's also a big contributor to Waynesburg College. Let them name it Eberly University" (2001, ¶ 1). Monongahela resident James K. Caldwell argued, "Armenti is just a temporary administrator. We, the graduates and residents of the valley, should decide the name of our only local state institute of higher education" (2001, ¶ 5). At one town meeting, over 100 citizens gathered to protest the proposal. Additionally, California University officials and state legislators were flooded with complaints concerning the proposed Eberly rebranding (Metz, 2001).

With a host of negative press, Robert Eberly asked that the family name be withdrawn from consideration. In a letter to Dr. Armenti, Eberly wrote, "In light of the number and often-angry tone of the objections to the proposal to change the name of California University to Eberly University – and out of concern that the Eberly name may be more of 'the problem' than a solution – the trustees of The Eberly Foundation request that California University and the State System of Higher Education address the

marketing issues at the university by selecting some other, less objectionable new name for California University" (Metz, 2001, ¶ 3).

Although the Eberly identification was dropped by one Fayette County institution, another Fayette County school adopted the name within two and one half years without any conflict or fanfare. In recognition of the Eberly family's contributions toward the 1965 construction of a Penn State University (PSU) branch in Uniontown, the local campus rebranded to include the Eberly name. In 2004, the local PSU campus became Penn State Fayette: The Eberly Campus. Over the years, the Eberly family donated $22.5 million toward the local PSU branch. The name change occurred two months prior to Robert Eberly's death on May 19, 2004 (Beveridge, 2004; Smydo & Levin, 2004). The difference in the community reactions to Eberly name at both campuses may be summed up by the respective communities' perceptions of the motivation for its adoption. The public viewed California University's motivation as being financial. In the Penn State Fayette case, it was viewed positively. Robert Eberly and his parents were actually responsible for the establishment of this particular campus – a school that probably would not have existed without the Eberly family support. Additionally, the name was an addendum to the existing brand and not a complete rebrand as proposed by California University of Pennsylvania.

## Reactions of the Faculty

Usually considered an important stakeholder in the acceptance of an institutional rebranding, faculty senates are often provided the courtesy of voting upon a proposed name change. Institutional administrations and the governing boards, however, have occasionally ignored the faculty's recommendation and have continued with their agenda.

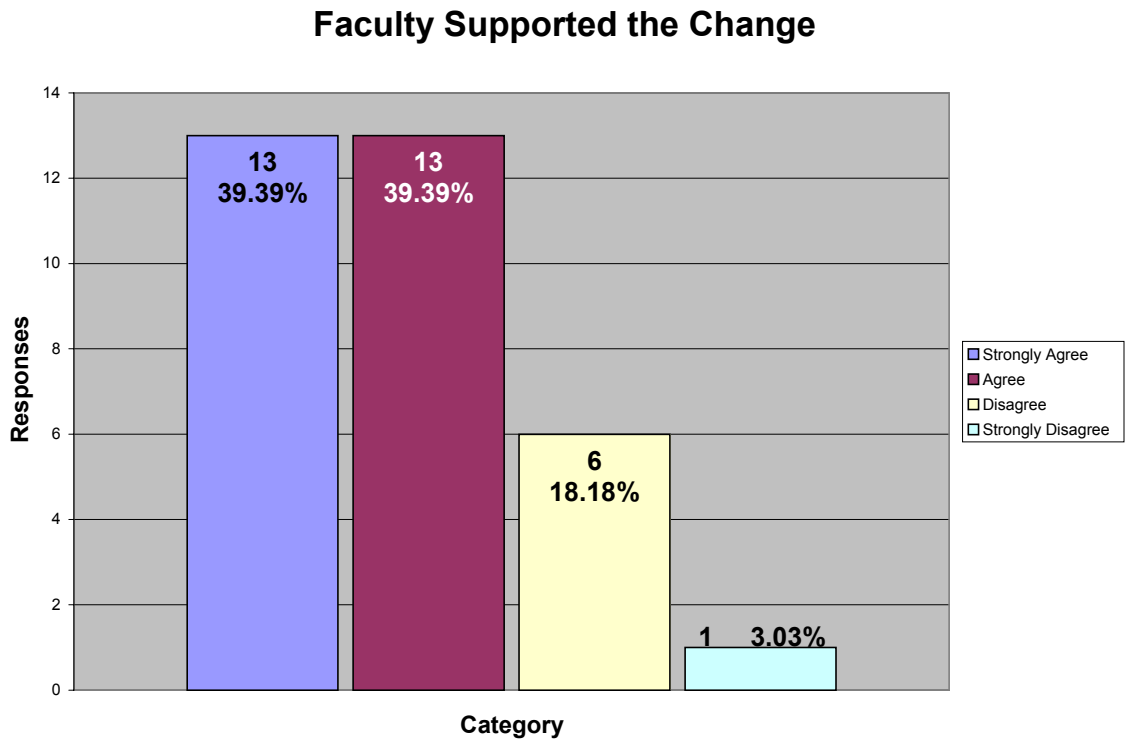
This occurred at California State University at Hayward where faculty narrowly rejected President Norma Rees' proposal to rebrand as California State University, East Bay. The 23-to-20 vote against the new moniker by faculty was not enough to sway the institution's trustees to reject the proposal. While the boards of the alumni association and the institutional trustees both unanimously supported the measure, faculty joined students and community leaders in expressing their opposition. The new name was approved two weeks following the Academic Senate's vote ("Academic Senate Votes," 2005; "It's Official," 2005).

During the same year, another California State University campus had vastly different results. Officially known as California State University, Sacramento, the school was beleaguered by a variety of brands including CSUS, CSU Sacramento, Cal State Sacramento, Sacramento State University, Sac State, and Capital University. Realizing the difficulty of managing multiple brand names, President Alexander Gonzales campaigned to change the name to Sacramento State University with Sac State as an official nickname (du Lac, 2004). With overwhelming rejection by the faculty, President Gonzales acquiesced and dropped the issue (Bazar, 2005; CSUS Faculty Senate, 2005). Faculty senate chair Cristy Jensen remarked, "There was widespread sentiment that we are proud to be part of the California State University system and didn't want that taken out of our name. He [Gonzales] listened to what we had to say" (Maxwell, 2005, p. B1). While the institution officially retained its California State University moniker, the media were asked to use a single informal name: "Sacramento State" (Bazar).

### *The Nature of Faculty Support or Rejection*

While the two California State University system schools treated their respective faculty's recommendations differently, how did the faculty at other institutions respond to rebranding proposals? Of the 34 institutions responding to the survey, 33 rated the comment "faculty supported the name change." Thirteen (39.39%) schools each rated this statement as "strongly agree" or "agree"; six institutions (18.18%) "disagreed," and one university (3.03%) "strongly disagreed." The average score for this statement was 3.15 on a 4.00 scale (see Figure 5.5). This placed faculty support fourth behind board, administration, and community support. Institutions in five of the ten states indicated that faculty did not support the rebranding.

Figure 5.5
*Faculty support for the "college-to-university" change.*



***Faculty Resistance***

In addition to negative faculty reactions, two institutions listed "faculty resistance" as being one of "the most interesting components of the process of changing the institution's name to a university." One university rated "faculty resistance" as second behind "alumni reactions." The other institution, however, listed the criterion as the third most interesting behind "alumni reactions" and "community sarcasm." One Georgia administrator illuminated the concerns of faculty:

> There was a sense of frustration and the feeling of not having any control over what was going on . . . The faculty were not left in a good position to be able to help articulate the reasons for the change to students or to alumni. That ended up creating more negative spin . . . You would expect faculty to be able to [defend the reasons]. Students would turn to their advisor or faculty member and say, "Why did this happen?" Rather than [receiving] any clear explanation of the process, what they got was, "Huh, I don't know"; "No one asked me"; "No one consulted us"; or "We recommended something else and they obviously just ignored us." So the lack of connection between campus input and the final result made it a disconnect.

One West Virginia administrator recalled faculty reactions to a similar change at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

> I came there two days after the President announced the change from St. Joseph's College to St. Joseph's University and I had to face the faculty

> and defend it. I did this within the first week I was there. I walked in . . . and I remember some of the faculty saying, "You are taking a very excellent, first rate college and making it a third rate university." I probably got off on the wrong foot by replying, "First of all, you have to convince me that it's a first rate college. There are four rankings of colleges and universities: first rank [tier], second rank, third rank, and fourth rank. The last time I looked at it, you weren't in the first rank." There was a fight over the change, but that disappeared in a year. I had none of those problems at Wheeling Jesuit. There wasn't that long of a tradition there.

While faculty senate minutes confirm overwhelming support at most West Virginia institutions, faculty at two institutions took issue with the processes relating to the change. At The University of Charleston, while faculty did not have any overt resistance to the name change, they felt disenfranchised by their exclusion from the process and had great apprehension concerning the institution's future. One administrative faculty member explained:

> The general feeling of the faculty was one of concern. I still think at that point, Morris Harvey College as an entity had a very real possibility. Other schools had failed. We started to see small schools all around the country – some of them had disappeared. I think that there was some feeling that the name change may have been a lesser evil, but it was a necessary component to struggle through, muddle through, and hopefully we could make it . . . Faculty knew that they had not been involved in the

> process. Part of the shock factor included the reduction of the number of faculty. This was really a new era. There wasn't a whole lot that the faculty could say. I think the faculty, as a teaching faculty, was concerned for the students. There was more thinking about,"How can we continue to grow?" The grandstand announcement was one of those, "OK here it is." The board had to have involvement in the process, but with the faculty there was a sense of some disenfranchisement with the process. That didn't become a major source of resistance within the structure. Those concerns expressed were a lot of questions about, "As we move forward, how are we going to be better?" This was more of a questioning component rather than, "You can't do this." The idea of the university structure and the ability to add graduate educational options – there were some things that were attractive to the academicians. There wasn't any real source of organized resistance.

In addition to not being a part of the process, a rise in deficits reported on the heels of the name change announcement precipitated the firing of faculty as part of the institution's restructuring efforts. One faculty administrator remembered the institutional tension in early 1979:

> We had gotten to the point where we had a number of tenured faculty in one or two person programs, where we had declining numbers of majors in our traditional programs. So structurally, we weren't really well positioned. By 1978, we found ourselves in declining enrollment in unattractive distributions . . . The University of Charleston name change

> was part of the overall structural change . . . So there were a number of things that were considered in that initial structure in naming. The faculty composition then became an issue changing dramatically with a number of tenured faculty and a number of programs that needed to be closed and cancelled. In February – the number I won't swear to but I believe – [that it was] 16 faculty members [who] were not renewed for the following year in that two-day period that was called the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre." That took place on February 14 and 15, 1979. That became part of the restructuring. At the same time, as part of changeover in structure, was the elimination of tenure for any faculty member who had not yet achieved tenure. Those that had it were grandfathered in, but those who did not already have tenure could not achieve tenure. Tenure was removed from that point. There was a series of three contracts: one-year, a three-year, and then a five-year contract. With those faculty having a tenure track position, a series of five-year contracts was issued, but nothing longer than five-years.

Even years after the restructuring and the name change, some faculty did not have confidence in their place of employment. One administrator illustrated this with one program's message to students.

> The nursing division told their students, "Go to West Virginia State" and get all of your general education courses there and come here for your nursing courses. They didn't have confidence in the quality of the educational experience and didn't want to be here. They were also

> primarily interested in saving the students' money. The university was going broke because we only had an 8-to-1 or 10-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio in those high-level nursing courses. We then tell students not to take courses where we might be able to have a ratio that could support the nursing courses. So all kinds of things were going wrong.

Likewise, the faculty and staff at Ohio Valley University viewed their own institution negatively. One administrator elaborated,

> We've had to change the perception of the school from the inside out. When I came here, we had faculty members that, for example, would hear that we had a student coming here that's a national merit finalist. A faculty member would say, "Why would she want to come here?" And that attitude was all the way through the institution. It was here. When we interviewed for a couple of key faculty and coaching positions, we had some candidates that were nationally acclaimed. The people on the search committees literally wanted to blackball them because they were too good to teach here . . . None of those people [with the negative attitudes] are here anymore. I needed that leverage, that university leverage, to help with the perception even inside this institution. And it's worked.

With the change to university status, Ohio Valley administration began expecting more from their faculty, as one administrator explained:

> When I came here, we had a very low number of our faculty with terminal degrees. That's changing. Basically, these positions are going to be held

> by people with terminal degrees. That's not an option. The option is, "Is it going to be you [or someone else]?" Basically, "if you're a program chair or you're a department chair, you're expected to have your doctorate. If you don't want to get your doctorate, you need to leave now and we'll hire someone who has one. If you're willing to get one, I'll be patient. We'll give you whatever." Some have three years and some have four years to get it. "We'll help you, but you have to show marked progress all four years or someone else comes in." It was the fact that we're a university that helped give validity to that [expectation]. Whether it really does or not.

One administrator acknowledged that while there wasn't much resistance to the name change, faculty were responsible for the bulk of the internal issues. Another administrator cited problems specifically related to the faculty.

> There were some faculty that were opposed and very strongly opposed [to the name change]. They did not feel that we were large enough to do that. They didn't understand that it was truly a repositioning of our institution from a marketing standpoint. There's a whole list of reasons why we did it, and it really was done from the standpoint of repositioning us for future growth and seriously a rebranding of where we are and where we are going.

One faculty member who had a longstanding relationship with the school eventually changed his position and embraced the idea, as one administrator illustrated:

> We still have a faculty member on staff who was the very first student who enrolled at Ohio Valley College. His name is Dr. Phil Sturm. He's a pioneer. Don Gardner, who was our first president, was out recruiting for students. Phil was going to go to one of our brotherhood institutions. By the time he [President Gardner] left Dr. Sturm's living room that day, he had him signing on the dotted line . . . He sold him on the idea of being a pioneer. Dr. Sturm had been at this institution his whole life, and he was opposed to the change to university status. But a year later, he came back and recanted and said, "I admit that I wasn't fully on board, but now I can see the vision. I can see where we are heading and I support the change." That endorsement, because he is respected by our faculty, helped internal relations and helped to solidify things. He was not out campaigning against it. Personally and professionally, I think he just hadn't caught the vision.

Shepherd University achieved faculty support by engaging faculty in conversations on the subject and outlining the reasons and benefits of moving to university status. One administrator recalled the dialogue process:

> I went around that year and met with every faculty department and by the time I was done, there were very few faculty [members] opposed to it because they understood that it was primarily a recruiting issue. They also understood that it opened the doors to graduate programs, which they tended to favor. Once they realized, and many of them already had, that our name was being confused with community colleges . . . [and] that this

[university status] can't hurt the quality of the students that come to their classes and it might increase the quality, they were on board.

At the 10 West Virginia institutions that became universities, most faculty officially supported the change. At other institutions in this study, faculty displeasure had little effect in altering the decision to rebrand. In regard to West Virginia institutions, negative faculty reactions were often short-lived and were soon forgotten. To avoid these issues, Krell (2006) recommended, "By including employees in branding initiatives before they are launched, you can ensure that everyone is on message" (p. 49).

## Reactions of the Alumni

While faculty are an important stakeholder group on campus, alumni wield a great deal of influence. This was discovered by Case Western Reserve University President Edward Hundert when he began a rebranding process at the Cleveland, Ohio institution. During his second year, Hundert sought to improve the school's image. Often referred by the acronym CWRU (pronounced "crew"), the institution was rebranded as "Case" because "market research had indicated that the acronym was difficult to pronounce and remember, and that it was poorly recognized outside Ohio" (Pulley, 2003, p. A30). There also was an opportunity for increased prestige with a one-word institutional name (Budiansky, 2006).

### *The Case for "Case"*

The official name of the school that recognized the 1967 merger of Case Institute and Western Reserve University, however, remained unchanged. The new marketing brand angered alumni and particularly the alumni of the former Western Reserve

University. Confused by the Case branding efforts, some alumni supposed that an actual institutional name change had either already occurred or imminent (Lipman Hearne, 2006).

Additionally, remnants of an age-old rivalry between the two adjacent campuses prior to the merger fueled alumni alienation. Vice President of University Relations Lara Kalafatis explained, "Western Reserve and Case were archrivals back in the day. It was a Hatfield and McCoy situation" (Strout, 2006, p. A30). Chicago marketing experts Lipman Hearne (2006) revealed that alumni from both historical arms of the institution continued to be irritated over the 1967 merger. Case alumni, who tended to have more animosity than Western Reserve alumni did, credited the merger with the devaluing of the higher national rankings that Case Institute of Technology previously experienced. Lipman Hearne also reported that graduates since the merger followed the same lines of demarcation as their predecessors and that "the University created, enabled and maintained the dividing line between the two entities long after the creation of Case Western Reserve University" (Lipman Hearne, 2006, § 3).

In addition to the loss of the Western Reserve name in the rebranding process that distanced one alumni faction, the new logo unveiled in 2003 was also controversial with most stakeholders. The institution explained the logic behind the Case logo (see Figure 5.6):

> The intersection represents the two institutions that originally came together to form Case Western Reserve University, reflecting the ideal of the arts and humanities intersecting science and technology. The half spheres evoke the lines of the global hemisphere, combined to represent

worldwide impact and dedication to global learning. Engaging line work represents the relationships between the university and community partners, Fortune 500 companies, and other partners who help create experiential learning, and can also be seen as a depiction of University Circle. There are gaps yet to be filled—communicating the idea that there is progress and learning yet to be achieved (Case Western Reserve, 2003).

Figure 5.6
*2003-2007 Former Case logo from available for download from Case Wiki.*


Often nicknamed the "fat man" or "fat surfer," Lipman Hearne explained the problems caused by the controversial image that was unpopular with a number of stakeholders including alumni (Lipman Hearne, 2006; Mortland, 2007). "The current logo/mark has become a 'lightning rod' and is distracting administration and leadership from important work related to institutional leadership, financial concerns, and positioning/branding work. At the institutional and school levels, it is interfering with substantive discussions about programs, research, and fundraising" (Lipman Hearne, 2006, "Key Findings" section). In somewhat of a contradiction, Lipman Hearne assumed, "the logo looks to be a nonissue" with alumni, "the institution name and lack of a coherent 'story' are the primary concerns" (2006, "Alumni" section). While the Case brand simplified an unwieldy name, Lipman Hearne's focus group of high school students

revealed “one-word University identifiers carry the assumption of prestige . . . [and that] ‘Case’ had not earned its way into the one-name group, so they considered that one-word moniker weak” (2006, “Focus Group” section).

During his four-year tenure, President Hundert further alienated alumni groups by consolidating longstanding alumni groups into one umbrella alumni organization. By 2006, Case Western Reserve’s mounting financial crisis and a “no confidence” vote by Arts and Sciences faculty led to Hundert’s resignation (Strout, 2006). Gonzles (2006) reported that alumni dissatisfaction and the resultant drop in donations was “one factor in the . . . resignation of former President Edward Hundert” (p. B2).

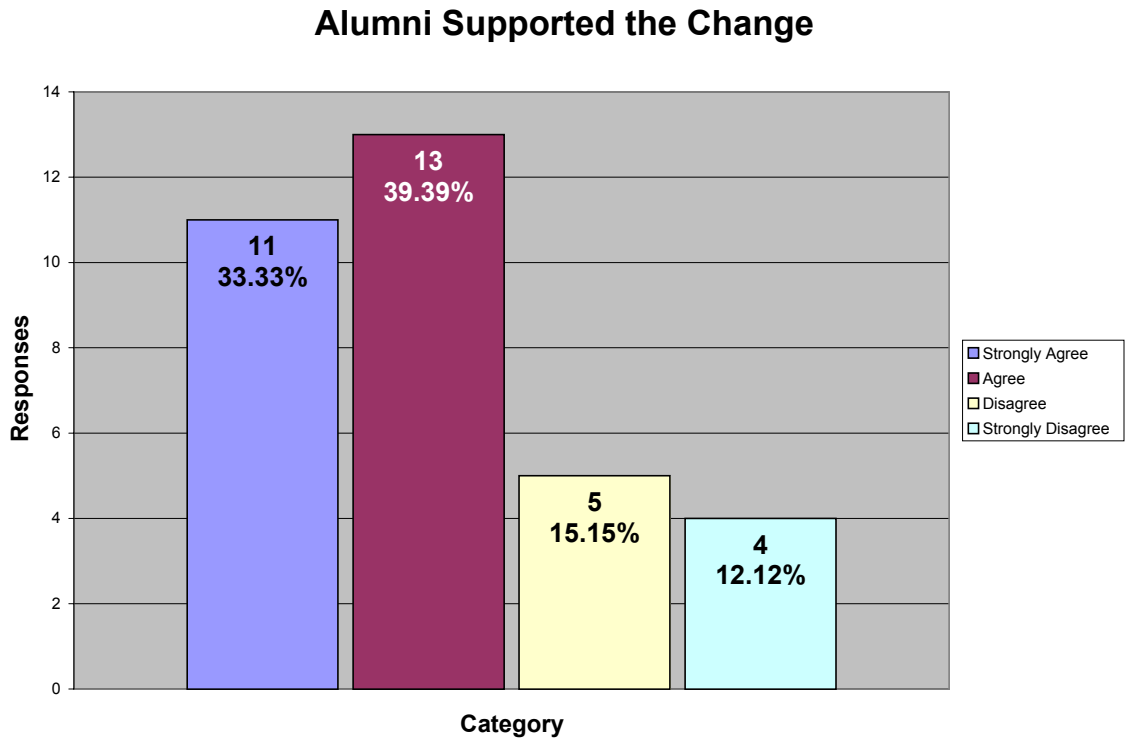
Lipman Hearne’s study concluded, “There are well-established links between brand loyalty and giving. This review and analysis suggests that Western Reserve loyalties are negatively affected by implications that ‘Case’ is dominant” (2006, “Modify Logotype” section). At the beginning of the next academic year, interim president Gregory Eastwood promised stakeholders that the branding issue would be resolved. To thunderous applause, Eastwood recommended a return to the full institutional name and logo that would not be “so much Case in your face” (Gonzles, 2006, p. B2).

### *Charting Alumni Support*

While the challenges and the experiences at Case Western Reserve University were unique, the incident illustrated the importance of alumni participation in the branding process. In a survey of 34 administrators from nine states, alumni were more likely to oppose a “college-to-university” rebranding than other stakeholder groups. In response to the statement, “Alumni supported the name change,” 33 administrators

responded at the following levels: "Strongly Agree" 11 (33.33%), "Agree" 13 (39.33%), "Disagree" 5 (15.15%), and "Strongly Disagree" 4 (12.12%) (See Figure 5.7). The mean institutional score for this criterion was computed at 2.94 on a 4.00 scale.

Figure 5.7
*Alumni supported the "college-to-university" name change; n=33.*




***My Old School***

At most West Virginia institutions, negative alumni reactions appear to be at a minimum. Where alumni have been most vocal, these issues seem to have subsided over time. Representing the state's most volatile responses, Morris Harvey College alumni reacted swiftly and negatively to the surprise announcement of the name change to The University of Charleston. Some independent variables may have influenced the alumni's attitudes. Although the name change would not be effected until six months later, the

initial shock of the announcement was probably a factor. As time progressed, alumni comments came less frequently. Second and related to the first, alumni were not part of the change initiative process. Their absence in the decision could have led to disenfranchisement. Third, the sheer novelty of the change also may have had an impact upon alumni. In 1978, the idea of a college transitioning to university status was not as commonplace as it is today. Within the recent memory of Morris Harvey's alumni, only one West Virginia school had made this transition—Marshall College to Marshall University and that was 17 years previous (Casto, 2005).

While these hypothetical dynamics may have contributed to alumni indignation, the reigning factor was the loss of an institutional identity and the allegiance to the Morris Harvey name. To Dr. Thomas Voss' credit, the institution retained the Morris Harvey name for the College of Arts and Sciences. One faculty administrator felt that decision tempered the issue: "That was an important part because it allowed for prior graduates to have some point of identification . . . Although we had not had a great deal of support from alumni in the past, it was a real concern about the negative alumni reaction to that change." Morris Harvey College was not, however, a stranger in regard to institutional change. Prior to the UC name, it was on its third name, in its third location, under its third controlling body, and twice had merged with other institutions (see Chapter 1).

In addition, most institutions in West Virginia had been through a series of name alterations. Even today, only two regionally accredited institutions in West Virginia retain their original names: Bethany College founded in 1840 and Davis and Elkins College founded in 1904 (see Appendix Z). Although local news media presented this

argument, alumni were anxious concerning the school from which they held their diploma.

Figure 5.8
*Bethany College one of only two WV accredited institutions that retains its original name.*


As a tangible piece of connective tissue, UC offered to reissue diplomas to graduates. The replacement diplomas listed the names Barboursville Seminary, Morris Harvey College, and The University of Charleston. For some unknown reason, the second name of Barboursville College was omitted ("New Diplomas, 1979). One faculty administrator explained the overtures made to alumni:

> Those tokens, signs, symbols, and things in terms of the process were offered to allow people to evaluate and say, "I think I kind of like this and so I want to go ahead and do this." If they didn't, then they didn't have to take any action . . . [Those not accepting this might say,] "You can't make

> me have a [acknowledge] University of Charleston from an alumni perspective. The institution that I went to is now gone." The administration said, "No it's not gone, it has gone through another transition . . . This is just part of an evolutionary process: a necessary part of the evolutionary process. Would you rather have an institution here still where you attended it, or have no institution here [at all]?" So those kinds of offerings were made as an outreach and we were very, very sensitive to the Morris Harvey College name. I think that without retention of the College of Arts and Sciences retaining the name in some form, I think that it would have been not impossible, but nearly impossible to do. That would have been the sign that we didn't care about anything that happened before. It's still an ongoing property, we recognize our past, we recognize the traditions of Morris Harvey College.

One remaining area of contention was the former institutional name on Riggleman Hall, the main building on the UC campus. One administrator explained the compromise of allowing it to continue.

> We had some conversations on whether the name Morris Harvey be removed from this building [Riggleman Hall] so you stand across the river and you see Morris Harvey College. There wasn't any signage out front for the University of Charleston. We didn't have one, and people didn't know what the name of the school was. It was then 10 years [after the name change] and it hadn't been done. Ten years later, 20 years after it had been done, it was still a matter of "Don't you dare touch that because

we are all just hanging by a thread with the allegiance of the alums to the institution. If you do anything to change the Morris Harvey name and its prominence, then you're in trouble." So, we used slashes, UC/MHC trying to bring those folks along.

Figure 5.9
*The Morris Harvey name continues on Riggleman Hall.*


While the institution made an effort to include Morris Harvey alumni, some still reject the UC moniker as an administrator noted: "There are some alums that still say I went to Morris Harvey College. So, it only sinks in because there are fewer of them than those who identify with the University of Charleston." Those that have eventually accepted the name have recognized that UC is the same institution as Morris Harvey College. One faculty administrator reasoned,

> We have many helpful Morris Harvey College alumni that are proud to be associated with The University of Charleston. They have made that [realization], "It's still my school, whatever it's called; it's still my school." Many of them, because they were loyal before, are going to be loyal to this institution even if we called it Mud Suck Tech. They wouldn't have liked it, but it was their school. That's seems to be the characteristic of alumni who are loyal and who were involved when they were a part of the institution in their college days. They might have that same kind involvement today. If there are any open wounds still out there, I'm not aware. I heard for a few years about people who were hurt by it [the name change].

While the University of Charleston's name change occurred in 1979, later changes at other institutions were met by alumni apathy or by veiled threats of non-support. A Wheeling Jesuit administrator assessed the situation regarding the institution's two name changes that occurred a decade apart.

> Most of the alumni ignored it or didn't seem to care. They understood that this was a process of growth. Several were very insistent. "I got my degree from Wheeling College and that's what I want it to be: [a] Wheeling College [graduate]." Others said, "I like the name Wheeling Jesuit College." A few of them dissented. The way they often try to present themselves is by saying, "I'll never give another donation." I don't remember looking at any of those – they just didn't like it. So you'll still find people, I found people that say to me, "I graduated from Wheeling

College" and "I say that's fine." I offered any that wanted to get their diplomas updated whether it was Wheeling College or Wheeling Jesuit College I don't think anyone took it up and I don't think it really bothered those people. I didn't have any real dissent that was meaningful – you'll find dissent in whatever you do. I didn't have any [major] dissent.

Figure 5.10
*West Virginia State Homecoming 2007: Clay Singleton ('86) & Jesse Peterson ('85)*


Clay Singleton, from New York, and Jesse Peterson, from Michigan, returned to State's campus for the first time since graduating. They are pleased with the "university" designation and the many improvements made to the West Virginia State campus in the last two decades.

Like UC and Wheeling Jesuit, a number of schools used the opportunity to issue new diplomas to alumni to build acceptance. West Virginia State University, where the alumni association was the first to endorse the name change, used the opportunity as a fund raising activity. Approximately 100 alumni from West Virginia State took advantage of the offer, as one administrator explained,

> You still have many alumni who were here when it was West Virginia State College. Something I've enjoyed talking to alumni about is the fact that in addition to your college diploma, you can now get a university diploma. We've had many alumni take us up on that. You have alumni who now have two diplomas from West Virginia State.

Similarly, Shepherd University reissued diplomas for its alumni who desired them. One administrator recalled Shepherd's specific promotion:

> We sent mailings out to all of the alums that we knew of and I think we published a notice in our quarterly magazine. We gave the opportunity to any alum that had a Shepherd College degree for a donation of $50 to a scholarship fund that we would present them with a Shepherd University degree [diploma]. Several did that, but not nearly as many as I thought would have. I think we had less [sic] than 200. But, I would have thought it would have been a lot more if for no other reason than the novelty. "Hey I've got two college degrees from the same place, but I only did 128 credits." We weren't overwhelmed with it. But, there are people out there now with two sheepskins on the wall.

Also using this tactic, Mountain State University offered alumni of Beckley College and The College of West Virginia an option for new diploms. Unfortunately, MSU has only actively nurtured its alumni during the last 17 years. One administrator explains some of the issues involved with this:

> I don't know how the alumni feel about much of anything. In the past, we hadn't cultivated our alumni and part of that is that we didn't give them anything to remember while they were here. You know all the older alums have had very fond memories of their experience here at Beckley College. It was their saving grace, as we represent economically a poor region. Regarding the name changes, I think it's hard – even when you divorce someone – you still have their name – you still have memories attached. Your educational experience is so intrinsic of who you are – just like your work experience, [and] your credit report. But I think everyone is pleased that the school has grown; because when the school is successful, they can tout that degree even more. One of the ways you can almost test that is to see how many people who have asked to have their diplomas changed.

While the exact number of alumni is unknown, 11 Beckley College graduates and 64 graduates of The College of West Virginia requested new diplomas (Stone, 2004). Another administrator believed that this was a good move for MSU. "The fact that the university wanted to go back and reissue the diplomas, I think that was a very positive thing for the alumni."

While not promoting a special campaign as did other institutions, a Fairmont State University administrator explained that alumni could receive an FSU replacement diploma. "We didn't do that [offer replacement diplomas], although I think if they ask for a new diploma it automatically comes up with the university name because we don't have the template for the old one."

For most institutions, only slight alumni negativity occurred. This was countered by administrations' providing solid reasoning to alumni dissenters. At Concord University, an administrator indicated that the initial reaction was "mixed"; however, "ultimately, the alumni association endorsed it. But it was only after a lot of soul searching by people who were proud to be Concord College graduates and that others before me talked about the value of it [remaining a college]." Additionally, Concord alumni didn't "put a great deal of significance in the name change." At Shepherd, most supported the change; however, as one administrator explained, some individuals had to be convinced.

> Shortly after the name change, which took place in March, I went down to Florida for a few days to pay a visit on some alums. I took with me some very nice, large coffee mugs. They were the first ones off the press that said Shepherd University, and I had them gift-wrapped. I visited a couple that graduated from Shepherd in the '50s, I believe, and they lived in Jacksonville. I had never met either one before. I knocked on the door and they invited me in and I presented them with these two gifts. As they opened them and looked at them, there was this long awkward silence and finally the woman says, "I guess you don't know my husband's position on the name change do you?" I said, "I think now I know." We talked for an hour or two. We went out and had lunch for an hour or two. We came back and talked some more. When I left, he was rah, rah Shepherd University. But when I got there that day, he did not want that name change. He didn't go to Shepherd University – he went to Shepherd

College. But, that was the exception. By a vast majority – I would say at least 9-to-1 were in favor of the name change. Today, three years later, it's hard to find someone who doesn't think it was a good move.

A smoother transition occurred at institutions where alumni were involved in the process or at least had a forum to express their opinions. One Ohio Valley University administrator spoke on how his institution involved the alumni beyond their participation on a "name change" committee.

We developed a survey instrument that we sent out to alumni and students. There were several questions. Most were closed-ended, but there were some open-ended questions. We did this to gauge perception and get feedback. It was very revealing. The overwhelming majority of responses were, "Yes, you should move to university status. It would be a good thing to do." We also sent along with that survey our rationale, and I believe we had 10 reasons why we needed to move to university status. As a researcher, more than likely, that biased my results in some way – I had a feeling that it did. I wanted to gauge their opinion and get their take on it after they read our rationale – that was our purpose. We threw it out there and said, "OK, here's why we're doing this. We feel like it's important." More or less, we asked them the question, "Do you agree where we're heading?" Some of our alumni, as you can imagine, were very vocal and very adamant about not doing it. We had responses that said, "Well, you're not big enough." "Don't you have to have graduate programs to

declare yourself a university?" The answer was no, and we attempted to provide a definition of the term "university."

In Georgia, where alumni were not involved in the process, the transition to university status caused major problems at several institutions. One administrator expressed how very powerful alumni felt disenfranchised by the very process.

> I'll tell you how bad it is. We even continued to print the old sweatshirts, caps, and things like that for our bookstore for old alums who refused to buy the new caps, sweatshirts, and things with the new name . . . It [the name change] resulted in a president leaving in the middle of the night, not only for this, but this was part of it. It resulted in about four years of having to repair relationships with the alumni and the other areas of the institution. It was an extremely unpleasant trip.

Another Georgia administrator admitted that even 11 years later, alumni still complain about the current identity: "There are members of our alumni board that bring that up every meeting now. 'Why don't we change it back?' 'Who did that?' 'Why did that happen?' 'Why did they do that to us?'"

## Reactions of Former Employees

Not unlike the negative reaction of alumni, former West Virginia Tech employees and their spouses formed a committee to protest recent developments at West Virginia University Institute of Technology. Seven women, whose connections to the school spanned over 40 years, organized "Take Back Tech." The membership included three former administrative assistants, one former Tech Foundation director, two spouses of

former Tech employees, and a spouse of an inductee in the Tech Hall of Fame (Phillips, 2007b; Williams, 2007).

Formed the day following Governor Manchin's 2006 State of the State address, the group was credited with stopping the move of Tech's engineering department to South Charleston. In the aftermath of the announcement, the women consulted with legislators and traversed Fayette County collecting 7,000 signatures to stop the engineering move. Part of their efforts resulted in a $3.2 million legislative appropriation for the engineering department. Fearing that WVU planned to move Tech to community college status, the group began to question the 2007 move of Tech from a regional branch campus to becoming a WVU division (Williams, 2007).

According to Senator Robert Plymale, "If I have one word to describe these women, it is 'persistent.' They were very, very concerned about the school. Their efforts were welcome, and the results were better because of their efforts" (Williams, 2007, p. 1B). Plymale, who chaired the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability (LOCEA), requested that the WVU Board of Governors provide LOCEA its plans for Tech. The report, expected by April 2007 but submitted in June, was not deemed adequate and Plymale requested that a plan be resubmitted by July 1, 2007 – the official date of the WVU Tech change in status (Phillips, 2007a). Meanwhile, Take Back Tech filed suit in Kanawha County Circuit Court to block the Tech status change. Requesting emergency measures, the plaintiffs asked that WVU's plan to move Tech to divisional status be blocked pending settlement of the suit ("Opponents of Tech-WVU," 2007). On July 3, with LOCEA having not received the requested plan, Tech Back Tech

spokesperson Dorothy Phillips opined in a *Charleston Gazette* guest editorial (2007a, p. P7),

> Why is it so difficult for the WVU Board of Governors to develop and submit a plan? Would or does the plan safeguard the baccalaureate programs at West Virginia Tech, particularly the engineering program? Or is the ultimate goal to destroy these degrees at Tech despite the specific intent of the Legislature to the contrary? Does the Board of Governors truly hope to revive Tech and its campus or turn it into a community and technical college? A respectable plan would have addressed these concerns and would have eliminated the need for our court action.

At this writing (August 30, 2007), WVU's plan remains unsubmitted and legal action is still pending. While the lawsuit did not block Tech's change-in-status plans, not all Tech stakeholders were pleased with the efforts of Take Back Tech. One Tech student complained about the group and suggested more suitable avenues of pursuit:

> I'm a current Tech student, and Take Back Tech has done nothing but make trouble for the school. Before the merger that took place at the beginning of the month, Tech was only a regional branch of WVU. WVU had no obligation to fund anything. Tech chose to become a regional campus, much like WVU-Parkersburg, because the administration at the time wanted more control over the school, something that the new divisional status will force the school to give up in some moderate amount. Tech was also underfunded [sic] for many years by the state legislature, forcing the school to fall millions of dollars behind in basic maintenance.

> Take Back Tech, which is made up mainly of residents of Montgomery and the surrounding area, could do other things to really, honestly help Tech. First and foremost, they could clean up the town and rid it of the massive drug problem in the town. Walking through downtown and trying to avoiud [sic] the syringes lying all over the sidewalks isn't very encouraging to students. Montgomery has also been unwilling to let new businesses in town, mainly franchises. This has forced several businesses to move across the river to Smithers, and leaving many Tech students who don't have the means of transportation unable to even do basic grocery shopping (Newsie, 2007, "July 11" section).

## Reaction of Other Institutions

Ten years before Tech Back Tech's campaigns mounted against a variety of decisions facing the Montgomery institution, there were reactions from administrators in both the College and the University systems toward the proposed WVU – WV Tech merger plans. While other institutions are not considered direct stakeholders, often they create dynamics that can influence a rebranding decision. This was evidenced by a number of cases outlined in Chapters 1 and 9.

### *Marshall vs. WVU: The Backyard Brawl*

In regard to the WVU-Tech merger, Marshall University President Wade Gilley cried foul to the idea. Gilley feared that with Tech as part of the University System, Marshall University would be required to share revenue under the funding formulas at the time. Gilley complained that Marshall was also funding the West Virginia School of

Osteopathic Medicine and anticipated similar resource sharing with West Virginia Tech (Rake, 1996). According to Gilley, Tech "might think they can come over to the University System, and we'll bail them out. I'm not opposed to the merger, but I want to be assured that Marshall students won't be taxed for that" ("WVU, Tech Get OK," 1996, ¶ 6). The editors of the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch* echoed this same cautionary reaction ("WVU-Tech Watch Out," 1996).

One administrator noted that University System Chancellor Richard Manning had problems with the ongoing WVU-Marshall rivalry, a hostility this proposal had fueled:

> He [Manning] was spending most of his time trying to keep Marshall and WVU from killing each other. Wade Gilley was a very aggressive president and he always had this way of . . . building up his institution at the expense of anybody else that got in his way. He had to tear somebody else down in order to build his own place up, and Manning spent an awful lot of time trying to get along with Gilley and trying to hold him down and try to get him from really having open warfare with WVU.

Another administrator, however, viewed Gilley as a shrewd entrepreneur with his own merger plans up his sleeve.

> I think Gilley is the slickest good old boy. He could sell me snake oil and swampland in Florida. I'll never forget having a drink with him at the bar at the [Charleston] Marriot. I was listening to him and saying in the back of my head, "This guy is running a university?" Because he does not come across as such, and I think that is the secret to his success. Before you

know it, he's made the deal and you don't know what happened to you. Regardless to what happened to him, I think that Wade Gilley is one of the most entrepreneurial souls in higher education. I think in his own way, he was trying to position Marshall as the alpha dog.

Figure 5.11
*Marshall University Graduate College – possible legislative appeasement for Marshall.*


The WVU-Tech merger became a springboard for Gilley to close a deal for Marshall University to affiliate with West Virginia Graduate College during 1996 (SB 591). In 1997, Marshall absorbed the Graduate College and increased Gilley's educational fiefdom ("The Merger," 1998). One administrator explained how the originating affiliation was attached to the WVU-Tech merger bill (SB 591, 1996):

> I will tell you that I also went to Wade Gilley, who was the president of Marshall, and to the College of Graduate Studies [West Virginia Graduate College], who were very concerned about WVU's presence in the Valley. I told them eight weeks prior that we were looking at this possibility. We had task force made up of people of both campuses and I really think this prompted them to think about a merger of their institutions, which members of the board forced them [Marshall] to tell me the night before they voted on it. So, I think they both went through in that same bill and I think this [WVU-Tech merger] prompted that merger.

While one legislator was hesitant to admit the Marshall and Graduate College merger was an appeasement to Gilley and Marshall for the WVU-Tech deal, one well-connected administrator disagreed and said this was the exact reason for the creation of the Marshall University Graduate College. "Yes, I do personally believe that it was a trade-off. Maybe even one that even WVU might regret today since Marshall has managed to expand that graduate college and really make it into something." After the smoke cleared, Gilley publicly praised WVU for saving West Virginia Tech (Bias-Jones, 1996).

### *A Carrier of Leprosy*

One other reaction occurred in relation to the WVU-Tech merger. This was the reaction of the other Presidents under the jurisdiction of the Board of Directors of the State College System [College System]. In addition to West Virginia Tech (prior to the merger), the College system included the other seven state colleges and the two free-

standing community and technical colleges. One administrator recalled the responses made by the other College System presidents to the WVU Tech merger.

> Presidents don't normally volunteer to give their autonomy away, and so, the other presidents were amazed, as I recall at the time. They were amazed, but they were also fearful that the legislature might see this acquisition as a desirable trend, and that they might want to have it happen with the other campuses. So they were all a little bit fearful that the legislature might think that this was such a good idea, "Let's do this at several other campuses." So they kind of almost all of the sudden acted like [WV Tech President John] Carrier had leprosy. They didn't even want to be seen with him, because they thought they might be tied into the same ideas with their own campuses.

***Sue Me, Sue You Blues***

Occasionally a rebranding results in a legal battle. When The College of West Virginia (CWV) worked through the process of a new name, it had no idea that another school in West Virginia was using a similar name to its selection of Mountain State University (MSU). However, as CWV began moving to adopt the new identity, a Mountain State College (MSC) representative approached a CWV recruiter about a possible trademark infringement at a college fair held on December 5, 2000. Two weeks previous, CWV had filed an application for "Mountain State University" as a registered trademark with the U.S. Patent and Trade Office (2000). Within weeks of MSC's initial complaint, The College of West Virginia Board of Trustees (2000b) approved the name of

Mountain State University as the school's new name. In addition, the Secretary of State of West Virginia registered the name for commerce within the state and Network Solutions permitted the institution's use of the mountainstate.edu domain name in tandem with its existing cwv.edu domain (Mountain State University v. Mountain State College, 2002; "Who is – mountainstate.edu," 2007).

On December 13, 2000, Jackson and Kelly, PLLC officially contacted CWV in writing stating that the Mountain State University name infringed upon MSC's trademark brand. Using evidence of Mountain State College's April 28, 1999 West Virginia trademark certificate as evidence, MSC's counsel claimed infringement based on three claims: a) use of the mark without consent of the registrant in commerce where it would cause confusion; b) use of the mark in advertising in West Virginia; and c) that corporation names must be unique and distinguishable from existing West Virginia corporations (Mountain State University v. Mountain State College, 2002; WV Secretary of State, 1999). Monika J. Hussell (2000, ¶ 8) advised that "Mountain State College objects to The College of West Virginia's use of the name 'Mountain State University' and respectfully requests that it cease and desist from using 'Mountain State' in its enterprise now and in the future."

On January 5, 2001, CWV responded through Steptoe and Johnson, PLLC. Megan D. Dortenzo (2001) countered, "Please be advised that after careful consideration of your request, my client is going forward with its efforts to change its name to Mountain State University. Please understand that this change is not made lightly" (¶ 2). Dortenzo outlined several reasons that there really was no conflict between the two institutions. These included the following: a) the schools were different in scope; b) the schools

served different types of students; c) there were hundreds of businesses using the "Mountain State" identity; and d) there were numerous examples of schools' sharing a similar identity to other institutions. In the meantime, MSC sent a second letter for Mountain State University to cease and desist with the name change (Hussell, 2001a).

Six days following this response, CWV officially became Mountain State University, Inc. *doing business as* The College of West Virginia. A media event occurred in Beckley and coverage of the name change was reported by media from Beckley, Bluefield, Charleston, Huntington, and statewide through West Virginia Public Radio. The *Beckley Register-Herald* dedicated the entire front page of the next day's edition to the name change story and printed a commemorative one-page sheet of the same as a souvenir ("Mountain State," 2001).

The following Sunday, Mountain State University placed full-page ads in every major newspaper in the state announcing the name change that would be effected in August 2001. Additionally, MSU issued a press release to all West Virginia newspapers. Both the advertisement and press release appeared in the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel* and evoked strong emotions from Mountain State College's administration. MSC's counsel threatened legal action (Hussell, 2001b; "Mountain State University Marketing Department," 2001; Mountain State University v. Mountain State College, 2002).

Four days following MSC's third cease-and-desist letter, Mountain State University filed suit against Mountain State College in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia on February 16, 2001. MSU claimed that its name did not infringe on MSC's name, that it was not expected to cause any confusion, that MSC's mark was not considered famous, and that MSU was not engaging in unfair competition.

The suit asked for a declaratory judgment (Mountain State University v. Mountain State College, 2002). One administrator explained that the institution was immersed into the name change process at the time of the suit. "We were so far into the process there was no stopping it. We had poured a lot of money, time, and a lot of the publicity had gone out . . . It was so late in the game that there was no stepping back from it." Another administrator recalled the rationale for the suit.

> We made our change and they got a group of attorneys here in West Virginia and said, "You've stolen our territory" and so on and so forth. "We're going to sue you over name infringement" and so on. The reality is that we would have probably won in court because . . . you can look at all the states and find similar kinds of issues. But I guess that's what that forced us to do what we did.

In addition to the issues raised by Dortenzo, Mountain State University also claimed the following: a) MSC held lesser status national accreditation, while MSU held regional accreditation; b) no one on MSC's faculty or staff had an earned doctorate, while 50% of MSU's faculty held doctoral degrees; c) MSC's advertising was geographically limited; d) MSC served a significantly smaller population; and e) MSU had a population of international students, while MSC had none. Mountain State College's position included the following: a) they had continuously used the mark since 1888; b) MSC's usage often was simply shortened to "Mountain State"; c) MSC operated the mountainstate.org domain before MSU registered either the mountainstate.edu [in 2000] or mountainstate.net [in 1999] domains; d) MSU employed reverse confusion in which the public would attribute MSC's products to Mountain State University; and e) MSC

employees had communicated with individuals who had confused the two institutions (Mountain State University v. Mountain State College; "Who Is – mountainstate.edu," 2007; "Who Is – mountainstate.edu," 2007"),

The suit continued for a year and was finally settled just prior to the trial date. A Mountain State University administrator remembered how the settlement occurred:

> It went on for about a year and we got in the presence of a federal judge in Charleston [Charles H. Hayden] who sat with us and sat with them and with our respective counsel. He looked at the Mountain State College owner [Michael McPeek] and said, "You two need to work this out." Then he looked at me and said, "You need to find a way to work this out. If you put me in a situation in making a decision, neither of you is going to be happy." Those were his words. So, we sat there that day. Our counsel said, "Let's fight it." I thought about it and said, "I'm going to make them an offer to just buy out the issue." I think we made a reasonable offer just to get them off our backs. It would have cost us far more in attorneys' fees and other kinds of things to fight it. We made a little cash settlement and their owner went home happy and we went away unencumbered. Not unlike what happens in any situation where there's something dealing with trademark infringement or copyright infringement. Those things are mostly settled. Not necessarily because you need to do it, but reality tells you that it's so much cheaper to do it that way.

While the settlement amount was undisclosed, one administrator characterized the amount as "not too much." Another thought that it was "about $250 thousand." A third

confessed that, "for trademark licensing settlement, it was considerably lower than most arrangements of that nature." One administrator believed that Mountain State College's primary motivation, however, was for MSU to purchase the Parkersburg school.

> They [Mountain State College] really were a small insignificant school and what they really truly wanted from Mountain State University was for them to buy them out. That was the whole push all along because they were floundering. I thought that they felt this was a good way to dump this thing. That's really what they were working for the whole time. That's why [administration] settled. I think [a number of staff] went up to look at it to see if it was viable and if it was something that may have worked for us. It was in a bad part of town and it was pretty dilapidated and it wasn't worth what they wanted for it.

A July 26, 2007 visit to the Mountain State College campus in Parkersburg revealed that the neighborhood did not appear to be any better or any worse than most sections of the city. Some buildings in the neighborhood were in disrepair, but these were not unlike houses that once adjoined the Mountain State University campus. Although the interiors were not inspected, a cursory examination of the exterior of MSC's three buildings revealed that they appeared to be in good repair and could not be considered dilapidated (see Figure 5.12).

While the extent of the confusion created by CWV's rebranding is not known, there appears to be some to this day. An administrator from another institution slated to be an expert witness for the plaintiff admitted, "A week before the set date for the trial, Steptoe and Johnson were preparing me for testimony and they asked about the possibility

of confusion between the institutions. I honestly said there would probably be some. There should not be much, but I couldn't say that there wasn't going to be any. They were not happy with my answer."

Figure 5.12
*Mountain State College in Parkersburg.*


One MSU administrator indicated that, even years following the change, "There were problems with MSU starting nursing program cohorts in the Parkesburg area as people tended to think it was Mountain State College and not us offering the classes." Several published issues have arisen as well. The 2005, 2006, and 2007 *HEP Higher Education Directories* incorrectly list Mountain State College as being accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, an organization that accredits MSU's Master of Science in Physician Assistant program.

Additionally, the popular college social networking site Facebook (2007) up through mid-2007 listed Mountain State University's network home as being Parkersburg, WV. This issue was resolved during summer 2007.

As far as the effect upon Mountain State College, the name change of The College of West Virginia to Mountain State University does not appear to have had any long-term effects upon MSC's enrollment. While more incremental losses occurred in the five years after the Mountain State University change, the average number of students in the five years prior to the change differed only by four FTE students from the post-change average (see Table 5.2). MSC lost a large number of students prior to the years analyzed. From 1993 to 1996, MSC lost 200 students, a 41% loss in three years (see Figure 5.13). These losses occurred well before the MSU rebranding. According to enrollment figures from the *HEP Higher Education Directories*, MSC was in a downward enrollment spiral that eventually stabilized in the late 1990s with 2006 being the worst year in 15. While there is little doubt that MSU's rebranding had some impact upon Mountain State College, it does not appear that it affected the school as MSC had alleged that it would.

Table 5.2
*MSC's enrollment pre and post MSU's rebranding (HEP Higher Education Directories).*

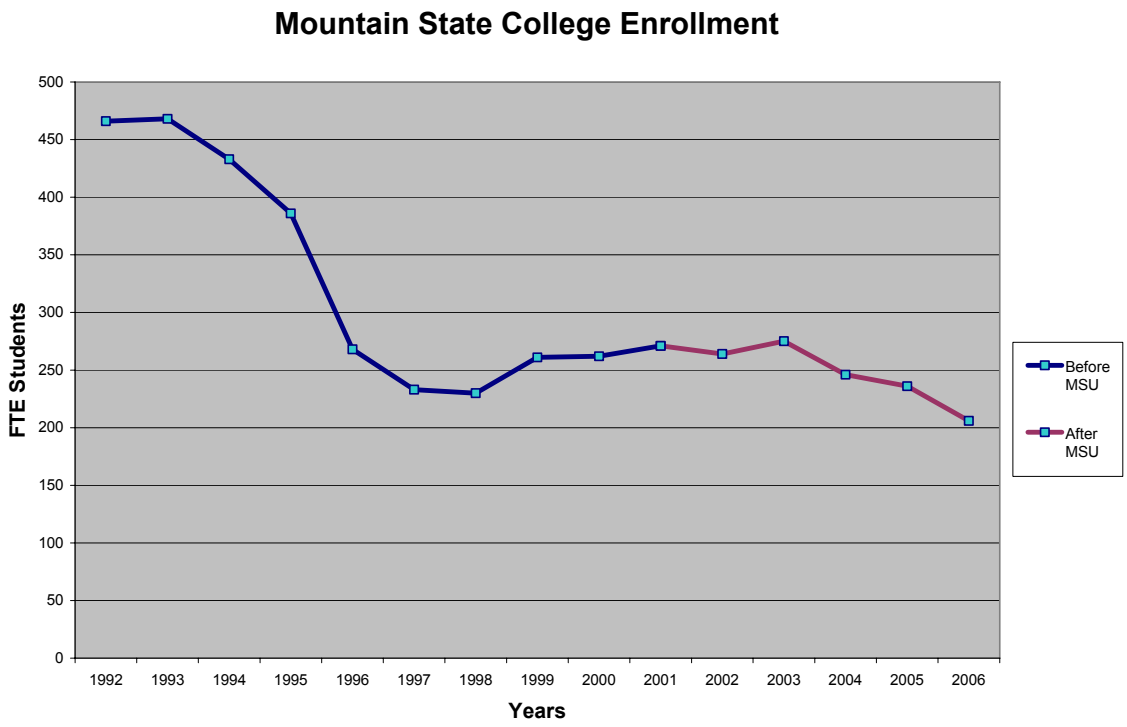
**Mountain State College Enrollment prior to Mountain State University's Name Change**

| Year | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrollment | 268 | 233 | 230 | 261 | 262 | 271 | 254 |
| Yearly Percentage Change | | -13.06% | -1.29% | 13.48% | 0.38% | 3.44% | 0.59% |

**Mountain State College Enrollment after Mountain State University's Name Change**

| Year | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrollment | 271 | 264 | 275 | 246 | 236 | 206 | 250 |
| Yearly Percentage Change | | -2.58% | 4.17% | -10.55% | -4.07% | -12.76% | -5.15% |

Figure 5.13
*MSC's reported enrollment trends (HEP Higher Education Directories 1993-2007).*




### *All for One and None for All*

A final rebranding issue is the cooperation among institutions seeking to attain university status simultaneously. In conducting interviews of West Virginia administrators, it became obvious that the four 2004 rebranded state universities did not work together through the process. While the institutions did not have active rivalries with each other, a concerted effort of cooperation did not appear to exist either. While Concord had not worked through political connections as vigorously as the others schools, legislators promoted the rebranding agendas of schools within their own regions.

For example, the joint bills of HB 2299 and SB 80 introduced on January 14, 2004 recommended the change of name for West Virginia State College. On February 3, 2004,

Eastern Panhandle delegates introduced HB 4222 to change Shepherd College's name. Two days later, Marion County delegates sponsored HB 4317 for Fairmont State College to become Fairmont State University. Not to be omitted, Southern West Virginia delegates introduced HB 4463 on February 13, 2004 and recommended Concord College's rebranding. In addition to bills favoring the individual institutions, HB 4289 introduced on February 3, 2004 and SB 445 on February 4 recommended name changes for all four schools. None of these bills passed. The name change provision was attached to SB 448 (2004). Originally worded as a piece of Community and Technical College legislation, it eventually contained provisions for the State Board of Education and all areas of higher education.

The four bills introduced in the legislature that favored one school at the expense of the other three suggest that the four institutions acted independently. One West Virginia administrator characterized his institution's position:

> We don't care how many other institutions there are as long as Shepherd is included . . . So our view was, we didn't care if West Liberty taught graduate courses. We didn't care if Concord did or anyone else for that matter. For us at the graduate level, you are talking almost exclusively about commuters. I don't know anybody who has applied to come to one of Shepherd's master's programs full-time and has given up a job in . . . let's say Vermont, to come down to one of our master's programs. We're not that type of institution. What we're here to offer is a master's degree to employers and prospective students. Typically, they're part-time graduate students. Almost all hold jobs in the daytime or hold jobs, so we

> didn't feel any sense of competition with any other institution. So in that sense, the more the merrier to a certain point. A bigger issue, I think, in my mind is why it was important for Shepherd . . . We felt it was important for us to change the name from Shepherd College to Shepherd University. This was not because we felt that there is more status associated with it; but in most other states, this has already happened. I was in Pennsylvania when places like Shippensburg, Edinboro, Clarion, Millersville, and all of those state colleges became part of the university system. They all changed their names to be universities.

While there was no active cooperation, all four institutions were elevated in status simultaneously. Another administrator remembered a situation in South Dakota where the state colleges had joined efforts to become universities.

> I went through this in South Dakota. We had two universities and four state colleges. I was at Black Hills State College at the time. The guy at Northern [State College] wanted it to become a university really badly, and tried to convince the other three of us to let him go for it one year in the legislature and then we could do it some other time. We said, "No, we're all going to do it together," and we did.

Cooperation among the West Virginia institutions may have created a synergistic effect that would have smoothed efforts in the state legislature.

## Statistical Results

In analyzing the survey results concerning stakeholders, the SPSS statistical software indicated relationships among several variables. These relationships may explain why some stakeholder groups combined efforts in accepting or rejecting a college-to-university rebranding. Results of a bivariate correlation revealed three combinations of stakeholder reactions that were significant (see Appendix AC).

While the confidence level was high at 95%, SPSS records the correlation coefficient at a fairly low .358. It may be suggested, however, that when the faculty supports a change there is some level of support by the alumni and vice versa. A second examination of stakeholder reactions indicates a correlation between alumni and community responses to the rebranding. With a significance level of .000, which is less than .01, it is extremely high at 99%. The confidence level is extremely high at 99% with a corresponding high correlation coefficient of .623, suggesting that acceptance levels of alumni and the local community are aligned to some degree.

Finally, a third correlation was indicated among the stakeholder variables. Faculty and administration support for the rebranding also showed an extremely high confidence (99%), and a high correlation coefficient as well (.687). While faculty and administration do not always agree on issues, including rebranding agendas, four possible scenarios could explain this high correlation. One, faculty and alumni had very similar views to their institution's rebranding experience. Two, faculty publicly agreed with the school's administration concerning the rebranding agenda for fear of reprisal. Three, since administrators were asked to rate these variables, administration may have perceived faculty supported the change. Four, administration's high acceptance level may have had

a direct and positive influence upon the faculty. Because faculty were not surveyed, it is impossible to judge their real feelings regarding the institutional rebranding efforts.

These correlation data may indicate that the support of one stakeholder group may have similar effects to other stakeholder groups. If faculty supports the change, for example, alumni and administration may be more likely to support the rebranding. Likewise, if alumni support the change, faculty and the community may also support the move to university status. If the community at large accepts the "college-to-university" rebranding, perhaps alumni will be likely to support it as well. No other stakeholder group reactions correlated. See Appendix AC for SPSS output on these variables.

## Summary

Various stakeholder groups have had an effect upon the branding agendas at a several institutions. Students, faculty, and alumni redirected the planned changes at Mary Washington College to include the "Monroe" name (for James Monroe) and to eliminate the first name "Mary" as Washington and Monroe University. The school rebranded as the University of Mary Washington. Community efforts stopped a proposed rebranding at California University of Pennsylvania. Faculty prevented California State University at Sacramento from becoming Sacramento State University and angry Case Western Reserve University alumni aided in the reversal of the Case brand instituted three years previous. Former West Virginia Tech employees were instrumental in reversing the move of Tech's engineering department to South Charleston, but were unsuccessful on other fronts.

Although stakeholders have often influenced college and university branding, these examples appeared to be the exception and not the rule. This was evidenced at the University of Charleston, Penn State Greater Allegheny, and California State University – East Bay. Strong stakeholder reactions did not prevent these schools from following their own rebranding plans. Even though several Georgia institutions indicated stakeholder displeasure of the 1996-97 branding initiatives, only two schools eventually changed their names. Most institutions with stakeholder issues followed their own agendas even when it evoked strong negative reactions. In regard to any institutional marketing decision, Pulley (2003) recommended that administrators "[h]ave a thick skin. What you do is visible to everyone with an institutional affiliation. Learn to accept feedback graciously" (p. A30).

The institutions that included stakeholders in the decision process and provided a forum for expression had the smoothest rebranding transitions. Even with unpopular decisions, institutions that involved stakeholders achieved greater acceptance of the institutional rebrand. Part of Midwest Metro University's successful rebrand was credited to the school's having identified its key stakeholder groups: military distance learning students, international students, and local community leaders (Toma & Morphew, 2001). Although other stakeholder groups existed, Midwest Metro involved only those groups that they identified as important to the decision. Along this line of thought, one West Virginia administrator advised others to limit the number of stakeholders involved in the process.

> Carefully look at what your particular stakeholders require you to do in getting everybody fully involved. Ours went flawlessly. I don't know that

others' will. I will say this: the fewer people you can involve in some of these things, the better off you are. The fewer people you ask permission from, the better off you are. If you believe that you have to involve all of your stakeholders in the process, it is awful hard to get there from here.