

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

**EXCERPT: CHAPTER SEVEN: REPUTATION AND THE
“COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY” CHANGE**

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CHAPTER SEVEN: REPUTATION AND THE “COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY” CHANGE

Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a persistent one. – Albert Einstein (n.d.).
We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are. – attributed to the Talmud (Ross, 2006, p. 281).

As colleges have transitioned to university status, one of the reasons provided by administrators was to increase the prestige of their institutions (see Chapter 2). When Kentucky Christian College in Grayson, KY became Kentucky Christian University (KCU) in 2004, the school provided its stakeholders 17 reasons for the change. Of these, KCU included the following benefits that occurred because of its new university designation:

- Provides faculty and administrators with greater peer recognition within the broader academic community . . . enhancing their professional expertise and scholarly contributions.
- Raises the bar and challenges the institution to move toward a higher standard of expectation, self-realization, and fulfillment.
- Creates an enhanced image of breadth and diversity, and gives the institution a marketing advantage in recruitment.
- Positions the institution to seek funding for “named schools” and “named chairs” within the University.
- Strengthens the appeal of the institution among corporate donors and foundations (“University: Unity in Diversity,” 2004, pp. 4-6).

Likewise, Kentucky Christian’s sister institution Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, which added the umbrella brand of Cincinnati Christian University (CCU) in 2004, explained that, “As a university, it becomes easier to request grants from

corporations and foundations” (“Frequently Asked Questions,” 2004, p. 6). For some, the addition of “university” in the institutional name provided an opportunity to seek additional philanthropic support as well.

Others, however, have discovered the lack of university status caused a loss of such revenue. For over 25 years, Alabama’s Athens State College reaped the benefit of annually distributing \$21 thousand in scholarships provided by the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation. In 1991, the foundation pulled its funding from Athens State because “[the foundation’s] board of directors voted to fund only universities” (Athens State College, 1997, p. 8). Additionally, Athens State requested funding from the Olin Foundation to build a new library – a request that was rejected because Olin funded only universities. Although Athens State would not change names until 1998, it began researching the possibility of rebranding as a university as early as 1990. After investigating the process and the results experienced by institutions in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, Athens State’s Planning Council concluded that the university name would greatly benefit the institution. The advantages of such a change were outlined as follows: “a) enhanced prestige, b) increased effectiveness in recruitment, c) increased pride among alumni, and d) enhanced fundraising capacity” (Witty, 1990, p. 3).

While an increase in prestige based upon the adoption of the “university” name is often expected, does it actually occur? Although the perceptions of prestige may result from the change, these are difficult to gauge accurately without surveying numerous stakeholders. In this chapter, empirical data were used to determine if there was a measurable increase in institutional prestige following a “college-to-university” rebranding. Although several measures may imply institutional prestige, four were

identified for this examination: Carnegie Classifications, an increase in graduate programs, undergraduate selectivity in admissions, and a rise in tuition rates. In addition, administrative surveys provided insight regarding the perceptions of an institution's prestige. Data reported in this chapter were derived from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, institutional catalogs, *U.S. News and World Reports America's Best Colleges 1998-2008*, and the Higher Education Publications' *HEP Higher Education Directories 1992-2007* (Rodenhouse, 1991-2002; Burke 2003-2007).

Prestige via Changes in Carnegie Classifications

In 2000, Christopher C. Morpew tried to understand the types of institutions that participated in the "college-to-university" rebranding trend. Morpew theorized, "The adoption of the university name and corresponding structures and practices would help a lower status institution to send a message of legitimacy to important external constituents" (2000, p. 5). This was the attitude expressed when Rosary College became Dominican University. Dominican's president, Donna M. Carroll, explained, "'University' communicates a level of academic reputation and opportunities that are consistent with our students' current and future interests" (Lively, 1997, p. A33).

Morpew and Baker (2001), however, argued that the change to university status often created mission drift. Corresponding to this, Morpew (2000) suggested that colleges pursued "graduate education and a . . . 'higher' Carnegie Classification not to serve any need that might be present (though that might occur as a result), but to adopt the practices and structures of those universities perceived as being most prestigious or [being of the] highest status" (p. 8). Morpew and Baker (2001) expressed that, "It has been common for colleges and universities to aspire to a 'higher' Carnegie Classification,

because of the status accorded institutions at the top of the scale. Upon reaching a ‘better’ classification, institutions often trumpet this news to the world as evidence of their improvement in quality and reputation” (pp. 4-5).

While never intended to be a measure of institutional prestige, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2006a) created a taxonomy of accredited, degree-granting institutions in the United States in 1973. The primary use of the classification system was to group similar institutions for research purposes. The creating of the system also aided in promoting the great diversity found within American higher education. The Carnegie Foundation has since adjusted the classifications in 1976, 1987, 1994, and 2000. In 2005, Carnegie completely revamped the system to include multiple classifications for each institution. The Carnegie Foundation (2006b) was adamant, however, that, it “does not rank colleges and universities. Our classifications identify meaningful similarities and differences among institutions, but they do not imply quality differences” (“General Questions” section).

Although Carnegie denies the imputation of quality, this has not prohibited educators from using the categories as badges of honor. In *Knowledge and Money: Research Universities and the Paradox of the Marketplace*, Roger L. Geiger (2004) explained a number of criteria used to judge the prestige of research universities. Geiger outlined the following indicators of success: faculty scholarship, research dollars, and inclusion in federal projects. Although data regarding non-research universities’ participation in some of these advantages are available to some extent, they are often difficult to attain. One additional indicator according to Geiger was the Carnegie Classifications.

Brewer, Gates, and Goldman (2001), while acknowledging that the Carnegie measure was not originated for the purpose of quantifying prestige, realized that the higher education “industry has seized upon the Carnegie Classifications as providing the yardstick for prestige” (p. 47). Doyle (2006) admitted that the previous versions of the measure brought about market segmentation and a desire for administrators to seek to advance to the next higher Carnegie level. Even the perception of prestige associated with higher rankings may have produced a better quality of life for students. Thompson and Bouffard (2003) inferred that at schools with better Carnegie Classifications certain criminal activities (including sexual harassment) were diminished.

To measure whether institutions had gained prestige because of the “college-to-university” change, schools were tracked by the Carnegie Classification applied to the institution during the year of the name change and the classification five years after the change. The Carnegie Classifications were rated according to the hierarchy used by the Carnegie Commission for its 2000 categories. With only a few exceptions, the 1994 classifications were similar to the 2000 measures. In 2005, the Carnegie Commission revised the categories and altered the numerical schema; however, the categories designating all of the affected 18 institutions’ post-five year change data for 2006 were similar to the previous Carnegie designations and were numbered according to the former rankings. The only exception includes institutions classified as doctoral or research institutions. Because these classifications had changed substantially with each iteration, the three doctoral/research institutions in this study were identified as having no classification changes despite the differences in their 1994 and 2000 numerical designations. Using the 2000 configuration as a base, the Carnegie Classifications rated

schools initially in the following manner: doctoral/research institutions in the 10s, master's level schools in the 20s, baccalaureate ranked institutions in the 30s, associate's level schools in the 40s, and specialty schools in the 50s.

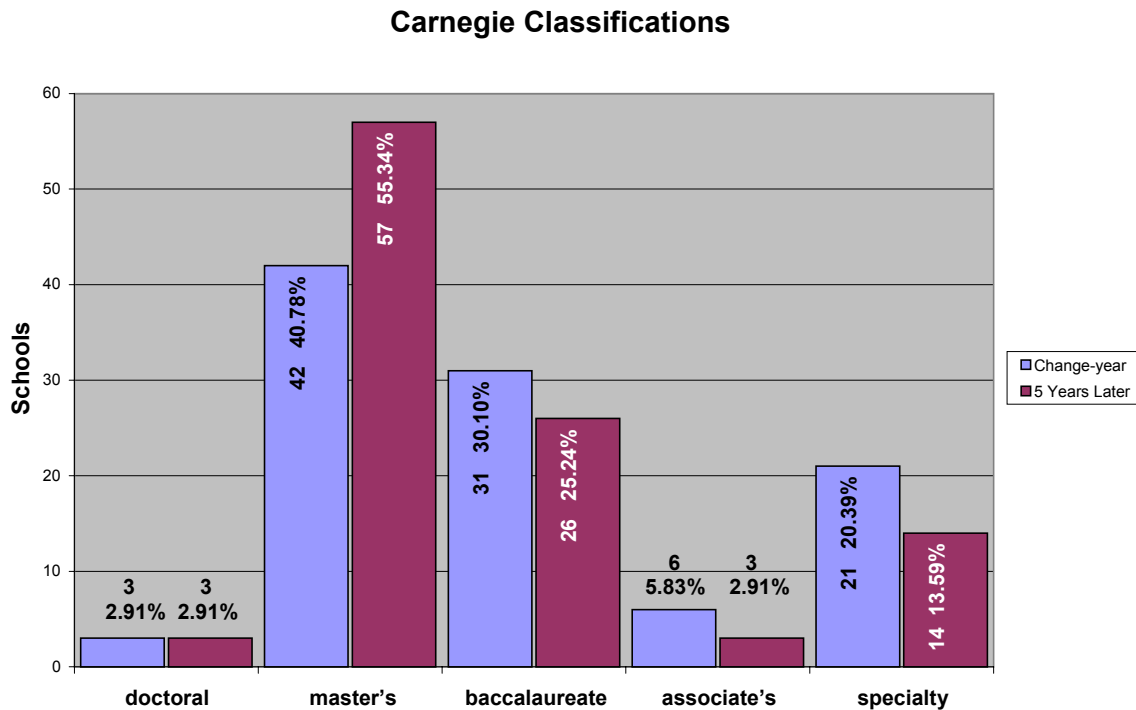
Although specialty ranked institutions may offer master's, doctoral, and first professional degrees, their lack of a comprehensive focus affects what the institutions can offer and may restrict what funding is available to the school. In an interview, one administrator acknowledged the level of frustration of the specialty classification stigma.

Let me make two observations: we have had a Carnegie Classification of a Special Purpose institution [that is] specialized in engineering. Now that we have "University" in our name, we are trying to leverage the system as a way to get some broader, more comprehensive type courses and programs approved. We are trying to expand our curricula and we are using the new name as one of the wedges to help us get that. When we send curriculum proposals to the state office, as we must do; they say, "Well, you do science and engineering, isn't this outside your mission?" The major reason we lose students or fail to retain them is because we don't offer programs they want. If a student comes here and doesn't want to take calculus, we have no courses for them now. [We do not have any] programs that don't require calculus. They have to transfer to somewhere else in order to get a degree. So, we're trying to expand our offerings in the traditional liberal arts and social sciences. The fact that we have university in our name now is an argument to become more comprehensive.

Seven of the 21 specialty institutions moved from that classification within five years following the rebranding. Three of the schools moved to the baccalaureate level and four to the master's classification. Likewise, three of the six schools initially ranked at the associate's level moved up to the baccalaureate level. Two universities moved backward slightly within the same general category. Virginia's Averett University had the only significant negative move and went from the master's level to the baccalaureate level. See Figure 7.1 for category delineation among the population of 103 schools.

Figure 7.1

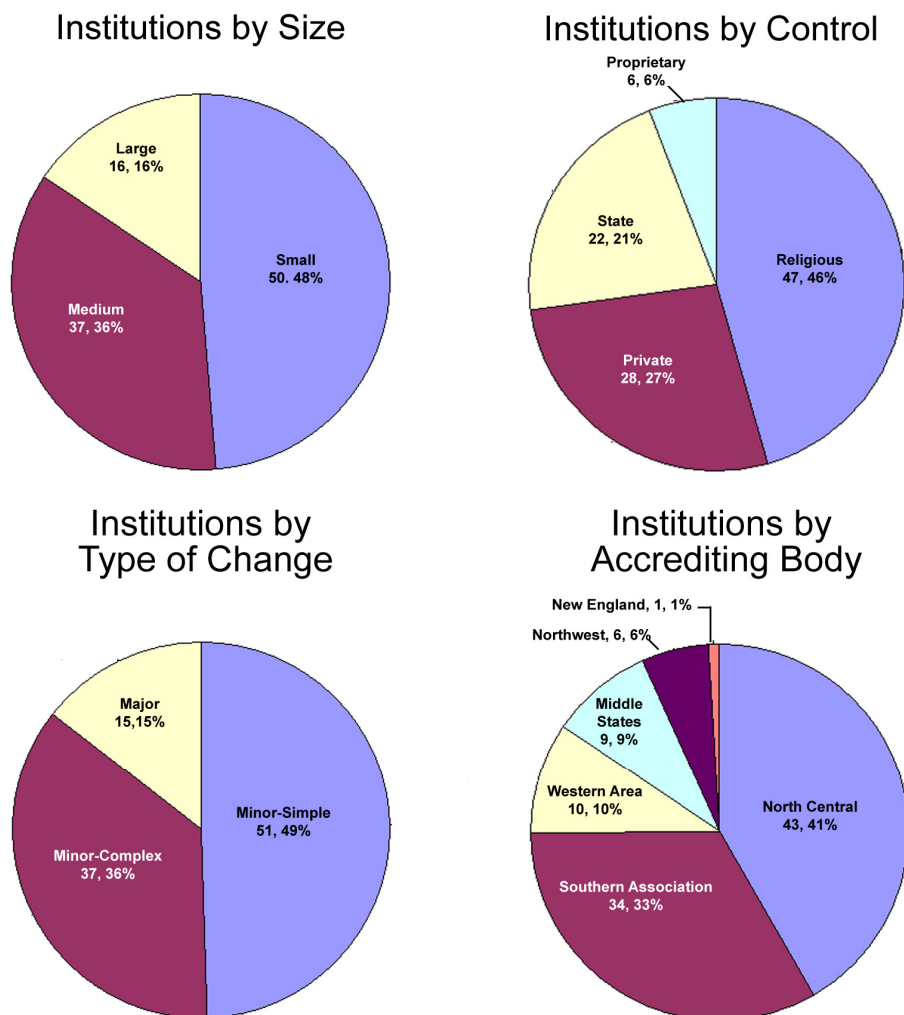
Carnegie Classifications comparison – change-year and five years later.



Three schools (Claremont Graduate University, New School University, and Union Institute and University) were the only institutions ranked as doctoral/research institutions both before or after the change. Since the classifications at the doctoral/research level changed dramatically from 1994 to 2000 to 2005, comparison

rankings at the doctoral/research level were not easily congruent across all years of the study. Although not impossible to find a comparative rank, the change-year (Year 0) and post-change-year (Year 5) categories were rated by the best ranking that described the institution in the change-year and post-change-year Carnegie Classifications for the 2000 schema. All other categories in the 1994 and 2005 schemas had a comparative rank under the 2000 designations. See Appendix AN for a translation of the 1994 and 2005 categories into the 2000 standard and each institution's ranking.

Figure 7.2
Selected institutional independent variable groupings.



Using a paired samples t-test, the name-change-year and post-name-change Carnegie rankings were combined into groups of similar experiences to test the influence of independent variables upon the results (Huck, 2007). These groupings were based on size, institutional control, type of name change, and accrediting body. Each grouping had a number of categories and mean scores were computed for each segment. For example, institutional size was determined by *U.S. News and World Report's* (2007) definitions of small, medium, and large institutions. Since only one institution was ranked as “very large,” it was added into the large category. See Figure 7.2 for a complete listing of independent variables and their categories. The mean score for each category was computed and used for comparison purposes. As these groups were constructed, mean change-year and post name-change scores were analyzed with SPSS statistical software.

According to the paired samples t-test, three variables indicated significance in the change of the Carnegie Classifications between the change-year and five years later (see Appendix AO for the SPSS output data). With a confidence level at 95%, SPSS recorded a significant difference in the Carnegie Classifications for institutions based on institutional size (α of .038) the type of name change (α of .021), and accrediting body (α of .029). Grouped by institutional control, significance was not noted (α of .178).

Prestige via Increases in Graduate Programs

Related to changes in Carnegie designation, a focus on graduate education would be an additional indication of an increase in institutional prestige. Morphew (2000) found that with the move to university status, “graduate focus . . . was positively associated with the [‘college-to-university’] change” (p. 17). Measuring 105 colleges that became universities, Morphew analyzed two years of graduate credit hours divided by graduate

student headcount. Morphew's study, however, provided what he termed as a "snapshot" view of two specific years spanning a decade and served as a measure of an institution's overall focus on graduate education during the period. Morphew did not base this analysis on when the change occurred, but rather on whether a change occurred. While this information was valuable to show a longitudinal perspective, it did not specifically show any relationship between the change itself and graduate education.

Utilizing a modified version Koku's (1997) model of pre and post data following institutional strategic name changes, this study measured the numbers and types of graduate programs during the year of the change-year and compared these figures with the number and type of programs five years following the change. Koku's model of incremental change over an 11-year period, however, was not employed for a variety of reasons including the following: a) institutional programmatic data from 1991 through 1995 were not readily available; b) changes in graduate offerings were not likely to occur as often as did changes in enrollment figures (Koku's focus); and c) many schools had not had any graduate offerings up until a year or two prior to their name changes. To measure the effect of the name change upon an increase in graduate education, catalogs of all 103 institutions were consulted during the year of the name change (termed as the change-year) and five years following the change (designated as the fifth-year).

Since catalogs were often issued for more than one year, the most representative catalogs were used. In a few instances, when catalogs were not available for the change-year; data were gathered from archived web sites by using *Internet Archive's Wayback Machine*. Programmatic data were available for all 103 institutions and graduate programs were enumerated in the manner designated by each institution. If an institution

listed a degree program as one degree as having multiple concentrations, it was counted as only one degree program. If the institution listed these concentrations as separate degrees, they were counted as such. Where schools offered two types of degrees in one programmatic area (such as an M.A. and an M.Ed. in the same field), these were counted as two distinct degrees, although the programs and required courses were often similar.

The graduate programs were ranked according to the classification levels specified by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES, 2006) of the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The NCES employed the hierarchy listed in Table 7.1 up through the 2006 – 2007 academic year. For the purpose of this examination, only graduate certificates and degrees at Level 6 and above were considered.

Table 7.1
NCES degree levels.

NCES Degree Award Levels	
LEVEL	DEGREE
Level 1	Undergraduate Certificate (less than one year of study)
Level 2	Undergraduate Certificate (between one and two years of study)
Level 3	Associate's Degree
Level 4	Undergraduate Certificate (two to four years of study)
Level 5	Bachelor's Degree
Level 6	Post Baccalaureate Certificate
Level 7	Master's Degree
Level 8	Post-Master's Certificate
Level 9	Doctor's Degree (research Doctorate)
Level 10	First Professional Degree
Level 11	First Professional Certificate (post-degree)

Although NCES categorized Bachelor's degrees at Level 5 and master's degrees at Level 7, its own documentation indicated that there were some exceptions to this rule. Two Bachelor's degrees, the Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) and the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) were considered first professional degrees and were listed at Level 10. Additionally, the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master of Hebrew Literature (M.H.L.), and

certification leading to religious ordination were also considered as first professional degrees (Level 10). Only one school offered a religious ordination track outside of an existing degree program. This certificate followed the NCES classification as a first professional degree.

While NCES included undergraduate and graduate certificates at Level 6, only pre-master's level graduate certificates were enumerated for this study. These included teacher certifications taught at the graduate level. Those using undergraduate credits were ignored in the tabulation. Intermediate degrees, such as the Education Specialist (Ed.S.), Master's of Philosophy (M.Phil.), and Candidate of Philosophy (C.Phil.); were classified along with post-master's certificates at Level 8.

All doctorates not specified as first professional degrees were categorized in Level 9. These included some health related doctorates, such as Doctor of Occupational Therapy (D.O.T.) and the Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.), as having been considered research doctorates and not first professional degrees. Additionally, the Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.), sometimes listed by the Department of Education as a professional degree, was categorized by NCES as a research doctorate. The Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.), which follows the first professional degrees of either the B.D. or M.Div., was classified by NCES as a research doctorate and not as a first professional certificate.

Level 10, or first professional degrees, included doctoral designations in the fields of dentistry, medicine, veterinary medicine, chiropractic, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, law, pharmacy, and those Bachelor's and master's degrees and certifications in law and theology enumerated above. First professional certificates (Level 11) included degrees and certifications above the first professional degree level. These were issued in various

medical, chiropractic, and dental specialties. None of the 103 institutions offered post-professional certificates in the areas of law, pharmacy, podiatry, theology, or veterinary science.

Although NCES has planned a future revamping of the classification system, the existing hierarchy was used to rate program types in order to construct an institutional graduate program score. To achieve an institution's score, the number of programs was multiplied by their respective level numbers and then all of the categorical scores were totaled. For example, a university offering five master's degrees (Level 7) would have a graduate program score of 35. A school with 10 master's degrees (Level 7 = 70), one specialist's degree (Level 8 = 8), two research doctorates (Level 9 = 18), and one first professional degree (Level 10 = 10) would have a graduate program score of 106. Program scores were calculated for both the change-year and for the fifth-year following the change. See Appendices X and Y for the number of graduate programs by category and Appendix AO for the aggregate scores for each of the 103 institutions.

Of the 103 institutions, 74 (71.84%) added graduate programs in the five years following the name change. One institution, Rogers State University (2006), lost all ten of its master's degree programs when the State of Oklahoma separated the school's Tulsa branch campus to create a new institution: the University of Oklahoma at Tulsa. Seven other schools dropped one or more graduate programs but continued with other graduate offerings. Twenty-one schools had no changes in the numbers of graduate programs since the year of the name change. Eight schools offered no graduate certificates or degrees during the period.

The mean scores of the institutions' change-year and fifth-year graduate programs were grouped according to categories of the following independent variables: institutional size, control, type of name change, and accrediting body. Using the SPSS statistical software package, a paired samples t-test was performed on mean scores of each subcategory. Several variable groupings showed a significant difference in the change-year and fifth-year graduate program scores. A significance at the 0.05 level was indicated when schools were grouped by institutional control ($\alpha = 0.024$). The greatest significance was seen at the 0.01 level when the scores were grouped according to accrediting body ($\alpha = 0.008$) (see Appendix AP).

Further examination of the accrediting body grouping indicated a statistical significance in the scores for certain accrediting bodies. Since only one institution present in the population (Southern New Hampshire University) was under the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' jurisdiction, it was eliminated as SPSS required a minimum of two pairs for each category. A paired samples t-test indicated that schools in three of the five remaining regional accrediting bodies had significant differences in graduate program scores.

The greatest significance at the 0.01 level was indicated for schools from the the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools with an $\alpha = 0.002$ and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools with an $\alpha = 0.010$. Indicating significance at the 0.05 level, schools within the jurisdiction of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools had an $\alpha = 0.020$. Institutions from both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges ($\alpha = 0.055$) and Northwest Commission on

Colleges and Universities ($\alpha = 0.233$) did not show significant differences at the 0.05 level (see Appendix AR). While other variables (such as state regulations) may have had an impact on these scores, it appears that schools in the geographic areas served by certain accrediting bodies may have had more favorable climates or perhaps better opportunities to increase their numbers of graduate programs than those in other jurisdictions.

In certain independent variable categories, there was a significant difference between the numbers and types of graduate programmatic offerings following a “college-to-university” rebranding. Although different measures were employed and these findings are inconclusive, they may support Morpew’s (2000) conclusion that the adoption of the university designation was positively associated with an institution’s increased commitment to graduate education. See Appendices X and Y for a listing of the numbers of graduate programs by NCES level designations and the change-year and the fifth-year graduate program scores for all 103 institutions.

Prestige via Changes in Institutional Undergraduate Selectivity

Another indicator of prestige in American higher education is the level of undergraduate selectivity. Dill reinforced this idea writing that one of the “means by which universities enhance their prestige is making strategic investments to improve the selectivity of their undergraduate admissions processes” (2003, p. 693). Since an institution’s status can be positively correlated with its selectivity (Geiger, 2002), the consumers of higher education tend to view selectivity as a benefit. According to Dunderstadt and Womack (2003), “Parents and students hold tight to the belief that the more selective an institution one attends, the better their [sic] chances for success later in life. Brand name has high value in college applications” (p. 43).

While private institutions have often paraded their selective admission policies, Hossler (2005) identified a number of emerging selective public institutions in Florida, Georgia, and Texas that have begun to move to a more selective rationale due to the large applicant pool in these states. Some institutions, like Missouri's Truman State University, decided to become more selective to better define their institutional focus (Morphew, Toma, & Hedstrom, 2001). While a number of public institutions have become more selective, Geiger (2004) expressed the importance of private institutions' remaining selective. This especially was the case for liberal arts colleges and universities: "Selectivity is tantamount to market power . . . [and] prestige in undergraduate selectivity is closely associated with financial and academic strength" (p. 16).

An institution's selectivity can be related to a number of aspects that contributes to its overall character. Johnstone (2001) illustrated the interrelatedness of several factors, including the level of faculty autonomy:

Proximity to the authoritarian end of this continuum [administration – faculty] correlates quite directly with low per-student instructional cost. The lower cost of production (which implies a lean staff, generally low pay, and extensive reliance on part-time and adjunct faculty), the more authority tends to be held by the president and management – and in general the lower the prestige of faculty and the selectivity of the undergraduate student body. Conversely, the greater the deference to the faculty, the higher the per-student costs tend to be – and also the greater the faculty and instructional prestige and the selectivity of the student body (p. 167).

Since selectivity can be measured, an institution's prestige based on this criterion can be quantified (Grant, 2002). Because students often utilize institutional selectivity as a criterion for college choice, Dill (2003) equated some of the interest in this indicator of prestige to the popularity of college guides such as *U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Colleges*. While Morpew (2000) examined the selectivity data found in *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges* using a "snapshot" model by arbitrarily choosing two years as indicators, it was possible to conduct a study of selectivity similar to the methods employed by Koku (1997). As institutional selectivity was less likely to vary from year to year, incremental changes were not necessary for comparison. Additionally, data prior to 1996 was not available; therefore, selectivity data from the year of the name change was compared to the fifth year following the change.

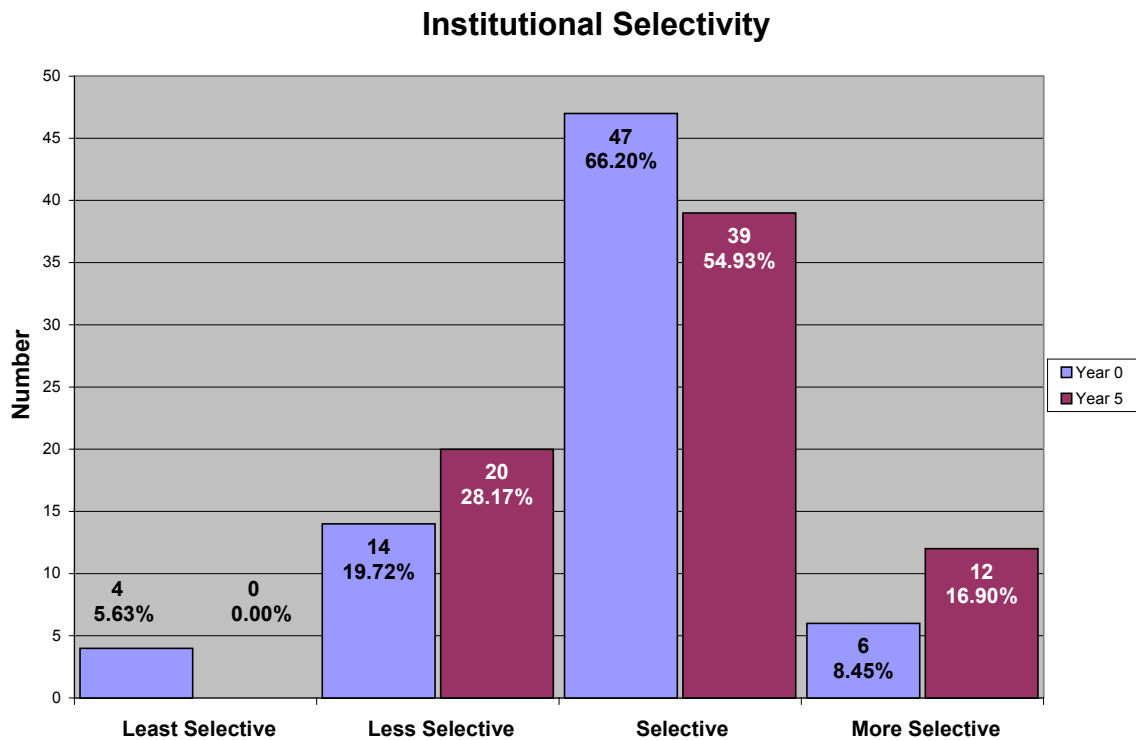
Table 7.2
U.S. News and World Report's selectivity ranking schema.

Ranking Category	Numerical Rank
Least Selective	1
Less Selective	2
Selective	3
More Selective	4
Most Selective	5

Because of its availability and popularity, *U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Colleges* from 1998 through 2008 were utilized as data sources. Since the publications used multiple (and sometimes controversial measures), only selectivity data based on the percentage of accepted applications to total submitted applications were used. Since data for all 103 institutions were not available, a criterion sample of 71 institutions were measured as to their selectivity. See Table 7.2 for the ranking schema. No institutions were rated at the "most selective" level for either year and proprietary schools did not release their selectivity information.

As with the other indicators of prestige, institutional data were grouped according to the various categories of the independent variables, which included the following: institutional size, institutional control, type of name change, and accrediting body. Appendix AT lists the selectivity ranks for 71 institutions of the 103. These were the only schools in the larger group where selectivity data were available for both the change-year and the fifth-year. In all categories, no significance was noted in selectivity data following a “college-to-university” name change.

Figure 7.3
Institutional selectivity change-year and fifth-year compared.



Prestige via Changes in Institutional Tuition

In addition to Carnegie Classification, additions of graduate programs, and undergraduate selectivity, there remains another quantifiable prestige indicator: an institution’s tuition rate (product pricing). Sevier (2002a) indicated that a rise in a

university's tuition is a signal of the institution's prestige. He and others have termed as this concept as the "Chivas Regal effect." Although many have been credited with coining this idea, it was first verbalized in the mid 1980s by Mount Holyoke College's dean of the faculty, Joseph Ellis, Jr. (Werth, 1988). Although Ellis coined the idea, he was not a proponent of the argument. This changed when he, as acting president, had the opportunity to test the idea by challenging it. In 1985, Mount Holyoke made only modest increases in tuition and fees, while similar elite institutions had greater increases. The decision resulted in a drop in applications and the institution's overall selectivity. The decision had a devastating effect upon Mount Holyoke's operating costs that resulted in a two-year deficit. Only when Mount Holyoke raised tuition to a higher level in 1986 did it begin to return to its former status level (Werth).

Synonymous with quality, the "Chivas Regal effect" was named for the premium priced, blended Scotch whiskey known for its 12-year aging process (Chivas, 2007). As the Chivas brand's price implied quality, the idea in regard to tuition argued that parents and students would be willing to pay more for an education at a well-known institution. According to the theory, if a university raises tuition, prestige will come via a self-fulfilling prophecy. According to Kotler and Fox, "a higher tuition might actually increase the number of applicants, because a higher price might imply higher cost and prestige" (1985, p. 256).

Long thought that this tactic would succeed only if an institution remained in the pricing strata of comparable institutions, Swathmore College tested it even further. In the 1980s, Swathmore raised its tuition to the level of Ivy League schools and reaped a 35% rise in applications in one year (Werth, 1988). While blaming institutions for increased

tuition costs, Werth (1988, p. 25) placed equal responsibility upon the American educational consumer:

We like high prices. High prices tell us what a school thinks of itself, and hence what we should think of it. They tell us we're getting quality, and for quality we're always willing to pay. In our general affluence, we decided long ago that only the best is really good enough. And that makes charging more for college almost irresistible. There are no incentives to charge less. What would they be?

The implied quality based upon the "Chivas Regal effect" also had a positive benefit upon a graduate's future earnings. Citing a study conducted by University of Pennsylvania economists, Larson (1997) reported, "How well a student does after graduation depends partly on how much money his professors made. The higher the [faculty] salaries . . . the better" (p. 10). Even with tuition rates traditionally rising at greater rate than inflation, Kirp (2003) reported that schools with a higher tuition rate often retained a competitive advantage by officially charging more and then reducing the student's costs by providing scholarships and tuition discounts.

To be effective, tuition increases must be commensurate with the perceived benefit of the academic program and the services provided. As Twitchell (2004) observed, there is an irony associated with the most expensive institutions: "The more the consumer pays (or is supposedly charged), the less of it he gets. The mandated class time necessary for a degree is often less at Stanford than at State U" (p. 138). Harpool (2003) cautioned institutions that adult consumers must be able see a return on their investment within an acceptable time; otherwise, higher tuition rates will be counterproductive.

While the “Chivas Regal effect” has proven successful at some institutions, a delicate balance must be maintained among tuition increases, inflation, and what the market will bear.

In order to test for the “Chivas Regal effect” at the 103 institutions in this study, base tuition rates before and after the “college-to-university” rebranding were compared. As with enrollment data utilized in Chapter 6, the *HEP Higher Education Directories (1992 – 2007)* provided annual full-time tuition data. Having analyzed tuition rates in the same manner as Koku (1997) did for enrollment, the data provided a signal to whether the perception of a school’s prestige had increased during following the rebranding. These results were based upon incremental changes in tuition. Using Koku’s model for incremental changes in enrollment, the same method was employed with published tuition rates over an 11-year period. For each of the 103 institutions, the percentage of tuition increases for each of the five years prior to the name change were compared to the percentage of the tuition increases for the five years after.

The incremental changes were averaged to produce the mean percentage rate of tuition growth (or in some cases loss) during the five years preceding the name change. The same procedure was employed for the five years following the name change. Both “pre name change” and “post-name-change” mean incremental tuition percentages were compared using a paired samples t-test. In addition to comparing all institutions, the universities were further divided by various categories according to the independent variables of size, institutional control, type of name change, and regional accrediting body. These categories were also analyzed with a paired samples t-test. See Appendices AU through AZ for the t-test results and tuition data for each institution.

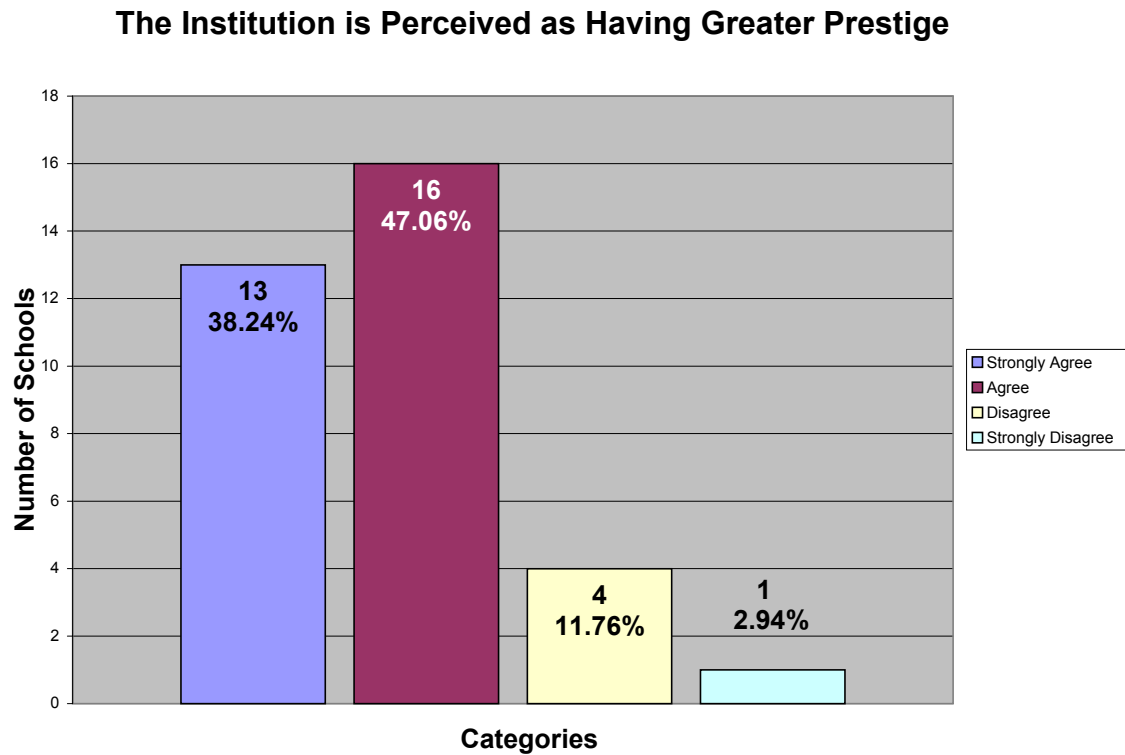
According to the data presented in Appendix AU, there were no statistically significant changes in incremental tuition at the institutions in this study following the university rebranding. At three institutions, tuition was lower five years following the change than it was before the rebranding. All remaining 100 institutions experienced increases in tuition; however, 47 had lower percentage rates of tuition increases after the name change than prior to it. It does not appear that the “Chivas Regal effect” was evidenced at any great number at these schools. Therefore, prestige based on tuition did not serve as a result to the “college-to-university” rebrandings in the population studied.

Perceptions of Institutional Reputation

Institutional Prestige

While the four indicators described in the previous sections may be quantifiable, institutional prestige is often based on perception. Although opinions of prestige can be quantified, these results remain in the realm of individual opinion. In a survey of administrators at 34 participating rebranded universities in the region surrounding Appalachia, participants rated their opinions on a variety of statements. Using a four-point Likert scale, administrators evaluated the statement: “Since being named as a university, the institution is perceived as having greater prestige.” Rated with a mean score of 3.21 on a four-point scale, 29 administrators agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Four administrators disagreed with the statement while one strongly disagreed (See Figure 7.4). Generally, administrators judged that their universities had gained prestige from the process of the university rebranding.

Figure 7.4
Institutional prestige as rated by administrators.

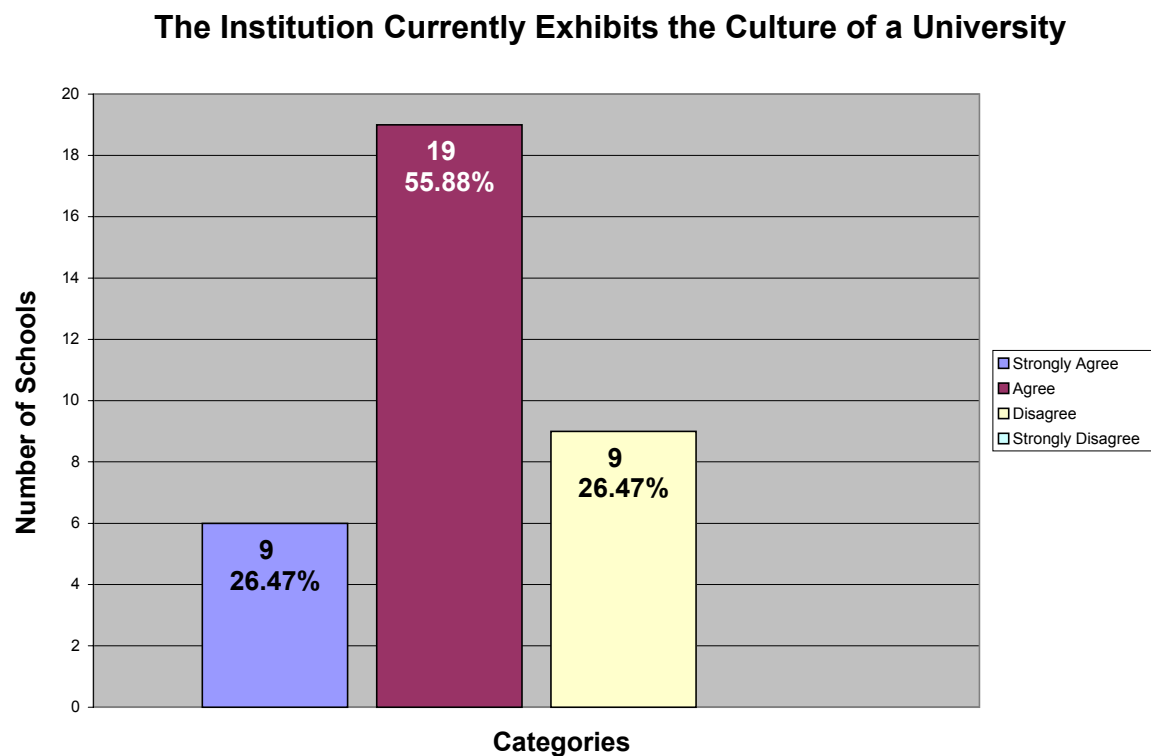


University Culture

Even more nebulous than the perception of prestige is the determination of whether an institution has attained the “university culture.” Although there is no authoritative definition of the concept, similar ideas regarding the nature of academe have been propagated. Birnbaum (1993) equated “university culture” with the generation of ideas. Hearn (2005) defined the American university as “a uniquely democratic institution where ideas and ideals compete in the free-for-all of the intellectual marketplace” (p. 162). As a bastion for thought and ideas, the university is not without outside forces that have influenced its direction. While acknowledging that universities contain a community of scholars that have an effect upon society, Edgerton and Farber (2005) admitted that budgetary and market concerns often muddled the university’s focus.

Berman (2000) argued that “university culture” has changed within the larger American culture and is now largely based upon consumerism and the greater society’s infatuation with entertainment. Even with changes occurring in society as a whole, Hearn concluded that the university remains “a repository of past achievement and the foundation of future innovation” (2005, p. 162).

Figure 7.5
University culture as rated by administrators.



In the opinions of surveyed administrators of recently rebranded universities, the statement “the institution currently exhibits the culture of a university” was rated eighth among the nine statements that were rated on a four-point Likert scale. The survey results produced a mean score of 2.91. Respondents rated only “enrollments increased as a result of the name change” as being lower; this variable had an average score of 2.85. While no

administrators “strongly disagreed” with the statement, administrators at nine institutions “disagreed” with their universities’ having attained a level of “university culture.” Three of the four schools in Virginia were rated in this manner. Six administrators “strongly agreed” and 19 “agreed” with the statement (see Figure 7.5). Although the results had trended positive, it appears that certain universities need to develop and/or enhance the “university culture” at their institutions.

Correlations

From the results of the surveys, it appeared that a strong correlation existed between the variables of “prestige” and “university culture.” All nine survey statements scored on a four-point Likert scale were analyzed with a Pearson’s bivariate correlation test. The analysis of the variables indicated a positive correlation between rises in enrollment with an increased perception of prestige. With significance at the 0.05 level, the two variables correlated with a $p = 0.042$ (see Table 7.4). This may represent administrators’ opinions that an enrollment increase signified prestige, or it may indicate that with an increase in prestige, enrollments may have correspondingly increased.

Table 7.4
Correlation between prestige and enrollment.

Correlations			
		Enrollment	Prestige
Enrollment	Pearson Correlation	1	.367(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.042
	N	31	31
Prestige	Pearson Correlation	.367(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.
	N	31	31

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In addition to the positive correlation between enrollments and prestige, there existed a positive correlation between the variables of prestige and university culture.

With a $p = 0.032$, there is significance at the 0.05 level indicating corresponding perceptions that if an institution is viewed as prestigious, there may be a corresponding opinion that the “university culture” is being exhibited (see Table 7.5). Therefore, when the institution’s mission is perceived as having exhibited “university culture,” there may be a corresponding attitude that the institution has prestige.

Table 7.5
Correlation between prestige and university culture.

Correlations			
		Prestige	Culture
Prestige	Pearson Correlation	1	.385(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.032
	N	31	31
Culture	Pearson Correlation	.385(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.
	N	31	31

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Finally, two stakeholder variables showed positive correlations with the variable of “university culture.” Alumni support (with a $p = 0.039$) and community support (with a $p = 0.012$) of the rebranding correlated with the attainment of university culture at a significance level of below 0.05 (see Tables 7.12 and 7.13).

Table 7.6
Correlation between alumni support and university culture.

Correlations			
		Alum	Culture
Alum	Pearson Correlation	1	.361(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.039
	N	33	33
Culture	Pearson Correlation	.361(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039	.
	N	33	34

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7.7

Correlation between community support and university culture.

Correlations			
		Community	Culture
Community	Pearson Correlation	1	.431(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012
	N	33	33
Culture	Pearson Correlation	.431(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.
	N	33	34

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Therefore, if alumni or the local community were supportive of the change, there may have been a corresponding perception that the institution had achieved “university culture.” If the institution was perceived as having achieved “university culture,” the alumni and the local community may exhibit support for the university designation. Although Chapter 5 dealt with stakeholder reactions, these correlations show the importance of involving key stakeholder groups in the process. Alumni and community acceptance of the new name may have positive effects upon the institution’s overall image.

Summary

While a university’s reputation may be largely decided upon by constituents, a school’s reputation does not always increase following a “college-to-university” change. In the areas analyzed in this chapter, there are indications that with “university” status comes a greater focus on graduate programs. This is consistent with the findings of Morphew (2000). While no correlation existed between graduate programs and Carnegie Classification, the Carnegie Foundation factors the number of programs, students, and graduate degrees granted into positive movement within their taxonomy hierarchy. Institutions that become universities may generally experience higher Carnegie

recognition, a development that occurs more often at smaller institutions where more growth potential exists. As Morpew (2000) discovered in studying the “college-to-university” name change, schools with a Bachelor’s II Carnegie Classification were more likely to seek university status than institutions with a Master’s I designation. Upward movement is possible with the change to university status.

While the Carnegie and graduate programmatic indicators of prestige appeared positively linked to the name change, the remaining two indicators of selectivity and tuition did not indicate significance, nor were there strong correlations between the data at the time of the change and five years after. Moving to university status was not accompanied by an increase in undergraduate selectivity. Additionally, the addition of the “university” name did not correspond to greater tuition prices at the majority of the institutions. While there did not appear to be a widespread rise in tuition to signal the “Chivas Regal effect,” this absence may have been based upon administrative hesitation or reluctance to make bold pricing changes rather than as a direct indicator of a lack of perceived institutional prestige.

Finally, administrative perceptions of institutional prestige and the school’s exhibition of “university culture” were generally judged positively by the 34 survey respondents. When compared, these two variables indicated a correlative relationship. Additionally, the survey responses indicated that enrollments rose in relationship to greater institutional prestige. The perception that new university exhibited the attribute of “university culture” correlated of the level of alumni and community support for the rebranding. This may signal to administrators to be cognizant of stakeholder opinions as they may have an important role in the overall perception of the institution.

As Koku (1997) concluded that strategic name changes should not be viewed as a universal remedy for an institution's problems, this chapter indicated that institutional prestige following the "college-to-university" change is often directly tied to academic improvements at the university. One of the stronger indicators of institutional prestige was tied to a greater focus on graduate education. This emphasis represented a concerted effort on the part of university faculty and administration to grow new programs. By doing such, the university increased the probability that its overall standing in the marketplace would increase.