

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: A BALANCING ACT: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW A PUBLIC FLAGSHIP INSTITUTION RESPONDS TO PRESSURES FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

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The purpose of this study was to explore how a public flagship institution responds to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education. In particular, the study relied on an exploratory case study methodology to investigate the University of Maryland, College Park's responses to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence from 1988, when the University was designated the flagship institution of the State of Maryland, to 2006. This study was informed by two streams of literature. The first stream examines how broad notions of equity and excellence are defined and measured and discusses whether these ideals are in tension within the broader context of American higher education. The second body of literature explores how institutions respond to external pressures, how contextual forces and human agents interact to shape institutional responses and how these responses affect the manner in which equity and excellence ideals are realized. The streams of literature are tied together through a conceptual model which suggests how demands for racial equity and institutional excellence are mediated by the strategic choices of key actors within the institution.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with nineteen informants and document analysis. Data suggest that specific strategies to mediate the demands for racial equity were conditioned and arguably constrained by the University's responses to pressures for institutional excellence. The data also suggest that the University's longstanding efforts to link racial equity with institutional excellence through broader notions of diversity which celebrate a broad range of individual differences are perceived to have diluted the social justice focus of racial equity. The University's resistance to addressing issues of racial equity in favor of promoting diversity and its tendency to embrace traditional, status-based indicators of excellence may have contributed to divergent perspectives concerning the University's commitment to racial equity and may have undermined the ability of the University to advance this value.

Taken together, these and other case findings indicate that the orienting framework was a valid and useful theoretical orientation.

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INSTITUTION RESPONDS TO PRESSURES FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND
INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

by

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DEDICATION

To
My Mother
&
My Daughters

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Thanks be to God for His strength and faithfulness.

To Essentino, my loving and supportive husband and friend, words cannot express my gratitude for your love, support, encouragement, lectures (smile), and your proofreading skills extraordinaire. I lived and breathed this study because it was mine to do and because I was committed to the work, you did so, deliberately and selflessly, because you cared for me. Thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Achieving the ideals of racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education has been framed as a complementary effort and a competing pursuit. Although advocates for racial equity decry the perpetual “myth” of these ideals being in conflict, much of the discourse has framed racial equity and institutional excellence as mutually exclusive goals (Birnbaum, 1988; Greene & Trent, 2005). While the major discussions regarding the compatibility of these goals have focused primarily on elite institutions and have been the subject of court cases which considered arguments for and against affirmative action (Astin, 1991; Tierney, 1997), this dialogue also holds considerable salience for a broader spectrum of academic institutions that operate under the constraints of this dichotomy. Public four-year institutions are especially impacted by the efforts to reconcile demands for racial equity and institutional excellence given their historical charge to address social problems (Chambers, 2005), their contemporary goals of equal opportunity (Bowen, Kurzeil, & Tobin, 2005), and their formal and informal accountability structures of legislative mandates and public scrutiny (Sadovnik, 1994).

Although institutions of higher education were once narrowly focused in scope and purpose, the academy of today is a diverse collection of colleges and universities which serve a diverse clientele of students. Yet, as a system, the mission of higher education could be unified under the banner of serving the public good. In an exploration of higher education and its relationship to the public good, Kezar and associates (2005) warned that contemporary higher education faces at least two diametrically opposed factions, each with its own unique and pressing demands. One set of demands stems

from an increasingly pluralistic society that seeks access to and equitable treatment within the academy. This push stands in contrast to another segment of the population that advocates for the protection of the rights of individuals and the maintenance of a system based almost exclusively on conceptions of merit and quality. The supporters of each claim that the role and responsibility of higher education is to serve the public good. Scarce resources and the tendency of the academy to cyclically support values which are viewed to be in conflict have heightened the tensions between these two camps and have required campus administrators to make tough choices about racial equity and institutional excellence.

These choices are even more pronounced for public flagship institutions because of their selective admissions processes, their status, and their designation as representing states' ideals of academic excellence, innovation, and human capacity building. Berdahl (1998) notes that public flagship institutions were typically the first public universities to be established by states from the mid-1850s to the mid-1880s. Many of these institutions were founded by grants provided by the Morrill Act of 1863. After World War II, the term "flagship" became associated with many of these pioneer public institutions when they expanded to include research, graduate education and professional schools (Berdahl, 1998). Today, the flagship institution is considered the most prestigious and elite of the public institutions within the state. These institutions like other institutions of higher education are under constant pressures to be equitable and excellent. Given the current climate of increased intervention of external forces into the affairs of higher education, studies which examine institutional responses to external pressures may help promote an

understanding of whether and how institutions mediate the demands of multiple constituencies and how these responses affect the institution.

The purpose of this study is to explore how a public flagship institution responds to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education. This study is focused on four central questions:

1. What are the sources and types of demands for equity and excellence recognized by this institution between 1988, when it was designated a “flagship” university and the present (2006)?
2. What strategies did institutional agents employ to mediate these demands?
3. What impact did these strategies have on dimensions of racial equity and institutional excellence?
4. What are the implications of this study for prominent theories that seek to explain how institutions of higher education interact with their environment?

The guiding conceptual frameworks of the study, institutional theory and resource dependency assume that institutions are open systems—both sensitive and responsive to their environments. However, these theories acknowledge that institutions also are reflective of their internal dynamics. Thus, while this study is oriented to institutional responses to external forces, the unique internal characteristics of higher education institutions must be considered as well. The principle focus of this study concerns institutional responses to pressures related to racial equality, in particular those associated with African American students and faculty. The unique history of legalized discrimination against this population, and the continuing and increasing challenge to

programs designed to equalize opportunity for this group make this study both relevant and necessary.

Given the paucity of empirical research which explored the nature, relationship and response to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence, this study relied on an exploratory case study design to understand and explain the phenomena of interest. Multiple sources of data including primary and secondary documents and interviews were used to answer the guiding research questions and address the theoretical insights generated by this study. In an effort to explain the reasoning for the study focus and approach, this study begins with a statement of the problem, followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework and methods used in this research.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Demands for racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education are prevalent, persistent, and problematic. Institutions struggle to respond to these complex, and, at times, competing demands. This study sought to understand both the process through which higher education institutions respond to these demands and the impact of those responses on institutional priorities, programs, and operations. The purpose of this section is to describe how the demands for equity and excellence in education have been attended to in the empirical and theoretical literature. This purpose is achieved by discussing global perspectives on equity and excellence, and by examining how these issues have been addressed in the K-12 and higher education literature.

Global Perspectives on Racial Equity and Institutional Excellence

The discourse concerning racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education is not a novel one. In the United States and abroad, scholars have struggled

with these two constructs and what each means in relation to the mission and functioning of higher education. Globalization, immigration, and border crossings have significantly impacted how previously homogenous countries are responding to dominant pressures for access and equity while maintaining and promoting quality. Although studies in these contexts offer important and necessary insight, stark differences between those environments and that of the United States limit the ability for adoption.

In contrast, the experiences of countries which have long histories of social stratification along racial and cultural lines have the capacity to provide another layer of context with which to consider the American experience (Bowen, Kurzeil & Tobin, 2005). South Africa is such a country. In their book, *Elusive Equity*, Fiske and Ladd examined equity in all aspects of education in South Africa following the end of the apartheid system of government. In their analysis of equity in higher education, these two scholars examined the historical trends and governmental policies, such as financial aid, that have impacted academic institutions and the students who attend them. They also examined the participation rates of Black students relative to students of other racial and ethnic groups.

The study concluded that despite public policies designed to address serious racial inequities in the system, only modest gains had been made. According to Fiske and Ladd (2004), while the South African government had initiated massive efforts to expand the educational system to accommodate previously excluded Blacks, inadequate financial aid barred participation for low-income Black students. With respect to institutions that had traditionally served the Black population in South Africa, they noted that historically Black institutions suffered deleterious effects from new “equal” funding schemes, which

ignored the fact that these institutions had been under-funded and under-supported for many years. Over time, many Black institutions lost much of their enrollment to predominantly White institutions, which were perceived to be higher in quality than their Black counterparts. As a result of this migration, the authors noted what they called “White flight” which is the phenomena of White students exiting from the nationwide system of higher education as Blacks were granted entry into previously restricted institutions. According to the authors, White enrollment in higher education fell from 45 percent in 1993 to 35 percent in 2000. While the exact cause of the decrease in enrollment has not been identified, Fiske and Ladd noted that plausible explanations have been linked to workforce entry, the departure of White students from the country and increased enrollment in private institutions.

Ramphela’s (1999) case study on equity and excellence in South African higher education provides another compelling glimpse of the struggle between these two ideals. Like Fiske and Ladd, she lays bare a system fraught with stark inequities and stratification between the races in areas of educational qualification and preparation, access to higher education and degree attainment. While she notes programs that have been developed to address the disparity in student and staff access to higher education (e.g. Affirmative Action, internships, post doctoral programs), the lengthy list of unanswered questions she poses at the conclusion of her study suggests that these initiatives may be merely the beginning of a complicated solution that will take generations to be completed.

While parallels around issues of equity and excellence within and across countries are evident, differences in historical, social, and political contexts tend to shape issues in

very unique ways. These differences require that the transfer of knowledge gained from specific cases be done with caution (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). While the works noted here and other studies of the tensions between the demands for equity and excellence in international contexts highlight the significance of the topic and generate insights about how institutions respond, this study focused on higher education in the United States and hence relied on the literature drawn from scholars working within the context of the United States.

Equity and Excellence in American K-12 Schools

In the context of American education, researchers and educators have explored the tensions between and opportunities for equity and excellence along the continuum of formal education. In fact, scholars who focus on the K-12 arena have grappled with these issues for many years and have produced a rich and substantial body of scholarship. While this study focuses on equity and excellence in higher education, the expansive K-12 literature provides thematic cues which draw attention to areas of importance in examining this topic in higher education systems.

In this scholarship, researchers have captured the relationship of equity and excellence constructs through empirical, theoretical and historical analyses. Works such as that of Justiz and Kameen (2001) have shown how equity in higher education is inextricably bound to equity in the K-12 pipeline. Others (e.g. Orfield, 1996) have investigated the failed promise of desegregation in promoting equitable opportunities and excellence for all students regardless of race. Additionally, scholars have exposed the current achievement gap and underperformance of many low income and minority students and documented how these conditions are shaped by complex socio-cultural

conditions that are perpetuated, in part, by the public school system (Fine, 1991; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Portes, 2003; Rothstein, 2004).

The themes drawn from the K-12 literature substantiate this study in several important ways. First, this rich body of literature illustrates the shared connection between higher education and the K-12 system. From the works mentioned above, it is clear that the challenges of ensuring equitable educational opportunities in higher education institutions neither begin nor end with colleges. Disparities in school resources and support have long-term student effects that extend beyond high school. The effects of these inequities are then transferred to the processes of college aspiration, choice, and enrollment, which subsequently impact equity and excellence in higher education.

Second, the K-12 literature shows how educational institutions at all levels are bound to their environments. Like universities, K-12 institutions manage multiple competing demands and expectations in a process that is both complex and political (Bacharach, Masters, & Mundell, 1995). Though public schools reflect and help shape the culture of their local communities (Cibulka, 1995), as an institution, public schools face pressures from a broad set of societal actors. These actors include federal, state and local governments, parent and community organizations, professional associations, and the business sector (Bacharach, et al., 1995). With these and other government entities and interest groups pushing different and, at times, conflicting, educational innovations, schools must buffer and adopt innovation based on the content of the innovation, and the relative power that the interest group can command (Bacharach, et al., 1995).

While K-12 and higher education share parallels in the nature of their relationship with their external environments as well as in the necessity of balancing notions of equity

and excellence, nuances of socio-historical context and differences in organizational structures, governance, and operational practices require more focused exploration of these issues in their respective contexts. This study synthesized these efforts in order to understand how demands for racial equity and institutional excellence have been examined in higher education systems.

Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education

In the higher education literature, the apparent struggle between the ideals of racial equity and institutional excellence is one that is well-cited and borne out in anecdotal evidence. However, very few studies have addressed the issues directly by empirically or theoretically exploring how institutions accommodate both sets of these often competing demands. The earliest works that empirically examined racial equity and institutional excellence in American higher education did so by limiting the definition of equity to access to postsecondary institutions (e.g. Hansen & Stampen, 1988; Seneca & Taussig, 1987). These studies tended to use quantitative methods and cross-sector analyses to link patterns of student access to tuition policies or student financial aid policies and higher education finance systems (Astin, 1985; Hansen & Stampen, 1988; Seneca & Taussig, 1987).

One of the earliest empirical studies of equity and excellence issues was Seneca and Taussig's (1987) quantitative study on quality, access, and tuition policies. This study sampled thirty public universities to explore the relationship among tuition, financial aid, educational quality and student access. The results of this inquiry showed that institutional access was affected negatively by tuition level and institutional quality, and was affected positively by financial aid. In addition, the study found that quality was

affected detrimentally by access. Based on these findings, Seneca and Taussig speculated that postsecondary institutions “face a trade-off between the goals of improving the quality of educational programs and providing greater access [to those programs]” (p.35). While the authors suggest replication and further expansion of their indicators of equitable access, (measured exclusively by level of family income), they afforded no such encouragement for their definition of quality which was measured solely by SAT scores of incoming classes. Therefore, while this study was a necessary first step in the exploration of how institutions respond to demands for equity and excellence in higher education, the limited definitions of equity and excellence raise questions about the accuracy and validity of the results. More focused explorations of equity and excellence at the institution level may provide a more nuanced description of whether equity and excellence are compatible or competing values.

For example, Hansen and Stampen (1988) used document analysis to investigate how internal and external forces impacted the goals of higher education, particularly, the goals of access and quality over a forty-year period (1947-1987). A significant contribution of this study was the finding that the goals of quality and access to higher education are supported and then de-emphasized in a political cycle based on the influence of external actors. Unlike Seneca and Taussig (1987), Hansen and Stampen were careful not to paint the picture of access or quality as an “either/or” choice for the academy. Instead, they argued for institutional policies and structures which increase quality, maintain financial aid for low-income students, and provide supports for minority student achievement. The authors cautioned against generalizing the findings to all types

of institutions and called for additional and more focused analyses based on institutional type.

However, few have heeded their call, so the gap on the literature still remains. For example, Bowen, Kurzeil, and Tobin's (2005) extensive study on equity and excellence in higher education uses empirical and historical analysis to examine major policy issues, national enrollment trends, and demographic data as they relate to the academy's progress in meeting equity and excellence goals. This broad cut at exploring equity and excellence is invaluable for the nationwide trends and challenges that it presents. However, to fully explore how these trends are played out on a campus level, an in-depth look at specific institutional cases is necessary.

Perhaps in realization of the need for detailed case inquiry, Bowen et al. (2005) include, as an appendix, an analysis of the case of South Africa's University of Cape Town (UCT). Written by Scott, Yeld, McMillan, and Hall this study explores how UCT remained committed to equity and excellence in the face of dramatic social and political pressures. As mentioned earlier, while this case offers rich themes that are quite relevant to institutional level analysis of equity and excellence, inquiry that is based on the American historical and societal context is greatly needed. This study sought to address this void in the literature by exploring how a particular kind of institution, a public flagship university, responds to external pressures for equity and excellence.

Though few in number, some qualitative studies have explored pressures for equity and excellence and their impact on aspects of the university. Richardson and Skinner (1991) present case studies of ten institutions which they believed were exemplary in addressing equity and excellence. Their study presents a theoretical model

of institutional adaptation to diversity which explains how external demands affect the persistence and achievement of racial and ethnic students at predominantly White institutions. As one of the first to develop a framework to guide and assess institutional responses to pressures for equity and excellence, Richardson and Skinner's (1991) work advances the notion that equity and excellence can be complementary objectives for academia. However, since the focus of the study was to understand how institutional policies and practices impacted student achievement, relatively little attention was given to explaining how the institutions interacted with their external environments or how decision-making occurred. In addition, while the ten case studies offer a broad view of how a nationwide sample of institutions balance equity and excellence concerns, the cursory presentation of each case left little room for a rich exploration of campus level responses, struggles, and experiences in dealing with these issues.

As a single case study, Fitzpatrick's (2003) work on diversity and academic excellence at the University of Louisville offers a rich examination of how one institution struggled with the dual demands of equity and excellence. Fitzpatrick's work provides a historical recounting of campus level events and trends related to access over a fifty-year period. It also provides an appraisal of the affect of the university's strategy for excellence and racial equity in the late 1990's. However, absent from his analysis were connections to theoretical constructs that could be used to characterize the university's relationship with its external constituencies or to explain the process of responding to environmental demands. Omissions by both Richardson and Skinner (1991) and Fitzpatrick (2003) present important opportunities for scholarly inquiry designed to

investigate the nature of external pressures, the process through which campus agents mediate these pressures, and the impact of their actions on the university.

This study built upon the foundation laid by these past works by examining how higher education institutions respond to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. This study addressed the gaps in the literature by documenting the extent to which university responses to outside demands for equity and excellence become part of the inner core of the institution or, in the alternative, become relegated to marginal or peripheral positions in the university.

As the paucity of empirical research on the interaction between equity and excellence suggests, this line of inquiry is far from complete. In fact, over the last five years renewed attention has been directed to theoretically and empirically grounded studies that examine equity and excellence in postsecondary education. In addition to Bowen, et al.'s (2005) work, current scholarship which is explored with more depth later in this study, focuses on assisting institutions to engage in change by implementing diversity goals and structures through the use of diversity and equity "scorecards". While these works acknowledge the relationship of institutions to their external environments, their focus is not on understanding how institutions respond to these constituencies or on the campus level impacts of these responses.

In his article on expanding the higher education research agenda, McLendon (2003) called on higher education scholars to examine the interrelationship of external pressures and politics on higher education goals and functions. Without this understanding, institutions are limited in their ability to discern and respond to environmental changes or threats. An example is found in Prestine's (1989) case study

on the conflict between the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a state agency for control of the University's teacher education department. In this case, the institution failed to accurately read or gauge the impact of external forces, and, as a result, lost a critical political battle. Based on her findings, Prestine called for additional qualitative work exploring how higher education institutions respond to and interact with their external constituencies.

Higher education scholars have not been alone in this appeal. Almost fifteen years ago in management and organization literature, Oliver (1991) states that explicit attention is lacking on how organizations strategically respond to environmental pressures that directly affect them. Since that time several scholars (e.g. Goodstein, 1994) both within and outside higher education have explored how institutions and their agents respond to their environment, but large gaps in the literature persist. Given this situation, this research sought to add to the limited literature on how institutions of higher education respond to external pressures by examining how campus leaders respond to competing pressures and by assessing the impact of these responses on key aspects of the institution. The next chapter defines and develops key terms related to this inquiry through a review of the literature and explication of the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by two streams of literature. The first stream examines how broad notions of equity and excellence are defined and measured and discusses whether these ideals are in tension within the context of American higher education. The second body of literature explores how institutions respond to external pressures as well as how contextual forces and human agents interact to develop institutional responses. This stream also examines the impact of institutional responses to equity and excellence pressures. The streams are tied together through a conceptual model which suggests how racial equity and excellence are mediated by the strategic choices of key actors in higher education institutions.

Equity in Higher Education

The study of equity for racial minorities in higher education has been explored for both students and faculty. Under the focus on students, much of the research has defined equity as an issue of access (Astin, 1985) and has explored a broad range of topics dealing with the low participation of minorities in higher education. Researchers have focused on the legal and historical challenges of overcoming the vestiges of segregation as well as the current battles over affirmative action (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Lindsay & Justiz, 2001; Orfield & Miller, 1998; Paul, 1990). Other studies have examined cultural and economic factors that affect the participation rates and college choices of particular student groups (McDonough, 1991, 1997; McDonough & Antonio, 1996). Some scholars have looked at the extent to which state and federal policies impact access (Contreras, 2005; Heller, 2005), and others have examined how the structure, experiences, and

practices in K-12 education impact postsecondary opportunity (Martin, Karabel, & Jacquez, 2005; Paul, 2005; Venezia & Kirts, 2005).

While acknowledging that work remains to be done in these areas, some scholars have called for higher education scholarship to go beyond the boundaries of access and affirmative action to a “compelling and continuing set of inquiries about higher education’s practices and setting[s]” (Gumport & Zemsky, 2003, p.1). Current work has begun to blur the lines between equity in access and equity in student outcomes and experiences in order to move beyond numerical representation in enrollments to an examination of equity in every facet of the college-going experience. Thus, the following section presents the conceptions of equity as derived from the literature by examining equity as access, equity in student experiences and outcomes, and equity as gauged by various frameworks and scorecards. While these categories are neither fixed nor incontestable, they are used here to organize the main themes evident in the literature on equity in higher education.

Equity in Access

As earlier stated, scholarship about equity in access to higher education covers a wide body of empirical and theoretical literature which describes and explains the implications of inequities in socioeconomic opportunities, academic preparation and resources on the enrollment of students in the academy. Scholars analyze how federal and state action, in addition to legal mandates such as affirmative action (Cooper, Kane & Gisselquits, 2001; Hansen & Stampen, 1988; Orfield & Miller, 1998; Tierney, 1997) and other institutional policies impact the aspiration, choice, and enrollment of college students across racial and socio-economic classifications. Likewise, access scholars

examine the extent to which deficient academic preparation of many minority and low-income students has contributed to low participation rates of these groups in higher education (Perna, 2000). These scholars also consider how stratification in learning outcomes, graduation rates, and SAT scores have impacted college access (Astin, 1991). The goal for many researchers is to offer substantive policy recommendations to federal and state governments as well as to educational institutions about how to make higher education more accessible for students irrespective of race and income.

Key findings in these areas reveal that the lack of equity for racial and ethnic minorities and students of low socio-economic status has been linked to the lack of financial resources (St. John, 2003), inaccessibility of need based aid, unaffordable tuition, and the lack of information and limited understanding of financing options, including grants, fellowships and other forms of financial assistance (Baum, 2001; Perna, 2000). Research in the access arena has contributed to our knowledge of how federal and state policies, such as those that emphasize merit based aid and tuition tax credits extend greater opportunities for college enrollment to middle-class and White families at the expense of equity based financial aid for low-income and underrepresented students (Hearn, 2001). Research in this area has shown that institutional policies such as ‘early-decision’ admissions policies benefit students with more socially valued cultural capital and a higher socio-economic status (Avery, Fairbanks & Zeckhauser, 2003; Bowen, et al., 2005), while the “legacy” process in college admissions gives preferential treatment to students with familial connections to an institution (Tierney, 1997). These research findings suggest that despite gains in providing access to the academy, institutional policies and structures that work against the achievement of equity for low income and

minority students often operate to preserve the pattern of privilege for White middle and upper class students.

As noted earlier under the access perspective, equity has been defined and measured by the participation rates of Black and other minority student groups relative to those of White students (Blackwell, 1982; Egerton, 1982; Trent, et al., 2003). Early studies such as Blackwell's work (1982) used data from the United States Census Bureau, the National Center for Education Statistics and studies published by the Southern Education Foundation to analyze the educational pipeline for Black students and their position in higher education post desegregation. Blackwell found that the South was the most segregated region for Black student enrollment across educational institutions. He called for increased momentum to address the critical state of Black student enrollment and matriculation in undergraduate and graduate level higher education.

Twenty years after the Blackwell study, Trent, et al (2003) examined equity in higher education. In this study, equity was measured by analyzing the participation rates of Black students across Carnegie classification sectors. Using data from IPEDS, the authors concluded that while Black and Latino/a enrollment had increased, both groups remain underrepresented relative to their rates of graduation from high school. A major cause of concern for the authors was the finding that showed increased segregation of Black and Latino/a students in less selective institutions.

Another method of gauging equity is through the use of "equity indices" (Perna, et al., 2005). Pioneered by Bensimon and her colleagues in their work on the diversity score (e.g. Bensimon, 2004), equity indices seek to measure the enrollment patterns and educational outcomes of a particular racial group relative to others in reference groups

(Perna, et al., 2005). An index score of one is considered equity attainment, while scores of less than one or more than one are considered below and above equity attainment. For example, if the referent group is classified as a particular state's high school graduation rate, then an institution would reach equity in Black student enrollment participation if the representation of enrolled Black students at the institution was equivalent to the percentage of statewide Black high school graduates.

In summary, it is clear that equity research which falls under the access perspective focuses on documenting and explaining how historical, socio-economic, and cultural barriers have served to limit the aspiration, choice, and enrollment of different student groups. Access research recounts how past challenges have shaped modern day access to education for racial minorities, clarifies the shared connection between K-12 education and higher education, documents how the stratification of minorities into non-elite institutions in the academy reflects the continued stratification of society, and examines how public policies define opportunity for education.

Equity in Student Experiences and Outcomes

Although equity in higher education has been characterized largely as an issue of access and participation, a substantial body of research probes equity in the overall academic experiences and academic outcomes of students. This line of scholarship is defined principally by its examination of the experiences, engagement, and performances of racial/ethnic students who are enrolled in predominantly White institutions. One of the earliest works to develop measures of equity in the experiences and achievement of Black undergraduate students was Nettles' (1988) exploration of "qualitative indicators of equality". According to him, these indicators included student performance on college

admissions examinations; type and quality of college attended; major field selected; retention and persistence toward completion of degree programs; academic performance on college outcomes assessments; academic, social, and extracurricular experiences during college; involvement with faculty and peers in the college environment; and academic and career success after completing college.

Using survey data from Black and White students and faculty from 30 different institutions, Nettles probed student backgrounds, performance, experiences and attitudes while they attended college and described faculty backgrounds, professional experiences, teaching styles, and students' perceptions of their institutions. Nettles found that Black students reportedly had a lower level of academic integration and experienced more interference with their mental and emotional well being than did White students. He found that Black students reported more racial discrimination on their campuses than their White counterparts. Nettles also found that more Black students reported that they felt that their respective campuses did not do enough to attract a more diverse student body or to address racial biases.

Since Nettles' (1988) research, numerous studies have examined the state of racial equity in higher education as defined by student experiences and outcomes (e.g. Bowen & Bok, 1998; Harvey, 2003; Lowe, 1999). The overall theme of these works suggests that disturbingly little has changed from Nettles' (1988) observations about the "'mis-education' of Black students in higher education" (Nettles, 1988). According to Nettles:

After college entry, Black students experience higher rates of discontinuance, lower levels of academic performance, greater under-representation in the more prestigious programs/institutions, and lower likelihood to pursue postgraduate

studies. In addition, Black students report greater social and psychological distress and less satisfaction with college compared to their White peers” (p. 77-78).

These dire facts exemplify the critical nature of this line of scholarship. By broadly defining equity as the quality of students’ experiences and outcomes, scholars have exposed the importance of understanding student experiences, altering institutional climates and cultures, and improving the retention, success, and engagement of minority students, and faculty.

Equity in the Faculty Ranks

While racial disparities persist in the enrollment and retention of minority students, recent enrollment data show encouraging signs of change (Trent, et al., 2003). Conversely, statistics concerning the racial composition of the American faculty reveal stagnation and stark inequities (Reed, 1986; Turner, 2002b; Turner, Meyers & Creswell, 1999). In particular, scholars note that minority faculty are underrepresented in the overall ranks of the academy, concentrated in less prestigious institutions, are more likely to be adjunct or part-time faculty and remain underrepresented in the sciences and technical fields (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2001; Tierney & Benismon, 1996; Turner, 2002b; Turner, et al., 1999). Data show that minority faculty only account for 15 percent of the total faculty nationwide. When disaggregated, the numbers reveal that African Americans compromise 6%; Latinos, 4%; Asians, 5%; and Native Americans 0.5% (NCES, 2006).

Explanations for the persistence of these inequities can be grouped into two categories—those stemming from forces external to the institution and those emanating

from internal sources (Turner, 2002). With regard to outside influences on faculty diversification, the problem of the “academic pipeline” is easily identified as the most prevalent external explanation given for the lack of diversity in the faculty (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2001; Turner, Meyers, Samuel & Creswell, 1999). Scholars note that after receiving the bachelor degree, the number of minority students who continue through the “pipeline” to earn advanced degrees (master’s and doctoral) sharply declines. They opine that this limited pool of qualified persons leads to fewer minority applicants who are qualified or interested in an academic position (Allen, et al., 2001).

Although there is evidence supportive of external explanations, like the pipeline, for the lack of faculty diversity (e.g. Turner, et al., 1999), some scholars (e.g. Reed, 1986; Moody, 2004) have rejected them as myths that contribute, in part, to the problem. Other works, while less dismissive of these external explanations look inward. Citing characteristics of the academy itself; they note that the “challenges to the successful recruitment, retention, and development of faculty of color include significant barriers within academia itself that discourage people of color from becoming productive and satisfied members of the professoriate” (Turner, et al., 1999, p.28). Allen, et al. (2001) argue that historical and existing faculty inequities are due to pervasive barriers that are embedded within the academic prestige hierarchy of American higher education. Thus, they argue, internal norms of the academy disadvantage Black and other minority faculty, while advantaging Whites (Allen, et al., 2001; Moody, 2004).

Moody (2004) identifies internal barriers to faculty diversity as institutional norms which place “extra taxes and burdens” on minority faculty while granting “profits”

to Whites. For example, she explains that minority candidates are taxed with the assumption that they are incompetent so they are forced to work harder to prove their worth. In contrast, White faculty profit from the presumption of competence. As a corollary to these phenomena, Moody (2004) also sees disparities within the evaluation process of faculty. She observes that minority scholars are vulnerable to unfavorable evaluations based on biases concerning their competency and the value of their work. She suggests that White scholars are typically not subject to these types of perceptions.

Another internal challenge to diversity is seen as the assignment of “outsider” status to minority scholars versus that “insider” status given to their White counterparts. Insiders are privileged with necessary support, such as mentoring and access to valuable networks during the promotion and tenure process. Outsiders, on the other hand, are alienated and deprived of such opportunities.

The work of other scholars confirms many of Moody’s contentions and supports the notion that the most significant barriers to faculty diversification are internal. Turner, et al. (1999) summarize the most dominant barriers to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color as attributable to isolation and lack of mentoring, occupational stress, devaluation of minority research, the token hire misconception, racial and ethnic bias in recruiting and hiring, and racial and ethnic bias in tenure and promotion practices and policies.

Equity through Diversity

Recent attacks on affirmative action have impacted much of the current work on equity in higher education by shifting the discourse from “equity” to “diversity” (Renner & Moore, 2004). However, diversity scholars argue that this relatively new stream of

inquiry should not be seen as an abandonment of the ideals of social justice or expanded access, as some (e.g. Renner & Moore) have suggested. Milem (2003) notes that, “supporting diversity in colleges and universities is not only about social justice but also a matter of promoting education excellence” (p.126). Thus, while this new semantical association between “equity” and “diversity” has been unsettling for some, empirical research on diversity promises to uncover ways to bring together convictions of social justice and equity with the ideal of academic excellence.

Over the past decade, the concept of racial equity through diversity has developed in two very different ways. The most traditional and widespread use of the term diversity focused narrowly and antiseptically on the numerical representation of racial minorities and issues of multiculturalism (Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005). Current constructs of diversity have changed from the traditional use of the term to broader concepts that call for changes to campus structures and policies affecting underrepresented and marginalized students (Williams, Berger & McClendon, 2005). The new diversity paradigm emphasizes engagement across racial and ethnic lines (Milem, et al., 2005) and quality educational opportunities and outcomes for all students (Colbeck, Bjorklund & Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Milem, 2003; Parente, 2001; Terenzini, Cabrera, Williams, et al., 2005). In addition, diversity research explicitly explores the often unspoken tensions associated with race and racism experienced at predominately White institutions (Chang, 2000). Examples of this focus are found in the book, *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education*, edited by Smith, Altbach & Lomotey (2002). This work captures how the persistent lingering effects of racism, discrimination, and

resentment in higher education are manifest in chilly campus climates and the marginalization and attrition of minority populations.

Responding to the call for evidence-based approaches to implementing diversity and equity initiatives, a small core of higher education scholars have turned their attention to both articulating and evaluating the educational benefits of a racially diverse campus. Diversity has been linked to increased benefits for the individual, institution, economy, and society (Chang, 2001; Hurtado, 2001; Milem, 2003; Umbach, 2006).

However, scholars caution that it is not enough to simply bring students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds together. Instead, they argue for initiatives that would create a truly engaged campus and would impact the entire scope of college life--from the curriculum and course offerings to student interactions and friendships (Milem, et al., 2005). In order to assist institutions in fully realizing the benefits of sustained and focused diversity engagement, scholars have developed evaluative tools which assess campus climate and structures. The premise of these benchmarks is that institutional commitment to equity is both identifiable and measurable. These steps include “increasing the representation of racial ethnic people of color among the faculty and administration, actively recruiting more students of color, taking steps to create a multicultural environment, and developing an appreciation for a multicultural society among faculty and students” (Hurtado, 2002 p. 132).

Multi-dimensional Frameworks and Scorecards

As the construct of equity has been expanded, scholars have developed multi-dimensional frameworks to gauge institutional equity and to examine the life of a student from enrollment to graduation. This type of research uses scorecards to measure whether

racial and ethnic students, once admitted to postsecondary institutions, have equal outcomes relative to White students. These experiences and outcomes are measured in terms of persistence and graduation rates, and in terms of the inclusiveness of the institutional climate. The degree to which work on these issues offers consistent definitions, indicators, and categories varies greatly.

Richardson and Skinner (1991) provided one of the earliest empirically-based analytic frameworks to gauge multiple aspects of equity in higher education. Their framework measured equity in participation, persistence, institutional climate, and achievement. They explained that equity should be measured in light of the representation of minorities in the local/state population and national context. Accordingly, their analysis of the ten cases which made-up their study compared enrollment and graduation rates relative to the state population. However, other indicators such as the proportion of minorities found among the faculty and staff, the number of minorities found in the tenured faculty ranks, and the number of underrepresented students residing in the residence halls, were not introduced across cases. Since the framework was not formalized or consistently applied across all the cases, it provided little detail of what equity attainment in areas besides enrollment might look like.

Recent works have broadened the line of inquiry to include analysis of student engagement and institutional practices across racial and ethnic lines. One of the most comprehensive and well-known frameworks is the “Diversity Scorecard” developed by Estela Bensimon (2004). Though entitled “diversity”, the scorecard seeks to gauge equity in institutional performance along four distinctive dimensions: *access* to university

resources and programs; *retention* in all levels of university programs, including highly technical areas; *institutional receptivity* to faculty and staff racial diversity; and *excellence* in access and achievement. Each dimension of the scorecard requires institutions to identify their baseline equity score (defined as their historical or current status), their improvement target, and the point of equity attainment.

The *access perspective* moves beyond assessment of the composite representation of racial and ethnic students on a campus. It assesses the distribution of minority students in all programs and majors, including areas such as the sciences, where minorities are often underrepresented. Access to scholarships and fellowships, as well as to financial support is also evaluated. Administrators are encouraged to examine access of racial and ethnic students along a continuum beginning with community college articulation, transfer, and matriculation to graduation and enrollment in professional schools. The *retention perspective* measures and compares student retention by major and degree. Thus, withdrawal rates from majors such as science and engineering are scrutinized, as are the completion rates for degree and certificate programs. The indicator of *institutional receptivity* examines faculty and staff diversity by exploring whether faculty and staff are representative of the student body and if new hires add to campus diversity. The final component, the *excellence* component, measures equity in two dimensions: access and achievement. The access dimension looks at what programs are “gateways” or “gatekeepers” and whether racial biases are evident in the composition of the student body enrolled in those programs. The achievement dimension examines completion and graduation rates in highly competitive programs and the percentage of underrepresented students with GPA’s of 3.5 or higher. According to Bensimon (2004), through the

process of disaggregating baseline data, campus officials gain an accurate picture of disparities that are often overlooked, unknown or ignored.

Since the development of the diversity scorecard, other scholars have contributed frameworks that assist higher education institutions in assessing and ultimately achieving diversity goals. Most notable is Williams, Berger, & McClendon's (2005) Inclusive Excellence Change Model (IE). The leading component of this model is the conceptualization of change as a strategic, deliberate, and active process where the focus is on excellence for all students. Since the main premise of this model is excellence, it will be explored in more detail in the next segment of this chapter.

Implications for Conceptualizing Equity in this Study

The literature on equity in higher education has important implications for this study. First, this body of scholarship serves as a classification device by which equity demands can be distinguished from other institutional pressures. Equity in higher education is understood as a broad ideal rooted in notions of social justice, equality and fairness. Demands that seek to advance equity such as student access, experiences, and achievement, as well as institutional features are included in this study. Second, the literature serves as a sensitizing guide for gauging dimensions of equity and examining the impact of campus responses on equity attainment. The manner and the extent to which this ideal is realized on college campuses can be gauged by looking at the following indicators: student access, student achievement, institutional receptivity and institutional climate.

Equity in *student access* as defined by the equity indices of Perna, et al. (2005) maintains that Black student enrollment at the flagship should be at least equivalent to the

enrollment of Black students graduating from high schools statewide. This indicator advances that the distribution of Black students across programs and majors particularly in math and the sciences should be at least proportionate to their numbers on campus. Equity in *student achievement* focuses on the retention rate of Black students compared with White students at a campus level as well as by programs and majors. Also relevant is Black student involvement in campus honors and societies (Bensimon, 2004). *Institutional Receptivity* draws from Bensimon's work and posits that faculty and staff should be representative of the diversity in the student body. Thus, equity should be reflected in the recruitment and retention (through tenure) of faculty throughout the university. Equity in *Institutional Climate* also means that all campus populations (e.g., students, faculty and staff) should perceive the campus as safe, supportive, and inclusive.

Excellence in Higher Education

The history of the American higher education system is replete with examples of how individual institutions and outside agents have sought to achieve, measure, or project the ideals of excellence. Given the variety of institutions which comprise the American system of higher education, differing views of what characterizes institutional excellence are both expected and pervasive. For example, Mingle (1989) maintained that:

[The] political meaning of quality, from the perspective of the states is fundamentally conservative and traditional. Quality values are associated with such policies as assessment, core curricula, selective admissions, incentive funding, merit funding, and a division (read stratification) of labor amongst institutions (p. 2).

In contrast, Nordvall and Braxton (1996) noted that for the general public the issue of quality is simply framed as which school among choices is the best institution. For

parents and students, excellence is frequently associated with the ability of a particular school to impact tangible outcomes, such as admissions into graduate schools and future earnings (Litten & Hall, 1989; McDonough, Antonio, Walpole, & Perez, 1998). Despite this array of views, most scholars agree that excellence is still commonly linked to a few narrow and traditional indicators. In fact, taking this characterization a bit further, many scholars have argued that institutional excellence is much less about measurable indices of quality or value added, as it is about reputation, institutional prestige, and elitism (Astin, 1985; Lawrence & Green, 1980; Tierney, 1997).

The following section explores the concept of institutional excellence by probing how it has been defined, perceived, and conveyed through empirical and theoretical explorations. It is evident in the literature that the term excellence is a broad umbrella that captures varied measures of institutional quality and achievement. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the terms excellence and quality will be used interchangeably. The review focuses on perceptions of overall institutional excellence, as opposed to the quality of course content or pedagogical practices. While the intent of the section is not to debate their merits, these indices, critiques and debates in the literature will be summarized. The first part of this discussion focuses on how excellence has been traditionally defined in higher education. This segment is followed by a review of alternative conceptualizations of excellence which challenge the common indicators of excellence to be inclusive of equity and diversity. The section concludes with a discussion of the implications of excellence research for this study.

Traditional Views of Excellence

The dominant conception of excellence in higher education is tied to a deeply embedded public belief system which equates quality with status and affluence (Karabel & Astin, 1975). Karbel and Astin (1975), citing (Clark, 1962), noted that the outside societal hierarchy transfers status to educational institutions making the most prestigious institutions the ones which educate the rich and elite. Since this classification schema is tied to socially perpetuated myths, it is both powerful and enduring. Through these recurrent myths of prestige, institutions are sorted, labeled and classified into hierarchical systems (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh & Bonous-Hammarth, 2001; Astin, 1985; Chang, 2000).

One result of this classification is that highly selective institutions which are deemed to be elite and prestigious occupy the top ranks of the hierarchy, while open and non-selective institutions are relegated to the lower rungs. An example of the enduring nature of this type of stratification is found in Lawrence and Green's (1980) exploration of the higher education ratings system. In their review of the literature, they found that the list of the top ten institutions identified in major reputational studies over a fifty-year period (the authors cited the following: Hughes, 1925; Keniston, 1959; Cartter, 1966; Roose & Andersen, 1970) reflected very little change. All of the institutions listed in the 1925 Hughes report were present in subsequent rankings with only a few additions. Lawrence and Green (1980) argued that this demonstrated stability in the rankings raises questions about whether rankings truly manifest a concern for educational matters or whether they are meant to reflect institutional prestige and elitism. Answers to these questions may lie in how excellence is commonly perceived by those inside and outside the academy. The following section examines the two dominant models for gauging

postsecondary excellence: excellence as reputation and excellence as resources (Astin, 1985).

Excellence as Reputation. In the reputational model, excellence is reinforced by folklore and measured by reputation on the premise that the best quality institutions are those with high visibility and high academic standings. While reputational rankings are now used to measure many aspects of an institution, including undergraduate programs, earlier studies exclusively focused on assessing graduate education and professional schools (Lawrence & Green, 1980).

One of the first rankings studies was conducted by Raymond Hughes in 1925 for the purpose of ranking doctoral degree-granting institutions (Lawrence & Green, 1980). In his study, Hughes asked faculty to rank peer programs based on their perception of the program's quality and faculty productivity. Hughes' ratings of doctoral programs were followed by studies ranking graduate programs (e.g. Cartter, 1966; Roose & Andersen, 1970), and professional schools (Lawrence & Green, 1980).

Astin's (1985) analysis of the major reputational rankings for Ph.D. granting institutions between 1966-1982 mirrored some of the conclusions of Lawrence and Green (1980), in that he found that the order and composition of the top institutions rarely changed and that most raters agreed to .98 reliability which schools were "excellent". Astin described the most common practice for conducting rankings as a process wherein a small sampling of faculty ranked programs in their own discipline using a scale which labels institutions and programs as distinguished, strong, good, adequate, marginal, or not sufficient for doctoral training. Astin concluded that an institution's relative placement on the hierarchy could produce a halo effect. This halo effect meant that a rater's

assessment of departmental quality indicators was influenced by the institution's overall position in the hierarchy and as well as the level of familiarity that the rater had with the program. Therefore, institutions that were both well known and high on the hierarchical chart tended to receive higher rankings (Astin, 1985).

Over the years, rankings have come under heavy criticism because of the unclear criteria and subjective methods used for rendering judgments (Nordvall & Braxton, 1996). Rankings also have drawn concern over their impact on students and parents in the college decision-making process (McDonough, Antonio, Walpole & Perez, 1998), their effect on postsecondary institutions (Hossler, 2000; Machung, 1998), as well as their lack of precision in "quantifying quality" (Clarke, 2002). Many of these criticisms are aimed at the popular *US New and World Report* annual college rankings. The magazine has enjoyed tremendous success since it started ranking undergraduate programs in 1983. It now makes over \$5.2 million in annual sales and has expanded to rank all undergraduate, graduate and professional schools (McDonough, et al., 1998).

While studies such as those mentioned above have raised enduring questions about the methods and use of reputational rankings, the potency of reputational conceptualizations of excellence has not been diminished. A cursory look at the emphasis placed on rankings in college catalogs, websites, and communications to donors, potential students, and alumni suggests that the use of rankings to imply the presence of institutional excellence is alive and well.

Excellence as Resources. Another commonly used approach for measuring quality is the resources model. Resources are typically measured in the categories of students, personnel (faculty and staff), and finances (Astin, 1985). Students are measured

by their incoming SAT test scores, grades, and class rankings. Measures of personnel resources primarily consider faculty productivity and publication records and the proportion of faculty with earned doctorates. Financial resources are assessed by institutional size, the size of the institution's endowment, student to faculty ratios, library size, the attractiveness of the physical plant and faculty salary levels (Astin, 1985). Over the years, many studies have measured institutional excellence using any number of combinations or extensions of these indicators; however, the most commonly used resource indicators are faculty and students.

A common practice of measuring the quality of colleges and universities through the resources model is by examining institutional selectivity which is tied to the resource of students (Braxton & Nordvall, 1985). In their study on social class and quality, Karabel and Astin (1975) used selectivity variables of individual student aptitude (grades and test scores) and affluence, (i.e. the revenue available per student) to measure quality. Braxton and Nordvall's (1985) investigation of quality and prestige in selective liberal arts colleges used the Carnegie Classification of institutions which ranked liberal arts colleges into selectivity I and II divisions. In addition to the composite indicator of selectivity, standardized test scores of students have been used as a proxy for institutional excellence. For example, in their study on access and quality, Seneca and Taussig's (1987) only measure of institutional excellence was the SAT score of the incoming class. They reasoned that while SAT scores are not ideal measures of quality, they provided a more objective measure than using reputational ratings.

Measurements of faculty as resources typically focus on the amount of full-time faculty with doctorates, faculty scholarly productivity and their degree origination (e.g.

Astin & Solomon, 1981; Young, Blackburn, & Conrad, 1987). The basic premise behind these indicators is that faculty members who frequently publish in peer reviewed scholarly journals are of higher quality than their peers (Conrad & Blackburn, 1985, Grunig, 1997). Thus, institutions with well-known and prolific faculty are presumed to be of higher quality.

While the resource and reputational definitions of excellence are separate constructions, scholars have noted that they are bound together by similar associations with social prestige and elitism (Astin, 1985; Nordvall & Braxton, 1996). According to Astin (1985) “Both the reputational and resources view are mutually reinforcing in the sense that enhanced reputation can bring an institution additional resources, and additional resources (particularly of able students and nationally visible faculty members) can enhance an institution’s reputation” (P.58). Astin levied additional criticisms by stating:

Both the reputational and resources view failed to meet all three of my evaluative criteria. Neither view is necessarily consistent with the institution’s purposes: to develop student and faculty talent. Furthermore, adherence to either view offers little possibility of enhancing the overall quality of higher education in the United States. Indeed, the resources conception may, paradoxically, deplete the total amount of resources available for institutions to invest in their educational programs. Finally, neither the reputational nor the resources view contributes to increasing equal opportunities in higher education. (p. 58-59.)

As an alternative to these traditional indicators of academic excellence, Astin (1985) argues that higher education should focus on developing excellence based on what he considers it’s primary mission--talent development of faculty and students.

Alternative Conceptions of Excellence

Astin’s conceptualization of talent development or value-added excellence is one alternative view to traditional indicators of excellence. Another view of excellence

defines it in terms of student outcomes or student learning. However, these alternatives have commonly been presented as one and the same (e.g. Braxton & Nordvall, 1996). This practice is based on the assumption that value-added excellence and outcomes are equivalent in measuring the contribution of an institution to the intellectual and personal development of students (Astin, 1985). Astin, however distinguishes between these two views by noting that, “the term outcome simply refers to some performance measure: retention rates, alumni achievements, and so on. No causal connection between the outcome and the institutional environment can be inferred” (p. 44).

An example of this view is found in Litten and Hall’s (1989) study of how high ability students and their parents view quality in colleges. The scholars found that a majority of parents in their study selected the outcome of “admission rates to top graduate and professional schools” as one of three indicators of a top quality institution. In contrast, Astin (1985) argues that, “according to the talent development view, a high quality institution is one that facilitates maximum growth among its students and faculty and that can document that growth through appropriate assessment procedures.” (p.77). Astin’s (1991) Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) model builds on this premise by arguing that the complete evaluation of student outcomes must be accomplished by examining variables related to students’ pre-characteristics, the educational or institutional environment, and student outcomes. Therefore, the measure of an institution’s excellence lies in its ability to contribute to the cognitive and affective development of students, particularly those who enroll with low levels of academic preparation and skill.

While the dominant perceptions of institutional excellence are still tied to historical indicators, a growing counter movement of scholars, policy makers and practitioners has joined Astin's efforts to press for new definitions and conceptualizations. The Making Excellence Inclusive initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is one such example. "Inclusive excellence" strives to blur the distinction between excellence and equity by presenting them as complementary and integrated values. One aspect of the AAC&U initiative was to commission papers by leading scholars and researchers to critically examine these terms and redefine them (e.g. Milem, et al., 2005; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Williams, et al.'s (2005) inclusive excellence change model and scorecard are products of this initiative. Different from traditional definitions of excellence, this model conceptualizes diversity "as a key component of a comprehensive strategy for achieving institutional excellence" (Williams, et al., 2005, p.3).

In the inclusive excellence scorecard, equity is measured by identifying and assigning a score to an institution's baseline, target, and equity goals. Baseline refers to an institution's score in specific areas prior to the implementation of intervention activities. The target score refers to a goal that the institution hopes to attain. Equity goals reflect the ratio of the baseline score relative to the target score (Williams, et al., 2005). This model measures excellence in four key areas: access and equity, diversity in the formal and informal curriculum, campus climate, and student learning and development

The scorecard dimension of *access and equity* examines equity in general numeric representation and in the achievement of historically underrepresented student groups.

The dimension of *campus climate* monitors how an institution's environment is perceived by students, faculty, and staff. *Diversity in the formal and informal curriculum* examines the integration of diversity into majors and minors in terms of course offerings, content of courses, and opportunities for students to engage in critical discussions about race and social justice. The *learning and development* dimension examines the civic engagement of students as well as the ability of groups to understand and appreciate differences and commonalities (Williams, et al., 2005).

According to Williams, et al. (2005), while the scorecard is necessary for assessment, inclusive excellence should not be viewed as a static or evaluative process. Rather, the goal of the model is to promote a progression of organizational change from symbolic surface-level change to deep and durable change. The scholars note that the integration of inclusive excellence into the core of the institution depends on the leadership of senior officials who are committed to establishing inclusive excellence as an institutional priority. Williams, et al. also call for broad based, measurable and sustainable organizational commitment. According to them, formalized and authoritative processes for capacity building and the leveraging of resources are essential in ensuring that the permanent structures and process are in place to sustain long term equity and excellence initiatives that advance the notion of "inclusive excellence" on university campuses (Williams, et al., 2005).

Implications for Conceptualizing Excellence in this Study

Like the literature on equity in higher education, the scholarship on excellence in higher education allows this study to distinguish between demands for excellence and other pressures that the flagship institution is subjected to. The constructs and definitions

of excellence provide an array of categories by which presses for excellence can be identified and gauged.

Conceptually, this study is in full agreement with Astin's (1985) claim that "the issue of equity versus excellence is really a matter of how we define excellence" (p. 198). For if excellence is defined in simplistic and narrow terms which place a premium on reputation and resources, excellence likely will be seen in competition or at the very least in tension with equity. Inclusive or talent development perspectives of excellence show greater promise for advancing equity and excellence as complementary ideals. Despite the appeal of the latter perspective, the fact remains that the dominant definitions of excellence are primarily based on the traditional views. Astin (1985) acknowledges this dilemma by noting:

Why is it that most people, when given a chance to think about the meaning of excellence in higher education, espouse a talent development view, even though they tend to rely on traditional reputational and resource conceptions when it comes to measuring institutional excellence. And, why are most of us inclined to accept the validity of the institutional hierarchy even when we know it is not necessarily based on the institution's relative effectiveness in developing talent (p. 64).

This study recognizes that the espoused view of excellence, which is more aptly captured in the inclusive excellence or talent development framework, is different from the view embedded in demands for excellence in higher education systems that are advanced by many, if not all, institutional stakeholders. This study also acknowledges that traditional indicators of excellence are not able to speak to the quality of the particular educational opportunities available to specific students. Therefore, while the constructs of value-added and inclusive excellence will be incorporated as measures by which departures from traditional conceptualizations can be identified and interpreted,

the dominant reputational and resources conceptualizations are used to make sense of how excellence may be constructed by mediating actors.

Having considered literature that provides a basis for defining equity and excellence demands and gauging the impact of institutional responses on the realization of those ideals, the study turns to scholarship that helps elucidate the process through which demands for equity and excellence are mediated. This attention shift is necessary because this study investigates not only the nature of the demands for equity and excellence but also the process which is employed to respond to these demands. Thus, the following review discusses how institutional context, structure, and agents interact in the process of strategic choice.

The Structure, Roles, and Choices of Institutions

The purpose of this section is to present the second stream of literature that anchors the proposed conceptual framework. This stream includes literature that blends theories of new institutionalism and resource dependency to form a model of strategic choice in university contexts. Since the literature on both new institutionalism and resource dependency is expansive, only concepts most directly related to understanding how contextual forces and human agents interact to develop institutional responses are presented. Even with this selective cut, some aspects of the constructs may or may not prove to be useful in addressing the research questions. However, this determination is an empirical question that will be answered through data collection and analysis. Thus, the following review presents some of the foundational underpinnings of new institutionalism and resource dependency because these theoretical traditions under-gird the model of strategic choice that grounds the process dimension of this study. Much of

the empirical research using these organizational lenses was conducted in the fields of business and management. As a result, some of the illustrative examples used in this study are drawn from those arenas. Where possible, examples from the K-12 and higher education literature are included.

The perspective of the new institutionalism in sociology focuses attention on how institutions maintain legitimacy through the replication of social processes and structures that are tied to deeply-embedded, socially-constructed cognitive scripts. The theory offers insight into the nature and sources of institutional pressures so as to explain whether pressures originate from legal imperatives, societal norms, or cultural expectations (Edelman, 1992; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). New institutionalism also indicates how broad institutional pressures can impact the actions and choices of organizations (Oliver, 1991) often by forcing them to conform to particular conceptions of organizational legitimacy.

A critique of new institutionalism is that while the theory holds great explanatory power for the structure and practices of institutions, it pays little attention to the capacity of institutional actors to affect institutional change (Jepperson, 1991; Bacharach, Masters, & Mundell, 1995). Resource dependency theory adds explanatory strength to this framework because it not only acknowledges the importance of the external environment to organizations, but also explains how people respond to the pressures and how they maneuver to give organizations competitive advantage. The theory addresses the underdeveloped role of agency and power in new institutionalism by contributing unique insight into how people, politics, and power shape the institution and environmental relationships. Thus, the combination of these two lenses holds particular strength in

explaining the nature of the institutional environment and how institutions develop strategic responses to multiple demands.

The concept of strategic choice as articulated by Oliver (1991) integrates resource dependency and new institutionalism in order to offer predictions of how institutions will respond to institutional pressures. A significant contribution of the framework is a typology of strategies for how institutions respond to pressures of varying scope and intensity. This framework is relevant because of its epistemological stance that views institutional responses to pressures as a deliberate action or choice, rather than the result of unconscious structural conformity (Oliver, 1991; Goodstein, 1994). It is also relevant because it has uncovered important aspects of the process through which institutional agents mediate the external demands placed on colleges and universities.

Organized into three parts, this section first lays out the key elements of both new institutionalism and resource dependency by defining the relationship between organizations and their environment and by characterizing the nature of external pressures. The second part moves beyond the general tenets of the theories and explains how institutional responses are rendered through strategic choices. This section also discusses how particular strategic choice decisions can impact the core or periphery of the institution. The final section presents an integrated model for examining how higher education institutions may mediate demands for equity and excellence through the strategic choices they make.

The Institution and Its Environment

“New institutionalism” is a departure from traditional organizational theories which cast institutions as rational systems operating to achieve technical efficiency

(Rowan & Miskel, 1999). Instead, institutional theorists posit that institutions are reflections of socially constructed reality whose internal structures, such as offices and rules of conduct, are maintained and legitimated by organizational myths (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As the forefathers of institutional theory, Meyer and Rowan (1977) provide the foundation of the theory by positing that organizational myths are characterized by two main properties that work jointly to maintain formal organizational structures. As seemingly rational and impersonal scripts, myths establish organizational functions and regulate how those functions are conducted. Myths also serve to institutionalize roles and routines by legitimizing those that are socially acceptable and by compelling rejection of those that are not. In developing their general ideas, Meyer and Rowan point to how the structures and processes of organizations are influenced by external demands. According to them:

many of the positions, policies, programs, and procedures of modern organizations are enforced by public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 343).

Thus, the policies and structures evident in organizations, including colleges and universities, give clues to what an organization and its most influential constituents hold as important and valued. The literature suggests that institutional core and periphery are dichotomous positions that reveal levels of alignment with institutional values, mission, and identity. The core of an institution reveals what is most valued by the institution; it embodies the defining characteristics of the institution's mission and identity. In contrast, categorization as the institutional periphery connotes less connection with central values, mission, and identity of the organization and more alignment with

marginalized aspects of the organization (Hackman, 1985; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Hence, references to the institutional periphery often imply that organizational actions may be token, symbolic actions that have little, if any, substantive impact on the priorities, policies, programs, and practices of an organization like the university.

Hackman's (1985) study of resource allocation in universities provides one of the few explicit gauges of core and peripheral structures in higher education. In the study, Hackman presents two indicators of power to classify organizational structures as core (called "central" in the study) or peripheral: environmental and institutional.

Environmental power is the ability of a unit to "bring in, to provide resources that are valued by the total organization" (p. 63). Therefore, units that were described as central to the institution were academic units that provided the institution with resources from student recruitment and retention, faculty recruitment and retention, and prestige.

Institutional power was defined as "relative influence within the institution independent of its environmental power" (p. 63). Factors that impacted institutional power included having a history of yielding power, length of time at the institution, and having visibility within and without the institution. Thus, units that were central to the mission of the institution were likewise considered part of its operating core (Hackman, 1985). In contrast, peripheral structures and processes within an institution refer to non-central structures, processes, and actions (Hackman, 1985). Administrative and support offices were identified as peripheral units in the study because relative to academic departments, they lacked environmental and institutional power.

Ashar and Shapiro (1988) expand on Hackman's definition of centrality by arguing that indicators of centrality should likewise include measures of a unit's

connection with the workflow of the organization. According to them, “critical resources are those that are important and needed by the organization. Whether a unit contributes to the organization as a whole or to its units, only when its contributions are critical can one speak of the unit as being central” (Ashar & Shapiro, 1988 p. 278). Both Hackman and Ashar and Shapiro found that a unit’s centrality was considered key by administrators as they made budget cut decisions. Departments that were considered as more central to the institution fared better in times of budget cuts. Consequently, distinguishing between what is core and peripheral in the organizational structure exemplifies what values the institution perceives as essential and what values are dispensable.

Nevertheless, attributing the form and structure of an institution to internal actors and interests is only partially accurate. Therefore, organizational theorists provide further explanation on how organizational structures are composed and maintained as institutions interact with and respond to environmental pressures.

The Institutional Environment as a Source of Pressure

Scott’s (2001) identification of “three pillars” of organizational pressures provides a broad-based perspective of how institutional forms emerge and are sustained.

According to Scott (2001), institutions, as social structures, are made up of cognitive, normative, and regulative elements, “that together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (p. 48). The cognitive or cultural element includes taken-for-granted beliefs that induce organizational compliance, through common understandings and the establishment of social identities. The normative element, which includes values and norms, affects organizations by defining

privileges, roles, and social obligations. The regulative element, which includes law, rules and sanctions, exerts influence on organizations through legally sanctioned rewards or punishments (Scott, 2001). While these three pillars operate on varying levels of analysis, the level that is most relevant to institutional theory is that of the organizational field (Scott, 2001). This context, also known as the institutional environment, or sector, is one of the key sources of pressure for particular institutions like universities.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe the institutional field as “organizations that, in aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services and products” (p. 143). Members of an institutional field are bound together through their similar services and products, as well as their shared risks, dependencies, core values, and functions. Thus, the institutional field defines how the actions and structures of a population of similar institutions are constrained and shaped through norms and rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The close interactions and relationships among members of the institutional field make it one of the most immediate and powerful sources of societal pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Scott (2001) notes that while the concept of an institutional field or sector typically points to the industry or focus population, institutional fields also include, “those other and different organizations that critically influence their performance, including exchange partners, competitors, funding sources, and regulators” (p. 83).

In the context of higher education, scholars frequently have noted that the system is influenced by multiple external constituencies such as the federal, state and local government, the courts, and segments of the broader public. Statutory law and court

cases dictate to higher education the parameters for remedying past discrimination; federal and state governments monitor the fulfillment of institutional missions; and external ratings, through accreditation boards and professional associations, normatively challenge institutions with benchmarks for preferred practices and outcomes. Pressure is also extended from the splintered “general” publics who push for a varied assortment of issues that are oftentimes in direct conflict with each other.

While the institutional field is structured and maintained through regulative, normative, and cultural cognitive pillars, the concept of legitimacy serves as the “glue” which holds this proximate environment together and the driving force behind institutional pressures. A central argument of institutional theorists is that “organizational success depends on factors other than efficient coordination and control of productive activities” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 352). They alternatively posit that organizational success is predicated on the ability of an institution to “incorporate socially legitimated rationalized elements in their formal structures” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 352). Thus, institutions can gain legitimacy through displays of conformity, alignment, and support of social norms and rules (Scott, 2001).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) further explicate how the proximate institutional field exerts pressure on an institution by identifying three mechanisms through which pressures for legitimacy are transmitted: coercive, mimetic, and normative. They argue that the press for conformity leads to a process called isomorphism, where institutions in a field begin to look more homogenous (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Coercive isomorphism results from pressures on organizations by other higher-level organizations that have the capability of exerting legal or hierarchical authority over them or by

pressures associated with cultural expectations. Edelman (1992) explains coercive isomorphism by arguing that laws create a legal environment made up of public expectations and societal norms that exert pressure on organizations to conform to those norms and expectations.

Mimetic isomorphism, on the other hand, is the response of an organization to uncertainty or ambiguity. In this mechanism, organizations draw from the socially appropriate and recognizable scripts of the cultural-cognitive pillars in order to achieve stability and order. In so doing, these institutions mimic other similar institutions, which are deemed to be successful or legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This mimetic isomorphism has been used to explain the homogenization of higher education institutions. Coined “institutional or academic drift” this form of isomorphism is defined as the tendency of higher education institutions to change “toward the structure and norms typical of more prestigious universities” (Morphew & Huisman, 2002, p. 1). Examples of this type of change include four-year colleges adding master’s degrees, comprehensive universities adding doctoral programs, and community colleges offering bachelor degrees (Morphew & Huisman, 2002; Aldersley, 1995).

Normative isomorphism is linked to pressures stemming from standards that have been normalized and made typical through a process of professionalization. In this process, standards are established and replicated through the rise of university and formal training and through the growth of professional networks within a field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Therefore, “to the extent that managers and key staff are drawn from the same universities and filtered on a common set of attributes, they will see the same policies, procedures and structures as normatively sanctioned and legitimated, and

approach decisions in much the same way” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 153). The development of networks within the field reinforces common understanding and standards, establishes status hierarchies and designates institutions that are central to the field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As examples of this mechanism of control, DiMaggio and Powell point to the influence held by professional and trade associations, as well as the wide-spread acceptance of common career paths, titles, and (their associated meanings) for many professional positions, such as the professoriate.

While the characteristics of coercive, mimetic and normative pressure can be seen as distinctive pressures, how they impact organizational processes and actions is very much interrelated. This interconnected relationship is seen in Walpole’s (2000) study on the merger of a library science school and a school of education. Walpole concluded that the primary impetus for the merger was coercive pressure felt by the library science faculty. Following the formal merger, these faculty faced additional coercive pressures as they struggled to secure resources and to maintain governance and autonomy. As the smaller of the two programs, the library science faculty felt normative pressure to retain connections with and upkeep standards for the wider discipline even while they attempted to craft a new identity with the school of education. Unsure of how to proceed, faculty mimicked the actions of other programs in order to shape their new identity (Walpole, 2000).

Scott’s three pillars (2001) and DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) concept of isomorphism can help explain how organizational structures and logics of action are socially constructed and defined and how external pressures are channeled. In so doing,

they provide this study with two distinctive, but interrelated, typologies by which the sources and types of institutional demands can be identified and characterized.

While understanding this environmental context is critical to gaining clarity on how institutions respond to multiple pressures, it is equally important that the process of human agency in mediating external pressures be explored and unpacked. For according to Scott (2001), “between the context and the response is the interpreting actor” (p. 76). Thus, the following section examines the role of agents in mediating between the environment and the institution.

The University Context and the Role of Mediating Agents

An underlying assumption of institutional theory and resource dependency theory is that institutions operate as open systems that reflect internal dynamics. According to Cameron and Tschirhart (1992), the two central variables between organizations and their external environments are management strategies and decision processes. They note that management strategies refer to the broad pattern of decisions and activities that organizational actors employ when faced with environmental demands, constraints, and opportunities. In contrast, the decision-making process directs attention to the internal—closed system by which managers analyze and manage choices (Cameron & Tschirhart, 1992). The critical role of human agents as they mediate between the external and internal environment is consistent across both of these processes.

Higher education scholars have long pursued scholarship which seeks to explain how decisions are made and how internal pressures are mediated by institutional leaders (e.g. Baldrige, 1971; Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Birnbaum, 1988; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Cohen & March, 1974). Based on these and other seminal

works, a portrait of the dominant characteristics of higher education institutions and their decision making processes has emerged.

These works suggest that decision-making in higher education is constrained by complex structures, unclear technologies, ambiguous goals, and the political bargaining of multiple constituencies (Baldrige, 1971; March, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 1997). In this setting, decisions are made based on uncertainty, conflict, and loose coupling (Birnbaum, Cohen & March, 1974; Weick, 1976). Higher education institutions have enduring cultures which are promoted through institutional symbols, sagas, and myths (Berquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Core institutional values are displayed in the mission of the institution and the direction of its leadership (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Successful academic leaders are adept at filling multiple roles including roles as “chief administrative officer, as colleague, as symbol, and as public official” (Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum, 1989; p. 72). Milliken (1990), quoting Daft and Weick (1984), notes that the tasks of managers are to scan the environment, analyze, and interpret the information collected during scanning and take action based on those interpretations. This active role supports the notion that institutional agents play important roles in responding to and managing organizational demands and processes.

While the broad tasks outlined above may seem straightforward, the actual process by which actors mediate internal and external pressures is fraught with inconsistencies and the interplay of political dynamics. Bacharach, et al. (1995) argue that forces within an institution are divided into groups, “entrenched interests with a stake in the ‘status quo’ ... and ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ who stand to gain from its replacement or modification” (p. 106). Based on this logic, the role of actors in

mediating between the institution and environment is displayed in two distinctive types of actions, namely preserving and transmitting institutional values, and promoting institutional adaptability and change.

Preserving and Transmitting Values. As mentioned earlier, the process of institutionalization refers to the structure and process of norming and transmitting values and standards that become taken for granted beliefs about what the organization may and must do (Scott, 2001). In this process, human agents take on active roles in the interpretation and transmittal of institutional values, norms and culture (Scott, 2001; Zucker, 1991). According to Scott, “rules, norms, and meanings arise in interaction, and they are preserved and modified by human behavior” (p. 49). Thus, individual actors reproduce the social structure of the organization as they perform the functions and responsibilities of their position (Scott, 2001). Zucker (1991) argues that institutionalization is particularly high for actors who occupy specific offices or roles. She reasons that regardless of the occupying person, actions taken by a particular office or position are viewed as rational, impersonal, and enduring (Zucker, 1991). She further concludes that highly institutionalized environments, such as offices, restrict institutional changes which conflict with organizational norms that are already well-established.

Besides preserving and transmitting institutional values as a function of their positions, mediating agents may engage in “Buffering” (Bacharach, Masters & Mundell, 1995; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981). Meyer, et al. (1981) note that organizational buffering has multiple definitions which fall along a continuum of management and strategic actions. Despite a wide span of possible uses from simple management devices to the more complex operations of concealment activities, the

fundamental goal of buffering activities is to protect the institutional core from outside forces or from internal conflict (Meyer, et al., 1981). Examples of two of the most widely cited buffering activities include the process of simplifying information that the organization receives (March, 1994; Honig & Hatch, 2004) and the process of creating institutional symbols and structures to manage demands (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

In the process of simplification, institutional actors focus the attention of the organization on particular problems as one of the first steps in developing the best course of action (Honig & Hatch, 2004). This system enables organizations to strategically manage and use environmental pressures for their benefit without being overwhelmed by the complexity of multiple demands (Honig & Hatch, 2004). In the simplification process, institutional constraints such as prescribed rules and roles assist organizational actors in reducing alternatives and deconstructing large tasks and decisions into smaller, less complex actions (March, 1994). The simplification process also enables organizations to work within the “known” realm by assisting them in recognizing patterns in how problems are resolved or generated and by framing the problem in familiar, narrowly focused, and manageable terms (March, 1994). For example, Sutcliffe and McNamara (2001) in their study of decision-making practices in banks found that for critical decisions, actors were more likely to revert back to using familiar and prescribed decision-making formulas which were based on institutionalized cultures and values, than to use newly introduced innovations.

Bolman and Deal (1997) explain that an organization’s character is revealed and communicated through symbols. Institutional rituals, myths, and ceremonies are used to provide explanation, direction, and interpretation of institutional values (Bolman & Deal,

1997). In addition, scholars have identified the adoption of symbolic policies and structures as another way that actors buffer institutions from pressures. Symbolic action can be manifested in institutional rhetoric, such as name changes, or the language actors emphasize or organizational images that actors project (Westphal & Zajac, 1998). Such action also can be seen in the creation of peripheral units and subunits in organizations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Hackman, 1985). Through the use of symbolic action, actors can appease external actors that may be pressuring for core changes.

Symbolic action also is used to deflect attention from areas of non-compliance. For example, in their study on reforms in corporate governance, Westphal and Zajac (1998) found that firms adopted measures that were highly favored by investors without implementing substantive governance reform. These symbolic actions satisfied the demands of shareholders and helped the firms avoid legally mandated reforms, which would have drastically impacted the way that they did business.

The use of symbolism to buffer against pressure is also seen in the educational arena. For example, Airasian's (1988) study of state-mandated testing in K-12 education revealed how state-wide testing programs were adopted with little empirical evidence of their effectiveness or legitimacy. Adopting state-mandated testing allowed legislatures to assure the public that something was being done about the nationwide problem in American public schools. State-mandated testing was meant to symbolize "order and control, a focus on important educational outcomes and basic, traditional moral values" (Airasian, 1988, p. 311). Thus, while these tests enjoyed widespread public support, the root problem of under-performing schools and declining standards was left untouched (Airasian, 1988). Other studies reveal how education systems may adopt prominent

educational innovation for their symbolic value (see for example, Ogawa, et al.,1992; Malen, 1994)

Promoting Adaptability and Change. The above discussion delineates how the structure of institutions, as well as the institutionalization process can limit substantive organizational change. However, the reality is that institutions can and do transform both their structure and mission. Organizational agents acting in the capacity of policy entrepreneurs and boundary spanners play critical roles in this process. Policy entrepreneurs can use “policy windows” to draw organizational attention to specific problems and possible solutions and to secure major policy shifts (Kingdon, 2003).

The role of policy entrepreneurs, is exemplified in Brint & Karabel’s (1991) study on the transformation of community colleges. Findings of this study showed that despite a developed institutional identity and culture, a small group of professional elites set out to “solve” the “image problem” of the early community colleges. The solution advanced by the entrepreneurs required that community colleges move away from their role and mission as liberal arts transfer programs to roles as specialized vocational institutions. Years later, when a decline in the labor market opened up a policy window, policy entrepreneurs successfully and strategically pushed for change (Brint & Karabel, 1991). Another example is found in Chaves’ (1996) study on the diffusion of women’s ordination. In that study, Chaves found that early adopters of the movement to ordain women as ministers of churches were impacted by the activities of a small group of ministry elites, who were acting as policy entrepreneurs. Despite a long-standing history of men only ordination, this group consistently pushed for women’s ordination, until their timing and efforts produced change in some religious denominations.

Policy entrepreneurs must be adept at using symbolism to initiate and influence change. Based on their study of a university's strategic change process, Gioia, Thomas, Clark, and Chittipeddi (1994) concluded:

Symbolism is usually cast only as a medium of expression, thus suggesting that the symbolic aspects of management have little to do with instrumental action. This study has revealed not only the pervasiveness of symbolism in the initiation and acceptance of strategic change, but also that symbols are one of the main means, by which management accomplishes substantive action (p. 378).

Further, the leveraging of symbols by the policy entrepreneur during the process of institutional change may be used to buffer or stabilize the institution against any instability, conflict, and uncertainty that could stop or derail a course of action. By effectively using symbols, mediating agents could "reveal and conceal important features of change" Gioia, et al., (1994).

Another role of mediating agents in the process of institutional change is their ability to serve as boundary spanners in advancing an innovation. Typically, boundary spanners are members of the university's operating core that have the ability to negotiate between internal and external constituencies (Mintzberg, 1979). According to Mintzberg, the "professional administrator--especially those at the higher level--serve key roles at the boundary of the organization, between the professionals inside and interested parties--governments, client associations, and so on--on the outside" (p. 63). Fluidity of movement and role allow boundary spanners access to new innovations and ideas which be imported to the institution.

While the notion of mediating agents, including policy entrepreneurs provides us with the "who" of strategic choice processes, policy networks enable us to understand the "how" of that process. Mintrom and Vergari's (1998) study on policy networks and

diffusion identifies policy networks as a “vital resource” of influence for entrepreneurial agents as they mediate between the internal and external environment to promote and diffuse innovation or to minimize instability and uncertainty.

In summary, it is clear that the roles of mediating agents are complex expressions of how institutions interact with external and internal environments. To ensure the success and survival of the institution, mediating agents must, among other things, be adept at: maintaining organizational stability; using symbols to “reveal and conceal”; using social networks for innovation and legitimacy; and managing the press of multiple constituents. The following section explores this mediation process by outlining how institutions make strategic choices in response to external pressure.

Strategic Choice

The concept of strategic choice, as elaborated by Oliver (1991), reflects an iteration of decision-making that recognizes the complexity of the decisional process and the impact of multiple pressures on the process. This acknowledgement is a clear departure from the theoretical origins of decision-making which first portrayed the process as the result of a rational procedure based on formal, systematic, and evaluative methods (March, 1994). Instead, Oliver’s (1991) framework of strategic choice draws from the literature on resource dependency theory and new institutionalism to identify five types of strategies that can be implemented by institutions in response to institutional pressures.

The framework recognizes that while institutions can actively choose a particular response strategy, they are bound by internal and external factors that can impact the choice process. Implicit in Oliver’s typology of strategic action are clues that illuminate

the likely effects of these decisions on an institution's structure and policies. However, Oliver (1991) falls short of characterizing whether the institutions core or periphery will be impacted by a particular strategic choice. Therefore, the framework used in this study adds to Oliver's work by explicitly characterizing the outcome tendencies of: no change, peripheral change or core change (see Table 1.). Adding the element of decisional outcomes to the framework provides evaluative power for assessing how strategic choices can impact the core or periphery of an institution.

Table 1. Strategic Responses and Institutional Outcomes

Strategies	Tactics	Institutional Outcomes
Acquiesce	Habit Imitate Comply	No Change Peripheral Change Core or Peripheral Change
Compromise	Balance Pacify Bargain	Peripheral Change Peripheral Change Peripheral Change
Avoid	Conceal Buffer Escape	Peripheral Change Peripheral or No Change No Change
Defy	Dismiss Challenge Attack	No Change No Change No Change
Manipulate	Co-opt Influence Control	No Change No Change No Change

* Adapted Oliver, 1991

As Table 1 shows, Oliver (1991) articulates five strategies that represent the range of active organizational responses to external demands: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation. Oliver further refines the strategies by noting the range of tactics or alternative forms that may be assumed in implementation. The column

of institutional outcomes (added here for this study) shows the likely affect of the strategic choice decision on the organizational structure.

Acquiescence. The first strategy of *acquiescence* acknowledges that while institutions are likely to accede to external demands, their response may take forms related to habit, imitation, or compliance. Accordingly, each of these tactics is likely to produce different institutional outcomes when adopted by an organization.

The tactic of habit suggests that institutions may respond to environmental pressures by blindly following institutional scripts which have become automatic or are taken for granted. Oliver (1991) notes that in choosing this tactic, the institution “may be unaware of institutional influences and, accordingly, [be] precluded from responding to them strategically” (p. 152). By simply reproducing what has already become part of the institutional core, it is unlikely that any new change to core or peripheral structures and routines will be identified.

Responses under acquiescence also include mimicry of successful models as suggested by DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) concept of isomorphism. Under this strategy, institutions symbolically adopt socially legitimated structures and routines to stabilize the institution and to reduce uncertainty. Thus, the organization is limited to peripheral changes.

Of all the acquiescence strategies, the tactic of compliance holds the most promise for resulting in core changes to an institution’s structure. Oliver (1991) defines compliance as “conscious obedience to or incorporation of values, norms, or institutional requirements” (p. 152). Oliver offers Meyer, Scott and Strang’s (1987) study of American school districts as an example of this type of structural conformity. The

authors found that the structural complexity in school districts developed primarily as a response to similar structures of complexity that were taken for granted in the institutional environment.

Compromise. Oliver (1991) notes that the strategy of *compromise* is most likely to be adopted if an institution is faced with conflicting demands. The three tactics associated with this strategy are balance, pacify, and bargain. Here, organizations may attempt to equalize the pressures or they may negotiate or attempt to accommodate multiple constituent demands through compromise or partial conformity. Organizations using this strategy will likely only implement what is minimally necessary to be seen as accommodating institutional rules and norms. This partial compliance suggests that while peripheral changes may be observed, core values generally will be left intact.

Avoidance. Under the strategy of *avoidance*, nonconformity is concealed or hidden behind symbolic facades of compliance. While these facades are meant to convey acquiescence, Oliver (1991) notes that in actuality they may be “window dressings”, ceremonial rituals, or pretenses that are meant to suggest acceptance or compliance. Therefore, while an institution may implement change under this tactic, the likely impact on the institution would be peripheral. The strategy of avoidance can result in peripheral or no structural change if the tactics of buffering and escape are used. Using these tactics, institutions may decouple core activities from the influence of the pressure or dramatically change or move activities from under the direct rule of the pressure.

Defiance and Manipulation. Through *defiance*, institutions actively resist institutional pressures by dismissing or challenging institutional rules or by attacking the legitimacy of the demands. The most active form of strategic choice is to *manipulate*

outside pressures by actively and purposively attempting to co-opt, influence, or control the institutional pressures (Oliver, 1991). No structural changes would be observed if an institution adopts these two most active forms of strategic responses

Factors that Impact Strategic Choice

Oliver (1991) acknowledges that the adoption of particular strategic responses is largely dependent on the nature of institutional pressures and the relationship that an organization has with the source of those pressures. Accordingly, she isolates five factors that impact the type of strategy that an institution would employ. These factors are: cause, constituents, content, control, and context (see Table 2).

Table 2. Institutional Antecedents and Predicted Strategic Responses

Predictive Factors	Strategic Responses				
	<i>Acquiesce</i>	<i>Compromise</i>	<i>Avoid</i>	<i>Defy</i>	<i>Manipulate</i>
<i>Cause</i>					
Legitimacy	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
Efficiency	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
<i>Constituents</i>					
Multiplicity	Low	High	High	High	High
Dependence	High	High	Moderate	Low	Low
<i>Content</i>					
Consistency	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
Constraint	Low	Moderate	High	High	High
<i>Control</i>					
Coercion	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
Diffusion	High	High	Moderate	Low	Low
<i>Context</i>					
Uncertainty	High	High	High	Low	Low
Interconnectedness	High	High	Moderate	Low	Low

*Oliver (1991) p. 160.

Cause. The predictive factor of *cause* refers to primary expectations or rationales that are aligned with the pressures. Oliver (1991) argues that organizations will comply with demands that are viewed as likely to improve legitimacy or economic position. On

the other hand, demands that are perceived to yield little legitimacy or no economic gain will motivate organizations to engage in non-compliance strategies such as compromise, avoidance, defiance or manipulation (Oliver, 1991).

Constituents. The nature and scope of organizational *constituents* is another important consideration for decision-making. While institutions are impacted by their external environments, they are neither willing nor able to respond to all external demands (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Thus, multiple competing actors prevent automatic compliance with the demands of any one actor (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003) and encourage institutions to use resistance and avoidance strategies (Oliver, 1991). How one institution responds to another is based on their interaction through “arenas of power relationships” (Brint & Karabel, 1991) or coalitions (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Since the relationship of coalition members is tied to the access and control of resources, not all members of the coalition will be equally valued or retain the same degree of power. The most influential members of the coalitions are the members who provide the most valued resources when alternative sources of valued resources are limited or unavailable (Bowman & Deal, 1993). Based on this logic, highly influential external actors, on which the institution is heavily dependent, are most likely to generate institutional compliance, be it in the form of acquiescence or compromise (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, Oliver, 1991).

Content. *Content* of the pressure refers to the extent that the demands are consistent with the goals and mission of the institution. The mission or values that coalition members most identify with will determine both their expectation for organizational performance and their criteria for evaluation. However, demands which the institution views to be in conflict with its own institutional goals or values, such as

institutional autonomy, are most likely to be defied and resisted. In support of this proposition, Oliver points to Covalleski and Dirsmith's (1988) study on budget allocation at a university. The main findings of the study attributed the demise of the university's newly implemented and externally driven budget process to a lack of congruence between the budget process and the institution's values.

Control. *Control* refers to how the pressures are imposed on the organization, whether the pressures are legally sanctioned or voluntarily diffused. Oliver (1991) argues that a high degree of legal pressure through laws and policies that are strictly enforced are likely to yield institutional acquiescence. However, institutions may attempt to compromise over the time and scope of compliance (Oliver, 1991). This notion is supported by Edelman's (1992), study of civil rights laws, which found that the structural processes adopted by institutions as a response to coercive and regulative pressures to implement equal opportunity and affirmative action processes, were only symbolically adopted. In contrast, early adopters elaborated substantive and core institutional changes.

Oliver (1991) argues that institutions are likely to comply with pressures if the norms and expectations are highly diffused within the field. This assertion is supported by Tolbert and Zucker's (1983) study of civil service reforms. They found that institutions were likely to adopt innovation that was widely diffused and which had accumulated a high degree of social legitimacy. This trend has been noted in higher education where merit based financial aid policies became quickly diffused nationwide after being successfully adopted in several states (Cunningham & Parker, 1999).

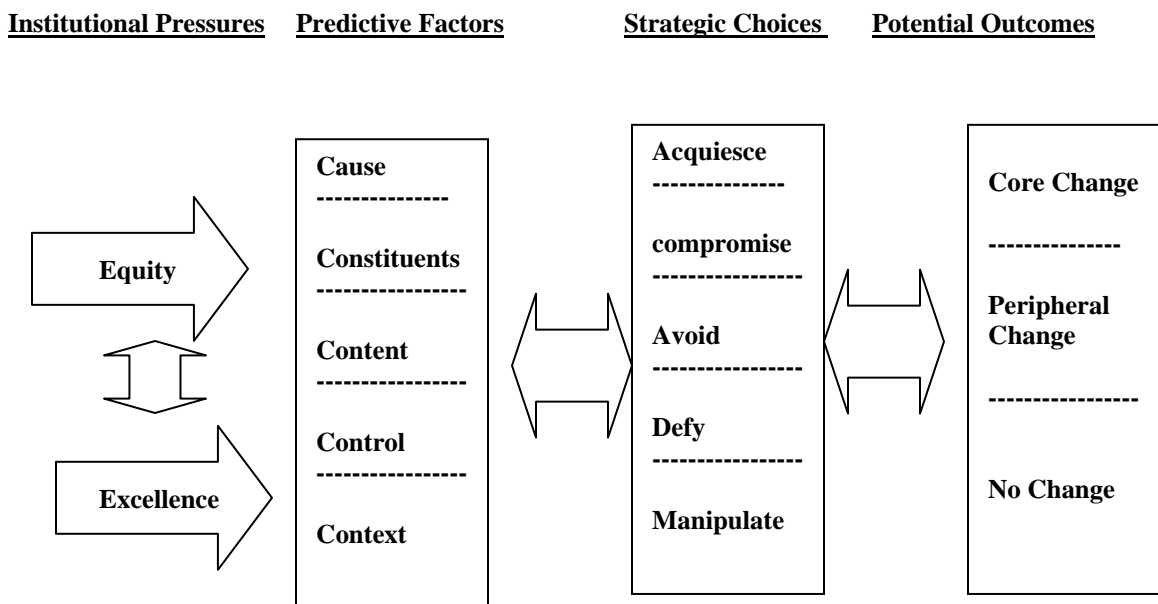
Environmental Context. The last condition that impacts strategic choice is *environmental context*. This condition is defined by the degree of environmental

uncertainty and interconnectedness that an institution is bound by. Oliver (1991) reiterates the position of institutional theorists who argue that in times of instability organizations are likely to comply with external pressures in order to promote stability and certainty. Likewise, environments that are highly connected and structured facilitate the diffusion of norms and values and make conformity to institutional pressures more likely to occur (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Oliver, 1991).

Application of Strategic Choice to this Study

The conceptual framework for this study suggests that institutions of higher education may follow particular tendencies when managing the multiple pressures of equity and excellence. The framework additionally accounts for antecedent factors that shape strategic responses to external demands. This study used Oliver (1991)'s typology and the factors that are isolated as impacting responses (see Figure 1.) to guide data collection and analysis.

Figure 1. Mediating Equity and Excellence with Strategic Choice



Sources: Asher & Shapiro (1988), Hackman (1985), Oliver (1991), Pfeffer & Salancik, (2003).

Figure 1 serves as an interpretive device to map the process of strategic choice. This figure traces what demands are recognized by showing that a flagship institution will be impacted by its environmental context which consists of multiple competing actors, with varying agendas and interests. The pressures for equity and excellence are identified as two of many issues that must be mediated by institutional agents. The illustration directs attention to what predictive factors or other forces may be involved in shaping institutional responses and whether the strategic choices that Oliver (1991) highlights will hold in the context of higher education. The figure also guides the assessment of the impact of strategic choice combinations on institutional outcomes.

Chapter Summary

The two components of the conceptual framework provide guidance in understanding how a flagship institution responds to pressures for equity and excellence. The characteristics and definitions of equity and excellence serve to distinguish these pressures from other institutional demands. Broad characterizations of how organizations interact and are structured give clues to how and why various types of external pressures may require different organizational action. Typologies of institutional responses suggest that agents may strategically choose to respond to external demands. The process of strategic choice is predicted by the nature of the institutional pressure and the relationship (e.g. degree of dependence) that the organization has with the source of the demands. When the streams are combined, the framework serves as an analytic device by which institutional responses to pressures for equity and excellence can be detected, categorized and understood.

Accordingly, the literature and conceptual framework of this study suggest the following main research questions and their respective sub-questions:

1. What are the sources and types of demands for racial equity and institutional excellence recognized by this institution between 1988, when it was designated a “flagship” university and the present (2006)?
 - a. What is the perceived intensity or strength of these demands?
 - b. Are demands for equity and excellence viewed as complementary or competing?
 - c. What is the perceived relationship between the demands of racial equity and institutional excellence and the university’s stated mission?
2. What strategies did institutional agents employ to mediate these demands?
3. What impact did these strategies have on dimensions of institutional equity and excellence?
 - a. What dimensions of equity and excellence were affected by institutional responses?
 - b. Did the actions of campus agents serve to preserve or change institutional structures and policies?
 - c. If changes occurred, were changes to the core or periphery of the institution?
 - d. How did the changes affect the realization of equity and excellence values?

4. What are the implications of this study for prominent theories that seek to explain how institutions of higher education interact with their environment?

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This study sought to understand how a public flagship institution responds to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education. In particular the study sought to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the sources and types of demands for equity and excellence recognized by this institution between 1988, when it was designated a “flagship” university and the present (2006)?
2. What strategies did institutional agents employ to mediate these demands?
3. What impact did these strategies have on dimensions of racial equity and institutional excellence?
4. What are the implications of this study for prominent theories that seek to explain how institutions of higher education interact with their environment?

Given its purpose and scope, this study used an exploratory, qualitative case study design. This chapter justifies that choice, then discusses data collection and analysis procedures, validity checks and ethical considerations.

Case Study Justification

The cornerstone of every well-designed research study is a significant researchable question that is appropriately matched with its methodological complement (Yin, 1994). Therefore, the objective of this section is to make explicit the match between the research focus of this study and the selection of the exploratory, qualitative case study method.

Creswell (1994) observes that qualitative study “is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 1-2). The strength and richness of the qualitative tradition is found in its ability to offer researchers a way to “appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of the case, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts” (Stake, 1995, p.16). The purpose of this study is to gain this level of understanding of the case and its context. Thus, qualitative methods, and in particular an exploratory case study design is an appropriate match.

A primary strength of the case study method is found in the descriptive and heuristic characteristics of this approach to research (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam, the descriptive aspect of case study is its ability to generate rich, thick and detailed accounts of a case. The heuristic characteristic promotes understanding and explanation. Together, these characteristics allow the researcher to generate a “complete” case that has clearly defined boundaries showing “the distinction between the phenomenon being studied and its context” (Yin, 1994, p. 148). The product of case studies is “a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon...[that] offers insights and illuminates meanings....(Merriam, 1998, p.41)

Despite these apparent strengths, case study research has faced criticism on a number of fronts. Some of the main criticisms of the methodology have pointed to a lack of rigor, its potential for generating massive amounts of unmanageable data, and the belief that findings are not generalizable. While these criticisms must be addressed and taken seriously, they are in no way inherent flaws of the methodology.

The proliferation of what are perceived to be “case studies” in academic disciplines and in professional work has had the unintended consequence of distorting the methodology (Merriam, 1998). Thus, research which does not exemplify the defining characteristics of the method gets labeled as a case study. However, the existence of weak or mis-named case studies does not mean that the method is fatally flawed—only that it has been unskillfully displayed. The integrity and rigor of case study methods can be maintained when the method is treated as a systematic research strategy that makes clear the logic of the design and the approaches to data collection and analysis (Yin, 1994). The design directs attention to the relationship between the research questions, the data, the analysis, and the interpretation. Hence, case studies with a well-developed research design are not only rigorous, but manageable.

The criticism concerning the lack of generalizability of case study findings is actually an overstatement of one of the methodology’s limitations. While case study findings cannot be generalized to a population or setting, the methodology does support analytical generalization. According to Yin (1994), analytical generalization is the method of generalizing the findings of the case back to a developed theory rather than to other cases. In this manner, existing theories may be expanded, challenged, supported, or refuted.

Case Selection Rationale

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) was selected as the case for this study for several reasons. First, the University’s relatively recent (1988) designation as the State’s flagship institution offered the researcher an opportunity to investigate responses to racial equity and institutional excellence demands that were still “fresh” in

the institutional memory. Bounding the case to the years 1988 through 2006, captured many of the University's first responses to racial equity and institutional excellence demands in its official role as flagship and allowed the researcher to assess the subsequent impact of those responses on the status of campus racial equity and institutional excellence.

Second, a preliminary analysis confirmed that UMD was aware of and responsive to pressures for equity and excellence. A cursory review of the history of UMD between 1988 and 2006 revealed watershed events from which the institution's strategic choices with respect to racial equity and institutional excellence demands could be explored. For example, in 1995 the University was sued for offering race-based scholarships; in 1999 the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), began monitoring the educational opportunities for African-Americans in the State of Maryland's public institutions of higher education, including, UMD; and, in 2001, the University approved a new mission statement that focused on increasing excellence and achievement. A recently released directory of diversity related initiatives quotes the current University president, Dr. C. D. Mote, as saying: "At the University of Maryland, we have made the diversity of our campus fundamental to our pursuit of excellence. We are proud of our nationally recognized record of achievements, but we also know that the effort to build a truly inclusive community is never-ending..." (University of Maryland, College Park, 2005). The precursory data analysis confirmed that UMD had faced critical decisions based on demands for equity and excellence. As such, UMD was an appropriate site to explore institutional responses to pressures for equity and excellence.

Lastly, the site of the University of Maryland, College Park provided the researcher with access to data and informants. As a student at UMD, the researcher entered the study with background knowledge of the case. This knowledge extended to the location of archival records, and to the identity of key administrators and offices on campus. The researcher's short-term participation as a research assistant in the UMD Higher Education Lumina Project during the fall semester of 2005 provided additional insight into key institutional actors and offices. Over the course of several months, the researcher was involved in preparation and/or completion of campus site visits for the purpose of exploring equity and diversity at three southern public flagship institutions, one of which was the University of Maryland, College Park. As a volunteer project assistant, the researcher gained a broad perspective of the campus climate for diversity at UMD, access to the study data, and opportunity to identify and/or be introduced to some of this study's proposed informants.

Data Collection and Sources

According to Merriam (1998), "understanding the case in its totality, as well as intensive, holistic description and analysis characteristic of a case study, mandates both breadth and depth of data collection" (p. 134). Thus, data collection for this study focused on multiple sources of evidence including primary and secondary documents and original interviews.

Primary Documents

The value of using documents in qualitative data collection is found in the capacity of documents to "furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track, change and

development...” (Merriam 1998, p. 126). In recognition of this value, this study used a wide array of current and archival documents as primary and secondary document sources. Given the volume of documents associated with the study, document summary forms, as advised by Miles and Huberman (1994) were used to facilitate the management of collected materials. The researcher tracked and maintained organization of relevant materials by a writing brief summary of the main points of a document and its significance for the study. A sample form is attached as Appendix A.

Official University documents were used extensively to develop an understanding of the University’s history, context, mission, and expressed values; characteristics of racial equity and institutional excellence; and University responses to dimensions of racial equity and institutional excellence. These documents included University mission statements, transcripts of presidential speeches and state of the campus addresses, University reports on issues related to racial equity and institutional excellence, strategic planning documents, and University press releases. Less-public documents such as internal memos, minutes, and agendas from meetings of key informants were used to construct the identity and nature of the pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. Relevant reports provided information about the racial representation, experiences, and outcomes of students and faculty at the University. Documents were obtained from the University archives, via the UMD and University System of Maryland website or from the collection of individual faculty and staff.

Secondary Documents

Secondary source data included books, research articles, newspaper articles (campus, local, and national) and external ratings of the University. These sources were

utilized to construct the context as well as to glean insight into the campus climate and culture for racial equity and institutional excellence. Analysis of these documents was used to identify critical campus events or periods that were directly relevant to the institution's response to equity and excellence pressures between 1988- 2006.

Interviews

Researchers concur that interviews are often essential for case studies of organizational processes. This researcher accepts that view. While the documents identified produced rich data on the context of the case and provided evidence regarding how equity and excellence are valued on the campus, the interviews helped unpack the *process* of mediating and responding to the external pressures.

This study used semi-structured interviews of informants whose roles and functions at the University would distinguish them as campus mediating agents. In general, mediating agents would have the capacity to make or to influence decisions in response to pressures from multiple constituents. Mediating agents should have deep knowledge about the University's history, mission, and strategic plans as they pertain to issues of equity and excellence. Given these criteria, the framework directed attention to high-level administrators and deans of University colleges and schools. In addition to these informants, the researcher used network and snowball sampling (Merriam, 1998) to identify other actors (e.g. faculty and mid-level staff) who are influential in or knowledgeable about how the institution responds to issues of equity and excellence. Participants were asked for recommendations of other informants at the conclusion of each interview.

Electronic mail invitations were sent to potential informants. These emails introduced them to the study and asked them to participate. The researcher followed-up this initial contact with direct phone calls and, in some cases, a second round of e-mail. This method generated fifteen scheduled interviews. Four more informants were identified from snow ball and network sampling. These additions brought the total number of informants interviewed to nineteen. Informants included: seven deans, one associate dean, six senior level administrators, and five mid-level staff and faculty. Five interviewees were African American and fourteen were Caucasian.

The Interview Instrument and Process

The study's interview protocol (Appendix E) was finalized based on the literature, a document chronology of watershed institutional events from 1988-2006, and guidance from members of the dissertation committee. The final interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions and more specific probes drawn from key campus events and strategic decisions.

Following the recommendations of Merriam (1998) the researcher conducted semi-structured, in-person, individual interviews. According to Merriam, such interviews allow researchers "to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (1998, p. 74). Thus, although the study protocol contained set questions that all respondents were asked, the format of the interview was relatively open-ended to allow the researcher opportunity to follow emergent issues or new ideas.

Informants were assured of confidentiality, the option to decline participation, and the option to withdraw from the interview at any point. All but three participants agreed

to be tape recorded. In those three interviews, the researcher took extensive notes. The researcher also took notes during all tape recorded interviews. Following the interviews, notes were reviewed, summarized, and typed up. Tapes of interviews were transcribed by an independent service. However, the researcher checked the transcripts against the original recordings to ensure accuracy and consistency in transcription.

Data Analysis

This study followed Merriam’s (1988) position on data analysis. She views analysis as a process undertaken simultaneously with data collection. This interactive and recursive process allows “emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses to direct the next phase of data collection, which in turn leads to the refinement or reformulation of questions, and so on” (Merriam, 1998, p. 151). This process was guided by the conceptual framework for the study which provided clues to relevant data sources as well as to concepts that guided data analysis (see Table 3).

Table 3. Research Questions and Conceptual Framework

Research Questions	Conceptual Framework
1. What are the sources and types of demands for equity and excellence recognized by this institution between 1988, when it was designated a “flagship” university and the present (2006)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conceptions of equity ● Conceptions of excellence ● Pressures in broad environment (regulative, normative and cognitive) ● Pressures in organizational sectors (coercive, normative and mimetic)
2. What strategies did institutional agents employ to mediate these demands?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic choice
3. What impact do these strategies have on dimensions of racial equity and institutional excellence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conceptions of equity and excellence ● Core or peripheral adjustments ● Preservation of the status quo ● Promotion of adaptability and change
4. What are the implications of this study for prominent theories that seek to explain how institutions of higher education interact with their environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic choice ● New institutionalism ● Resource dependency

Data collected from interviews and documents were validated, coded, aggregated, and presented (Geary, 1989; Murphy, 1980). Murphy (1980) lays out specific procedures for assuring the quality of the collected data. These tests focus on checking the data for plausibility, consistency, certainty of account, detail of account, and interconnectedness. Murphy suggests that the data be scrutinized to determine if data are based on eye-witness account or hearsay. He also recommends that the researcher observe the demeanor and forthrightness of interviewees in order to gauge if their accounts should be considered reliable and accurate. With these standards in mind, the researcher assessed, and cross checked all collected data for clarity, accuracy and plausibility and worked to corroborate information across interview sources and between interviews and documents.

NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, was used to manage and organize the data analysis process. Although the software assisted the researcher with marking, moving, and coding data segments the categories and themes for coding and analysis were developed by the researcher based on the conceptual framework and the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998). Interview transcripts, document summary sheets, memos, and post interview notes were transferred to NVivo as soon as they were completed. Data were analyzed within and across sources for emergent themes or categories. Categories were named according to their congruence with the conceptual framework and literature or as suggested by participants (Merriam, 1998). Coded interview transcripts were reviewed by peer debriefers who checked for consistency, clarity and congruence among and between coding categories.

The analysis process cycled through data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994) until initial categories were reduced and aggregated to form consistent and saturated categories (Merriam, 1998). The researcher used the strategy of memoing to facilitate the recursive process of data coding. Miles and Huberman, quoting Glaser (1978) note that memoing is “the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (p.72). As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out these “memos are primarily conceptual in intent. They don’t just report data; they tie together different pieces of data into recognizable clusters.” (p.72).

This recursive process was likewise applied to the preparation of the case narrative. A preliminary summary of the case allowed the researcher to review emerging study findings, examine the quality of the data, and plan for next steps in the data collection process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Validity and Quality

To ensure the validity and quality of the research, the researcher adhered to the following research strategies: triangulation, maintenance of a chain of evidence, checking for rival explanations, and member checking. Data source triangulation was achieved in this study through multiple sources of data including primary documents, secondary documents and interviews. However, as Yin (1994) notes the true advantage of multiple sources moves beyond simply using them in a study, to using them to *develop* “converging lines of inquiry” (p. 92). This study paid careful attention to how the multiple sources corroborated or challenged findings and conclusions.

Maintaining a chain of evidence in which the readers can trace the conclusions of the researcher backward through the process is critical for the validity of the research

(Yin, 1994). This chain was established by setting up an audit trail that clearly explained how the study was conducted and how the findings were derived (Merriam, 1998). The trail is evident in the final report through descriptive detail which illuminates the analysis process and findings (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, these details provide links back to the original research questions and purpose of the study.

To prevent erroneous adoption of an account or finding, rival explanations have been considered throughout the analysis process through the filter of multiple sources of evidence, as well as by feedback from collegial review. Alternative explanations have been discarded or held based on the level of congruence with data and conceptual framework. Peer debriefings of emergent findings were used to test the soundness of arguments and conclusions.

Another strategy that this study used to address quality and validity is member checking. Member checking grants study participants the opportunity to check for research accuracy in representing their voices or actions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995). Two study informants, each representing one of the two dominant perceptions revealed in the study, were invited to review the preliminary case narrative for comments or corrections. Both informants completed the task and offered no rival interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher used due diligence to ensure that all ethical considerations involved with doing case study methods were fully met. To that end, all interviews were kept in strict confidence. Informants were provided with a consent form for reading and signature that introduced the study and informed them of their rights (Appendix B). This

study's reliance on exploring the unique context of UMD made institutional anonymity impossible. However, all informants were assured of anonymity. Informant interviews were assigned and referenced by number in data management and analysis. Citations of informants in the final case report are identified by their general positions (e.g. dean or senior administrator, a handful of "mediating agents"), not by their names or specific, designated positions.

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a sketch of the history and context of the University of Maryland, College Park from its founding, to its formal designation as the flagship institution of the State of Maryland. The primary focus of the section is to outline the watershed events which give clues to how the campus has managed pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence prior to its designation as the flagship institution.

University Characteristics

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) is a public Carnegie classified doctoral/research extensive university. The University is the flagship campus of the eleven degree granting institutions which comprise the University System of Maryland and the original 1862 Maryland land-grant institution. UMD is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). The University enrolls 36,014 total students, of which, 25,857 are undergraduates and 10,157 are graduate students (University Facts and Figures, 2007). In 2006, 33 percent of the undergraduate student population was minority: 12.9 percent African American, 14.1 Asian American, and 5.6 percent Latino/a and .4 percent Native American (University Facts and Figures, 2006).

The University is located in Prince Georges County, Maryland; it is situated approximately thirty miles north of Washington, DC and south of Baltimore City, Maryland. Historically, African Americans have resided in the surrounding areas in relatively high numbers. In 2005, African Americans were 29 percent of the population of the State of Maryland, 66.1 percent of Prince George's county population, 64.9 percent

of Baltimore City's population, and 57 percent of Washington, DC's population (U.S. Census Bureau: State and County Quick Facts, 2005).

University History

The University of Maryland, College Park was chartered as Maryland Agricultural College on March 6, 1856. In 1864, the Maryland legislature voted to accept a federal Morrill Land Grant which designated the college a federal land grant institution. In 1920, the University, then known as the Maryland State College, merged with the University of Maryland's professional schools (located in Baltimore, Maryland) to become the University of Maryland (Callcott, 1966). Over the next one hundred years, the State of Maryland continued to develop other public institutions of higher education to educate its geographically dispersed citizenry as well its former slaves.

Though the first African American student graduated from the University law school in 1885, the University operated as a multi-tiered and deeply-segregated system. At the top of the tier were the relatively well-funded Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), headed by the unofficial flagship, the University of Maryland, College Park. The under-funded Historically Black Institutions (HBI) compromised the lower tiers of the system. In the late 1880's through the mid 1950's, Maryland African American residents had only two options for postsecondary education: attend the severely under-funded institutions of Morgan State College (now Morgan State University), or Princess Anne Academy (now University of Maryland, Eastern Shore); or take a state sponsored grant to attend college out of state (Callcott, 1966).

In 1934, Thurgood Marshall, who had himself been denied admission to the

University, successfully sued the institution on behalf of Donald Murray, an African American applicant, for entrance to the law school (Callcott, 1966). Murray was admitted and graduated from the school, but the institution remained firmly segregated for the masses.

According to Callcott (1966), throughout the 1940's Maryland African Americans began a long campaign pushing for access to quality education. Harry Bryd, president of the College Park campus of the University of Maryland, took an unexpected stance by pushing the legislature to increase funding for the Princess Anne Academy. Callcott stated that Bryd's motives were revealed to be neither altruistic nor moral. Bryd supported the enhancement of Princess Anne Academy to prevent "Negroes" from integrating College Park. Callcott quotes Bryd as stating "If we don't do something about Princess Anne, we're going to have to accept Negroes at College Park—where our girls are" (1996, p.351).

In 1950, Parren Mitchell enrolled at the College Park campus as the first African American graduate student. One year later, Hiram Whittle enrolled as the first Black undergraduate student. Though Mitchell graduated from the College Park campus he spent his early years fighting for the right to take his courses on campus rather than off campus at the Baltimore location where he was assigned. Whittle withdrew from the campus after one year of enrollment (Fenton, 2005a).

After the 1954 landmark court case of *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, the University regents passed a resolution which declared that all University of Maryland institutions were open for all persons, regardless of race. Despite the resolution, the *Brown* decision and the passing of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act had little impact

on the enrollment patterns of the highly segregated University of Maryland. In 1969, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now the Department of Education) found the University in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and issued a desegregation mandate directing the State to create and implement a desegregation plan for all of its higher education institutions. From 1969 to 1974, the State submitted five different plans which were all rejected by OCR for being insufficient to address the magnitude of the desegregation problem (Bayly, 1998). In 1985, OCR accepted the State's plan for desegregation. The two main objectives of this plan were:

The continued integration of Maryland's TWIs through a portfolio of enrollment goals, recruitment measures, retention efforts and affirmative action plans, and;

The enhancement of Maryland's HBCUs to ensure that they are comparable and competitive with TWIs with respect to capital facilities, operating budgets and new academic programs. The Plan provided for a wide range of measures and activities to meet these objectives, including enhancement of the HBCUs, desegregating student enrollments through increased recruitment and improved retention programs for African American students, and desegregating faculties, staffs and governing boards, all of which were designed to meet the mandates of Title VI in the state-supported institutions of higher education in Maryland (OCR Agreement, 1985).

During the 1960's, the University of Maryland, College Park, like many other institutions of higher education throughout the nation, became embroiled in turmoil and campus civil unrest (Fenton, 2005b). Internal and external constituents of the institution actively protested—through sit-ins, counter demonstration, vigils, and assemblies—many forms of social ills, including racism and discrimination at the University of Maryland, and the surrounding College Park town (Fenton, 2005b). Foremost among their demands was for the University to recruit and retain African American students, faculty, and staff. In the 1960's, the campus administration banned a campus group for Black students called the "Congress for Racial Equality" for being too militant. In 1968, the group

returned as the Black Student Union (Fenton, 2005b). The Black Student Union (BSU) and the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) were especially active in challenging the administration to provide access and support for African American students, faculty, and staff.

The combined pressures from OCR, and what many study participants perceived as battles with internal and external activists slowly yielded changes in the institution's policies, programs, and patterns of action. Though the University of Maryland at College Park enrolled its first Black undergraduate and graduate students in the early 1950's, African Americans could not be found, in any significant numbers, on the campus until the 1970's. Thus, throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, the long-segregated and embattled University of Maryland began taking small but measured steps to redress years of injustice and discrimination towards African Americans in hiring practices and in admission to the University.

Some of the prominent equity related initiatives that were founded in that era included the 1968 founding of the African American studies department; and the 1971 founding of the Office of Human Relations, the Nyumburu African Cultural Center, and the Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education. In 1973, the University president created the President's Commission on Ethnic Minority Issues (PCEMI) to address issues of racial equity and inclusion. The charge of the PCEMI was:

To ensure that barriers to equal access are identified and addressed, and that ethnic minorities are represented in all aspects of life and study throughout the campus....[to] serve as an advocate for the ethnic minority community and help create an environment that is supportive and provides a fair opportunity for the enrollment and graduation of ethnic minority students, and for the employment and upward mobility of ethnic minority faculty and staff" (UMD "Diversity Timeline", website).

In addition to responding to pressures for racial equity, the University in the late 1970's engaged in another movement to enhance the quality of the institution. From 1975-1982, Chancellor of the College Park campus, Robert L. Gluckstern, and the President of the University of Maryland, John Toll, spear headed this movement. At that time, the head of the five-campus University of Maryland was given the title of "president"; while the term "chancellor" referred to the leaders of the individual campuses.

During his tenure, Gluckstern sought to improve the quality of the College Park campus by revamping the criteria for admissions and by establishing several new scholarship programs. In 1979, Chancellor Gluckstern developed the Benjamin Banneker Scholarship Program, a merit based scholarship for high achieving Black students as part of the University's attempt to comply with the OCR desegregation mandate.

In 1978, John Toll became President of the University of Maryland. Early in his term, President Toll stated that his goal was to make the University of Maryland one of the nation's ten best state universities (Berdahl & Schmidlein, 1996). One of his first initiatives was to coordinate a comprehensive study of the challenges and opportunities of the institution. In 1981, Toll completed this study which outlined the long-range strategic plan for the University of Maryland, as well as a proposal for its development. The proposal called for increases in the State budget appropriation, the creation of a Baltimore region comprehensive university, plans to educate the state's minority population, major improvements in the quality and recognition of the institution; and a reorganization and restructuring of the state's higher education system (University of Maryland, 1981). Though the complete provisions of Toll's plan were not adopted, it set in motion many of

the events that would lead to the 1988 restructuring of the system and the official designation of the College Park campus as the flagship institution of the State of Maryland (Berdahl & Schmidtlein, 1996).

In November, 1982, John B. Slaughter, a well respected engineer and the director of the National Science Foundation, made University history by becoming the first African-American Chancellor of the University of Maryland, College Park. Slaughter inherited a university with a problematic reputation on issues of both racial equity and institutional excellence. In particular, within the local African American community the University had a deeply tarnished reputation of racial discrimination, and a chilly, and at times, hostile campus climate. The University's state and national reputation for institutional excellence fared little better. Though unofficially recognized by the legislature and system governance as the State's major research institution, the University of Maryland was viewed by these same groups as a mediocre regional institution with near open admissions criteria for enrollment (Berdahl & Schmidtlein, 1996).

Slaughter's legacy was built on his deliberate actions to reinvent Maryland into a quality "model multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-generational institution" (Slaughter, 1988). During his tenure, the campus undertook several new initiatives to improve the quality of the Maryland education and experience. Central in this endeavor was the 1987 report of the campus senate, *Promises to Keep: The College Park Plan for Undergraduate Education*, also known as the Pease Report. In the report, Pease outlined plans to revamp the undergraduate curriculum, particularly the general education program; to include a foreign language in the admissions requirements; to require that all

students take at least one course that focuses on non-western cultural groups, women, or minorities; and to expand the honors program (“Promises to Keep”,1987).

In 1988, the President’s Committee on Undergraduate Women’s Education, charged by Chancellor Slaughter to investigate strategies to improve women’s education presented their final report. The report proposed changes in three areas, namely, campus climate, the curriculum, and women’s under-representation in specific disciplines (e.g. science and engineering). Although the report was focused largely on the experiences and challenges faced by women, it also scrutinized areas of the institution that were problematic for minorities, and in particular, for African Americans.

In 1988, two years after the racially charged Len Bias athletic scandal, Slaughter resigned from the University for another presidential appointment. He was succeeded by his Provost William “Brit” Kirwan.

Internal efforts to enhance the College Park campus were met by a simultaneous movement of the Governor and Maryland State Legislature to improve the quality and reputation of higher education in the State of Maryland. Both the Governor and the legislature regarded the State’s original post-secondary governance system of four governing boards, and the five-campus University of Maryland as a structurally inefficient system which lacked distinction (Berdahl & Schmidlein, 1996). On May 17, 1988, Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer signed Senate Bill 459 into law. Simply put, the major provisions of the bill restructured Maryland higher education into its current form. The law mandated the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) as the main coordinating board for all State of Maryland higher education institutions, established the University System of Maryland (replacing two separate

boards), and designated the University of Maryland, College Park as the state's flagship institution (The College Park Plan of Undergraduate Education, 1987; Berdahl & Schmidlein, 1996). The provisions of the legislative mandate stipulated that:

[Maryland Higher Education Commission] MHEC shall direct the USM Board of Regents to develop and implement a plan for the enhancement of the University of Maryland College Park as the State's flagship campus with programs and faculty nationally and internationally recognized for excellence in research and the advancement of knowledge

USM shall maintain and enhance the College Park campus as the State's flagship campus with programs and faculty nationally and internationally recognized for excellence in research and the advancement of knowledge; admit freshman to the campus who have academic profiles that suggest exceptional ability; provide access to the upper division undergraduate level of the campus for students who have excelled in completing lower division study; and provide the campus with the level of operating funding and facilities necessary to place it among the upper echelon of its peer institutions

The Chancellor shall develop an overall plan that enhances the mission of the University of Maryland at College Park as the State's flagship campus with programs and faculty nationally and internationally recognized for excellence in research and the advancement of knowledge (Senate Bill 459).

Since its designation as flagship, the University Maryland, College Park has continued to face demands for racial equity and institutional excellence from a wide spectrum of sources. The following chapters discuss the sources and characteristics of these pressures, as well as their impact on the institution.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the sources and types of demands for racial equity and institutional excellence recognized by the University of Maryland, College Park between the years 1988 and 2006. The first part of the chapter presents a descriptive account of the sources and characteristics of racial equity and institutional excellence based primarily on informant responses to the interview protocol. The second section presents a more analytic treatment of the dominant themes which characterize the source of the pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence.

Racial Equity: Sources and Characteristics

Early presses for racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park, centered on the demands for greater numerical representation of African Americans in all facets of University life. In response to these presses, the University, over the last fifty years, has made important strides toward increasing the representation of African Americans among its faculty, student body and staff. Despite these gains, data analysis reveals persistent calls by multiple internal and external constituents for racial equity in access to the University and, more recently for racial equity in the persistence and success of students of color. Based on interview data, the internal sources of the pressures for racial equity can be categorized into pressures stemming from “top” administration, individual African-Americans and advocacy groups that focus on issues related to the African-American population, the University of Maryland Equity Council, individual convictions, and institutional expectations. External pressures, on the other hand are more readily identified as emanating from interest groups or entities such as the

federal and state government, the community or general public, and professional associations.

Internal Pressures

“Top” Administration

When asked about the source of demands for racial equity most, if not all, study informants pointed to the leadership of the senior level administration. In particular, the positions of president and provost, commonly referred to by interview informants as “the top”, were seen as significant sources of pressures for racial equity. Rather than speaking hypothetically about the capacity of the position of president or provost to press for racial equity, participants specifically identified persons who held those positions as sources of pressures for racial equity. In addition, participants gave examples of the actions and policies of top administration based on their experiences or their understanding of University history. Thus, the following discussion recounts study informants’ perception of the individuals who have occupied the positions of president and provost of the University of Maryland, College Park.

Presidential Leadership. Within the timeframe of the study (1988-2006), and, indeed, as many informants recalled the history of the University, the last three University presidents surfaced as critical agents in originating and/or sustaining administrative demands for racial equity. Several informants acknowledged Robert L. Gluckstern, Chancellor between 1975 and 1982, as being committed to equity, but none credited him with establishing or sustaining a campus wide agenda for equity. According to the informants, Chancellor John B. Slaughter (1982-1988) the institution’s first

African American president is distinguished as the first University president to demonstrate a commitment to issues of racial equity and diversity. One informant noted:

Let me say that, to his credit, it all began with John Slaughter. He's the person that first articulated multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-gender, etc., peoples of color in his administration and things began to take a turn, because it was coming down from the top person, but very slowly... But he was fighting almost by himself, this battle, you know? (13).

Other informants recalled:

Then Slaughter came in. This was the first time we had a Black president at the University of Maryland. He was definitely very committed to both equity and excellence. I don't think he saw any conflict; he didn't have any problems (4).

I'm sure you've heard before, the University of Maryland was a segregated institution until Brown and then pretty much racially exclusive until the '70s or at least resistant until the '70s and then through a series of presidents, Slaughter, Kirwan, really became sort of known for being in the forefront of racial equity and inclusion (11).

While Slaughter is regarded by some participants as one of the earliest University presidents to make public commitment to issues of racial equity, it is his successor William E. "Brit" Kirwan who informants almost unanimously credited with advancing a University wide commitment to racial equity and diversity. Brit Kirwan, became president of the University in 1989 after serving in various senior level leadership positions for over eight years. He was referenced as a highly visible leader and ardent advocate for issues of racial equity.

I think that it probably was in the late '80s Dr. Kirwan, who was the president at that time, really articulated a mandate to the campus, that we were going to work for diversity and that basically means we're going to work for some racial equity. I think he brought a lot of focus and visibility and emphasis to that issue, at least from my point of view (5).

Well, I think Kirwan, in terms of racial equity, I think that [equity] was kind of at the center of everything he did and even what he continues to do now. He's kind of at the center and he was a vocal advocate (11).

From the beginning of his term, Dr. Kirwan made it clear that the University of Maryland would continue to build on the foundation laid by the Slaughter administration for both academic excellence and racial equity. In his inaugural address to the campus, President Kirwan reaffirmed his commitment to excellence and diversity by stating “at College Park, our efforts to build excellence are inextricably linked to our efforts to increase diversity. College Park must be a place where diversity is not only tolerated, but celebrated” (University website, section: Diversity Timeline). When he resigned in 1998, Kirwan had faced many challenges to this position, not the least of which was the 1985 court case of *Podberesky v. Kirwan*. In that case, Kirwan and the University were sued for offering the racially exclusive Banneker scholarship program. According to informants, Kirwan’s legacy to the campus is shaped by his unfailing leadership in defending the University’s determination to maintain the scholarship and to fight the legal challenge of it. In addition, he reportedly was engaged actively in working to improve the campus racial environment.

On April 23, 1999, Clayton Daniel Mote, Jr., an engineer from the University of California, Berkeley succeeded Kirwan as the 27th president of the University of Maryland. Since coming to the campus in 1998, President Mote, in the eyes of some informants, has continued to press for racial equity and diversity. One dean articulated this viewpoint:

I think this University has been really lucky in that both under President Mote and Dr. Destler, who’s now our provost, and the previous president, President Kirwan, these two presidents were gung ho, gung ho. They were not supportive, they were gung ho about promoting the value of diversity and racial diversity. And probably they placed the importance of this on the radar of this University even more than it was than before (16).

White informants generally agreed that President Mote serves as a committed leader for racial equity, but one group of informants, primarily composed of Black faculty and staff who had been on the campus for two or more successive presidents, disagreed with the characterization of President Motes as a committed leader for racial equity. This group acknowledged the critical role of the president in leading the institution toward racial equity but attributed less of the current senior level leadership in this regard to President Mote. Instead, they questioned President Mote's commitment to the ideals of racial equity in light of what they perceived to be an over emphasis on building the University's prestige and increasing the University's ranking. They credited provost Destler with serving as an important source of influence and leadership in advancing issues of racial equity.

In contrast to these perceptions, other interviewees, including another group of African Americans some of whom were much newer to the campus acknowledged that President Mote was not as vocal about racial equity as his predecessor but disagreed with portrayals of him as being unconcerned with racial equity. For this group, differences between Kirwan and Mote were simply a matter of style and skill, rather than commitment or will. One senior administrator stated:

I think that under our current president, Dan Mote, he actually cares as much about diversity as any of our last two presidents before him did, but he's less vocal on the subject matter. So I think, to some extent, the message that people hear out there is his message and his message is more quality and excellence driven and so forth. His commitment, from my personal working with him, is just as high, actually, and he would be very unhappy to see us reverse the positive momentum we've built up in the diversity area, but he doesn't tend to be an outward spokesperson, sort of talking about that goal very much and so [the provost] tends to try to make up for it to some extent by certain things [he has] started here, the provost's conversations on diversity, equity, and higher education, things like that, and other ways in which [he] can make the point clearer to its constituency (15).

Provost Influence. When identifying sources of pressure for racial equity, study informants characterized the influence of the provost differently than that of the president. Provosts who were identified as sources of pressure were characterized as either partners who complemented the leadership of the president or “stop gaps” who filled voids caused by a lack of clear presidential leadership or voice.

At the University of Maryland, the provost serves as the institution’s senior vice president and chief academic officer. The multiple levels of responsibility for the provost can be summarized as primary oversight for all programmatic and administrative functions for the institution’s academic programs. As such, the provost is instrumental in setting policies and practices which impact decision-making concerning curriculum, faculty recruitment and retention and the development and articulation of academic standards. The deans of the University’s thirteen (13) schools and colleges report directly to the provost. The formal power concentrated in the office of provost makes the position quite capable of advancing institutional priorities and interests such as the achievement of racial equity. However, lack of perceived interest in or commitment to matters of racial equity, lack of campus wide support, as well as brief tenures in the position of provost, have precluded many of the past University provosts from leaving a discernable legacy of advocacy for racial equity. In fact, during the timeframe investigated only two provosts were consistently cited as actively championing and aggressively pressing for racial equity: Kirwan, provost (at times called vice chancellor for Academic Affairs) from 1981 to 1988, and William Destler, provost, from 2001 to 2007.

Prior to his term as president, Kirwan served as the provost of the University of Maryland under the administration of Chancellors Slaughter and Gluckstern. Informants

reported that during his term, his actions and policies complemented the leadership of his presidents. Some reported that the values supporting racial equity that he saw displayed by both Slaughter and Gluckstern were retained and emulated when he was at the helm (18, 11). As one informant stated:

Brit, having been influenced by Slaughter's message and emphasis and probably sharing much of that himself as provost, devoted himself to diversity and excellence and things began to change, even at that level, rather dramatically. And then when Brit became president there was a collective joy from various communities, including many in the African American community (13).

Provost Destler was perceived by most informants to be a deeply committed source of pressure for racial equity. However, the context within which he wielded influence is perceived differently among the informants. Some informants stated that they perceived Provost Destler's stance on racial equity as a full complement or mirror to that of the current presidential leadership. Another group of informants regard Destler as the leading face and voice for racial equity given the "silence" of President Mote.

One informant who identified both Destler *and* Mote as complementary sources of pressure for racial equity noted:

It comes from several things and it has to come from all of them if it's going to work. For starters, it's got to come from the top and we are a fairly diverse institution but we are an institution that, at the top, is led by two White guy engineers...But there are White guys who talk the talk and there are White guys who walk the walk and I will tell you that both of these men are very serious about diversity...(6).

In contrast, others, particularly longtime African American members of the campus community deemed Destler's actions as critical for the sustainability and advancement of racial equity at the University. According to them, the policies and programs advanced by Provost Destler were filling a void caused by a lack of presidential leadership on issues of racial equity (1, 13, 11). Referenced were *The Provost's*

Conversation on Race, Democracy and Higher education, a University-wide academic lecture series on diversity issues and the special “pot” of recruitment monies for the recruitment and retention of minority faculty. Sentiments about the important leadership of the Provost on matters of diversity are exemplified in the following quotations:

So we sort of are at a time of stagnation and were it not for the provost’s office...I see what he has done to make this a more pluralistic Black faculty over the years starting when he was just a dean, a dean of college of [Engineering]...I mean diverse in terms of gender and diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. And that was not the case before Destler....He has this drive and passion to continue to make inroads into the faculty (13).

I think that, as I said to you before, the President spends quality time off the campus bringing funds in. I think that the Provost that’s here, though, has spent money and has in many, many occasions has articulated the need for the University to be diverse, so we still have language and a lot of our brochures and we still have a talking head that says that diversity is really, really important, but for many of the people who were here during the last administration, I don’t think that they see it as much of a part in it as much as it used to be (1).

Black Faculty and Staff

Informants frequently acknowledged African American faculty, staff, and students for the role that they have played in pressing for racial equity. Documents and informant testimony revealed that formal groups such as the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) and the Black Student Union were especially instrumental in pressing for change and racial equity on the University campus throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s. One informant recalled that:

I think initially it was, like a lot of other places, it was a result of huge protest by people especially students. Here a lot of students are starting more protests. Nyumburu Cultural Center and African American studies then came out of a protest movement...A lot of these programs came out of protests which happened at many campuses. I think they weren’t voluntarily offered up in the first place. I think they were really the result of a lot of protest [and] fighting (11).

However, for the timeframe covered in this study, informants identified a small informal group of Black faculty and staff as a source of pressure for racial equity. Of that group, the individuals most frequently mentioned by name were Cordell Black, the current Vice Provost for Equity and Diversity and a thirty year member of the campus community; Ray Gillian, past Assistant to President Kirwan and author of *Access is not Enough*; Marie Davidson, past Chief of Staff to President Kirwan; Raymond Johnson, Math Professor and member of the campus community for thirty eight years; and Robert Waters, current Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Assistant to the President, and the head of the Equity Council (5, 12, 13). One informant remarked:

And then there was, as best as I can understand it, a group of people who really committed themselves to some of these principles. There was Ray Gillian, who was an assistant to Kirwan, who was in charge of the Equity Council and monitoring racial equality and he was a very devoted guy. Cordell had been playing a role in this for a long time. Marie Davidson, who was Brit Kirwan's chief of staff, and she was African American and she was, again, very well respected person, but that was just one of her principles and values and everybody knew it. And these people, I guess you could say they created a pressure, but it was a little bit more elegant than creating a pressure. These were people who did embrace these values and they were highly respected. They were scholars in their own right, and so it became a part of our culture (5).

Together, the service records of these individuals span several decades, and a variety of University positions. Analysis showed that whether acting under their own convictions or in an official University capacity, this group served as the highly visible faces of an interest group of African American faculty and staff who were concerned about and committed to advancing racial equity on the Maryland campus. One informant recalled that many African American faculty and staff held demonstrations in the early 1970's in an effort to increase the number of Black students at the University. Others spoke of the efforts made by members of the African American campus community to

recruit, retain and graduate African American students, particularly those in the science and technical disciplines. Also mentioned were African American faculty and staff drawn from across the University campus— from academic departments such as the African-American and Women Studies programs to programs which serve high percentages of African American students such as the Academic Achievement Programs, Pre-college Programs, Nyumburu Cultural Center, and Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education.

The Equity Council

When asked to identify sources of pressure for racial equity at the University of Maryland, most study informants did not immediately point out the University's Equity Council. However, as interviews progressed and informants recounted to what and whom they were accountable for issues of racial equity, the Equity Council emerged as a latent source of pressure. Two informants noted:

Now there are some institutional processes themselves which send a message, like a college having an equity officer... The very recruiting process itself, the search process has equity as an component of the way you do business, so you can say, okay, if I think about it, there is a pressure there because it's a much less efficient method than I want to say a commercial hiring process. So the pressure is not considered overt in the sense somebody coming and beating on you, but it's there in a sense that the institution has structured and amplified these messages (7).

The most visible signs for this are in, in terms of day-to-day activities of the campus, I think the most visible and obvious aspects of diversity happen in high-profile searches. These are key faculty or associate deans or deans or center directors or whatever. We have pretty strict procedures here. We have to file paperwork for campus. All our searches have to be approved by the campus equity officer, have to be reviewed by the college's equity officer, the equity officers have to give the search committee the charge to talk about diverse schools (6).

The Equity Council was created under the administration of President John Slaughter to serve as advisory group to the president and the president's cabinet. The influence of the group was strengthened after a panel commissioned by President Mote noted its ineffectiveness and impotence and urged the President to restructure the campus equity system. President Mote heeded the recommendation. Under the new system, the council is chaired by the Special Assistant to the President for Equity and Diversity and consists of equity administrators from each vice president's office, each dean's office, and the office of the president. The goal of the group, as articulated in its 2006 mission statement, is to "support the longstanding and continuous goal of the University of Maryland to be a national leader in recruiting and retaining a diverse community of faculty, staff and students" (Equity Council website). According to the Council's website, the Council articulates and develops affirmative action policies and procedures for the campus community. Members of the council are responsible for reviewing, monitoring and recommending search and selection policies and procedures for their respective colleges or departments. According to one informant:

The only people that I know of up here that "champion the cause" would be the equity administrators. We have an equity administrator for each division of the college and all of them are members of the Equity Council. That Council is directed by Dr. Robert Waters, who is the Special Assistant to the President and it is that Council's role to make sure that we are equitable that we practice equality in all of our searches that we have at the University....the equity administrators at each of those divisions and colleges, make sure that the vice presidents, the deans, the chairs of the departments, really adhere to the searches' specifications (1).

Individual Convictions and Institutional Expectations

Not all the sources of pressure for racial equity were identified readily or credited to an individual or campus group. One view voiced by several informants maintained that pressures for racial equity stemmed from self-generated pressures or institutional

expectations. Both Black and White informants affirmed that a sense of individual responsibility and personal convictions guided their actions and decisions. As one informant noted:

I felt like I created the pressure myself. I wanted to do it. It's not somebody up there telling me (4).

Though this sense of self generated pressure was articulated across racial lines, Black informants referred to this self-generated pressure as a passion or a drive which prompted them to serve as advocates or agitators in the larger campus community. One long time advocate recounted:

I've never been one to move from one position to another; I've never had that ambition, but there was a passion in me to right wrongs. That's always been a part of me, I think, as long as I can remember and to try to create a climate...a climate as well as a support group for faculty of color beginning their careers at the University of Maryland... Now I've had several promotions, but I still never lost sight of one of my primary functions, and that was to facilitate, once again, at the University level, the recruitment and promotion and retention of faculty of color and to a lesser extent, White female faculty (13).

In contrast, one White informant while decrying the use of the word "pressure" or "demand" to characterize influences on the behalf of racial equity rejected the notion that the sources of the pressure lay outside his/her own personal values. S/he asserted that campus actors created "opportunities" rather than "demands".

I'm trying to be sensitive to your use of the word, "demands," and I want to make sure I respond to be consistent with what you are intending with the use of that word. I'm aware that there are legal responsibilities that I have as an officer of this school to the equity principles and concepts and aspirations that the institution holds and that the professions hold. It's interesting. I don't think of them as demands but really as expectations and opportunities ...I think of it as an opportunity because I think there's a lot of misinformation and a lot of missed opportunities to be overcome in the kinds of outreach and the kinds of efforts we make to broaden and diversify participation in the fields (8).

This frame of reference likewise prohibited her/him from identifying groups or

individual as a source of pressure:

I haven't really paid attention to the sources because I haven't really questioned the agenda. So, therefore, it's going to cause me for the first time to think well, why do I care who's putting the force, the pressure on us? I don't question the agenda (8).

Some informants perceived a source of pressure for racial equity to be emanating from the University's internalized values and commitments. Most members of the campus community, as study participants explained, were both aware of and in agreement with the campus wide expectation for and value of racial equity. They reasoned that it was this internalized pressure that spurred the university to forge policies and make decisions toward racial equity. This view is exemplified by two informants who stated:

To be honest I don't feel that we've been pushed from the top in terms of pressure to do X, Y, and Z or a demand to do that. There's a general philosophy here at the University in terms of diversity as a good academic virtue in its own right and I think we ought to subscribe to that as you sort of sign up, you know where Maryland stands on these issues. And what kind of what we've done, well over 90-95% of what we've done, has been internally generated as opposed to an external pressure coming from administration or another school (7).

And then on campus it's kind of a lot of self generated, but there's pressure generated by different racial and ethnic communities, but also I think it's our reputation that pushes a lot... There's a lot to live up to. There's a lot to live down (11).

External Pressures

External forces as described in the profile of the University's history have served a critical role in pressing for racial equity at the University of Maryland at College Park. However, though generally acknowledging the role of external actors, most informants oriented their discussion on the sources of pressures for racial equity on internal actors or groups. In spite of this internal emphasis, data analysis revealed five different external

advocates for racial equity. These sources include the federal government, the state government, the external community, and professional associations.

Federal Government

The role of the federal government has evolved over the history of the institution. Informants readily point to the highly visible federal government intervention of 1969 which mandated desegregation at the University of Maryland and other public postsecondary institutions. The desegregation mandate which remains in effect to this day requires that institutions file annual progress reports which detail efforts made toward the goal of desegregation in institutions of postsecondary education. Included in these reports are analyses of data trends at traditionally White and historically Black institutions. Areas tracked include, but are not limited, to full-time and part-time enrollment by race in undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools; degrees awarded by race and subject area; staff representation by race; and full-time faculty by rank and race (Maryland Higher Education Commission).

Informants also identified the courts as a source of pressure for racial equity within the last twenty-five years. Cases such as *Podberesky v. Kirwan*; *Gratz v. Bollinger*; and *Grutter v. Bollinger*, have each pressured and influenced how the institution addresses racial equity in student admission and enrollment policies. The interventions of other federal departments also have affected racial equity for staff. In 1992, the United States Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP) filed a discrimination law suit against the University for allegations of racial discrimination. African-American women who had repeatedly applied for non-exempt jobs at the University without being hired or granted an interview filed suit for

discrimination on the basis of race. After settling the suit, the University was required to hire all the women who filed suit and to implement new procedures when hiring non-exempt staff. Though document analysis revealed that this suit had far reaching impact on the institution, only one informant made reference to it and its affect. This informant explained:

Unfortunately, I think the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP) thought it necessary to regulate the way things surfaced here. There was a class action suit that was filed with the Black women. Their case was that they had applied to the University of Maryland or in nonexempt positions over and over again and for whatever reason, they were qualified, they didn't get an interview at the University and they sued and they won. And part of what they wanted was to be able to get the jobs that they thought they were qualified for. And so the University had to hire these women. That has impacted us in a way that's substantial, that whenever we have applicants come through and if I find that minority applicants are not being hired and I look at why they're not being hired, if I see things like they weren't fit for the job or anything that doesn't fit with their educational background or their experience, then I question it, before we make that kind of decision. But that was a direct impact of what we went through about 12 years ago (1).

State Government

Pressures for racial equity originating with the government of the State of Maryland have stemmed primarily from separate interest groups and coalitions within the State. While desegregation is required by federal and state law, state agencies such as the Maryland Higher Education Commission along with individual institutions of higher education, including the University System of Maryland are dually responsible for ensuring the State of Maryland's compliance with desegregation plans. They also are charged with making reasonable efforts to maintain and promote racial equity. To this end, the Maryland Higher Education Commission requires that each public two-year and four-year institution develop minority achievement reports and submit annual reports on progress made. These reports are required to outline the status of minority students,

faculty and staff. The Maryland plan for Postsecondary Education outlines specific efforts to improve the graduation and retention of students, particularly minorities, on traditionally White institutions, as well as the recruitment and retention of faculty and professional staff.

Political entities such as the Governor and the Maryland State Legislature also were cited as sources of pressure for racial equity. However, more than one informant noted the inimitable press of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus. Informants commenting on this Caucus remarked:

The diversity/equity thing is a little bit less straightforward, but there is a Black Caucus in Annapolis. They're in touch with us. They pay attention to us. If they get the sense that things here are not running the way they should, we hear from them (6).

I think that everybody, but especially the African Americans in the State of Maryland, the legislature, the system, certainly African American politicians and folks in the legislature...especially in Annapolis, particularly with the African American legislature, MHEC, the Higher Ed Commission, because they keep pretty good track of what our student numbers look like, what the climate is, things like that (11).

The Community

Data analysis revealed that informant perceptions of the community in general and the African-American community more specifically as a source of pressure for racial equity at the University of Maryland, are nuanced and complex. When asked to identify sources of pressure for racial equity, some informants identified facets of the “general public”, “community” and “society” as sources of pressure. However, these references were not linked directly to current interest groups or coalitions. In one case, it appeared that an informant included the community in his/her list of possible sources for racial equity, not based on direct knowledge but rather on his/her assumption that community

groups should be pressuring the University for racial equity. In other cases, informants referenced groups such as the local African American community as historical rather than current agents for racial equity. Informants acknowledged that the role of the broader African-American community was critical for engaging in past battles for integration and improving the Maryland campus climate. However, they offered few contemporary examples of how the African American community exerted pressure on the institution for racial equity.

References to the community as a source of pressure were tied to the demographics of the State of Maryland and the University's resident county, Prince George's County. Some indicated that the relatively high population of African-Americans in both the State and County was a source of pressure. Examples of these types of views are found in the statements of two informants:

But I would also like to think that the greater community puts pressure on the University of Maryland because, I mean here we are in PG County. If we didn't have substantive African-American population, with Washington just to our south and Baltimore just to our north, it would be wrong on a lot of levels, but it would also be unnatural and wrongheaded and all these things. So whether that's explicit pressure or implicit pressure I don't know, but I certainly think that that is a societal pressure. And let's don't be coy, I think everybody forgets sometimes that none of this has transpired without battles. In some cases, literal battles. It's not just naturally going to occur unless people are putting pressure on institutions. It doesn't happen magically. It doesn't necessarily happen of its own accord. People have to make it work. You've got to have the heat on (6).

I think that they've come from multiple sources. I think that... I'm not sure I'd call them pressures, but I would call them sort of increased higher expectations from certain parties. I think the changing demographics in the State of Maryland has been one factor that has raised expectations that the institution reflect, at least in some measure, the demographics of the state from which it draws its students. I think that that has had some ramifications in terms of not only student recruitment and retention efforts and admission policies and so forth, but also our attempt to recruit and retain faculty and staff as well. I think that has been an important driver in the general diversification of the population of the State. That's been important. Those expectations have been driven not only from

elected representatives who represent those constituents but, in some cases, from the constituents themselves, who, of course, are the ones who finally sign the applications and send in their checks (15).

Professional Associations

A sub-group of informants composed primarily of current deans identified professional associations as sources of pressure for racial equity. These associations included academic and scholarly affiliations and representatives of business and industry (e.g. recruiters or hiring managers). According to these informants, professional associations articulate expectations for a diverse pool from which they can hire well-trained students who had been exposed to diversity in people, thought, and experiences.

This viewpoint is articulated by a Dean:

There absolutely are external pressures...my field, for instance, is very mindful of the need for [diversity]...they, in turn, turn around and look at the school and if you're not bringing in, training, and graduating people of color they're going... Are you helping us or are you not? Do you believe this or not? That's one of the reasons we're very popular because we turn out a lot of really good students of color that do very well and they get placed very well and they tend to do very well. And many other schools do, but many schools don't. So we definitely have that external pressure in terms of our constituency outside (6).

Section Summary: Sources and Characteristics of the Pressure for Racial Equity

Data analysis revealed the presence of both internal and external advocates for racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park during the timeframe of 1988 through 2006. However, informants differed in their judgments about the extent to which the institution and certain identified actors were committed to racial equity. Informants also contested the relative importance of the external mandates in shaping the University's current actions for attaining racial equity.

Data analysis suggests that the intervention of external actors, such as the Office for Civil Rights and the OFCCP, was a necessary precursor to the current receptivity to racial equity and diversity that is now evident in many aspects of the University. Although there is evidence of committed individuals and groups who were working to advance racial equity at the University prior to these external demands, pressures from external actors appeared necessary to establish an environment in which the University could take steps to comply with the law and then embrace its principles.

Institutional Excellence: Sources and Characteristics

Data analysis suggests that, similar to the pressures it experienced in relationship to racial equity, from the years 1988 through 2006, the University of Maryland also faced pressures for institutional excellence which emanated from both internal and external sources. However, while informants identified similarities between the pressure for equity and excellence, they characterized the pressures differently. Very few of the informants distinguished the University's pursuit of institutional excellence as a contested or politically charged issue. Instead, they characterized the sources of pressures for institutional excellence as manifestations of well-established principles. Further, informants agreed on the identity of the sources of the pressure for institutional excellence without significant variance in opinion. Informants categorized the sources of pressure into two groups "top" administration; and "everyone else", which included deans, faculty, staff and in some cases, students. The external sources of pressure were identified as the State, various ranking systems and peer influences. Still, with respect to the pressures for institutional excellence areas of disagreement were found. One such

area is in determining proper methodology for measuring institutional excellence and the timeframe by which the university will reach the level of its aspirational peers.

Internal Pressures

“Top” Administration

As was the case with respect to racial equity, “top” administration was typically characterized by the offices of president and provost. Informants credited past Presidents John B. Slaughter, William E. Kirwan, and Daniel Mote with initiating and sustaining an institutional commitment to the achievement of institutional excellence. Responses from informants indicated that the press for institutional excellence from these “top” administrators has been carried forth with each successive president, such that each president has built on the efforts of his predecessor. President Slaughter, with the support of the University System of Maryland Chancellor, John S. Toll, was credited by some informants as the president who awakened an institutional consciousness to the objective of achieving institutional excellence (in tandem with racial equity). Several informants stated that the vision articulated by Slaughter was sustained and advanced under President Kirwan and taken to new heights under President Mote. Reflecting on this history, two long time members of the campus community commented:

I always say and I don't know how well this goes over, but this was a pretty mediocre institution for most of its history, so it's interesting that a segregated institution was also a fairly mediocre institution; so academic excellence hasn't been a big priority here until maybe the last 30 years. But it hasn't been a traditional priority. There have been a couple pockets of excellence, but this isn't a place that was thought of as an excellent institution for some time. It was kind of an open admission institution. So it's really been the last 25-30 years. I think the president and the administration and support from the State. And the pressure builds up more because of Slaughter's push for equity and excellence program. Kirwan pushed even more. President Mote is pushing even more (11).

Well, for a long time Maryland really didn't have a strong push for excellence. Maryland was kind of a state university and, certainly, when I began working here it was respectable, but not considered excellent. It was everybody's safety school and so forth. Again, it was Brit who started it, but certainly Dr. Mote has very much pressed forward with this notion that we were going to become one of the great public universities in the United States. And so, again, I want to say late '80s, early '90s there was suddenly a lot of talk about becoming excellent (5).

In contrast to the informants' divided perception of President Mote's commitment to racial equity, their view of his commitment to institutional excellence was unanimous. Many reported that President Mote is living up to the vision for the campus he articulated in his inaugural address to the campus in 1999 when he stated: "... as many of you know, I have not been shy about proclaiming our intention to become one of the great research universities in this country. I believe that is why I was recruited to the presidency. I know that is why I was interested in the challenge, and why I accepted it. And I am forthright about what this achievement will take" (President Mote's Inaugural Address, 1999).

"Everybody Else"

While most informants identified "top" administration as a source of pressure for institutional excellence, they also noted that these demands were not being pressed upon unwilling or resistant actors. On the contrary, pressures from senior administrators were met by a similar commitment and expectation of the broader campus community. As such, informants viewed the pressure for institutional excellence as a common goal that "everyone" was working towards. With respect to this common goal, two informants noted:

You know universities are amazing. It comes from the administration; it comes from the faculty. People want to be a good institution. You want to feel the results, the work you're doing is improving the institution. Not in the abstract sense that I wake up in the morning and I want to know that the University of

Maryland went from 93 to 92 or something like that. Just a better place than it was when I came. So the pressure, I think, is partly internally generated (4).

The pressures for institutional excellence come from a lot of places and I think the highest pressure is on the campus itself. I think we are pushing ourselves to be.... The university is a living organism; it's not unlike a human being in that if it's really going to achieve excellence, it's probably because that drive, that engine is mostly from within.... We should be upset if we're not pushing ourselves, but we are pushing ourselves, so I think the first push is ourselves and, again, from the top, from all of us really, but primarily the top (6).

Most informants, irrespective of their position as vice president, dean, director or other senior level staff, readily articulated their individual strategies, goals, expectations, and benchmarks for attaining institutional excellence. However, most of the deans articulated a drive for excellence for their schools and colleges that, while connected to, was not necessarily dependent on the actions or performance of the rest of the University. Thus, it appeared that while deans were concerned with the reputation of the overall institution, their primary focus was on elevating the rankings and reputation of their respective schools and colleges. One dean noted:

As a leader of the school, it is my goal to see that we're continuously moving up along the excellence gain and that includes student admissions, faculty selection, research support, quality of teaching. I could give you a number of very specific measures and they're very specific...One is a general pressure with an occasional sort of stronger message kind of thing. The other, at the school level, is a definite hammer or a lever. Typically levers work better than hammers! They really do. Hammers you got to find nails, right? A lever you can use as a hammer or you can use it as a crowbar or whatever so that there's this general surge to move upward... So we're constantly pushing very hard at the school level and I would say if you look at who's generating the pressure, it's the dean's office and the chairs of the departments. And there it's more than just a pressure versus a very, very heavy push (7).

Informants also perceived staff and faculty to be sources of the pressure for institutional excellence. A few informants mentioned the supportive role that staff, particularly those hired under the current administration, have played in facilitating the

University push for excellence. However, most informants focused on the pressure that faculty exerted on each other and themselves for the attainment of excellence.

Accordingly, informants perceived faculty to be vocal supporters and committed collaborators with their peers, deans, and senior level administration in the quest for institutional excellence. In this vein, as illustrated by the following statements, faculty were portrayed as cooperative and interested partners in working toward institutional excellence:

Oh, everybody, the entire faculty is interested in excellence, and, more recently I would say, that is a very prominent theme by the top levels of the administration of the University, the provost, the president. Since President Mote, in particular, has been president of the University there's been a lot of pressure for programs being ranked in the top 10, or the top 15, or the top 20 for every hiring decision, hiring the very best person you can find...and tenure decisions making sure that people really can compete at the highest levels before they can receive tenure. But I think our faculty itself, at least this school's faculty is all in favor of this working towards excellence (3).

More or less except that in the case of academic excellence more recently I see the pressure coming from both ends both from the president and from essentially the lowest level of the core employees at the University, essentially your faculty. He's pushing for excellence. The faculty are pushing for excellence. So, actually it's a very harmonious activity. There seems to be no disagreement about what we want (15).

Though not identified as a major source of pressure for institutional excellence, students were nevertheless credited with filling a key role in facilitating the University's drive for excellence. Informants recognized that the credentials of current and entering students were an important factor in determining the institutions rankings and that the "best" students were influenced to enroll, at least in part, based on their perceptions of the University's resources and prestige. As one dean noted:

I'm also aware in our competition for students and faculty among programs where students and faculty get to choose, do I come to Maryland? Do I not come to Maryland?" What's at Maryland that is particularly appealing? How

progressive? How excellent? How much advantage are the opportunities to either teach or learn here compared to our peer institutions, those that we most often compete with? So we're aware, in that arena, how we recruit and position ourselves in their eyes, in the eyes of the prospective students. I'm keenly aware of that and know that we have to continue to work to position ourselves favorably (8).

External Pressures

While informants emphasized the role of internal advocates in pressing for institutional excellence, they also acknowledged that external actors levied demands for the same. The most prominent external sources of pressures for institutional excellence identified by interviewees can be categorized as State actors, ranking systems and peer influences.

The State

The State of Maryland is a significant source of pressure for institutional excellence. State expectations for quality and excellence in the University System of Maryland which includes the University of Maryland, College Park have existed well before the 1988 designation of the University as the State's flagship institution. Statewide plans for postsecondary education dating as far back as 1978 have called on the University to "achieve as high of degree of quality as possible in carrying out its particular role and mission (Maryland Statewide Plan, 1978 p. 8). However, data analysis reveals that the formal 1988 designation of the University as the flagship institution brought a heightened demand for quality and excellence. By codifying the University's designation as the flagship institution of the State, the State of Maryland effectively placed a legal requirement for the University to strive for and attain high levels of

institutional excellence. According to informants, State actors, including the Maryland legislature, General Assembly, and other State agencies also have exerted high expectations for rising institutional rankings, fundraising and national reputation.

There's tremendous pressure, I think, from the State because there are so many constituencies that have a real stake in Maryland...For every dollar the State of Maryland invests in the University of Maryland at College Park, it turns over six times. We are the single biggest economic engine in the State of Maryland. So it is incumbent upon the State of Maryland's interest that there be excellence here at College Park. It's important for its economic development and it's important for its intellectual development and of course those are paired (6).

In terms of higher quality expectations, in 1988 not only were we declared the flagship institution but in law was passed an expectation that the campus would become an institution of first resort for the best Maryland high school seniors and would become known for the quality of its programs to be comparable with the very best public research institutions of its kind and, as you know, we have five designated peer institutions which are also large public research institutions of the same kind and we've been benchmarked against them ever since. So I think there's been some almost legal responsibility based on the act of 1988 to push forward in that direction. Then in 1998, a decade later, the Larson Commission Report was also passed into law by the State general assembly and it mandated continued higher expectations for the flagship campus here from the State...(15).

The State's responsibility has been to fund the institution at a level consistent with peer institutions. This responsibility has seldom been fulfilled even as the State's expectations for the University to achieve distinction remain unchanged. Though the University continues to lobby the State to uphold its part of the bargain, the funding reality is largely accepted as part of the changing public policy landscape of higher education (State of the Campus, 2003).

Rankings and Peer influences

Though many informants were loathe to give credence to the power of rankings and peer influences, they, nevertheless, acknowledged them as major sources of pressure

for institutional excellence. Referencing these sources of pressures two informants explained:

It comes from peer pressure, because we should want to be the greatest university we can be just because that should be our aspiration. If we were the only university in the world we should have the aspirations to be great. But because we are in an environment of public institutions, we want to be great in part because we want to show the world we're great. We want to tell the world we're better than Texas and we're better than Illinois. We're better than you-name-it. So it's that competitive thing. So that's very distinct pressure. There's nobody holding a gun to our head, but every time those U.S. News ratings come out you'd better believe that everybody's noticing (6).

Universities, unlike most of the institutions of American society, have all adopted one model. That's not quite true, but we all want to be like Harvard. That's really what it really boils down to. We all want to be like Harvard. We want to have the best math department, the best physics department, the best English department and best is defined by research, pure and simple...So the pressure for excellence comes from the top, it comes from inside, and it's defined by this rigid model and the rigid model is [that the] best is the most highly rated research department (4).

Many informants also spoke of the increased attention given to the University's standing in relation to competing programs and institutional peers. They cited the prominent display of ranking, incoming student credentials on the University websites, the President's State of the Campus Address, the University mission statement, and signage throughout the campus. The ubiquitous nature of the rankings achieved two purposes. First, they served as constant reminders to internal and external groups of the University's goals and accomplishments. Second, they encouraged the University community to reach for higher points of excellence. The comments of one informant exemplify this notion:

The rankings. It's terrible. These terrible U.S. News and World Reports rankings. I say terrible because I don't think they're very well designed, at least in our field. Maybe in some other fields, like in education, for example, U.S. News does a better job. They have multiple criteria. But maybe we rely too heavily on that. It will be an NRC, National Research Council's doing the ranking of the Ph.D.

programs and we're in that. We are going to pay very close attention to that and we are making sure that everything we do that can be counted is counted. We're hoping that in this NRC ranking we are in the top 10 or close to it (3).

Only one informant mentioned alumni as a source of pressure for institutional excellence. However, University documents and presidential speeches clearly indicate that alumni represent an important external constituent group on whom the University is increasingly dependant for resources and support.

Section Summary: The Sources and Characteristics of the Pressure for Institutional Excellence

In summary, informant characterizations of the sources of pressures for institutional excellence revealed a high level of consensus concerning the sources of the pressure. Informants concurred that during the years 1988 through 2006 most members of the campus community operated as committed supporters and active participants who sought to achieve of excellence. Pressures for institutional excellence extend from internal, as well as external sources and are free of conflict or disharmony. Most members of both internal and external constituent groups shared common definitions, indicators, and measurements of what it means to be excellent. Tension is only revealed when expectations for greatness are measured against insufficient resources and indispensable State support. This reality stands in sharp contrast to the splintered and contested perspectives of study informants concerning the sources of pressure for racial equity.

Sources and Characteristics of Racial Equity and Institutional Excellence: An Exploration of Themes

Analysis of study data revealed that during the timeframe of 1988 through 2006, the sources and characteristics of racial equity and institutional excellence at the University of Maryland have evolved and been displayed in dissimilar manners. Analysis suggests that internal and external sources of both pressures have been critical in prompting the campus to change. However, the relationship between these sources and the institution has been markedly different depending on whether the sources of the pressure were for racial equity or institutional excellence. These relational distinctions are manifested in how the University has responded to and adopted measures of racial equity and institutional excellence. Data suggest that the University's adoption of measures of racial equity has been a slow and contested grass roots process, lead primarily by vocal individuals or interest groups. In contrast, the adoption of measures of institutional excellence has been accomplished through broad based campus support, established channels, and deliberate University action. The following section examines the nature and sources of these two different processes.

The Battle for Racial Equity: External Demands, Grass Roots Efforts, and Institutional Battles

When asked to identify sources of racial equity on the University campus, many study informants pointed to various past and present internal actors and senior leadership. Presidents Slaughter and Kirwan were cited for their unwavering leadership and commitment to the ideals of racial equity and diversity. However, data suggest that it was not the action of senior leadership which drove the University's adoption of

measures of racial equity. Rather, analysis reveals that the initial supporters and advocates for racial equity were individuals and small interest groups, primarily from the African American community. Over time, the long term grassroots efforts of these initial supporters were bolstered by pressures stemming from external forces such as the United States Office for Civil Rights and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance. Pressure stemming from these external sources has made headway where internal advocates had toiled unsuccessfully for many years.

External Demands

Prior to 1988, external pressures for racial equity at the University of Maryland were exerted primarily through federal legislation (e.g. the Civil Rights Act of 1964) and the ruling of the courts (e.g. *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Adams v. Richardson*). However, the State of Maryland's failure to comply with these legislative decrees prompted the direct intervention of the United States Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to enforce the law. The University's attempts to comply with OCR demands resulted in some of its earliest initiatives for racial equity such as the 1976 founding of the Benjamin Banneker scholarship program. The continued presence of OCR has forced the University to broaden access to the institution for African Americans and other minorities. OCR sustains this pressure to the present day by requiring annual campus updates on progress made toward desegregation.

Informants perceived that it was only through the OCR mandates that change was finally affected at the University. One informant commented on the impact of the OCR mandates by stating:

The federal government had a mandate on the University of Maryland to desegregate its faculty, that was in 1979, because the University of Maryland had even far fewer faculty of color than they have today at that time, and we still don't have that much. So, as a consequence of that mandate, and it had to be a consequence of that mandate, the university was able to recruit 14-15 African Americans and the emphasis was, at that time, almost exclusively on African Americans, given the history of this university and the segregation policies and so forth (13).

Another informant offered the intervention from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP) as another example of an external force which substantially impacted the University's response to racial equity. The OFCCP filed suit against the University to end hiring discrimination against African American staff. The University settled the suit by creating new hiring protocols for non-exempt University positions and hiring the persons who filed the suit.

Grass Roots Efforts

To their credit, University of Maryland leaders such as Presidents Slaughter and Kirwan built on the early success of these governmental initiatives by strategically articulating visions for racial equity. However, analysis suggests that internal University action for racial equity was not initiated by presidential leadership but by the grassroots efforts of individuals and campus interest groups—including individual African Americans faculty and staff, and the Black Faculty and Staff Association. Informants note that as early as the 1960's and through to the present day, campus supporters of racial equity have waged a long and often "lone" challenge to the institution, including the "top" administration. These internal advocates have pressed for the University to take substantive and decisive action to remedy chilly institutional climates and persistent discriminatory practices.

One informant offered an example of this grassroots, primarily individual based advocacy in the person of Raymond Johnson, an African American tenured full professor in the Department of Mathematics. This informant perceived that much of the math department's gains in graduating and retaining African American students were directly attributed to the efforts of Dr. Johnson rather than to the efforts of the institution:

And so they're doing amazing things primarily because of Raymond Johnson and the help he gets from some of his colleagues there in terms of graduating Black Ph.D.s, women and men, in mathematics. He draws them because of the success that others have had; they just come. I won't say they're flocking in, but you may have about 10 of them in a given couple years or so and it just keeps going and keeps going, but Ray's not going to be there forever and we're fortunate enough to have Ray there, but the mechanism has not been set up so that it's not dependent upon one individual (13).

This study participant and other informants also spoke of the less visible efforts for racial equity that grassroots supporters participated in. These activities included special investment of time and effort to recruit and advise undergraduate African American students and serving on more than "ones share" of University committees. One informant reminisced about these types of efforts:

On the other hand, like most Black people, since Black students were not faring well here at all, the Black undergraduates in particular, many of us took on the responsibility of advising several if not many students, taking on mentoring and serving Black students and talking to them and then going to the Black faculty staff... We recognized, also, that we had this obligation to our communities, but also that if we preached to diversity then we needed to be willing to show diversity in important committees, therefore to serve on perhaps more than my share of committees where we would be the only person of color...(13).

Data suggest that over the years, the grassroots efforts of the internal sources of the pressures for racial equity were bolstered by external forces and by receptive campus leaders who legitimated their demands through official University channels. Thus, efforts for racial equity once nonexistent or undertaken by individual

members of the campus community have since been incorporated into official University channels. The functions of the Equity Council and the presidential commissions for minority issues are examples of this type of institutional legitimation.

Institutional Battles

In addition to depictions as incremental and grass roots, the process by which measures of racial equity were adopted at the University of Maryland, were cast by informants as highly contested battles. This characterization is prominent in the details of informant accounts, as well as in the words and metaphors that informants used to describe the process. Informants perceived that early efforts for racial equity by both internal and external sources were met by an engrained culture of resistance.

Accordingly, informants used phrases suggestive of warfare and battle to describe the environment of the campus and the nature of the change process. The statements of the following informants demonstrate the use of this metaphor and characterize the climate of the institution at that time:

I remember the early days trying to recruit students whose parents were discriminated against. It was really tough, walking up Baltimore public schools, a tough thing to do. It was a tough battle and there were a lot of people around here at the time who were in the trenches. It's very different now than it was then (12).

I think everybody forgets sometimes that none of this has transpired without battles. In some cases, literal battles. It's not just naturally going to occur unless people are putting pressure on institutions. It doesn't happen magically. It doesn't necessarily happen of its own accord. People have to make it work. You've got to have the heat on (6).

Oh yeah, Let me say that, to his credit, it all began with John Slaughter. He's the person that first articulated multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-gender, etc., peoples of color in his administration and things began to take a turn, because it was coming down from the top person, but very slowly and it was under his administration, however, that the carnage took place that I mentioned earlier. But he was fighting almost by himself, this battle, you know? (13)

Informants generally acknowledge that the present day University of Maryland has changed dramatically since those resistant and battle filled days. However, interviewees continued with the metaphors of war to describe what they perceived as current “pockets of resistance” and “battles” on the campus. One informant spoke proudly about the campus’ new identity as a model for diversity and racial equity. However, this informant identified current areas of challenge as continuations of earlier battles. According to this informant:

But there is a constant battle, particular faculty searches, to remind people that we can get better and that can include people of color (11).

Rousing the Latent Tendencies for Institutional Excellence: Broad-based Support and Institutional Commitment

The tone and character of the process by which the University of Maryland has adopted measures of institutional excellence were presented considerably different from the process associated with racial equity. Data suggest that the University adopted new norms of excellence and prestige with broad based campus support and minimal conflict or dissent. Informants perceive that this consensual action of the campus reflects the latent tendency of the institution to embrace matters of quality and merit.

When asked to identify sources of the pressure for institutional excellence, informants excluded virtually no one from the list. Respondents perceived faculty, staff, “top” administration, students, as well as inside and outside constituents—in short, “everyone” as vested and interested in the excellence of the institution. According to interviewees, all of these actors operated in some manner as sources of pressure for institutional excellence. Analysis of University history has likewise shown that excellence has been advanced and supported from bottom-up and top-down approaches.

Interviewees acknowledged that past and present University presidents including Presidents Mote, Kirwan and Toll have levied continuous pressure on the campus for higher rankings and other traditional measures of excellence. However, also evident are examples of how faculty, acting as a unit or as individuals, have made notable contributions to the transformation of the institution. The actions of John Pease, the chair of *Promises to Keep: The College Park Plan for Undergraduate Education* and the University senate is one such example. As a result of the Pease report, the University made dramatic enhancements to the undergraduate curriculum and confirmed that concern for excellence and quality was a shared community goal. In 1993, Dr. Ira Berlin, a University professor and the Dean of Undergraduate Students met with a small group of campus administrators about creating new programs for undergraduate students. The idea for living learning communities emerged from this meeting. These programs, currently twelve distinct communities, are now considered one of the hallmarks of the University of Maryland experience. Over the years, the examples set by others in the University community (e.g. faculty, staff, students, and alumni) who positively impact the perceived prestige or status of institution are extolled and supported.

Informants perceive that little conflict has been generated by pressures for excellence because individual members of the institution have been willing partners working toward the same goal. The unity of the campus is captured in the sentiments of respondents that portrayed the process as “a very harmonious activity” with “all” or “everyone” working toward excellence.

This goal oriented sentiment is evident even as one informant talked about the retrenchment period of the 1980's, arguably one of the hardest periods of the University's history:

They had a budget cut situation 20 years ago or so and it was very difficult but it was a great opportunity because they eliminated some of their very weakest departments and it was like pruning a rose bush. The thing isn't going to flourish until you prune the dead limbs and they did that. Brit did that. So things really started collecting momentum towards excellence under his tenure (6)

Study data suggest that while institutional actors were actively engaged in plans to improve the quality of the institution, it was the formal designation of flagship by the State of Maryland that inspired widespread change (Enhancement Plan, 1989).

According to informants, the designation of flagship was effective for two interrelated reasons, the content of the designation; and, the values of the institution.

The formal designation of flagship confronted the University of Maryland with pressure and a promise. The pressure required that the University reach the "upper echelon" of American public research universities; while the promise committed the State to fund the University at a level consistent with peer institutions. However as informants explained, the pressure and promise of the State gained additional saliency when combined with the values of the institution. One informant explained:

The force of institutional excellence... First of all, it's just ingrained in academia... Each person may define this somewhat differently, but it's a meritocracy and so there's just a natural momentum in any institution to get better (14).

According to informants, the pressure and the promise of the State's designation combined with the fertile soil of latent institutional values for merit and prestige produced a ground swell of support and action toward new norms of excellence. In 2006,

this drive for excellence continues and is sustained by widespread campus support and focus for reaching the “upper echelon” of public institutions.

CHAPTER SIX

Strategic Responses to Pressures for Racial Equity and Institutional Excellence

This two-part section examines how campus institutional agents at the University of Maryland, College Park strategically responded to demands for racial equity and institutional excellence from 1988 to 2006. The data suggest that campus actors and interest groups employed different strategies in their responses to these demands depending on whether the pressure was for racial equity or institutional excellence and whether the pressure came from internal or external sources. While the use of strategies may have been different, it is apparent that institutional attempts to address both concerns occurred simultaneously.

This section begins by separately tracing the strategic responses of campus leaders to racial equity and institutional excellence from the time of the 1988 designation of the University of Maryland as the State's flagship institution through the year 2006. This segment draws primarily from documentary data to recreate a descriptive account of the institutional timeline and patterns of action. This section is followed by a more analytic presentation of the strategies for managing the pressures and their perceived impact based on the views of the interview participants

Rhetorical Proclamations

Many internal and external constituents considered the University of Maryland at College Park the State's flagship institution prior to 1988. However, the formal designation of flagship combined with the promise of increased State funding appeared to have a profound effect on the campus. President Kirwan's comments in the weeks

following the formal designation are indicative of the excitement which surrounded the event:

The effect on the morale at College Park has been extraordinary. Those of us who have been here for several decades can remember nothing like it. There is now an excitement, a momentum for change that is unmistakable. The Governor and the leaders of the General Assembly may have expected the legislation reorganizing higher education to be welcomed in College Park, but no one could have predicted the sense of excitement we have witnessed here this semester. As one of our Deans put it at a recent campus convocation, 'These are magical days at College Park'. (Kirwan, Introduction letter, Enhancement Plan).

Armed with the knowledge that the University community was ready for change and empowered by the force of the new designation, President Kirwan introduced a dramatic strategic plan for the University. On May 10, 1989, a little more than six months after the designation of the University of Maryland at College Park as the flagship institution of the State, President Kirwan submitted a document entitled *Enhancing the College Park Campus: An Action Plan* to the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland. In the enhancement document, President Kirwan responded to the mandates of the legislative action by outlining a vision for becoming the State's premiere research university. This document also included his five-year plan of action for the University. To achieve his vision, President Kirwan focused on four areas in which the University would take measured action for improvement. The areas of focus were excellence in undergraduate and graduate education; excellence in developing research enterprises; excellence in service to the state; and excellence in the creation of an inclusive and enduring academic community.

As part of the plan, President Kirwan responded to the pressures for racial equity in two distinctive ways. First, President Kirwan included racial equity as a prominent theme of the plan for distinction. Each of the four areas of the plan included specific

goals to address issues of racial equity. Second, the primary focus of the plan was to ensure numerical compliance with desegregation mandates for the U.S Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR). For example, the plan called for increasing the Black student enrollment from 9.7 percent to 12 percent, intensifying recruitment efforts for Black faculty with the goal of doubling their presence on the campus, and increasing the percentage of Black and minority staff from 12.4 to 18 percent. In the plan, President Kirwan also acknowledged that past University actions have disadvantaged minority populations. For example, referencing the under-representation of minority graduate students at the institution, he noted that “in the past we have not done well by these groups, particularly Black students” (Enhancing the College Park Campus, 1989 p. 13).

While the plan, referred to fostering an atmosphere and community characterized by inclusiveness, few specific goals or initiatives were proposed to support that endeavor. Shortly after the enhancement plan was written, the University adopted a new mission statement. In this statement, the University made a public declaration of its commitment to meeting the OCR desegregation mandate and redefining its reputation for equity and diversity:

Within the next decade, the University seeks to be recognized for its commitment to cultural and racial diversity. Consistent with the institution's desegregation plan, special emphasize will be placed on the recruitment, retention and graduation of Black graduate and undergraduate students. Plans are underway to increase the number of Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglas scholarships for undergraduate students and to increase the number of fully funded fellowships for Black graduate students. In addition, the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research is developing a special recruitment program for students at Bowie and Coppin. Because fewer Black students are electing to pursue graduate education, the University faces a great challenge to achieving its goal. Therefore, the University will increase significantly its efforts to recruit Black graduate students (Mission Statement, 1989. p.8).

Throughout the late 1980's and into the early 1990's, early measures of success in enrollment of African American students became evident. Black student enrollment in the overall undergraduate student population increased as did the representation of Black faculty (Access is Not Enough, 1989). Compared to other predominantly White institutions, the University of Maryland was charting new ground toward achieving racial inclusion. As these results of measures taken to comply with desegregation requirements became public, the University of Maryland began to receive national attention for its accomplishments in diversity. However, despite these tangible gains, as well as the increasing number of public proclamations supportive of diversity and inclusiveness offered by senior level administrators, proponents of racial equity at the University of Maryland grew gradually more concerned that these accomplishments were not impacting core issues of race and equity. African Americans within, and without the campus community, perceived vestiges of the University's discriminatory past which were not being dispelled despite rhetoric to the contrary.

The tension between 'rhetoric and reality', as expressed by some in the community, was evidenced in the protracted lawsuit brought against the University of Maryland by the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). In 1987, the OFCCP, filed an Administrative Complaint against the University of Maryland, that charged the University with violation of federal labor laws. Specifically, the OFCCP plaintiffs who were all African American women and who each had applied repeatedly for secretarial/clerical positions at the University, alleged that, despite being qualified for the positions for which they applied, they were not hired or in some cases, they were not granted an interview. The plaintiffs claimed that the

University had discriminated against them on the basis of their race. The University categorically denied any participation in discriminatory practices.

Early attempts at settlement were unsuccessful. However, later, in 1991, the University and the OFCCP were able to settle the matter. The University which entered into the agreement “for the purpose of avoiding costly and time-consuming litigation and in the spirit of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity”, was not required to admit wrongdoing; however, it was required to satisfy certain terms. Some of the terms of the settlement agreement required the University to: (1) place the plaintiffs on a priority hiring list for offers of employment; (2) develop mandatory EEO training programs for persons responsible for hiring or interviewing for secretarial/clerical positions; and (3) amend the hiring process for secretarial/clerical positions. The agreement called on President Kirwan to release a statement which emphasized “his personal commitment, and the University's commitment, to the University's affirmative action program” (OFCCP Brief).

On October 15, 1989, two years prior to the settlement with OFCCP, the report *Access is Not Enough: A Report to the President Concerning Opportunities for Blacks* began what would prove to be major first step in how the University of Maryland would deal with issues of racial equity. The goal of the Access report was “to inform, challenge and assist the campus in moving beyond providing access to assuring Blacks a productive and successful experience at UMCP”(p. 3).

Though purportedly commissioned by President Kirwan, the report reflected the cry of many African Americans at the University for direct action against racism, “chilly climates”, and the general exclusion of African Americans from various aspects of

University life. Ten years prior to its release, the author, Ray Gillian, Special Assistant to the President and an active member of the University's African American community, had given a similar presentation at a campus retreat. Since that time, he believed that the institution had taken some steps, such as in undergraduate recruitment, to advance racial equity at the University of Maryland. However, he noted that many areas germane to the Black experience at the University were in need of critical attention. Gillian argued that only when the University of Maryland chose to address the disparate experiences of African Americans would the University truly move toward achieving excellence. In his view, examining the status of Blacks on the University of Maryland campus was important in order to "identify areas of success, as well as problems that are hindering [its] pursuit of excellence" (p. 2).

Access is Not Enough presented a comprehensive report on the status of African American students, faculty and staff on the University of Maryland. On the positive side, the report found that the University had made commendable strides toward providing access of Black undergraduate students and had established a fair number of programs to support undergraduate students. However, among other concerns, Gillian found only marginal progress had been realized in the overall recruitment and retention of Black students and faculty. Other deficiencies included an ineffective and impotent campus organizational structure for monitoring equity issues; pre-college programs hampered by limited resources, which included staff shortages; perceptions of unwelcoming climates by Black students, faculty and staff; and a lack of a formal grievance procedure for incidents of racism. In addition to providing a candid portrait of the African American experience at the University of Maryland, the Access report commended the leadership of

the institution for its willingness to engage in change. It also highlighted services and programs on campus that offered support for African Americans and other minorities and provided recommendations for improvement.

Throughout the report, Gillian strategically linked the University's pursuit of excellence to matters of equity and encouraged the campus to see the embracing of racial equity as an opportunity for the University to establish itself as a leader in both regards.

The following statements illustrate his presentation of this argument:

UMCP is a leader in providing access, however, much more is needed if we are going to go beyond providing access to providing an environment for Blacks that is supportive of their individual pursuits of excellence as well as our institutional goal of excellence.

The College Park campus, a leader in providing access for Blacks in higher education, has an opportunity to be a model institution built upon diversity in its students, curriculum, and the workforce. Our current status, our location, and our willingness to critically look at ourselves, as evidenced in this report, places us in a unique position for this leadership role.

Upon its release, *Access is Not Enough* garnered widespread attention across the University of Maryland campus. Ray Gillian scheduled open forums to provide the campus community with formal opportunities for feedback and dialogue. He also scheduled meetings with campus groups such as the Campus Senate and the Black Faculty and Staff Association. These conversations generated new calls for self examination and action.

In the spring of 1990, the Campus Senate passed a resolution calling for the formation of a special committee to follow up on the report and to provide recommendations for further action. Using that resolution, President Kirwan and the Senate formed the Committee on Excellence Through Diversity: Providing Opportunities for Black Americans at College Park, also known as the ETD Committee. President

Kirwan charged the committee with assessing the effectiveness of programs aimed at achieving the full participation of Black Americans in all aspects of campus life, recommending changes in programs that were determined to be deficient, and suggesting new strategies needed to achieve levels of African American participation identified in the campus five year plan, *Enhancing the College Park Campus: An Action Plan*.

In 1992, after a two-year period of data collection and analysis, the ETD Committee submitted a report of its findings to President Kirwan. These findings confirmed much of the *Access Is Not Enough* report. The ETD Committee concluded that as of 1992, the University of Maryland had made important strides in creating opportunities for African Americans. For example, the Committee noted increases in the representation of Black students on the campus. They also recognized the University's high ranking in the award of baccalaureates and doctoral degrees to African Americans compared to other predominantly White institutions. Notwithstanding these advances, the Committee identified areas where the experiences of the Black members of the campus community were considerably different than the experiences of their non-Black counterparts. Among the challenges noted by the ETD Committee were the myriad of institutionalized factors leading to a "revolving door" of Black faculty, Black student perceptions of campus hostility and discrimination, and the disparate experiences of the Black staff compared to their White colleagues.

As a striking example of high turn over rate of Black faculty, the Committee pointed to the 93% attrition rate of 14 Black faculty members (tenured and untenured) hired at the University in years of 1982-1985. Less than ten years later, at the time of the ETD Committee report, only one faculty member hired within that three year span still

remained at the University. The ETD also reported that between 1980 and 1990 only one Black professor was promoted to full professor. Adding to these observations were Black faculty's accounts of instances of isolation, racism, devaluation of scholarship, and a lack of collegiality. Based on these findings, the ETD Committee recommended that the University take immediate and bold measures to build a culture of accountability for racial, ethnic and gender equity in the faculty. Some of the key changes recommended by the Committee included holding chairs, deans, and unit heads accountable for "good faith" efforts for recruitment; opposing the use of quotas in faculty hiring, broadening the narrow and inadequate measures of quality for all faculty, expanding the use of minority pool lines (MPLs), and enhancing the power and authority of equity officers.

ETD findings also revealed differences between the experiences and perceptions of Black and White students and staff. On a macro level, the University had clear indication of difference in the success of African American students on campus. Though the University was confronted with a low five-year graduation rate of 56% for all students, African American students' graduation rates were on average more than 20 percentage points lower at 35%. The Committee found disparities in the perception of Black and White students concerning racial attitudes and behaviors at the University as well. Half of all Black students reported that they had observed hostility and anti-Black behaviors, while only 29% of White students claimed to have observed such behaviors. ETD findings revealed that compared to other student groups, Black students were more likely to report feeling that their professors had lower expectations of them and they were more likely to perceive discrimination in the selection of University honors or awards.

According to the ETD Committee African American faculty and students were not the only ones to perceive campus discrimination. African American staff also reported experiencing disparate treatment from their White counterparts. For example, according to the ETD findings, seventy two (72%) of Black University staff were more likely perceive campus race relations as only fair or poor compared to 29% of non-Black employees.

In sum, the ETD report concluded that the University of Maryland had made important gains in complying with pressures for racial desegregation. However, the University was still considerably short of its proclaimed goal of inclusiveness and racial equity or “excellence through diversity”. In order to fulfill that goal, the ETD Committee urged the University to continue “an on-going, long-term process of self-examination and institutional change” (ETD Committee Report, 1991, p.5).

In June 1992, one month before the release of the ETD Committee findings, the campus completed the 1992 Middle States Commission on Higher Education periodic review. An entire chapter of the report, entitled *Progress in Equity and Diversity* was dedicated to the process of self-examination concerning issues of racial equity. The findings of the chapter echoed those of *Access is Not Enough* and presented yet another clarion call for University-wide change on matters of racial equity.

Together these reports took the important step of exposing for scrutiny and action the undercurrent of racial discrimination and racial inequity at the University of Maryland. These reports ensured that President Kirwan, the institutional leadership, and, indeed, the entire campus community were fully informed of the opportunities and challenges facing the institution as it worked toward achieving racial equity. Given this

knowledge, Ray Gillian's words stood as a challenge for action "if the College Park campus fails to openly admit and attack racism in all its forms on campus, it will compromise its commitment to excellence" ("Access Is Not Enough" p.28).

The Promise of Racial Equity: Programmatic Initiatives and Visible Stances

These reports indicated that the current strategy of rhetorical proclamations and symbolic statements, were not enough to eliminate the stigma of segregation and discrimination at the University. While the reports praised the University's actions to expand access and enrollment of African Americans and other underrepresented groups, they too were judged to be limited and lacking. The reports concluded that unless addressed, the institution's reputation would jeopardize the University's aspirations for greatness. The reports attempted to neutralize the threat by advancing collective recommendations which were far reaching. As the reports made clear, change in the University's reputation and reality would only come through systematic efforts to with commitment from students, staff, and faculty.

Faced with this reality, President Kirwan heeded the reports and modified his strategy for leading and responding to issues of racial equity. In the new strategy, Kirwan retained his symbolic and visible rhetoric about equity and diversity, but added programmatic initiatives and measures of accountability. This strategy is evident in his 1993 memorandum to deans, directors, and department chairs. In this memo, entitled *An action plan in response to studies of progress toward diversity goals for African American Faculty, Staff, and Students*, President Kirwan addressed four areas which all the previous reports had criticized the recruitment, retention, and graduation of African American students; the appointment, retention and promotion of African American

faculty; the degree of job satisfaction of African American staff members; and the general climate on the campus for African American employees and students. The initiatives of the plan were substantial. President Kirwan committed resources, set goals, and established firm accountability measures to assure completion. The plan included \$2.5 million allocation for upgrading and expansion of the Nyumburu African American Cultural Center, college specific retention and graduation goals, hiring goals for African American faculty by college, and increases to the minority pool lines. The plan required units who received minority hiring funds to submit plans showing how they would support appointees through to the award of tenure. The plan also required that units develop recruitment measures to increase the number of African American job applicants. President Kirwan's plan also expanded the scope of the campus' Diversity Accountability and Implementation Plan (DAIP) by making DAIP goals and assessment measures required parts of the annual performance assessment of chairs, directors, deans, and vice presidents (Action Plan, 1993).

The strength of President Kirwan's Action Plan lay in its strategic use of symbolism and direct accountability measures. Though he was the chief author of the action plan, President Kirwan credited its development to a broad based consensus and to the cooperation of many different campus constituent groups. In acknowledging the offices and individuals responsible for equity affairs (e.g. The President's Commission on Ethnic Minority Issues, The Black Faculty and Staff Executive Committee, and the Equity Council) as well as members of the academic community including Deans and the Council of Deans, President Kirwan stated:

Discussions with all of these groups and the responses from many individuals have been invaluable to me in formulating the present plan. Indeed, I can say with

some confidence that the proposals described below represent a consensus from the advice I have received on how the campus can best achieve its diversity and community development goals as they relate to African American faculty, students, and staff (Action Plan, 1993, p.1).

The details of the plan suggested that it was strategically written to command attention and inspire action. President Kirwan addressed the memo to deans, directors, and department chairs and included a timeline for initiation and completion of initiatives. He also named persons responsible for key actions and listed accountability measures by which success would be judged.

The action plan was but one of President Kirwan's tools to communicate the value of racial equity and his desire to see institutional change. One informant commented on President Kirwan's strategic actions on the behalf of racial equity by noting:

From that point forward Brit Kirwan really did create a lot of energy and pressure and excitement about it. And in that context I think there was some initiative put in place. People were hired, things were done to basically reinforce that. And I also think, the best as I can recall, that some time at that point we were doing some of the first strategic plans for the campus and this was written into the plans as sort of an expectation. (4)

President Kirwan continued to use symbolic measures to signal the shifting identity of the University as well as his expectation for change. One such example was the adoption of an institutional policy on inclusive language which was approved in 1991. This policy neither modified a preexisting policy nor created a new procedure; it simply "reaffirmed [the University of Maryland's] commitment to creating a campus environment free of discrimination and bias" and encouraged the use of gender neutral and inclusive language (UMCP Policy on Inclusive Language).

For some informants, one of the most important signals of the campus's changing commitment to diversity was the high visibility of African American executive staff. Informants noted that President Kirwan was surrounded by African American advisors and staff members who kept him informed and responsive to campus racial issues. One informant shared that President Kirwan created an open door policy for his administration by including African American staff who were willing to address issues of racial equity:

One thing about the Kirwan administration, he had selected as his chief of staff, a Black woman who was very well respected, who advised him almost on anything, and whom he respected a great deal and little by little broadened her responsibilities and the two of them were seemingly always on the same page with respect to Black faculty and faculty of color and retention. So we always had access (we as a Black faculty in particular) to Brit Kirwan and Marie Davidson and they would meet with us, not knowing the whole story, would come as a group of Black faculty to voice our concerns and never once did they not have the door open to receive us, never once, even though we brought contentious problems their way, they would sit down an hour, an hour and a half and talk with us and sometimes make promises that they'd work on this area, or work on that area and so forth (13).

Perhaps the most telling action that University leadership, particularly President Kirwan, were willing to beyond the rhetoric of racial equity to substantive action was demonstrated when he and the University were sued for offering the race-based Banneker scholarship program.

Public Defenses: The Banneker Court Case: Podberesky v. Kirwan

The landmark case of Podberesky v. Kirwan considered the legality of race-based initiatives on college campuses. In 1990, a University of Maryland student, Daniel Podberesky brought suit against the University because, as a Hispanic student, he was not considered for the University's Banneker scholarship program. While Podberesky had the academic eligibility requirements for the scholarship, he was not awarded the

scholarship because the program was available only to African American students. The issue before the court rested squarely on the question of whether the University of Maryland could maintain a separate merit scholarship program that it voluntarily established for which only African American students were eligible.

The University defended the position of maintaining a race exclusive scholarship program based on what it argued was a long history of documented discrimination against African Americans by the University. In 1979, the University established the Banneker program as a specific initiative to comply with the desegregation mandates of the Office for Civil Rights and to redress the enduring effects of past discrimination.

The case unfolded as a contentious battle over the course of four years. The University won the first round in 1991 after a federal judge at the United States District Court level dismissed the case. However, Podberesky immediately appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. During this second round of litigation, the Fourth Circuit Court presented President Kirwan and the University with a critical decision “either abandon the Banneker Scholarship program or undertake a thorough self-examination of the status of race on campus” (Bayly, 1998, p.4). The University chose what would prove to be a highly visible and prolonged period of self-scrutiny. A year later, President Kirwan released the findings of the report entitled the *Decision and Report of the University of Maryland at College Park Regarding the Benjamin Banneker Scholarship Program*. According to Bayly (1998):

The sixty-one page *Report*, supported by sixty-nine exhibits, concluded that four significant effects of past discrimination against African Americans existed at the University of Maryland. These effects were: an adverse reputation among members of the African American community; perceptions of a hostile campus climate; underrepresentation of African Americans in student enrollment; and low African American retention and graduation rates. The *Report* concluded that the

Banneker program was effective in remedying these present effects because it provided role models and peer mentors to African American students, thus increasing overall enrollment and, retention and graduation rates. Studies presented in the *Report* showed that the University's experience with race-neutral merit scholarships failed to recruit Banneker-profile students, and that the Banneker program, which accounted for about one percent of the total available financial aid, had a minimal effect on non-African American students. The Banneker program thus represented a narrow tailoring of the University's resources and energies. Banneker worked, the *Report* found, not only to remedy the identified present effects of past discrimination, but also to achieve a diverse student body, an essential element of the University's instructional mission (p.5).

Despite significant University effort, the Fourth Circuit Court did not accept the University's argument and the University of Maryland lost the case. In 1995, the University geared up for yet another battle by appealing the Fourth Circuit's decision to the United States Supreme Court. In a statement defending the University's decision to appeal the Banneker decision, President Kirwan wrote:

Some have questioned the University of Maryland's rationale for fighting to continue its Banneker Scholarships... Our defense of these scholarships is not based on abstractions, but rather on pragmatic consideration of where this university has come from, where it stands today, and what it intends to become....As a segregated institution, this is the university that denied admission to the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall simply because of the color of his skin. Well into the 1970s the University actively resisted integration, causing a gulf between Maryland's African Americans and their state university; a gulf that, we can document, remains today in the hearts of many. The vestiges of state-sanctioned discrimination run deep: today Black students remain the only minority segment under-represented on the University of Maryland campus when compared to their presence in the region's population. With two decades of proactive recruitment of African Americans through programs like the Banneker Scholarships, we are making notable progress...Their presence is an essential element in the diversity of the campus. And they serve as outstanding role models for all students, but most especially for other Black students, eloquently signaling that today's University of Maryland offers a supportive, welcoming environment for all high-achieving students (President Kirwan Banneker Statement, 1995).

In 1995, the United States Supreme Court declined to hear the case so the decision of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals remained unchallenged. The Fourth

Circuit's decision affirmed that race-exclusive scholarships are permissible only if they are narrowly tailored to remedy the effects of past discrimination by the institution. After losing the Banneker case, the University made adjustments to its affirmative action programs and eliminated race exclusive awards. The University combined the Banneker program with the Francis Scott Key program and opened it to students irrespective of race.

Re-conceptualizing Racial Equity

President Kirwan's leadership during the Banneker litigation and the committed action of the entire campus community were powerful conveyors of the University's commitment to erasing the legacy of racist practices against African Americans. When the Banneker case ended in 1995, it was clear that the long ordeal of the case did not deter the University from actively promoting itself as a safe and inclusive place. In fact, those who have studied issues of racial equity and diversity at the University of Maryland during this time suggest that the Banneker case served to institutionalize diversity at the University (e.g. Ting, 2004; McCarthy, 2005).

In what would seem to occur overnight for some, but for others after a lifetime of waiting, the University of Maryland began to experience a shift in the institutionalization of diversity efforts. Initiatives and programs to foster diversity were created or expanded across Students Affairs, Academic Affairs and throughout the campus. In 1994, the University adopted a new core curriculum which required undergraduate students to take a diversity course about marginalized populations or racial and ethnic minorities. This addition to the curriculum bolstered the changes made in the late 1980's by the Greer

Report and Curriculum Transformation Project which had sought to assist faculty in integrating diverse perspectives in their classes.

In that same year, the Ford Foundation awarded a \$1,000,000 grant to the institution to serve as a model campus for campus diversity initiatives. In 1995, the University of Maryland, in collaboration with the Association of American Colleges and Universities, published a monograph entitled the *Diversity Blueprint: A Planning Manual for Colleges and Universities* which highlighted the institution's equity and diversity initiatives and the process of institutionalizing them. The Blueprint project brought teams of senior administrators from colleges and universities across the country to visit the campus to learn about the diversity model.

Yet, the Podberesky case was not without consequence. Data analysis suggests that the legal challenge of Podberesky forced campus leaders to abandon their rhetorical and, in some instances, programmatic focus on African Americans. Thus, while earlier documents and reports explicitly focused on desegregation and providing remedies for racial inequity against African Americans, subsequent documents either celebrated the University's achievements relative to the growing presence of ethnic and minority students or reaffirmed the campus' commitment to diversity. For example, in 1993, the University adopted another mission statement in which issues of racial inequity and desegregation were almost entirely omitted. The only mention of race was contained in the paragraph below:

As a constituent institution of the University of Maryland System, UMCP cooperates with other educational segments in Maryland and collaborates with other UMS institutions to provide citizens access to high-quality educational services and to meet the economic and cultural needs of Maryland. Because excellence knows no distinctions of race, culture, or gender, UMCP has made the

diversity of its human resources and educational opportunities a distinguishing characteristic of its institutional identity (Mission Statement, 1993, p.1).

Though the Banneker case and early equity related reports focused on the experiences of African Americans, the University post Banneker sought to be inclusive of other races and culture. The initial focus on African Americans was, in a large part, due to the University's historical exclusion and discrimination against African Americans. This initial focus was influenced by the specific remedies called for in the federal desegregation mandate and the large numbers of African Americans represented in the State of Maryland and the counties surrounding the University. Around the time of the Banneker decision, the growing population of other racial minorities contested the University's emerging commitment to equity for African Americans and called for increased attention to their own unique situations. These voices pushed campus leadership for inclusion into the discussion on campus equity and urged a re-conceptualization of diversity.

In 1993, President Kirwan appointed the Asian, Hispanic and Native American Task Force to examine issues related to the experiences of the groups at the University. Four years later, President Kirwan created the President's Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. Both of these commissions represented an attempt by the University to broaden the discussion concerning equity and to address concerns of other campus constituents.

The 1996 strategic plan exemplified how campus leaders re-conceptualized diversity as a campus value. Unlike some of the earlier University documents, the 1996 strategic plan omitted targeted numerical goals for the recruitment and retention of African Americans. Instead, the plan articulated broad goals which, without

specification, called for “recruiting larger numbers of academically-talented minority students”. The plan also sought to ensure that diversity was acknowledged as an important asset in the University’s quest for distinction. For example in enumerating the strengths of the University, the plan proclaimed that the University “enjoy[ed] a degree of diversity in our student body other universities are still striving to attain”. The plan also recognized that the “University has assumed a position of leadership in American higher education through its commitment to diversity and the transformation of the curriculum to address issues and new scholarship relating to women and our multi-cultural heritage” (Strategic Plan, 1996, p. 8).

In 1998, after over thirty years of service in a variety of capacities, President Kirwan resigned his position as President of the University of Maryland at College Park to assume the presidency of the Ohio State University. In his final speech before the College Park Senate, President Kirwan reflected on his eight years as president by examining the University’s progress, challenges, and accomplishments during his tenure. Commenting on his inaugural vision to create an institution “where excellence is achieved through diversity” he stated:

If I were limited to citing only one or two accomplishments of this University over the past decade, accomplishments that define the institution, that have enhanced our stature and brought us national recognition, I would clearly include our efforts in building a diverse community. This has not been grafted on or decreed from above, but has grown organically out of the day-in, day-out efforts of those who make up this community. It grows from and is nurtured by thousands of individual efforts to understand, include, accept and respect each other. Although in absolute terms, we and the rest of higher education still have a long way to go, the University of Maryland is now widely recognized as a national model for a university committed to diversity. We were the university chosen by the President's Initiative on Race to host the dialogue on race and higher education. And, as we speak, the Ford Foundation is producing a manual documenting what we as a university have done and how we have steadfastly

worked toward our diversity goals over the past decade (“Kirwan Farewell Speech”, 1998)

Building Bridges: Diversity at the University of Maryland 1998-2006

In the fall of 1998, Clayton Daniel Mote, Jr. joined the University of Maryland as its 27th President. President Mote, as will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, was recruited and hired as president for his potential to take the University of Maryland to the next level of institutional excellence. In casting this vision for excellence, major portions of early campus addresses, including his inaugural speech and his early State of the Campus addresses, laid out his strategic plan for reaching high degrees of excellence or commended particular campus units or individuals for having met this mark. In particular Mote enumerated four goals for the campus.

- Build a culture of excellence across the University that raises us to the ranks of the most eminent public research universities;
- Offer an enriched educational experience to all students that takes full advantage of the special strengths of a research university and prepares them to be productive members of society;
- Build our Maryland family of alumni and friends to create a network of allegiance and support for the University; and
- Engage in a range of partnerships with private companies, government agencies and laboratories, and other research universities in the region and the State to make the University a major driving force in the economic development and well-being of the citizens of Maryland (President Mote, Inaugural Address, 1999).

Initially under President Mote, racial equity and diversity were seldom highlighted as campus wide goals or celebrated as a distinctive campus identity or primary institutional values. President Mote’s relative silence on issues of equity and diversity came to an end, however, when over the course of a year the University was the target of a series of hate crimes against African-American students, faculty, and campus leaders.

The first incident occurred in his first week on campus. President Mote immediately condemned the actions. A year later in his augural address he referred back to the incident, saying:

And I am sad to say that there are students whose educational experience has been marred by incidents of intolerance. Last September, during my first week on campus, a very ugly incident happened. You may have read about it in the papers. Two African-American freshman students were made to feel unwelcome in a campus dormitory. And because of that, all of us were sullied. Frankly, I was sickened by it. I felt deeply for the students and their families, and I was terribly saddened for our campus family too. I feel it personally as the head of this Maryland family. I will respond against acts of intolerance with all my power and conviction (President Mote, Inaugural address, 1999).

Less than a year later, several African American students, faculty, and campus leaders received threatening letters filled with explicit and racially offensive terms. In his 2000 State of the Campus address President Mote departed from his usual rhetorical emphasis on prestige and excellence by stating:

While I speak often about our culture of excellence extending across the campus, I should also speak to our culture of tolerance and civility that need to go along with it...our collective commitment to fight intolerance together gives us strength and the chance to suppress this demon. Accordingly we will keep it at bay even though it will continue to harass us on occasion” (State of the Campus Address, 2000).

The hate crime incidents drew widespread local and national media attention and again placed the University of Maryland in the national spotlight for issues surrounding race. A campus document on the incidents reported that the University led a “massive investigation” into the incidents that included the State Police, FBI, Department of Defense, and the National Security Agency. Different campus groups sponsored rallies. President Mote, as well as State and County officials attended many of them to denounce the attack and to support peace and understanding. According to the document, the incidents revealed concerns about the University’s response to the incidents. One area of

concern was that the campus was not prepared for the magnitude of the attacks. The University learned that quick and decisive action from the President and administration was needed and a hate incident protocols had to be developed. The document suggested that the incidents reinforced the value of education and dialogue, such as those sponsored by the Office of Human Relations, between different campus groups (“Responding to Hate Crimes and Incidents” PowerPoint).

The hate crime incidents caused another shift in how the value of diversity was embodied and characterized at the University of Maryland. Though culture and race were indelible parts of all University diversity initiatives, programs developed as a response to the incidents focused on “building bridges” and encouraging interaction across a wide range of differences notably, gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, and religion.

Immediately following the hate incidents, the Office of Human Relations Programs (OHRP) gained greater campus visibility by developing a week of initiatives to increase the campus’ awareness of hate crimes. The theme of the week was “Building Bridges: Looking Back, Moving Forward”. Subsequent OHRP initiatives included the expansion of a special project tracing the timeline of diversity initiatives on campus and the formation of a special program entitled Words of Engagement. “Words of Engagement” is an OHRP program which initially began to provide undergraduate students with opportunities to have small group discussions with other students different from themselves. The goal of these dialogues is to "encourage[s] students to share their experiences and collective voice to create an open and socially just campus environment" (“Diversity Timeline” website).

In 2000, President Mote responded to the hate crime incidents by commissioning a 21-member University panel made up of students, faculty and administrators. President Mote charged the panel to identify opportunities to “reduce impediments to building understanding and enlightenment; reduce institutionalized balkanization of the campus; and propose steps to enhance the opportunity for increased interchange and understanding across our diverse community” (“Charge to Diversity Panel”, p. 1). The panel spent eight months collecting data and discussing the issues. The final report covered a wide-array of issues from physical safety to enhancing the curriculum.

The overall impression of the panel was that the University had made remarkable progress in becoming a more inclusive campus, as evidenced by the diverse population of the campus as well as the numerous groups, commissions, committees, and initiatives dedicated to diversity and identity-based groups. While the committee concluded that the numerous identity-based groups were necessary for providing safe and welcoming places, they recommended more opportunities for bringing diverse groups together for sharing and learning. The panel found that the University’s history of segregation and open discrimination against African Americans was generally unknown around campus. Other areas of concern found by the diversity panel included the leveling off in the number of minority faculty and the decline in the enrollment of African American and Asian students. In reference to those declines the committee stated:

Many people on our campus, including the Vice-Presidents, expressed concern to us that the campus was experiencing a loss of momentum in its recruitment of faculty and students of color and dated this either to the court decision in the Podberesky v. Kirwan (Banneker) case or to the University's possible overreaction to that decision, resulting in the halting of our most pro-active minority recruitment programs”(Section C: Overall Impressions (online)).

The committee likewise found that the highest level of the University's administration, comprised completely of White men, was lacking in racial and gender diversity. To counteract these challenges the panel called for "reenergized retention and recruitment efforts", that focused on diversifying the vice presidential staff, increased flexibility in faculty hiring procedures, and the realignment of merit based funding for undergraduate and graduate students so that measures in addition to standardized tests scores were considered in the awarding of aid. The panel encouraged the University to build on its expertise in diversity by developing a research focus on the scholarship of diversity and to increase collaboration within and among campus groups responsible for student living and learning.

While all of the above noted suggestions were important, the committee chose to address their most critical suggestions directly to President Mote:

Were we to identify one single action--the magic bullet--that would most effectively move us from a "diverse campus to a diverse community" it would be the President's articulation of these goals. Although some colleagues have shared with the Panel their concern that the campus has been experiencing a loss of momentum in achieving its equity goals, this year was certainly re-energizing. The President spoke out--loud, clear, and repeatedly--and the campus listened. We conclude therefore with suggestions intended for the President alone. Many of these may seem symbolic, since even the President has limited powers to effect change in a public university; but their significance should not be underestimated. Moral suasion and support for the whole of our community go a long way in making us proud to be members of this community (Section G: Leadership (online)).

Noting a lack of accountability for progress in implementing diversity on the University of Maryland campus, the panel urged President Mote to assign equity concerns and the DAIP process to a vice president who had "a specialist's knowledge of the research on diversity, a track record of successful implementation of diversity programs, and, of course, the clout to hold others accountable". According to the panel,

“accountability can be achieved only by significantly restructuring the entire equity system and creating a mechanism for bringing responsibility for equity and diversity right into the President's cabinet” (Section G: Leadership (online)).

President Mote's earlier silence on issues of racial equity and diversity did not go unnoticed by the panel. In response, the diversity panel identified three roles that they urged President Mote to embody: diversity spokesperson, enabler of key projects and diversity advocate. To fulfill these roles, they advised President Mote to “continue to articulate clearly, and in every possible setting, that a significant aspect of the excellence of University of Maryland is our diverse community, and to include mention of the quality and depth of the research and scholarship on diversity when naming our particular centers of excellence.” (Diversity Panel Report Section G: Leadership (online)). A significant part of their recommendation was urging President Mote to increase the diversity of his presidential cabinet and to implement training for the highest level of administration including Vice Presidents, Deans and Department Chairs. The panel also encouraged President Mote to “break the logjam of projects too long studied and too long relegated to a back burner” and petition the Board of Regents for resolution of issues such as domestic partner benefits and the overrepresentation of persons of color as contingent employees (Diversity Panel Report Section G: Leadership (online)).

In response to the diversity panel, President Mote appointed an ad hoc advisory committee, referred to as the Goldstein Committee, to review several recommendations of the diversity panel including the campus equity system and the implementation of the human relations code. The Goldstein Committee recommended the creation of a position with responsibilities for providing leadership and advocacy for issues of equity and

diversity. The position would be a part of the President's Cabinet and serve as a liaison between the President's Cabinet and the Council of Deans. The committee also recommended a complete restructuring of the campus equity system with responsibility given to the appointed individual to oversee all offices and activities related to issues of equity and diversity. In addition to these responsibilities, the individual would have oversight of the Equity Council, Human Relations Office, the President's Commissions and the faculty and staff Ombuds officers (Goldstein Committee, 2001)

President Mote accepted the Goldstein Committee's recommendations and appointed the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Robert Waters, as the newly created Special Assistant to the President for Equity and Diversity. Dr. Waters was charged with implementing the recommendations outlined in the Goldstein Committee report, and serving as the person responsible for campus equity initiatives.

Though President Mote did not explicitly address the recommendations that the diversity panel specifically directed to him, analysis of subsequent presidential speeches suggest that the Committee's recommendations were taken to heart. For example, in the 2001 State of the Campus address, President Mote devoted part of his speech to highlighting campus diversity and he expressed a desire for the campus "to be known for its inclusiveness." Several key aspects of his speech included recognition of the newly created position of Special Assistant to the President; commendation of colleges, such as the School of Engineering, for successfully recruiting diverse faculty; highlighting special diversity initiatives; and the celebration of the diversity of the University community (State of the Campus, 2001).

At the same time of the diversity panel's analysis of the campus, the Provost was spearheading the development of the year 2000 University strategic plan. The plan recognized that much had changed in the University and the State of Maryland since the 1996 strategic plan was written. For example, "a new Provost was appointed in 1997, a new President in 1998, and by 1999, there had been a change in leadership in almost half of the 13 colleges and professional schools and in several critical support units" (Strategic Plan, 2000, p. 2). No longer hampered by a tight economy, the State had substantially increased the financial support of the University, and in 1999 the General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the University as the Flagship Institution of the State" (Strategic Plan, 2000, p. 2). In light of these changes, the plan reaffirmed the University's intention to meet the goals for excellence and distinction set out by President Mote in his inaugural address. However, as the following passage exemplifies, the plan cited the University's commitment to diversity as a unique strength:

As we strive to achieve greater excellence in our research and instruction, we will also build on the strengths that are special to the University of Maryland. One of the University's goals in the last two decades has been to build a model multi-racial, multi-generational, multi-ethnic community. Our commitment to excellence in our faculty and educational programs has been matched by a strong belief that diversity among faculty, staff, and students is a central part of that excellence and is a priority of the University community. Through numerous campus-wide activities to achieve greater diversity and inclusiveness, the University has built a solid foundation from which to create a campus that thrives on diversity. This success is a major strength, which provides a foundation for an energetic new campus-wide push to achieve community with diversity (Strategic Plan, 2000, p. 3).

Diversity was included as one of the five initiatives that would serve as the framework for the plan. The specific initiative called on the campus community to "ensur[e] a university environment that is inclusive as well as diverse and that fosters a spirit of community among faculty, staff, and students" (Strategic Plan, 2000, p. 9).

New Threats to Diversity

The 2000 strategic plan revealed that campus leaders were quite aware of the changing national sentiment in relation to affirmative action and racial equity. Recognizing that equity related programs were being challenged in courts across the nation, the plan stated: “In the face of legal challenges to traditional affirmative action programs and recent declines in the numbers of students and faculty of color, the University needs to seek new ways to maintain and increase the diversity among its faculty, staff, and students that it counts as one of its strengths” (Strategic Plan, 2000, p. 7).

Undoubtedly, the legal challenges referenced by the strategic plan included the University of Michigan courts cases of *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger* that were both pending at this time. In the *Grutter* case, Barbara Grutter an unsuccessful White applicant to the University of Michigan law school challenged the admission policies of the institution. Similarly, *Gratz* was a suit against the University of Michigan’s undergraduate College of Arts and Sciences by a class of unsuccessful White applicants. Backed by the Center for Individual Rights, both cases challenged the race consciousness admission programs of the University of Michigan by arguing that the programs violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (University of Michigan website).

On June 23, 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court issued decisions in the cases. In the case of *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the Court upheld the University’s position and found that diversity is a compelling interest in higher education, and that universities can take race into account as one of a number of factors to achieve the educational benefits of a diverse

student body. The Court also found that “the individualized, whole-file review used in the University of Michigan Law School’s admissions process [was] narrowly tailored to achieve the educational benefits of diversity...[and] the Law School’s goal of attaining a critical mass of underrepresented minority students does not transform its program into a quota” (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 US 306, 2003).

In the *Gratz* case, the Supreme Court held that undergraduate admissions could use race as one of many factors in the process to achieve educational diversity. However, they found that the University’s process of automatically awarding twenty (20) points to students from underrepresented minority groups was not narrowly tailored, and was therefore unconstitutional (*Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 US 244, 2003).

Though the University of Michigan cases had not been decided at the time, the University of Maryland’s 2000 strategic plan mirrored the 1996 strategic plan in that no numerical goals for maintaining or promoting racial equity were promoted. Instead, the plan rhetorically recognized diversity as a unique feature and core value of the University and declared that the University would continue to prioritize diversity efforts.

After the Supreme Court decided the University of Michigan cases, President Mote released a statement commenting on the decisions. In the statement, President Mote expressed that the University was “heartened” by the Supreme Court ruling which affirmed the use of race as a factor in admissions. He offered reassurance that while the University believed that its admission practices which had been in place since 1991 were consistent with the rulings, they would undergo further scrutiny to ensure compliance. President Mote also offered a perspective on the University’s goal of diversity given the University’s increasing emphasis on selectivity and prestige:

Over the past decade, Maryland has become increasingly selective as we fulfill the State's mandate to serve the most promising students. Our undergraduate programs attract large numbers of applicants with superior talent and potential, and we are pleased that more than a third of students are from minority groups. We are proud to be among the nation's top five research universities awarding bachelor's degrees and Ph.D.'s to African American students (according to *Black Issues in Higher Education*). Our commitment to academic excellence requires our commitment to diversity, and we are bound to the aggressive pursuit of both. (President Mote's Statement on the Michigan Court Cases, 2003).

Under President Mote's leadership, the University has sought to maintain diversity through the development of student programs which promote affordability and accessibility. Though race neutral, these programs have widened opportunities for predominantly minority and low income students. Shortly after arriving at the University, President Mote established the Baltimore Incentive Awards Program based on a program at University of California at Berkeley. The program provides full four-year scholarships to the University of Maryland to "students who demonstrate uncommon persistence, academic ability, and maturity despite adverse life situations" (Incentive program website). In fall 2001, the University piloted this program with nine participating Baltimore City high schools before expanding, in 2006, to five additional high schools in Prince George's County. In similar fashion, the Office of Student Financial Aid launched the Maryland Pathways initiative in 2005. By providing a collection of grants and scholarships, Pathways guarantees that in-state students with family incomes between \$22,000 and \$65,000 will not graduate with debt exceeding the cost of one year's tuition, room and board.

Another program developed to promote access and affordability is the Maryland Transfer Advantage Program. This program was inaugurated in 2006, in collaboration with community colleges in the State of Maryland. Students in this program are

conditionally admitted to the University of Maryland at the time of their enrollment in the community college. Students are able to transfer to the University if they maintain an acceptable record of performance at the community college. These programs are widely touted by President Mote and the University leadership, in communication with alumni, in fundraising campaigns, State of the Campus addresses and other presidential addresses, as evidence of the University of Maryland's continued commitment to accessibility and affordability.

Section Summary: Strategic Responses to Pressures for Racial Equity

Since 1988, the University of Maryland, College Park has undergone noticeable changes with respect to the prioritization and centrality of racial equity in campus life and culture. Recognizing that the designation of the University as the State of Maryland's flagship institution and the promise of increased funding had created a window of opportunity for University-wide change, President Kirwan developed a comprehensive and far reaching plan in which racial equity was prominently featured as an important aspect of the University's quest for distinction.

This plan explicitly called for specific, measurable increases in the representation of African American students, faculty and staff. Over the years, while the University would see increases in the representation of African American undergraduate students, report after report noted the "chilly" campus climate and persistent challenges in retaining Black undergraduates and recruiting and retaining African American graduate students and faculty.

President Kirwan's strategy for dealing with these issues was both symbolic and substantive. President Kirwan maintained a visible and engaged presence by treating

issues of racial equity as important and worthy of full consideration. Reports were commissioned and panels were organized to research the issues and to offer recommendations. These recommendations were in turn, acted on through the development of special initiatives and the allocation of University resources. The diversity of President Kirwan's closest advisors, Ray Gillian and Marie Davidson, contributed to perceptions of an "open door" for open dialogue and candid "self-evaluation" about the state of race relations on campus. President Kirwan's firm stance on defending the Banneker scholarship demonstrated to the campus community and the nation the value that the University of Maryland placed on racial equity. The Banneker case reportedly unified the campus and institutionalized racial equity and diversity in the campus culture. The loss in the Banneker case and the growing presence of other racial and cultural groups impacted how diversity and racial equity were implemented on campus and shifted the University's focus from meeting specific and measurable goals of racial equity for African Americans to a more inclusive conceptualization of diversity. This more general notion of diversity encouraged acceptance of a broad range of individual differences, which encompassed race, but extended to gender, sexual orientation and religious affiliation.

In 1998, President Kirwan resigned from the University of Maryland to serve as the president of the Ohio State University. At the time of his departure, the campus had garnered a national reputation as a model institution for diversity. President Kirwan was succeeded by President Mote who was recruited for his perceived ability to take the University to new heights of excellence and prestige. Thus, true to his charge, President Mote, in the early days of his presidency, focused on little else. A rash of hate crimes

against African Americans compelled President Mote to broaden his focus and lead the campus through the difficult period. To his credit, President Mote consistently and forcefully denounced the actions of prejudice and called on the campus to promote civility and a respect for differences. A report following the hate crimes incidents shed light on areas of racial equity where the University remained challenged. To address these areas, President Mote restructured the University's equity system, created a cabinet level coordinator for campus diversity affairs and seemingly increased his own involvement in diversity affairs.

As President Mote's presidency continues, it is clear that the institution's commitment to diversity has been tested by societal changes, institutional aspirations, and continued threats to affirmative action. Despite these challenges, President Mote has reaffirmed the University's commitment to diversity through continued support of longstanding diversity initiatives, as well as the development of new programs. While newly developed programs such as the Baltimore Incentive and Maryland Pathways have focused on providing access and affordability to students irrespective of race, students of color are among the primary benefactors of these programs.

Creating an Identity of Excellence: First Steps and Early Promises

At the time of its designation as the flagship institution of the State of Maryland, the University of Maryland at College Park was hardly a place to be applauded or emulated. According to University documents, the campus viewed itself as a, "large and impersonal place where students [had] limited opportunities for meaningful interaction with faculty or with other students outside their disciplines" (Enhancement Plan p. 10).

Many internal and external constituents perceived that the University had little to offer Maryland's best and brightest students. The average GPA of the incoming class was 3.0; the University only offered first year students fifty percent (50%) of the financial aid available at peer institutions; the honors program was severally underdeveloped and funded; and less than half of an entering first year class graduated within five years (Enhancement plan, 1989). It was clear that the University had much work to do before it could fully exemplify the mantle of "flagship".

Though President Kirwan was forthright about the challenges facing the University in the document *Enhancing the College Park Campus: An Action Plan*, the State's promise of \$100 million in state general funds over a five year period beginning in fiscal year 1991 did much to inspire the campus. As the University's first official document after its designation as flagship, the enhancement plan set the stage for how the University of Maryland would respond strategically to the State's expectation for institutional excellence. Perhaps more importantly, the enhancement document presented a virtual blueprint for how the campus community would achieve the feat. In the plan, President Kirwan wrote:

We aim above all to become the pride of Maryland. With the guidance of the Board and the support of the State we believe we can become the distinguished, prestigious academic institution Maryland deserves and needs.

President Kirwan then went on to describe what such an institution would look like:

That distinction will manifest itself in various ways: our faculty will regularly receive the most prestigious awards for research and scholarship, our undergraduate students will be highly sought in the market place and regularly receive prizes and fellowships for graduate study at other prestigious institutions, our graduate students will increasingly populate the faculty ranks of the nation's leading colleges and universities, our campus services will regularly receive recognition for efficiency and creative efforts, and our campus will become increasingly praised for its excellence in design and livability. Our University will

be recognized as a frequent producer of new ideas and technology, and high school students from Maryland and elsewhere will increasingly come to prize an acceptance letter from College Park as a badge of academic achievement as well as an invitation to join a select community of scholars. That, as we conceive it, is what true academic excellence at College Park will look like (President Kirwan, Introduction Letter of the Enhancement Plan, 1989).

According to the plan, “tangible measures of success” would include, among other things increases in high school GPA of incoming first year students from 3.0 to 3.3; national recognition for academic department; and substantial increases in the receipt of competitive grants and contracts. President Kirwan named five aspirational peers that the University would use as benchmarks for emulation and goal setting. These institutions were, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Throughout the plan, President Kirwan encouraged the campus to emulate these aspirational peers by citing numerous initiatives and programs which were “common among peer institutions”. President Kirwan also affirmed campus goals according to the University’s ability to “match (and aim to surpass)” aspirational peer institutions (Enhancement plan, 1989, p. 16).

The vision President Kirwan painted for the enhancement of the University of Maryland at College Park required focused work by all members of the campus community. President Kirwan urged every school, department, and unit to cultivate quality and excellence. He called upon individual faculty members to engage in rigorous scholarship and to interact with students with higher degrees of excellence. Kirwan did not spare any aspect of the University’s identity from critique, goal setting or comparison to the aspirational peers; even the physical location of the University the ‘Town of College Park’ was challenged to become “synonymous with a stimulating intellectual and

cultural environment” like that of the names—Ann Arbor, Chapel Hill, Berkeley, Madison and Austin (Enhancement Plan, 1989).

In the plan, President Kirwan presented an air of confidence about the institution’s ability to work towards success. Kirwan assured State officials that “the plan reflects the enthusiasm and commitment of our University community, and it presents detailed proposals through which we intend to bring about change” (Enhancement Plan, 1989, p. 40). In turn, the responsibility of the State was to ensure that the campus was adequately funded. In the enhancement plan, President Kirwan provided a detailed comparison of the University’s fiscal conditions to that of its peer institutions, as well as provided projections of the required financial resources required to fund the initiatives. Unfortunately, few of the financial resources materialized. The State provided just one year of enhancement funding before a state-wide recession necessitated sharp budget cuts. As a result, the state reduced the University's budget by \$42.5 million over two years (The Flagship Initiative, 1998). The “magical days” of the University of Maryland were quickly replaced with the “dark days” of program discontinuance and retrenchment (Committee on Excellence, 1992).

Responding to Threats to Excellence

Preserving Enhancement

During the retrenchment period, the Provost working together with the Academic Planning Advisory Committee (APAC), a joint faculty and administrator committee, shouldered much of the responsibility for leading the University through the process of reducing academic units. In 1991, the Provost’s office released *Preserving Enhancement Report: A Plan for Strategic Academic Reallocation*, which

outlined the reality of the budget crisis and some preliminary decisions concerning program reduction. While the budget cuts were devastating and unexpected, the campus leadership was determined that the reductions would not derail or thwart the University's goal of excellence. According to Eckel (1998) campus leaders framed the retrenchment process as a necessary step to reach enhancement. Writing in the Enhancement Report the Provost stated:

Reduced budgets have altered the timetable of the Enhancement Plan, but they have neither stopped the process of enhancement nor altered our mission. Nor can they be permitted to do so.

If we must make choices, we must decide what our highest priorities are, and what will most benefit the University in the long run. It seems clear that we must first consider those that form the present basis or the future hope of achieving excellence in the disciplines delineated in the Enhancement Plan (Preserving Enhancement Plan, p.2).

At the end of the process, seven academic departments, 18 undergraduate degree programs, six master's programs, five doctoral programs, two certificate programs, and one college were eliminated. Many of the programs that were eliminated had previously enrolled large numbers of minority students and women. Though painful and at times tumultuous, the process of program discontinuance at the University of Maryland was characterized by many as legitimate, fair, and emblematic of shared governance (Eckel, 1998). According to Eckel (1998), in addition to saving funds, the process yielded the positive outcome of generating perceptions of an enhanced University. Many members of the campus believed that the University had been made stronger and more focused as a result of the elimination of mediocre programs.

After the severe budget cuts of the early 1990's, a smaller and leaner University of Maryland emerged. Despite this new reality, campus leaders continued to enhance the

institution with improvements to undergraduate education, such as implementation of the Senate-approved CORE program and the founding of the College Park Scholars living learning community (Middle States Self Study, 1997). Beginning in 1994, the University began to take stock of its current state and strategic direction through a strategic planning initiative and Middle States Accreditation Self-Study.

Getting Back on Course: Strategic Initiatives and Budget Allocation

In 1996, after two years and two successive drafts, President Kirwan unveiled the University of Maryland Strategic Plan. The final version of the plan listed five strategic initiatives which would allow the University to continue its reach for excellence. These initiatives included offering high-quality education to outstanding undergraduates; building cornerstone programs of excellence in graduate education and research; increasing the University's contribution to society; encouraging entrepreneurship; and rationalizing resource allocation and administrative operations (Strategic Plan, 1996). Though the plan acknowledged the steps that the University had taken to protect the vision of enhancement, it also provided a candid assessment of areas where support and/or upgrade was needed. Areas of focus included replenishing depleted departmental operating budgets; upgrading classroom and laboratory facilities; developing a competitive salary structure and fringe-benefits package for faculty; correcting deficiencies in the Library System; improving retention rates for all students, particularly those of minority students; and reinvigorating recruitment initiatives for minority and women faculty. To impact those and many other areas, President Kirwan called on the campus “to be prepared to change...current ways of doing business, [and to shift]

resources to units and programs where they will be put to the best use” (Strategic Plan, 1996, p.8).

One key area of change was the process of budget allocation. As outlined in the plan, the new process was to be led by the Provost and President. The process required that units submit budget proposals and justification for the requests to the college deans. After the requests were made, the plan stated that “the President and Provost working in conjunction with the college deans will remove resources from units judged to be less central to the University's strategic objectives, or less effective, or less efficient, and assign these resources to units better positioned to achieve excellence” (Strategic Plan, 1996, p.19). The additional allocations were assigned to units that were identified by their deans as "signature programs" or "cornerstones of quality". In a 1999 memo describing the implementation of the plan, J. H. Leshar, Assistant to the Provost observed:

While the final version of the Strategic Plan received broad support from campus faculty and staff, it did not lack for critics. In the judgment of some, the Plan exuded a degree of optimism that bordered on fantasy. In their view it was unrealistic to suppose--and perhaps even irresponsible to suggest--that the University could raise its overall level of academic quality even in the absence of additional State funding. To others, the Plan seemed to foster a kind of pernicious ‘academic Darwinism’ --enhancing well-established programs at the expense of the weaker ones. The costs of such an effort--in terms of a damaged sense of collegiality and common purpose--might be significant. Others expressed disappointment with what they saw as the Plan’s lack of interest in one or more important concerns--in international programs, for example, or ‘service-learning’, or maintaining the University’s commitment to racial and ethnic diversity. The imposition of an annual 1% tax on departmental budgets also struck some observers as most unwise since it risked damaging an already badly depleted ‘resource infrastructure’ to launch new programs of unknown value. These criticisms notwithstanding, the President proclaimed the Strategic Plan as ‘the campus’s main planning document for the next five-year period’ and invited faculty and staff in all campus units to begin to think about how activities in their unit could be coordinated with the Plan’s main initiatives. (“Leshar Memo”, 1999, p.5).

As Lesher would further observe, the 1996 strategic plan resulted in success in many areas:

The resource-allocation process during this period enjoyed an unusual degree of coherence, effectiveness, and support from within the campus community. Within the divisions and colleges, the Vice Presidents and Deans oversaw the development of strategic plans for their units, and structured their budget requests within the framework of the Plan's main initiatives. By all accounts, these efforts energized many faculty and staff to become more active and knowledgeable participants in program development, and many of the initiatives undertaken at the individual unit level continue to benefit the institution. By the end of the two-year period, the campus had succeeded in launching four new College Park Scholars Programs, placing University Honors on a secure financial footing, and creating an array of new advising and student information-technology support services; conducting a comprehensive review of all graduate programs and increasing funding in those units identified as the best or most promising; generating a number of new profit-making enterprises and dramatically increasing the levels of private, corporate, State, and federal support for research; and privatizing selected administrative operations while launching a comprehensive, multi-year Business Process Re-engineering Project ("Lesher Memo", 1999, p. 2).

According to Lesher (1999), the plan was least successful in long term implementation of the annual 1% tax on unit budgets which had to be discontinued after two years. Lesher noted that relatively little changed in the retention of minority faculty and graduate-student cohorts, the quality of the undergraduate educational experience, the enhancement of faculty salaries, and other initiatives related to increasing capital building campaign, the library, and the technological infrastructure. Lesher concluded that despite the resolve and persistence of President Kirwan and the other campus leaders, most of the unsuccessful initiatives were thwarted in some part by the undeniable effect of restricted state appropriations.

In his farewell senate speech, President Kirwan took stock of his presidency by noting areas where his leadership contributed to success and change as well as areas where challenges persisted. In that speech, Kirwan expressed regret that he was unable to

garner the level of State funding support that the University needed to reach its goals of distinction:

Clearly, we have managed over the years to raise our sights on this campus as to what the University of Maryland can and should become. The job of getting the resources from Annapolis to support our aspirations is not yet done. I regret that I have to leave the completion of this task in your hands and those of my successor. I do want to emphasize, though, that the stage is set for a major breakthrough in our resource base but it will not be accomplished without a significant and concerted effort by the entire university community (“President Kirwan Farewell Speech”, 1998, section: Flagship Initiative Funding).

Enlisting the Assistance of Supporters

In the last days of his presidency, President Kirwan enlisted the assistance of outside constituents to lobby the State on the behalf of the University. In 1998, the Board of Visitors of the University of Maryland, College Park, a University advisory group made up of business, civic, and educational leaders released a document in support of the University. Entitled *The Flagship Initiative: Creating a World Class Research University*, this document appealed to the State to increase funding to the University or risk thwarting the progress made toward distinction:

Through the dedicated efforts of many people over an extended period of time, the University has raised the level of its academic quality to the point where it is now within striking distance of becoming a world class research university. The Board of Visitors believes there could be no better time than the present for the State of Maryland to renew its commitment to higher education...However, it is our determination that historically low levels of State Support threaten the University’s progress” (“Flagship Initiative”, 1998, Introduction).

The timing of these appeals could not have been better; the economy of the state was strong and the University had important political allies supporting it bid for increases in the State’s financial commitment to the University. These allies included Governor Parris Glendening and key leaders in the Maryland State Senate and House of Delegates (Flagship Initiative, 1998; Kirwan Farewell Speech, 1998). In 1998, the Governor's Task

Force for the Study of the Governance, Coordination, and Funding named the University as the "State's first priority" for higher education funding. The Task Force's recommendation was later codified into law in the regular session of the 1999 Maryland General Assembly. The bill pronounced that the University System of Maryland should:

Enhance College Park as the State's flagship campus with programs and faculty nationally and internationally recognized for excellence in research and the advancement of knowledge; admit to the campus freshmen who have academic profiles that suggest exceptional ability; provide access to the upper division undergraduate level of the campus for students who have excelled in completing lower division study; and provide the campus with the level of funding and facilities necessary to place it among the upper echelon of its peer institutions (Senate Bill 682, 1999, p. 23)

After ten years of waiting for enhancement appropriations, the University finally began receiving the promised State funding.

Changing Administration: Changing Priorities

In the fall of 1998, President Mote joined the University of Maryland as its 27th president. By his own account, President Mote was selected president as a result of his potential to lead the University to national distinction. Commenting on his leadership President Mote noted:

During my travels out and about the campus, as many of you know, I have not been shy about proclaiming our intention to become one of the great research universities in this country. I believe that is why I was recruited to the presidency. I know that is why I was interested in the challenge, and why I accepted it (President Mote Inauguration Speech, 1999).

On the occasion of his inauguration, President Mote outlined three steps that he believed the University must be willing to take to reach national distinction. The steps included building a culture of excellence across the University; enriching the educational experience for all students; and building a Maryland Family of alumni and friends (President Mote Inauguration Speech, 1999). The comprehensive nature of these steps is

mirrored in the wide range of strategies President Mote has used in leading the institution to excellence. Over his tenure, President Mote has relied on rhetorical appeals, programmatic advancements, outreach to constituents, emulation of peers, and rewarding of campus units which achieve distinction to push the campus to achieve distinction. Through aggressive fundraising and private partnerships, President Mote has attempted to take the fate of the University out of the hands of the State by reducing the reliance of the University on State funds.

In 1999, the designation of the University as the State's funding priority in higher education provided President Mote with the fiscal support necessary to implement an aggressive plan for excellence. Along with the University's new legislative backing, the law also required that each University System of Maryland institution develop a new mission statement and strategic plan which would establish the standards against which the institution would be judged. Study data suggest that President Mote used these documents to reinforce and give detail to his plan to lead the University to distinction. President Mote also used the plans to point to the University's aspirational peers as explicit models of excellence, which the campus should emulate.

In 2000, the University of Maryland submitted a four-page mission statement which incorporated the University's past, present, and future capabilities. The statement enumerated a wide array of goals that the institution intended to pursue to elevate its overall quality. These goals included improving undergraduate education, strengthening recruitment efforts, increasing retention and graduation rates, increasing the availability of financial aid, improving excellence in graduate and professional education, ensuring inclusiveness and diversity, engaging the University in community outreach, and

improving the administrative, operational, and physical infrastructure of the University. The mission statement also included a list of the University's previously identified aspirational peers, with the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, replacing the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (Mission Statement, 2000). The statement declared the University's intention to perform and be funded at levels comparable to those and other distinguished universities.

In addition to the mission statement, President Mote developed a new strategic plan to guide the institution "to the next level of distinction in the ranks of preeminent public research universities in the United States" (Strategic Plan, 2000). The specific goals of the plan drew heavily from those articulated by President Mote in his inaugural address and served to reinforce his commitment to:

Build a culture of excellence across the University that raises us to the ranks of the most eminent public research universities; offer an enriched educational experience to all students that takes full advantage of the special strengths of a research university and prepares them to be productive members of society; build our Maryland family of alumni and friends to create a network of allegiance and support for the University; and engage in a range of partnerships with private companies, government agencies and laboratories, and other research universities in the region and the State to make the University a major driving force in the economic development and well-being of the citizens of Maryland (Strategic Plan, 2000, p.3).

While the University's strategic plan and mission statement laid out the comprehensive goals of the institution, the core values of the institution are in large part gleaned from what is routinely vocalized by President Mote. The dominant themes of President Mote's rhetorical message are that of distinction and prestige. Data suggest that this message usually unfolds in two parts. One part applauds instances where the University demonstrates distinction; the other urges higher heights and deeper depths of

accomplishments. One informant offered his perspective on President Mote's rhetorical strategy by noting:

By all internal reports, we're making great progress and it's mostly because we have effective leadership that is pointing out the gains we're making on a regular basis to be both self-congratulatory and incentive-izing for all of us. That it's possible, it's doable. Do your part, kind of thing (8).

As the following statements demonstrate, the message has not been lost on the campus:

Now that's a message that comes through loud and clear. Nobody ever actually says out loud we want to be the Berkeley of the East Coast, but that's quite implicit and people do say out loud all the time that we want to be in the top 15, be in the top 10. We're sort of top 18 or whatever we are now. The push for excellence is always out front. It's everywhere we go. The other night they kicked off a billion dollar capital campaign. That was the theme throughout all of that. For us to obtain our potential. For us to be excellent. For us to be full peer with these other institutions. It's the constant reinforcement...(6).

I think in terms of institutional excellence there is a general message... that everything we have to do has to be first tier, first rate, and with regards to excellence there's everything from the promotion and tenure processes which go on at the University, through athletic competitions, through what we as a school do or have people perceive us, there's definitely a message communicated that shows us that we have to do more (7).

Using traditional indicators of excellence, it is clear that the University now stands the closest it has ever been to distinction and excellence. The overall ranking of the University has risen quite dramatically; University schools and departments have continued to see steady increases in the rankings within their respective fields. In 2006, U.S. News and World Report ranked 31 University programs in the top 10 programs of their fields (State of the Campus Address, 2006). The profile of the entering University class is impressive. In 2006, the average first year student had an SAT score of 1300 and a GPA of 3.9. However, by all accounts, this apparent success has not satisfied President Mote. In 2006 he challenged the University community to even greater heights by proclaiming:

We will not stay in front by following. To lead, we must create attractive, value added opportunities for tomorrow and get them out there first....But now, here is the grand challenge. We need ideas - transformational ideas - for a new strategic plan. We need new thinking, a new class of programs spanning disciplines that is expandable, dynamic, manageable, topical and attractive to both students and funders. We need to stop doing things that are good, but not good enough. It is about transformational ideas (State of the Campus Address, 2006).

President Mote also has used rhetorical emphasis on greatness and distinction to highlight University priorities and core values. Analysis of presidential speeches revealed that one of the dominant messages is creating a distinguished faculty. The following excerpts from State of the Campus addresses and testimony to the Maryland State Legislature illustrate the emphasis:

The key to the future of this great university lies in the distinction of our faculty... Faculty distinction is today, as it always has been, the foundation of the great university, and recruitment of star quality faculty in head-to-head competition with the best universities is mandatory to be ranked among the best (State of the Campus, 2000).

Because a great university is built on the shoulders of its faculty, for the past decade or more, the University has made recruiting and retaining top faculty a high priority...By balancing recruits of top-caliber senior faculty with a steady stream of the most talented young professors, we are building a solid base for the University's future leadership across the disciplines. (State of the Campus, 2004)

Faculty are the key to the reputation, impact, and visibility of this university. I predicted that if we made every effort to recruit and retain faculty of the highest caliber, all indicators of excellence would go up ("Taking Stock": Companion Piece to the State of the Campus, 2004)

Accordingly, when individual faculty members and/or departmental units attain a level of excellence which is aligned with President Mote's concept of excellence they are celebrated and held-up as examples to be emulated. Presidential speeches, the University website and other advertisements to internal and external University constituents are replete with recognitions of the University's accomplishments. Commenting on the

seemingly ubiquitous nature of these promotions, as well as the content of these messages, one informant noted:

I've seen them putting signs up around the campus, as you drive in, as to the grade point average of the incoming freshman class...3.87...Certainly it's in the newspapers and it's in all the literature and it's in the president's every message that he speaks about the campus and the quality of the students in the campus (10).

Another informant shared that units which are perceived as excellent are afforded tangible University benefits:

And at the deans council there's a fairly strong awareness that among schools, those that are ranked well, fare well. And if you really want to achieve within the institution you really need to demonstrate meaningful progress on being regarded among peers, outside the institution as well as among peer units of the institution (8).

Since articulating his vision for excellence, President Mote has acted strategically to encourage its fulfillment by defining his conception of greatness, by engaging in consistent recognition and promotion of University achievements, and by aggressively pursuing private funding and partnerships. One informant summarized Mote's simple, but effective strategy by stating:

Dr. Mote brings in revenue. He's a fundraiser. That's really his background in development. So, if you look at this...he wants to bring in revenue for the campus. And how you do that, is you say, "Gee, look at us! We bring the brightest and the best in" (2).

President Mote's own words offer a more nuanced explanation for his approach:

Our recent history shows that we can rank among the best universities in the country. This transformation has been rapid, in fact so rapid that many outside the campus do not realize what has transpired here. And frankly speaking, there is only one sure way to fix this problem. Only one. In a word, it's connections. We need to forge strong connections both internally and to our external constituencies (State of the Campus, 2000).

President Mote's promotion of the University has assisted him in maintaining an

aggressive approach to fundraising. As described above, part of his strategy to achieve excellence was to reconnect alumni to the campus “to create a network of allegiance and support” so the University could become less reliant on public funds. This approach has proven important in the face of diminishing State financial support. Though State funding to the University has not been reduced to the levels of the Kirwan era, the University has experienced continuous declines in State appropriations. In the 2003 State of the Campus address, President Mote observed that “this is structural shift in public policy, not a short-term budgetary shortfall and our State is not bucking the national trend.” According to Mote, in order for the University to stay competitive with peers and other institutions deemed to be excellent, the University would need to become increasingly and permanently less reliant on state funds.

President Mote also noted that reductions in State financial support did not release the University from expectations of the State to become a “top-class research university.” To manage this funding reality, President Mote noted that the University had only one viable option. That option was to “develop a strategy to move the University forward by making internal operational changes and by increasing and leveraging non-State assets while continuing to press the State to step up to supporting its best interests” (State of the Campus, 2003). Some of the proposed actions of the strategy included exploring new financial models that are less dependent on State appropriations, creating new incentives for people and units to increase both State and non-State funding and to implement efficiency efforts, implementing major private fund raising campaigns, expanding the number of partnerships with government labs and the private sector, allocating resources to highest University priorities, expanding financial aid, and placing pressure on the State

to support the campus.

Section Summary: Managing Pressures for Institutional Excellence

The designation as the official flagship institution of the State and the promise of increased State funding inspired many on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park to work toward distinction (Enhancement Plan, 1989). President Kirwan used this momentum to articulate a vision for excellence which would attempt to transform the institution and align it with the traits of five aspirational peer institutions. After just a year of enhancement funding, the University faced severe budget cuts and retrenchment. Despite these grim realities, President Kirwan and the University leadership did not lose sight of the “excellence” vision and devised a strategy for retrenchment which sought to preserve the University’s goals. Programs eliminated during the retrenchment process were judged to be of weaker quality and/or less clearly aligned with the University vision. The University of Maryland emerged from retrenchment with fewer academic programs, but with the added campus-wide conviction that the University had done what was necessary for enhancement (Eckel,1998).

President Kirwan attempted to manage the incompatibility of fiscal shortages and aspirations for greatness by implementing several measures. Some of these actions included implementing a new process of resource allocation that was tied to the University’s strategic goals, taxing weaker or less central units and reallocating the funds to programs “within striking distance” of eminence. At the time of his departure it was President Kirwan had both preserved and accomplished much in the University’s quest for distinction, though the results were hardly on par with the vision articulated in the 1989 enhancement document. Over his tenure, University accomplishments included

national recognition for a growing cadre of academic departments, particularly the Business and Engineering schools; the development of undergraduate honors and living learning programs; and an emergence of new profit-making private enterprises. However, Kirwan was unsuccessful in securing consistent state funding and raising the overall ranking of the institution to a level comparable to the aspirational peers.

By the time President Mote began his presidency, the fiscal situation of the University had improved drastically. The State of Maryland was out of recession and had designated the University as the funding priority for higher education. President Mote led the University in developing a new mission statement and strategic plan and took on a highly visible role in leading the institution to eminence.

Over the course of his tenure, President Mote has used a wide range of strategies to push the institution to excellence. Under President Mote's leadership excellence is expected from the entire University. He offers incentives and openly challenges all units to reach for distinction. Rhetorically President Mote emphasizes distinction and prestige by promoting University achievements and by calling for new innovation. President Mote's pursues private funding and outside partnerships as aggressively as excellence is emphasized on campus. These strategies have yielded successful fundraising initiatives, growth in capital projects, steady climbs in the rankings, and impressive student and faculty profiles.

Balancing Racial Equity and Institutional Excellence: An Analysis of Strategic Responses and Their Impacts

This section continues the discussion of how campus leaders have responded to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. This analysis goes beyond the

descriptive chronology and uses Oliver's (1991) typology of strategic choice to analyze these responses more fully. The discussion draws from perceptions of study informants and document artifacts to present broad themes which characterize the University's strategic responses and the impact they have had on dimensions of the University of Maryland, College Park.

As covered in Chapter two, Oliver (1991) presents a typology of five strategies: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation, which she claims represent the range of active organizational responses to external demands. Institutions may adopt different tactics or alternative forms of a particular strategy when strategic choices are made. Oliver (1991) also notes that the adoption of a particular strategy is bound to institutional factors including: cause, constituents, content, control, and context.

Data analysis suggests that, during the period of 1988 through 2006, University officials used the strategies of acquiescence, compromise, and avoidance to manage pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. The strategy of acquiescence acknowledges that institutions are likely to accede to external demands through the use of one or more tactics. Institutions may reproduce institutional scripts which have become habitual or are taken for granted or imitate the structures and routines of organizations perceived to be legitimated. Institutions can choose to adopt compliance, a particular tactic of the strategy of acquiescence. This tactic should not be confused with the same term used to refer to the meeting of legal requirements. In Oliver's (1991) model, institutions demonstrate compliance through conscious acts of obedience and the institutionalization of new values or norms. Institutions are most likely to acquiesce to demands when they are highly controlled by and dependent on the source of the demands

for legitimacy, consistency, interconnectedness and uncertainty reduction. Broadly diffused norms are most likely to inspire acquiescence.

Oliver (1991) notes that the strategy of compromise is most likely to be adopted if an institution is faced with conflicting demands from multiple constituents. The three tactics associated with this strategy are to balance, to pacify, and to bargain. Using these tactics, organizations may attempt to equalize the pressures, negotiate, or accommodate demands through compromise or partial conformity. Organizations using the compromise strategy will implement only what is necessary while actively preserving their own interests. Institutions that employ the strategy of avoidance, hide nonconformity behind symbolic facades of compliance. While these facades are meant to convey acquiescence, Oliver notes that in actuality they may be “window dressings”, ceremonial rituals, or pretenses that are meant to create the illusion of acceptance or compliance.

**Excellence by any Means Necessary: Acquiescence and Compromise at the
University of Maryland, College Park**

The 1988 designation as the flagship institution of the State of Maryland unequivocally required the University of Maryland, College Park to make core organizational changes. According to the mandate, these changes extended to “program and faculty”, “research and the advancement of knowledge”, “academic profiles” of students, and “operating fund[s] and facilities” (Senate Bill 459, 1988). The bar set for the transformation required that the University reach the “upper echelon” of American public research universities. In 1998, the State re-issued the directive after designating the University as its funding priority for higher education. In exchange for meeting these

demands, the State of Maryland promised to fund the institution at a level comparable to that of aspirational peer institutions.

In the light of these mandates, institutional leaders, particularly Presidents Kirwan and Mote have led the University in full step toward compliance. Throughout their tenures both presidents have demonstrated their commitment to reaching the mandated level of distinction through symbolic and rhetorical communications and programmatic adjustments.

Official University documents dating back to the *Enhancement Plan* have all pronounced the University's intention of striving toward distinction. Examples of these proclamations include:

We aim to become one of the nation's finest public universities, an institution that attracts outstanding students from Maryland and around the nation (Enhancement plan, 1989, p.2)

In keeping with the legislative mandates of 1988 and 1999, the University of Maryland is committed to achieving excellence as the State's primary center of research and graduate education and the institution of choice for undergraduate students of exceptional ability and promise. While the University has already attained national distinction, it intends to rank among the very best public research universities in the United States (Mission Statement, 2000, p.1)

In seeking to acquiesce to the State's expectations for excellence University leaders have employed two distinct strategies: imitation of the "upper echelon" and erasing the stigma of discrimination. Over time, these strategies appear to have had a profound impact on the culture and reputation of the institution.

Imitation of the Upper Echelon

University of Maryland leaders have consistently turned to institutions perceived to be among the "upper echelon" for emulation and goal setting. Immediately following the University's designation as the flagship institution of the State of Maryland, President

Kirwan initiated the tactic by crafting an *Enhancement Plan* which drew heavily from the structures and norms of aspirational peer institutions. According to the plan, the University selected aspirational peer institutions because they were nationally recognized flagship universities with responsibilities and missions similar to those of the University of Maryland of Maryland's funding history. In the document, President Kirwan used the aspirational peers in two distinctive ways—as points of comparison and benchmarking and as models of the types of distinction that the University should strive to achieve.

In the second part of the two-part *Enhancement Plan*, President Kirwan presented an overview of the financial resources needed to attain distinction. In the overview, Kirwan formally introduced the five aspirational peer institutions and benchmarked their funding history against that of the University. The specific areas which were compared included state resource allocation, student teacher ratios, and the ratio of staff support to faculty. In each of these areas, President Kirwan emphasized how the University was lagging behind the aspirational peers due to critical shortages and deficiencies in state funding support.

President Kirwan presented the aspirational peers to the campus community as obtainable programmatic models which the University should emulate, then strive to surpass. Accordingly, in the first part of the plan, President Kirwan did not name any particular institution as an aspirational peer. Instead, he made informal references to the programs and initiatives of well known institutions to provide models for how excellence was manifest in “upper echelon” institutions and to challenge faculty members and staff to develop and nurture programs comparable with other flagship campuses.

During the fiscal crisis of the early 1990's, President Kirwan's rhetorical tactics to encourage emulation were bolstered by a retrenchment strategy which rewarded programs that had achieved measures of excellence consistent with those of the upper echelon. Programs deemed to be "within striking distance" of excellence were spared the most devastating consequences of retrenchment while programs judged to be weaker or less aligned with the University's aspiration were eliminated or merged. In 1996, the University developed a new strategic plan which gave additional weight to the administration's press for alignment with top-tier institutions and ushered in a new "carrot and stick" method for motivating campus wide compliance to the University's goals.

In this new method, University leaders explicitly tied budget allocations to the extent to which units were able to demonstrate "solid and documentable claim to national eminence" (Strategic Plan, 1996, p. 19). The "carrot" of the budget allocation process, meant that the University would "provide incentives and rewards for those units eager to innovate, and deliver improved results" (Strategic Plan, 1996, p.10) while the "stick" promised to "remove resources from less effective programs and to reallocate them to units ready, willing, and able to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience" (Strategic Plan, 1996, p.10). This method signaled to the campus community that excellence as measured by traditional indices of prestige and national approval was the dominant priority of the institution.

Mimicry of the programs and processes of aspirational peers has continued through to the current administration. The 2000 and 2006 mission statements as well as the 2000 strategic plan have all featured lists of prestigious institutions chosen by the

University as measures of its ambition. Over time these and other prestigious institutions have provided the University with socially legitimated ideas and model programs. One informant shared how the aspirational peers have served as benchmarks for the University:

In terms of higher quality expectations, in 1988 not only were we declared the flagship institution but in law was passed an expectation that the campus would become an institution of first resort for the best Maryland high school seniors and would become known for the quality of its programs to be comparable with the very best public research institutions of its kind and, as you know, we have five designated peer institutions which are also large public research institutions of the same kind and we've been benchmarked against them ever since (15).

Another informant commented on how the aspirational peers have been used to provide the institution with “new” ideas:

He [Mote] wants always a new idea. He wants a new idea. He wants something new to give us some push to do good things and to be excellent. He used to have, in the years past when I got here, we had some actual peers, I mean realistic peers, and we had aspirational peers and we took the real peers out and incorporated the aspirational into our peers. And so we're striving always to be like Berkeley, always to be like Michigan, always to be.... Everything we do. We're working on our Web site. Well, what does Michigan's look like? That's all we want to know (9).

Under President Mote's leadership, two celebrated University programs—the Baltimore Incentive Program and the Maryland Pathways Program— began as ideas borrowed from other institutions. The Baltimore Incentive Program was modeled after another at the University of California, Berkeley and the Maryland Pathways program was modeled after programs found at prestigious public and private institutions across the country. Informant comments illustrate how aspirational peers and other prestigious universities influenced the development of both programs:

When [Dr. Mote] got here one of the first things he recognized is why are we not getting any kids from Baltimore City. Because the schools are so horrible, they

can't get in...At Berkeley they had a comparable problem with the Oakland schools so they had established the Oakland incentive program. The very best kids in the schools got a full ride to Berkeley. What an incredible opportunity! [President Mote] established [the Baltimore Incentive Program] in Baltimore, one of the first important things he did.... I don't think he set out to say this will help us be more diverse, but he just sort of said, this is what great universities do. And that's my sense of it. It's not just that we want to be excellent for excellence's sake. It's not just that we want to be diverse for diversity's sake, but it's what great universities are. By definition you can't be great unless you are those things (6).

There's always competition. Access UVA and Carolina Covenant came out first... President's Office came...and said, can you look at this Carolina Covenant... Harvard came out with theirs, Princeton did something, and then Maryland Pathways came out (2).

Elimination of the Stigma of Discrimination

When Kirwan became president of the University of Maryland in 1988, he faced neither an impending crisis of campus civil unrest the likes of which had loomed over the campus in the late 1960's and 1970's nor imminent sanctions from the Office for Civil Rights, as was the case ten years prior. The University had stabilized itself through programmatic accommodations which appeared to have pacified, at least temporarily, many internal and external advocates for racial equity. These accommodations included the African American Studies department, Nyumburu Cultural Center, Academic Achievement programs, an unprecedented entering class (1988) comprised of 13.6 percent first-time African American students, a dedicated scholarship program (Banneker) for African American students, and the record hiring of 14 African American entry-level faculty members (1982-1985).

Despite these advances, the University retained a distressing reputation in and about the community for discrimination, racism, and an inhospitable campus life for African Americans. Reminiscing on that time two informants commented:

We needed Brit to be who he was when he was and it was a time when I can remember being...under desegregation orders, where there was a tension there that this institution was being forced to do something that it didn't have a will to do. It's a very different era now than that. Thank goodness! We've come a long way. I remember the early days trying to recruit students whose parents were discriminated against. It was really tough, walking up Baltimore public schools, a tough thing to do. It was a tough battle and there were a lot of people around here at the time who were in the trenches. It's very different now than it was then.... There were racial incidents in the residence halls and it was hard to be the first 50 on the block here, breaking down the barriers (12).

The University of Maryland, in fact all of public higher education in Maryland along with the K-12 sector, was segregated up until right before Brown vs. the Board of Education.... I was shocked...when I came to Maryland to see how much discrimination and prejudice still existed in the environs, across the institution, to be honest but also in the environs of the University....During this period of time Maryland had become an integrated institution, there was relatively little progress in terms of creating a more diverse institution and in the late '70's the Office of Civil Rights came to the state of Maryland and, I think, to all of the states in the south, even to Pennsylvania and said, "Hey, you all have got to do better, You've got to have special programs to accelerate the pace of integration, so then we were placed under the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) mandated order, which, as you may know, still exists. So, as a result of that order, the University was expected to create special programs to encourage and promote the integration of the campus, both in terms of the student body and its faculty and staff and it was during that era that the famous Benjamin Banneker scholarship was created (14).

While the campus had accepted and ignored the reality of campus inequity for many years, mounting evidence on its deleterious effect on campus aspirations prompted attention and change. In 1989, the report *Access is Not Enough* identified "chronic problems" on the University campus despite "indications that the campus leadership is committed to substantial improvement" (p.3). These problems included low retention rates and graduation patterns for Black students, low retention and recruitment of Black faculty, lack of diversity in the administrative staff, and a chilly and unsupportive campus climate. The report concluded that in order for the University to meet its institutional

goal of excellence, it must move beyond providing access to African Americans to addressing deep-seeded issues of racism and discrimination.

The University, it seemed, had two choices: “fix” the chronic and highly visible problem of racial equity and move unencumbered to distinction or continue on the current course and jeopardize the quest for excellence. President Kirwan chose the former option and took strategic steps to neutralize the threat to the University’s aspiration.

President Kirwan began by reframing racial equity as a unique strength of the University and by incorporating equity goals in the plans to achieve distinction. Unlike his initial response to the pressure for institutional excellence, President Kirwan did not look to aspirational peers for ideas or innovation for managing pressures for racial equity. He took this stance in part because, as University documents consistently proclaimed, the campuses’ status in achieving racial equity as defined by the enrollment of African American students, was comparable to or better than its peers. To maintain its edge over other predominantly White institutions, the University simply had to capitalize on the natural strength of its location and meet the provisions of its desegregation plan.

As part of Kirwan’s new rhetorical strategy, institutional actors and documents made bold public statements about the University’s intention to achieve racial equity. These statements were tied to both the desegregation mandate and the institution’s quest for excellence. The 1989 mission statement declared that “within the next decade, the University seeks to be recognized for its commitment to cultural and racial diversity” (p.8). The 1989 Enhancement Plan affirmed that one of the objectives of the University

was to “provide opportunities for minorities and other groups that have not been well served by higher education in the past” (p.10).

Despite these bold rhetorical statements, between 1988 and 1992, the institution did little to move closer to building a community that valued diversity. The University continued to meet the access and enrollment goals for undergraduate students but fell considerably short on efforts to retain both faculty and students. In 1992, the Excellence Through Diversity (ETD) committee pointed to the dissonance between the rhetoric and reality of campus racial equity by commenting, “the public addresses and mission statements from the highest levels offer perspectives on diversity that bump up against competing perspectives of reality from many entrenched individuals and subsystems” (p.5). The committee challenged the leadership to move beyond symbolical statements and lip service to authentic actions that truly epitomize diversity as a campus value.

Over the next few years, campus leaders significantly modified their strategy for dispelling the campus stigma of inequity and discrimination. The campus augmented its singular focus on rhetorical proclamations and symbolic gestures with internal programmatic initiatives and a highly visible moral stance on racial equity. In 1993, President Kirwan sent a strong internal statement of the University’s commitment to diversity to deans, directors, and vice presidents. The plan pledged additional financial support to equity efforts (including \$2.5 million for the renovation of the Nyumburu center and \$300,000 for post-doctoral programs for African American students), strengthened key diversity processes, and called for increased recruitment and retention efforts of African American faculty, staff, and students. At the same time, the campus engaged in a highly visible court case to defend its right to offer race based scholarships.

While the Podberesky case may have exemplified the personal and moral conviction of campus leaders, it also provided the campus unmatched opportunity to transform a major part of its identity. According to informants, the national platform of the lawsuit allowed the University to shed its past reputation of racial discrimination and exclusion for one of diversity and inclusion. The following two statements excerpted from President Kirwan's statement on the case are illustrative of this undertaking:

Our defense of these scholarships is not based on abstractions, but rather on pragmatic consideration of where this university has come from, where it stands today, and what it intends to become (p.1).

For now, the University of Maryland should be allowed to continue one of its most effective means for demonstrating to Blacks that today's universities are not what they used to be and that, with greater participation by all segments of society, our nation's universities can become even better (p.1).

Though the University lost the battle of the Podberesky case, it won the war for reshaping its reputation and image. Prior to the Podberesky case, President Kirwan faced the monumental task of demonstrating to the University's internal and external constituents—those supportive and resistant to racial equity alike—that the institution was ready and willing to implement substantive and authentic changes to realize racial equity. In the past, President Kirwan and University leadership had made verbal commitments to racial equity, however equity advocates repeatedly pointed out the dissonance between the rhetoric of University leadership and the reality of campus life.

In contrast, informants perceived that the University's action in the Podberesky court cases sent a far more powerful and decisive message of change. According to one informant:

Brit Kirwan, when he was president before, was very vocal on the issue of diversity and the need for the campus to make it a priority and under his leadership we took the Banneker-Key Scholarship Program all the way to the

Supreme Court where we lost, but I think that was seen by the community interested in diversity issues as a real commitment by the campus to this issue (15).

University leaders capitalized on the positive momentum created by the Podberesky case by promoting the University as a model of diversity and inclusion. Leaders encouraged and publicized newly-minted campus diversity initiatives and programs. These programs shared two defining traits: most were created to celebrate difference and build bridges in the undergraduate community; and most constructed racial equity as part of a broader “diversity” value. While this brand of diversity was being promoted, campus leaders made fewer public statements about the Office for Civil Rights desegregation mandates or racial equity for African Americans. The combination of these tactics took attention away from race and subsumed racial equity under the rubric of “diversity”. These tactics helped cement the new identity of the University as model for diversity. In some respects, the transformation was so complete that in 2000 a University diversity committee found that the institution’s history of segregation and open discrimination against African Americans was virtually unknown on campus. Two informants shared thoughts on the remaking of the University image:

Certainly one is just reputational. We want to be seen as an institution that is excellent and an institution that is diverse. I think Maryland is very much self-identified as an institution that embraces diversity. And this comes a little bit out of our history that we were a segregated university up until the ‘60s. And then there was a sort of a long period of healing and recovery and now the university very much wants that to be past and for us to be seen as an open and diverse and welcoming place. I think that this plays into our desire to have a lot of international students here. Again, we want this to look that way. We do want to appear favorably with our aspirational peers. We want to look good in all these different U.S. News and World Reports, and rankings, and stories that come out about the campus (4).

We are the flagship campus for the state of Maryland and [the University of] Maryland has not been good in the past. Its history has been bad. I think that we

had administrators who understood some of that and just moved to make [The University of] Maryland a showcase and we really are. We're an example. We are an example for many institutions on the east coast and in the country. We are top. There's no question about it (9).

Although this informant had no doubt about the University's status, identity and current outlook in regard to equity and excellence, this level of conviction was not one that was shared by all informants. The next section discusses how the strategic choices of the institution have resulted in multiple perceptions of the University.

Multiple Perceptions and Conflicting Realities

This section draws from the perceptions of study informants to characterize how institutional strategies for racial equity and institutional excellence have impacted the University of Maryland, College Park. Measures of both institutional excellence and racial equity are highlighted along broad dimensions consistently found in presidential speeches, strategic plans and University documents to internal and external constituents.

Toward the New Norm of Excellence

Informants noted that in acceding to the demands for institutional excellence, the University of Maryland has institutionalized norms and values indicative of the traditional indicators of excellence. In 1989, President Kirwan lamented that the University was not the school of choice for Maryland's best and brightest students by stating:

We have for too long lost many of our best state students to Virginia and North Carolina, to Duke, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This must cease. We must offer curricula and instruction of consistently high caliber and we must make other changes -- in support for undergraduates, in dormitory life, and in the intellectual ambiance of the campus --that will send a clear signal to prospective students that things have changed at College Park (Enhancement Plan, 1989, p.2).

Kirwan also noted that the University faced challenges in recruiting and retaining high caliber faculty due to the quality of the academic enterprise, low salaries, and aging facilities. One long time member of the campus recounted how the last two presidents have lead the University out of mediocrity and obscurity:

I just think that 25 years ago, say, this university decided we just don't want to be an open enrollment institution. We don't want to be a mediocre institution. We want to be a great institution. There's not really a great public institution sort of between North Carolina and Penn State. Let's do something about that. So they started something and under Brit Kirwan they really made a lot of strides and under Dan and his last nine years I think they have really taken it to a very high level (6).

In 2006, the University of Maryland exhibited norms of excellence and prestige in what is typically perceived to be core areas of the University. As Table 4 shows, from 1988 to 2006, the University of Maryland has shown dramatic improvements along many traditional indicators of institutional excellence. This transformation is seen in the academic profiles of entering students, the awarding of prestigious awards and honors to the faculty, and in the financial resources of the institution.

Table 4 Traditional Indicators of Excellence 1988* and 2006

Traditional Indicators of Excellence and Prestige	1988*	2006
Entering class GPA	3.0	3.9
Entering class SAT	1035 (as of 1987)	1300
US News and World Report Rankings (National Public Universities)	Not ranked	18
Active University Alumni ⁺	11,000	31,000
Endowment (UMCP Foundation) ⁺	\$35 million	\$289+ million
Endowed Chairs and Professorships	9	100+
Cash Gifts to University	\$14 million	130 million
Competitive University Research Grants	\$82 million	\$350 million
National Academy Membership	9 (as of 1996)	42
Ph.D. Recipients (same year)	364	602

Sources: Enhancement Plan, 1989; Strategic Plan, 1996; Middles States Self-Review, 2007; Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP), 2007; UMD alumni website; UMD foundation 2005-2006 Financial Statement.

*Unless otherwise indicated figures are for 1988. ⁺Prior to 1988, the endowment and alumni records of the five University of Maryland campuses were centralized. The 1988 legislation which established the campuses as separate institutions and designated the University of Maryland, College Park as the flagship institution, also allowed the creation of institution specific endowments and alumni pools.

The University has devoted considerable resources to the improvement of undergraduate education, campus facilities and infrastructure, and the formation of outside partnerships. In fall 2006, over 40 percent of entering University first-year students enrolled in one of twelve different living-learning programs, in University Honors, or in the honors programs of Gemstone and Honors Humanities (Middle States Self-Study, 2007). Over the last decade the University has undergone a massive capital building campaign and constructed or renovated more than fifteen (15) campus buildings. Institutional fundraising campaigns have been successful in raising private funds for other institutional priorities such as capital building projects and student financial aid. The University's Baltimore Incentive program is entirely funded by private donations and many of the University's newest buildings (e.g. the Jeong H. Kim Engineering Building) were substantially funded by gifts from alumni and other private donors. Other areas of improvement include the library and technology infrastructures of the campus and partnerships with private industry to develop 'M Square', a new research park, and a planned 38 acre mixed-use project.

In addition to recording gains on traditional indicators of excellence, the institution has changed in less quantifiable but no less central areas. One area is in the attitude and self-perception of the campus. Informants suggested that much has changed since Kirwan wrote in the Enhancement document that the University largely was considered "mediocre," "large and impersonal," or "losing out". As the University moves towards the new norms of excellence, study informants, some with more surety than others, expressed confidence that the University was within striking distance of distinction:

I think we are moving forward. If people want to ask us, are we successful, are we a better institution now, than we were under the last president, I think people would say yes. That we are hiring top-notch professors, that our business school here rates pretty high. We have a fire/rescue unit that does pretty well. I think that we are pretty much on target with trying to reach the goals of distinction (1).

The University has transitioned from a University where (to be very blunt) mediocrity ruled to a University that is having very little tolerance for mediocrity and constantly pushes for more excellence in every aspect of its operation (13).

Well, it's a very long term project and so I see progress being made every year, but it's such an ambitious goal that it's kind of like watching a kid grow up. Yes, they're growing up and if you go away and come back three years later you notice it, but it's not something you notice year by year, necessarily, or day by day, semester by semester. When you look at the quality of students measured by, say, GRE scores or incoming GPA there's been a steady improvement. If you look at overall research funding of our own unit or the campus as a whole, there's steady improvement. If you look, as many people do, at the number of programs that are ranked like in the top 25 or 15 or 10 by U.S. News and World Reports, there's steady improvement. Members in the National Academy of Sciences or National Academy of Engineering, it's grown quite significantly. So, yes, I think there's definitely progress (3).

Informants also reported that in some instances the campus can compete successfully with the "upper echelon" for both students and faculty. Many of the deans interviewed for this study expressed awareness that their schools could, and do, compete successfully with other prestigious institutions:

I think it's a great pressure on us to become top-notch. I'm also aware in our competition for students and faculty among programs where students and faculty get to choose, do I come to Maryland? Do I not come to Maryland?" What's at Maryland that is particularly appealing? How progressive? How excellent? How much advantage are the opportunities to either teach or learn here compared to our peer institutions, those that we most often compete with? So we're aware, in that arena, how we recruit and position ourselves in their eyes, in the eyes of the prospective students. I'm keenly aware of that and know that we have to continue to work to position ourselves favorably (8).

For "top" administration, awareness of the emerging institutional identity has since evolved to confidence that the institution should be counted among the best public institutions. This confidence is demonstrated in the 2000 Strategic Plan:

The University is now widely recognized to be among the most rapidly advancing of the public research universities, and with growing confidence, we are laying a claim to be counted among the best of these institutions. Our progress can be measured by our achievements in many areas: innovative, effective, and popular learning communities; an expanding number of academic programs of recognized distinction; an increasingly productive engagement with the research, business, and government communities; significant contributions through award-winning scholarship to the interpretation and preservation of history and culture; vibrant and growing creative and performing arts programs; major contributions through nationally-recognized research in public policy, biology, physics, information science, technology, and engineering; and innovative leadership in agricultural and natural resources (p. 2).

Perhaps most importantly, confidence in the University of Maryland has recently spurred President Mote to urge members of the campus to move beyond imitation and emulation to leadership and innovation. In his 2006 State of the Campus address, president Mote asserted, “One thing is crystal clear. We will not stay in front by following. To lead, we must create attractive, value added opportunities for tomorrow and get them out there first” (Section: So What’s Next That’s Not Known). This exhortation suggests that President Mote and University officials may be relying less on past strategies which emphasized benchmarking and emulation of the aspirational peers in favor of a more independent leadership role.

Informants noted that under the new norms the University uses measures of excellence as the prevailing yardsticks by which decisions are made, programs are developed, and people are invited in or shut out of the University community. The following statements capture the sentiments of the respondents:

That’s where the pressure is. If you look at the way we are enrolling our students and the way we are recruiting faculty, we are trying to get our numbers, our ratings, up to a point so we can say we are a top-notch research institution. That’s where the pressure is. That’s where people are getting their money and we’re hiring people to help us get there (1).

It's excellence, excellence, excellence. If you try and send a faculty member through for promotion and tenure, even if he or she is quite good, if he [President Mote] doesn't think they have a potential for excellence in their field, it's tough. Half of the people on this campus that are tenured probably could not get tenure today because they wouldn't be good enough (4).

According to informants, the drive for excellence is fueled by President Mote, expectations of the State, and by changing societal values. One informant noted:

That seems to have gotten stronger with Mote. I think it was strong with Kirwan, but partly the whole society is moving towards this race to be in the top 10. So I don't know if it's personality driven or just this is what everybody's doing right now, but it seems stronger now with Mote than it used to be. I was just at a conference and I think everybody in the country is just sort of caught up in this ranking game. It's probably a very destructive thing, but we're all doing it (5).

In sum, most informants perceived that the University had made major progress in adopting traditional indicators and norms for excellence which are central to the identity and culture of the institution. This emerging University identity appeared to be acknowledged and embraced by most informants. However, as will be discussed in the next section, some informants expressed concern about the impact of the University's aggressive drive toward traditional indicators of excellence on racial equity.

One informant expressed concern that the University's emerging reputation and emphasis on prestige could negatively impact educational opportunities for all students, irrespective of race. Although this informant perceived that the University was supportive of diversity, he/she expressed worry that the institution's drive for excellence could limit opportunities for students not considered "the best":

In terms of meeting the progress, are we progressing towards changing our reputation and I would say yes. Is it good or is it bad? Where is it taking us is the question. Is it going to take us to the point where we have the reputation where we only accept the best? That worries me. When higher education becomes a constant competing platform you are going to have this whole sector of students who never enter it. Because that's what the media has. If you look at newspaper print and magazines and what's on the television, it is...I just saw Dr. Mote. He

was on Channel 4 and his whole focus was our average GPA is 3.9 and our SATs are 1330....That's where we're heading. Is that progress? Me, personally, I think not. I would much rather hear: we just hired five students who have their Ph.D.s, and when you are a student when you come here, you are going to get a faculty member. You're not going to get a T.A. [The University should] start focusing on our programs when we're talking. Start focusing on the opportunity of getting a degree in whatever field you have an interest in...(3).

This informant was one of two interviewees who expressed dismay at what was perceived to be the University's abandonment of its land grant identity and public mission:

I don't think that works. We are a land grant institution and our mission statement is not what Princeton or Harvard and what every other Ivy League is. They're not a public land grant. Our mission statement is to meet the need of the public and it's not to make sure that we are on Peterson's report #1, because we have a 3.9 average GPA. That's not our mission....The campus has this "great expectations" push. Big campaign out there that's started. When I first saw it, I went, Yeah! Great expectations. I'm thinking Charles Dickens, a rags to riches story. This is financial aid; this is wonderful. Oh, no. They were "we are the best, we accept the best". Totally two different concepts of great expectations. And when I went into the meeting, not having read it, I only saw the title, we had lots of interchange in that meeting and I said you guys are coming from a private perception. They had gone to the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton, Harvard to get this great expectations idea. We're the public. We are rags to riches. That's what we are doing...gateway to a better place. We're not taking you from your yacht and bringing you through education so you can go work for daddy. That's being a little facetious there, but the private [universities are] very much of a big boy network, a legacy campus. We're not a legacy campus. We've never been a legacy campus and we never should be. So that's my personal opinion (3).

While this informant perceived that the University's drive to prestige could jeopardize its mission of serving the needs of the public, other informants expressed alarm at what this direction could pose for racial equity.

Perceptions of Equity and the Drive for Excellence

All informants acknowledged the important role that equity initiatives have played in shaping the identity of the modern day University of Maryland. Informants

offered numerous examples of campus-based initiatives, programs, and policies that were intended to remedy past discrimination or celebrate newfound commonalities. They also hailed key leaders in the University's past and present as being committed to transforming the institution into a place where the ideals of both racial equity and institutional excellence could be valued and embraced.

Despite, this general level of agreement, the views of informants diverged as they recounted their perceptions of the current priorities and relationship of racial equity and the institutional excellence. Data suggest that these different perceptions have emerged as actors observe and interpret the University's heightened drive toward excellence under the current leadership.

Intensity of messages. For example, when asked to compare the intensity levels of messages for racial equity and institutional excellence, respondents split into two groups. One group held the views of four of the five African Americans and four of the eight deans interviewed for the study. This group perceived that the campus, particularly the "top", sent messages for institutional excellence which were more intense than those for racial equity. Respondents from this group reported:

I think if you look at the actual pressures on the dean's position and you set on a scale of 1-10 where ten every morning someone's beating you over the head and one nobody ever mentions it at all, diversity issues are in the 3-5 range and academic excellence is in the 9-10 range (6).

I think the pressure for racial equity is strong. I think the pressure for excellence is stronger. I think that it's not as subtle. It's not as discreet. We're always focused on these rankings and that's how we measure our excellence. So, U.S. News and World Report, or whatever ranking, the NRCs, we're look at that; we're worrying about that. We're striving to improve our scores, either by discipline or by campus. On the racial equality, there's no ranking. We get little measures like graduating more Ph.D.s or the second most Ph.D.s of color or our undergraduate diversity is this. We look at our faculty diversity. We do pay attention to it, but it's just a little bit softer than the excellence thing (5).

Informants in the second group, either perceived no differences in the intensity of messages for racial equity and institutional excellence or they stated the two messages were too incompatible or different to compare. The views of two informants exemplify these positions:

It's interesting. I've read Robert Birnbaum's issue, where he talks about a pendulum swing between access and meritocracy, access and meritocracy of what you would term as excellence and there's a pendulum swing. I've never felt that there was a pendulum swing here at this institution, that's there's some kind of jerking back and forth between the two. I think that they are the same for us. I've never really thought we could be an excellent institution unless we were diverse (12).

I'd say it's pretty close. Some of it is hard to tell because, again, we put a lot of the pressure on ourselves.... Let's just say that of all the messages that are trying to be conveyed in terms of what's important, that let's just say the message about excellence as an institution is ten. The pressure doesn't get much higher than that around here. Then there's the pressure to raise money maybe that's nine. The pressure for multiculturalism and diversity I would say would be 7 or 8. Really, it's strong. Again, I think it's a little bit different because when we talk about pressure part of it is how you get things done is different depending upon what you're trying to get done. Part of the pressure for excellence is a lot of it is financial. So they have to have a megaphone, to some extent, to reach out to people that we want to hear the message. We need you to help Maryland be great. We need your help. We need your time. We need your money. So it's almost got to be like commercials all the time, in different venues, over and over. Getting the message across on diversity takes different approaches (6).

While none of the informants perceived the message for racial equity to be more intense than institutional excellence, one informant perceived that the institution regarded equity as a non-negotiable goal. This informant stated:

If I had to chose, if I kept score every time excellence was referenced or implied as opposed to fairness or equity, reference or implied, I would probably find a preponderance of citations for excellence—that it's more frequently mentioned or implied than equity is, but when equity is mentioned, it's mentioned with a kind of non-negotiation. In other words excellence is something maybe it could be argued in the eyes of the beholder. But equity is not (8).

Status and relationship of pressures. The most pronounced distinction between the perceptions of informants emerged as participants recounted their views on the status and relationship (e.g. whether complementary or competing) between racial equity and institutional excellence on the campus. More than half of the informants perceived little change in the University's commitment to racial equity since it began aggressively pursuing new norms of excellence under the leadership of President Mote. This group asserted confidence that the institution was equally pursuing and making core changes for both racial equity and institutional excellence. The distinguishing characteristic of this group centered on the perception that both constructs were not competing and/or the University had achieved inclusive excellence.

Yet another group observed tension in how racial equity and institutional excellence were valued at the University. Informants in this group perceived tension in how racial equity was valued along a continuum ranging from awareness of slight erosion and strain, to fairly strong convictions that racial equity was being abandoned or relegated to the periphery of the institution. Despite some differences in perception, this group was tied together based on a common view that at the University of Maryland, racial equity and institutional excellence were regarded as competing constructs.

The two groups were sharply divided along racial lines. Four of the five African Americans interviewed for this study perceived that on some measures, racial equity had eluded the core of the institution. In contrast, most of the Caucasians interviewed perceived that the University had achieved inclusive excellence. The racial breakdown of the informant group paralleled what some informants reported that they had observed around campus. These informants observed that the perceptions and experiences of

African Americans were often different from the rest of the campus community. When asked to compare the current priority for racial equity and institutional excellence one informant commented:

Different people would answer this differently. I think for the African Americans here they would say it's been limited. Whether that's a fair assessment or not, I think that's what they would say. I think for other communities, they would say it's pretty status quo. I don't know of too many communities that would say it's increased (1).

Another informant offered a similar assessment "I think that people of color who work here and have worked here for years, I mean we've seen some change, but in some ways there isn't a lot of change" (9).

Inclusive Excellence

As mentioned prior, for more than half of the informants, excellence at the University of Maryland has been inclusive of equity. These informants perceived that the University has embraced the notion that excellence is inextricably tied to diversity and that both ideals have been attended to with little compromise. Informants note that the University of Maryland is no longer publicly associated with the stigma of racial discrimination and oppression. These informants shared that the university has exchanged this shameful identity for one of diversity and inclusion:

Well, I think diversity is so ingrained in the identity of the institution right now that it's tough to think about the University of Maryland without the pride that everybody feels in that. And so I don't think we're going to move forward without that. I don't think you can talk to a single senior level administrator around here who believe otherwise. It's just a part of the ethos right now (12).

I would say the issue of racial equity is one that appears to be part of the fabric of this institution more so than many others. I don't know what the reason is... I have been hearing a dialog in this university ever since I came here. Of course it doesn't mean that the activities and the programs and the initiatives have remained the same, but I think the importance of diversity was impressed on me

in the first year that I came here. And it continues to remain one of the priorities of this institution and, quite frankly, this is something that I'm very proud of (16).

Informants of this persuasion cite examples of symbolic gestures and substantive programs that have developed within the past few years that have advanced both racial equity and institutional excellence. Evidence of the University's commitment to realizing core changes for racial equity is reflected in the demographics of student populations, degrees awarded to minority students, and other programmatic initiatives which are widely touted in University publications and presidential speeches.

According to University facts, in 2006 minority students made up 33 percent of the undergraduate student population. The two largest groups were Asian Americans at 14.1% of the population and African Americans at 12.9% ("Quick Facts", University of Maryland website). In 2006, the magazine *Diverse Issues* ranked the University thirteenth out of all Traditionally White Institutions (TWI) for awarding doctorates to African Americans and seven for awarding undergraduate degrees to African Americans ("Quick Facts", University of Maryland website). In 1994, the Ford Foundation awarded the University \$1,000,000 to serve as a model campus for diversity. Through a University diversity project, hundreds of administrators from other campuses have visited the University to learn about its model for diversity. For informants holding to the perception of inclusive excellence, these advances and recognitions suggested that the University had met substantive equity goals.

One interviewee credited President Mote with seeing diversity as a sign of distinction and a means by which the University of Maryland can be looked to for emulation by peer institutions:

I would say that we are becoming a much more diverse campus, which is what our strength is, what is really Mote's promotion. He said that in order for us to be the next public ivy you have to have diversity. You have to. You cannot have a cookie cutter, every student the same. It doesn't work. So we do that really, really well. Everything this campus does, we do diversity very well.... We're outstanding on diversity efforts. And it's real. That's one thing I can say from the inside, it's a real effort. Mote truly cares about diversity.... He really does. There are some things that are what I call "virtual ware," veneer. That's not veneer. There's a real true ingrained passion for this campus to maintain its diversity levels and we are looked upon by our peers as, on that one sector, as being stellar. Wow! We want to be like the University of Maryland. Michigan looks at us and goes, "Wow, we want to be like them." So, for that, I have to give us great kudos, quality points on really, truly having it at the heart of who we are (2).

Some informants in this group noted that the University's attention to racial equity and institutional excellence was unique in comparison to other major research institutions or private sector organizations. Others offered examples of how expectations for racial equity and institutional excellence were brought to bear on many different aspects under their responsibility. One dean noted:

You're going to hear Dr. Mote out there saying, he'll be talking about institutional excellence. He will also say we need to be diverse, but the pressure or the prioritizing on the diversity front happens more just in the day to day operation of the place. Not at events and things like that as much as it's me dealing with the provost. If I'm searching for an associate dean, he's asking me in my one-on-one, "What does your pool look like?" When he asks me to run a public policy search, he's reminding me (and he's got Cordell Black next to him saying) let's talk about how we can make sure we are casting the widest net as possible and getting a good diverse pool of candidates. Where do we need to be advertising? Where do we need to be recruiting? Where do we need to be hunting? It's the assessment. Everybody on campus is coming up with assessment plans and part of that is how you can guarantee you have multiculturalism in your curriculum. Nobody's going to make a press release or a news conference about that, but believe me that is where the rubber hits the road and the universities are going to be talking about the curriculum and what's happening in the classroom and diversity is very much, it's an important part of what's on the table when that happens. So I guess what I'm saying is both of these things are very important priorities. I think maybe they get conveyed in different ways...(6).

Challenges to Inclusive Excellence

While this group perceived that the words and deeds of the University were indicative of inclusive excellence, they acknowledged that the University did face challenges in maintaining and promoting it that value. These challenges were presented largely as “to be expected” norms and/or the work of forces external to the institution. According to these informants, some of the challenges that the University faced included the possibility that it may be losing its edge in institutional diversity accomplishments, legal threats to affirmative action, demographic shifts, and difficulty in recruiting and retaining minority faculty.

Losing Its Edge

Some informants noted that the University’s reputation and modeling of diversity initiatives has yielded a unique but not unexpected challenge. They perceived that other colleges and universities were beginning to make gains in diversity areas where, for many years, the University of Maryland had served as the model. One informant concluded:

I think, in many ways, the rest of the country has caught up to us. It used to feel here like we were ahead of everyone else. Now I don’t think it feels anymore like we’re ahead of everyone else, because lots of people have come where we are. So a lot of things we’ve been doing for a long time, they were pretty path breaking, you know, like we have 14% of our student body is African American. We have students numbers compared to Berkeley, Michigan, University of Illinois and nobody comes close to that. But that has been the case for a long time... We’ve been a big, inclusive campus for a long time and we’ve had a lot of programs for a long time... So in that sense I think it feels like we’ve fallen off, I think, because a lot of people have caught up to us (11).

According to these informants, the implications of this challenge are twofold. First, it provides evidence that the University of Maryland is an example to be emulated on matters of equity.

We’re an example. We are an example for many institutions on the east coast and

in the country. We are top. There's no question about it. And there were a few years when we were one and two in our numbers of doctoral degrees to African Americans. We don't rank that high now. It isn't that we've reduced what we do; it is that the others have caught up. With the same numbers we are now number seven or number eight, where we used to be one and two (9).

Second, it serves as a challenge to the University to work towards new ideas and innovation. One informant offered this perspective:

I think other universities have caught on and I can't tell you how many other institutions we've hosted here so they can try to figure out what the formula is for them. But I think you've got to continuously look at new models of organization and execution (12).

The Changing Legal Landscape

Informants in this group identified the changing legal climate of the nation and the changing demographics of the campus as examples of external forces which have directly impacted the capacity of the University to respond to demands for racial equity. Respondents note that these challenges have resulted in a loss of equity tools, and an expanded "umbrella" of interests to be addressed. Interviewees cited the University of Maryland's own case of Podberesky vs. Kirwan and the 2003 University of Michigan court cases as highly influential in shaping institutional policies and practices, particularly those which govern admissions and financial aid. One informant shared how those court cases have impacted the University of Maryland in terms of student recruitment and the awarding of financial aid:

What we cannot do, and so here's where we have some competing priorities, is we cannot award based on race. So I cannot show preference based on the color of somebody's skin, or their religion, or their sexual orientation. So we do have limitations by law that we cannot deny. The University of Michigan just had a big lawsuit that I think the Supreme Court said you can use race in certain circumstances and you have to have a whole lot of fluff around it. We don't. We don't use race for any awarding of aid (2).

Other informants noted that the court cases combined with the changing demographics of the State, country and campus have pushed the University to adopt a broader notion of diversity which was referred to by one informant as a “big umbrella”. This informant concluded that the change was a challenge but also beneficial to the campus:

I mean all along there were Asian American students, there were Latinos, there were people of different backgrounds...So now we're having to think about, when you think about racial inclusive you're not thinking just about Black/White people so you're thinking about Latinos and Asians and not just racial, but and LGBT folks. We try to make this umbrella big. It's been a challenge. I think it's great for the campus (11).

This informant likewise acknowledged that in some cases the “big umbrella” has resulted in African Americans perceiving a diminished focus on their interests:

but it's tough for, you know...the African American community knows we have to do it, but it isn't always comfortable with it because they feel like some of the focus is taken away...so it isn't so much affirmative action in African Americans so much anymore, it's diversity and African Americans and Asians and you know and Latinos and that's good. That's where I think it has changed a lot on this campus the last 10 years (11).

The views of another informant echoed these sentiments:

It's a challenge. I think nationally and here.... Here particularly we had a terrible history of racial discrimination against African Americans in the state of Maryland and our desegregation orders originally were based on African American issues. And I think many here would believe that we didn't solve our past problems before these new agendas came into play here and the demographics started changing, so I think there's a feeling here and nationally of unfinished business before the resources got diverted to handle a more diverse population. I think that's very real. I think the feeling's here at the institution and I will say I see the feeling nationally in terms of writings and programming and people who are talking about these issues. So it's real. I think it's real. So, for example, 20 years ago I would have seen 50 Banneker Scholars, African American scholars. Now you see 100 scholarship students, 50% of whom are from non-White, non-Caucasian backgrounds, but you are going to see fewer African Americans there. It's going to be more diverse than it was 20 years ago, but fewer of those scholarships are going to African American students. So it's more diverse; clearly it's more diverse, but African American students, by and

large, get fewer scholarships than they did 20 years ago, when it was committed to African Americans. So there's a pull and tug (12).

These informants went on to note that the loss of specific tools for maintaining racial equity for African American or other racial groups did not mean that the University was unwilling to address the limitations that they pose. Accordingly, informants noted that the University has implemented other means of reaching students, such as outreach, increased marketing in areas with high concentration of African Americans, and innovative financial aid programs:

I think outreach is incredible. You know, where our staff {members} choose to recruit and who it is they choose to target all plays a role in who eventually comes here, who they award scholarships too, who they admit. How attractive are the programs that are in place here at the campus to attract students all play a role. And so those are the tools, I think (12).

Now, how is it that we have such diversity... If you say that people from Baltimore City are 80% Black and we are going to do a lot of marketing in Baltimore City we will bring more racial diversity into our campus because we've marketed to those students....So those are how you get around the regulations or the laws is to come up with some creative marketing strategies (2).

The Faculty Pipeline

A third area of challenge identified by informants espousing the view of inclusive excellence was in the area of faculty recruitment and retention. Of the three challenges, this challenge appeared to be the most chronic and virulent. Informants recounted that while the University was taking measures to address inequities in the faculty ranks only small gains had been made. In particular, informants noted that the University had a persistent problem of minority faculty attrition. As one informant remarked:

It's so tremendously challenging. Let me tell you just a couple of observations that relate to that issue. One is that while we have done better in some areas in attracting greater numbers of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans even female faculty in some of our colleges...and, in most cases we've been making progress, but not all (most cases we've been making progress), we still have what

I consider to be a major issue related to minority faculty hired as junior faculty and dropping out before they get tenure. That's still an issue and that, of course, affects the number of senior minority faculty that we have and that continues to be a problem. We're making progress but it's slow and in a number of cases we've had faculty drop out well before they were due to come up for tenure so this is an issue which we are looking very closely at...to try to affect that concern (15).

According to these study participants, the problems that the University has faced in respect to the recruitment and retention of minority faculty were not limited to the campus, but were external and national in scope. This problem was fueled by the shortage of minority faculty, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, as well as the need to maintain quality standards. One dean suggested that it was unreliable to judge the University's progress on racial equity based on the number of minority faculty at the institution. According to this individual since one cannot recruit from the "null set", equity was best measured by examining the racial distribution of staff and students:

I think the easiest measure, the most reliable measure is to look at the staff, because if you're looking at most staff you can recruit from a community and there are plenty of people of all types that are potential candidates for recruiting if you're really equity oriented. You can't necessarily look at the [specialization] faculty in [specialization], right, because there may not be any minorities involved in a particular year. There may be only one or two. So if you're looking at that statistic, it would be fallacious. You can look at the distribution of ethnic, and racial, and also at the country origins of our student body because they are a statistically a very meaningful survey there. So I would say staff and students because they're both large numbers and you can see, for example, you're reflecting the ability to actually recruit a diverse workforce. I think there the university does very well (7).

The informant also noted that he/she did not compromise quality to recruit faculty of color and maintained a "color blind" process:

When we recruit faculty, it's a bit harder because there are very few faculty of color in [area]. There are a few projects and we support those, but there we're sort of color blind in terms of recruiting and I don't think we would bend our quality standards to get somebody of color. In fact I'm pretty sure we wouldn't because

what would happen is they wouldn't end up getting tenure and then, therefore, why bring somebody in and groom for not four but six years and you make a tremendous investment and they make a tremendous investment and because of our academic standards, our multi-national so to speak, if you bring in top quality candidates they're going to make it. So they are the only ones, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds (7).

Other informants in this group noted that over the years the University has implemented various incentives and programs to address issues of minority faculty recruitment and retention with varying degrees of success. Many pointed out that the Provost's office maintained special designated "pots" of money for recruiting minority and women candidates. The Provost's office also monitors the hiring process in collaboration with the University equity system to ensure good faith efforts for diversity.

One dean commented on the process:

I think the most visible and obvious aspects of diversity happen in high-profile searches. These are key faculty or associate deans or deans or center directors or whatever. We have pretty strict procedures here. We have to file paperwork for campus. All our searches have to be approved by the campus equity officer, have to be reviewed by the college's equity officer, the equity officers have to give the search committee the charge to talk about diverse schools. We are more or less required that if you have a short list of three or four there's got to be at least one woman and or one person of color on it. And, if you don't you'd better have a damned good reason and most of the ones I'm familiar with do. And, when you have the most significant kinds of appointments you're not only meeting these guidelines, but you're having conversations with the people down the hill on how it's going or what have you. So I would say that it manifests in terms of personnel and if you're demonstrating that you're just not.... If you've had five or six hires in a row and there's been nothing but White guys you have some serious explaining to do (6).

Informants pointed to programs which were specifically developed to address long-standing deficiencies in the academic pipeline through intervention in along various stages ranging from the K-12 to graduate school. Examples offered include the Science and Technology: Addressing the Need for Diversity (STAND) program developed by the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences; the Smith Talented

Acquisition Referral System (STARS) developed by the Robert H. Smith School of Business; and the Maryland Leadership Program of the School of Public Policy.

Two deans offered detailed examples of how they have promoted diversity in the hiring process for junior and senior faculty. One dean in particular laid out a very specific and detailed strategy for successfully recruiting faculty of color. In particular, he/she noted that as the dean there was no hesitancy about impressing on departmental search committees the importance of recruiting faculty of color. With this expectation in mind, faculty search committees rigorously and actively sought out minority candidates. Excerpts of this strategy are highlighted below:

First, let me start by telling you that while we have made quite a bit of progress I'm not happy with that progress. I would have liked to have had a much bigger level of progress.... I think number one, you constantly talk about it. I have created an environment where there is no doubt in anybody's mind (when I say anybody I do mean anybody) that it's a good thing for us to marry excellence with diversity. So item number one, we talk about it all the time. We don't shy away from talking.

Secondly, we have put together a set of incentives in order to encourage bringing in faculty members, in particular faculty members, because that's really where the challenge is because, as I said, the pool is very small. We go after the very best, so the pool becomes even smaller...I have created a pool of funds exclusively for addressing the diversity issue. Not compromising excellence, but doesn't need to fit exactly that narrow area where the department is searching for.

The third thing is you really need to be proactive. You can't just sit on your laurels, place an ad in a magazine, and hope that all these great people, including women and minorities apply to your position, because, as I told you a few minutes ago, they are very much in demand. They get approached by other universities so we need to approach them. So, instead of waiting for them to apply, we go out and seek them. We tell our faculty members when you go to conferences, when you find good quality people in particular minorities and women, identify them, talk to them, encourage them to apply here, invite here to come and give a seminar. So the combination of these three things, having discussion, creating incentives, and being proactive (16).

Interviews with other study informants confirmed the veracity and success of this dean's claims. However additional data suggest that at the University of Maryland this level of skill and commitment to recruiting minority faculty may be the exception rather than the norm.

The Elusiveness of Racial Equity

The majority-held notion of inclusive excellence was challenged by a smaller group of informants made-up of four of the five African American and two of the fourteen Caucasian informants. Most participants in this group affirmed their belief in the ideals of inclusive excellence and in the complementary nature of racial equity and institutional excellence. However, they perceived that, to varying degrees, these ideals were not evident at the University of Maryland. While these persons agreed that the University had made important strides in both diversity and excellence, their perceptions suggest that the widely heralded message of inclusive excellence had eluded the core of the University. Thus, when core activities of the institution are examined, such as the recruitment and retention of faculty and students, equity and excellence surface as competing constructs. Excellence is aggressively promoted and advanced while equity languishes in varying degrees of stagnation or erosion. This group attributes the campus's chronic problems of racial equity to the action and inaction of members of the University community, not to external forces.

A Resistant Core

Given the segregated past of the University, these informants regard the current ethnic diversity of the campus as a positive sign of change. However, interviewees refer

to the unique diversity of the Baltimore Washington Metropolitan area as evidence that the University's enrollment of African American students should be greater. Thus, although the enrollment of minority students has grown to over 30% of the University's overall undergraduate student population, the enrollment of African American students remained relatively steady at approximately 12%. In 2006, the six year graduation rate for African American students still lagged ten points behind the rate for all University students, at 69.3% and 79.0% respectively. One informant commented:

A lot of that has to do, to my mind, with where we are. We're in a state with 27% of the population being African American, so a large proportion of our natural undergraduate population is African American. We have harvested some of that, not as much as we should have, to my way of thinking, but still, you know, compared to a lot of institutions there are a lot more African American students. So, when you look at graduation and graduation rates and your utilization of the university, all the things that at the student level, I think we are a role model. People look at College Park and we're graduating this many undergraduates and we're graduating this many graduate students and I think we're doing well in those respects. I don't think we've ever come close to reaching what we should have done...So my feeling has always been that we're doing way better than lots of places, partly because of where we are and that we're doing a pretty good job with our resources where we are, but we could do better (4).

Another informant shared frustration with what was perceived as unwillingness to make specific recruitment goals for African American faculty and students a top priority. According to him/her this condition was especially troubling given the demographics of the University's location:

I did not hear diversity of faculty and students as being a priority. I do not hear it as a priority. I do not hear it coming from the top that this is a specific goal we are going to reach. I've never heard anyone say that we're going to increase our Black student population by 10% next year. That's specific to me. Okay? I've heard people say that we have the highest number of African American students in any land grant university... And I still say that that is not sufficient for me, and the other fact that we are geographically sandwiched between Washington, DC, Prince George's County, which has probably some of the most concentrated schools of African Americans than any place in the State (10).

This informant soundly rejected arguments which suggest that the low percentage of African Americans in the student population could be explained by a lack of “quality” African American students. To counteract this argument, s/he offered an example of a local predominantly African American scholars program whose students has been heavily recruited by institutions such as Cornell University. According to this individual, this same program has been virtually ignored by the University of Maryland.

The Washington Metropolitan Scholars...They have 1000 scholars in that bank with 3.5 or better, basically African Americans. The University of Maryland is not vying high for that population. Cornell has the highest number of students receiving that population, 70 scholars. The University of Maryland hasn't jumped out and said we absolutely want that to be a part of our recruitment strategy. They have just received from my colleague over at Washington Metro Scholars a list of her 1000 scholars. So have we run out and said, “Let's make sure we get 100 of these students and really boost...?” No, we're comfortable with being a little bit over where we were the previous year. So if you say diversity? Equity? I think it all depends on what people perceive as their comfort level. Nobody is willing to take the lead on this campus in terms of diversity. We are ahead of the game, so to speak. As long as we are ahead of the game we don't have to be a mile down the road ahead. We're a half a mile, that's fine. Or a quarter of a mile, that's fine. So, no, I'm not encouraged by where we are in terms of equity for students, diversity for students (10).

This sub-set of informants also perceived that the University's broadly defined diversity efforts have become inconsistent with full compliance to desegregation mandates and racial equity for African American students and faculty. As one participant commented:

I have become a bit disillusioned with the term “diversity” because too often, for me, it has become a substitute for recruiting Black students and Black professors.... And where are we today, in terms of desegregation, back about where we were before Brown came to be. So the university says it's so proud of its diversity and so on and so forth.... Yes, very broadly defined, very broadly defined and we've done better than a lot of schools, okay, a lot of prestigious institutions and in our undergraduate student body, even with Black students we've done better, but they're talking overall diversity which is about 33 1/3% and the largest group lately has been Asian Americans. As I said the enrollment of Black students is falling off, even in graduate school, etc., so I really have to

study that issue, but I really think diversity doesn't do it for Black people. It just doesn't do it (13).

Although these interviewees perceived tensions between excellence and racial equity for students, most noted that compared to faculty, racial equity for students continues to fare much better.

As evidence that racial equity has eluded the core of the institution informants point to the chronic challenges that the University has faced in the recruitment and retention of African American faculty. Study participants reference the small population of African American faculty at the University—5.6 percent of the total faculty population (UMD IRPA Profiles, 2006) and their high attrition rate.

As table 5 shows, compared to faculty of other races, African American faculty were far more likely to be denied tenure or resign or withdraw from the institution.

Ethnicity	Promoted	Denied	Resigned/Withdrew	Pending
Asian-American (56)	57%	7%	30%	5%
African-American (41)	34%	15%	51%	0%
Hispanic (23)	61%	4%	35%	0%
White (278)	60%	6%	30%	4%

Source: Table reproduced from University of Maryland Middle States Self-Study, 2006

In light of these dismal rates, one study participant wondered why these and other numbers related to the retention of African American students were not accounted for when the institution is promoted as having achieved inclusive excellence:

I understand the university's reputation. But there are a lot of sub-factors that contributes to what should be defined as excellence and equity... Attrition is a significant part of what we define as excellent. The larger the attrition, in my opinion, the lower the excellence, the quality of excellence, because there are several factors which are not going to be obvious at the point of entrance, when the GPA is determined, that are going to contribute to retention, which represents what happens in the environment and, like I said before, excellence and equity are

defined throughout the inner workings of the environment. It is not at the beginning of the gate; it is not at the end of the gate. If you get the highest number of incoming assistant professors who are Black and you have the highest number who are leaving before they get promoted, are we excellent? To me that's the kind of questions that one has to ask (10).

Informants in this group acknowledged that recruiting and retaining minority faculty can pose unique challenges. However, they questioned the University's willingness to address the issues through strategic efforts such as recruitment, departmental accountability, or changing common held definitions of what constitutes excellence. One interviewee offered this perspective:

I've seen no efforts that Maryland has recognized, 'hey, look, these guys are available; why don't we go and try to make a package for a couple of people?' The problem is if you try to go one at a time your chances of getting anywhere are pretty random, but if you can actually tell people, okay, we're going to do something significant, we're going to have a group and you're going to be an important part of that group you have a good chance... I'm sorry, I have to think strategy that would produce the kind of results that you're talking about and there's the strategy and there's money and I haven't seen either one (4).

Another informant offered a different, but no less indicting perspective on the issue by noting that the current focus on excellence and ranking has supplanted equity in recruitment efforts. Although the University provides departments with a modest percentage of the salary for minority hires, these resources are limited and often leave departments in the position of having to find long term funding solutions. Thus, a quality hire which may increase the diversity of a unit is not as valued as the "superstar" faculty who can most directly impact the rankings.

To a large extent, that seems to translate either into hiring or retaining the faculty who we think are going to move us forward in terms of our rankings and so forth. And I think it would be fair to say that more money is available for that, so, if you go forward and you say, "I have these superstars and they can come into my department and I think they're going to make a tremendous difference in how this department is ranked," there's probably more funds that will flow toward that hire than if you say, "I have a very good African American who's going to come into

my department.” Money flows. It’s an incentive. People are glad. It’s not like there isn’t encouragement, but it’s more on the excellence side, I think (5).

Study participants also noted that as a general rule, University programs have grown accustomed to repeating the excuse of “the pipeline issue”, without actively investigating to see if those assumptions hold true or aggressively working to produce more quality applicants. According to one informant:

You have to do a lot for education, reading and all, about the lack of availability. I mean that was said repeatedly to me about the faculty in [field]. There are no Blacks in [field]. And I would go around and get this directory from UCLA or Berkeley, I’m not sure, where it would show that in a given year maybe 48 Black Ph.D.s had graduated in various fields of [field]. Where did they all go? Where are they? They’re not in academia. And so I would always insist that they would document their assumptions and they could rarely do that. See this was a kind of cursory perspective that they had on the availability and, admittedly, in certain fields you have far fewer candidates of color than you will Whites...I just think you have to challenge these statements that they make. Pipeline issues, sure, but when are you going to do something about the pipeline issue? What are you doing currently to produce engineers and produce mathematicians, physicists and the like? What are you doing if there’s a pipeline issue? You’ve been saying this for years, “The pipeline issue” (13).

These informants perceived that many of the challenges related to equity and diversity, (whether related to student diversity, or faculty retention) indicate that racial equity has not permeated the core of the University. Thus, they argued that the elaborate paper trail of diversity plans, assessments, and reports, are rendered meaningless in the face of persistent University beliefs and patterns of action which retain and transmit inequity. According to informants, these resistant aspects of the institutional culture stem from opposing constructs and definitions of racial equity and institutional excellence and a lack of institutional will for fully implementing equity values.

Opposing Constructs and Definitions

Study participants who perceive that racial equity has eluded the core of the

University noted that the division between racial equity and institutional excellence was caused by deep-seeded University wide beliefs which have defined and promulgated the two constructs as polar opposites. Informants acknowledged that the University's history of racism and segregation shaped many of the norms and structures of the institution but maintained that the University had begun to take steps to dismantle these barriers during the presidencies of President Slaughters and Kirwan. However, some of these informants perceived that this progress was halted under the current administration. One individual blamed President Mote for reinforcing opposing definitions of equity and excellence in the early days of his administration:

I have heard [President Mote] say on more than one occasion, as if he's seeing diversity and excellence with different eyes, says, "My emphasis is not upon people of color, I'm interested in excellence,"...I've heard him say on more than one occasion, particularly early on in his administration (13).

According to these informants, this mindset has perpetuated a destructive viewpoint in which racial equity is seen as compromising excellence. Informants claimed that the University's almost exclusive focus on traditional indicators of excellence contributes to a polarization of equity and excellence—where excellence is rarely equated to matters of equity. One informant explained:

The fact of the matter is the institution speaks of "Here's what our composition of our freshman class is, here's how many students we have in the class (we're excellent), here's how many top ten research departments we have (we're excellent)."...There are few times, if any, that it's said that we are top ten because we have more students of color (i.e., African Americans) than most of our peers, or our retention rate is higher than our peers for this population. See? That is not what is considered. Are there a number of students who are coming that are of color, Black, who are graduating and have gone on to graduate school (we're excellent)? So if you're talking about excellence from a Black perspective, to me those are the ways you measure excellence, not how many students come into the door with a certain grade point average (10).

This informant perceived that University programs which were the historical

means by which students of color were admitted and received academic support at the University were not valued as important contributors to the quality and mission of the institution. Thus, these long standing programs were neither publicly celebrated nor financially supported as extensively as other programs which are seen to be central to institutional excellence. This informant shared:

It's recognition of what activities within the environment contributes to diversity, enhances the quality of the educational mission and excellence and you support those things. If people were to analyze that program in OMSE and Nyumburu they would say the same thing. Shirley Morman in talent search, who's pre-college, but they are still fundamental to identifying and putting into order the university eye in the community and developing a trust with the kids in the elementary and junior high school and senior high school to help them consider the University of Maryland, these are valued contributions to the campus but they are not necessarily viewed as such (10).

Another informant argued that the polarization of racial equity and institutional excellence is reinforced by racial stereotypes and erroneous assumptions about the "quality" of persons of color. These assumptions become manifest when persons of color are judged for recruitment or promotion:

I think, in too many people's minds, excellence is defined by traditional scholarship; excellence is defined by non-Black people. I think too many professors hold to the impression that whatever is done by Black scholars is not up to snuff ... there's a tacit assumption in the hands of many...that excellence, by definition, is White. And anything that deviates from White precludes, in too many cases, excellence. And if it is excellence in color then it almost has to be a Nobel Peace Prize winner or Nobel Literature winner. The problem is...it would probably take 50 years or more for Black people, people of color to produce as many mediocre Black professors, Chicano professors, or Asian-American professors, as they have White professors, with all of this talk of excellence and never have I heard used by those deans the word "qualified" for White professors. They always assume that if they're White candidates, the two are redundant. That is never in their mind's eye when it comes to faculty of color (13).

These informants have concluded that the University's lack of faculty diversity is due in large part to the manifestation of these false and stereotypical assumptions that are part of the broader society and engrained in the University of Maryland context.

Lost Will

Much like the inclusive excellence group, informants who perceive that equity has eluding the core of the University of Maryland observed that the University has lost ground in its standing in diversity related rankings. Both groups agree that other institutions have used the example of University of Maryland to improve their campus profiles. However, informants holding to elusive equity perceived that drops in the University's diversity related ratings are indicative of its diminished attention to equity issues. Some of these informants also perceive drops in rankings as a lack of will to extend beyond already legitimated levels of diversity. One informant expressed frustration at what was perceived as the campus norm:

I see excellence being pushed again. Like I said, excellence is pushed at the head of the train and equity is on the caboose someplace back there. It's supposedly following along and as long as it's following along and as long as it doesn't get too far behind, people are not going to rise up in arms like the Gallaudet students did, which we should, given where I believe we ought to be versus where I think we are (10).

Informants holding the perception of elusive equity generally agreed that court cases and the changing socio-political climate of the broader nation have undermined the University's ability to use many previously successful affirmative action tools. However, while acknowledging the loss of important tools; this group by and large reported that the University had neither the will nor the inclination to move beyond peripheral commitments to equity efforts. Two informants commented on this dynamic:

There were things that we were doing during the Kirwan administration that we can't do now because of the Banneker court case and because of the change of the tenor of the country in the general in respect to how you can do about achieving diversity. So, yes, there certainly were things that we've lost that were extremely useful tools in improving racial equity at the university, but I say, "no" because I don't think that's why we're not doing as well. It's not been a problem and they've come up with, to my mind, good substitutes for some of the things we can't do anymore, it's the fact that we don't have the will for doing it (5).

And I accept the fact that you can't have a quota, but the point is that there's no numerical goals and you've got no way of knowing if you're making progress, going forwards, going backwards, where you are on the map, you have no idea. So the problem is that with institutional excellence I think it's easy to quantify. You can quantify diversity, but if you quantify diversity as numbers then they're going to hit you on quotas and you're not going to get anywhere. In a sense that's right, because with raw numbers, we've had a situation here, in X college, where we had a dean who brought in lots of African Americans and six years later they were all washed out because they weren't of the right quality. To my mind, that was not progress on racial equity, if you bring people and you wash them out six years later. So, it can't just be numbers. It's not just a matter of numbers, but it's a matter of numbers meeting the standards of the university. But I've also seen a few cases where they bring in people, they don't mentor them properly, and then they wash them out, even though the people really were good enough... So measuring is not the reason it failed, it's the lack of will is the reason it failed (4).

Informants argued that the University's lack of will for moving beyond peripheral association with racial equity has led to a lack of strategic approaches to promote equity for students; few, if at all, consequences for non compliance on equity efforts; and minimal structures for sustaining equity interests. One informant, who perceived that the University had moved away from its land grant mission in favor of an elitist identity, questioned why the University was not taking more strategic steps to increase equity in the student population.

No, I see a higher push for excellence, but I think that people are defining excellence by numbers. The university has basically defined itself, in my opinion, as an elitist institution, when it is, in fact, a land grant institution who has a primary responsibility to providing an educational opportunity for its citizenry. And the citizenry, in my opinion, first originates in the state of Maryland, since it is a state institution and since state citizens are paying for taxes in the state. I see the university as being comfortable with its diversity increases as long as it gets

here and it represents the numbers and they have high grade point averages. I don't see us being creative and saying, "Let's create within the University of Maryland an opportunity for students...If the national norm for an African American student is 150 less than White students on the verbal SAT, why do we hold everybody to one standard, when traditionally the patterns of performance on the exam have been historically documented with this distinctive variance? That variance does not start with intellectual ability. It starts with educational experience. The educational experience of many Black students who perform as they do on the SAT, from foundation education (pre K-12) is very different from those who perform higher. And if you look at the performance of students in the same school setting with African Americans you will see that their performance was similar.... So the idea of excellence is defined by setting a norm which is very, very high, which captures a majority of a certain population and a minority of this other population and it keeps the numbers in a certain range (10).

This informant pointed to the lack of strategic approaches to equity as the University's attempt to either weed out or contain the numbers of African American students at the University:

The higher you set the goal, the more we can weed, because students who are at the top of this testing game, African Americans have tremendous choices, both in and out of the state. Some will choose to historically Black schools. If we are committed as a university, why is it then that we don't think about what's the strategic way to make sure that we are enhancing African Americans in the state of Maryland in enrollment in College Park? I don't think that you will find a university recruitment strategy or its admissions enrollment management gain any strategy necessarily to recruit, identify, and enroll the number of Black students in Prince George's county schools other than the Baltimore incentive, which is ten students (10).

Study participants perceived that while the "top" may be advocating for diversity in campus wide hiring, search committees and departments chairs see little consequence for non-compliance. In turn, informants perceived that campus constituents can and do simply ignore rhetorical appeals for racial equity. One interviewee acknowledged that this resistance from the core is an ongoing problem dating back to the time of President Slaughter:

The problem is you have this commitment at the university level, but how does that translate down to a department in terms of what they actually do. The

problem is, even though Slaughter was all for it, these guys down here kept doing what they'd been doing and they didn't do much about it. That is the case, you know, there's funds to do this. To me the biggest joke that the university plays is that they always say, "Well, if you want to hire an excellent African American, we'll give you money to do it." And then the guy says, "No, we don't care," and they just go ahead and do what they're going to do and so nothing happens, but there's no consequence to not using these funds. Most people just go ahead and not do it...how do you translate your commitment into actually results at the department level 80 departments and 80 different people sort of deciding what they want to do in life and they decide they don't want to do anything (4).

The words of another informant articulate how this lack of structure left the hiring process open to the whims and values of ever-changing department chairs:

I think a lot of it does have to do with the chairs, because the chairs are the people who really drive the hiring of the faculty and the selection of graduate students. How much of this institutional goals and policies are communicated to chairs and how accountable are the chairs being held during their time? So that's kind of an interesting question and you know they roll through the place in three to five years and each one's different; each one brings their own personal values. So some of them are going to be very committed and some of them not so much (5).

Informants also noted that instead of permeating the ethos of the institution, many diversity efforts were tied to the work of individuals in the administration and faculty. Accordingly informants noted the decline in new and innovative approaches to racial equity since the departure of key equity advocates. Others expressed concern for the future of diversity at the University if and when other "equity minded" individuals were to depart:

We had a group of people 10-15 years ago who were empowered to do a lot of interesting things Gladys Brown was one of those people, I mentioned Marie Cordell, Ray Johnson in math. There was a whole group of people who, because of the institution's commitment, were able to do some things that did, I think, put us on the map in terms of being creative leaders and really doing something. I think we haven't replaced that group and now they're all old. Some of them are gone. Cordell's getting tired. Ray Johnson's getting older. I don't feel that we've replaced them and so I don't see a lot of creative initiatives and energy today. I think that everybody still believes it. I think people would like it to be true, but I'm not quite sure we're really in a leadership role any more. But I think we're still reaping the benefits of that reputation (5).

They're doing amazing things primarily because of Raymond Johnson and the help he gets from some of his colleagues there in terms of graduating Black Ph.D.s, women and men, in mathematics. He draws them because of the success that others have had; they just come...but Ray's not going to be there forever and we're fortunate enough to have Ray there, but the mechanism has not been set up so that it's not dependent upon one individual. You know what I mean. So that tells me that there's a lot of fluff in the talk about diversity and excellence (13).

In summary, the perceptions of these informants were reminiscent of the views of the Excellence through Diversity (ETD) committee articulated more than seven years ago. At the University of Maryland, College Park, in matters of institutional excellence and the achievement of racial equity "there is bitter with the sweet"(ETD, p. 4).

Assessment of the Multiple Perceptions and Conflicting Realities

The conflicting realities of inclusive excellence and elusive equity at the University of Maryland, College Park raise important questions about the origins and veracity of these beliefs. Although this study suggests factors which may have contributed to shaping these divergent perceptions, investigations and/or conclusions about their sources are beyond the scope of this work. However, an assessment of the extent to which perceptions of inclusive excellence and elusive equity hold against the reality of University action is both permissible and important.

One of the most interesting traits about how perceptions of inclusive excellence and elusive equity are conveyed is that supporters of each offer many of the same facts to substantiate their claims. For example, both groups point to the diversity of the undergraduate population, the large "umbrella" of diversity related programming and initiatives and the high standing of the University in popular diversity- related rankings. Those informants holding to perceptions of inclusive excellence count these examples as positive signs of change and evidence that equity is a priority at the University. In

contrast, informants who perceive that equity has eluded the core of the institution, consider these patterns, at best, as peripheral gains, and at worst, as road blocks designed to thwart the realization of equity. When both arguments are weighed against a definition of racial equity rooted in social justice, which this research has adopted, the perception of inclusive excellence appears less congruent with the realities of the institution than the perception of elusive equity. Three lines of evidence support this appraisal.

First, University facts and rankings which are consistently presented by study informants who hold to inclusive excellence conceal critical areas of campus racial inequity, particularly as they apply to African Americans and present a distorted view of the progress the institution has made on dimensions of racial equity. For example, undergraduate enrollment data show that minority students make up 33% of the undergraduate student population and provide some evidence of progress in advancing racial equity and institutional excellence. However, when those data are disaggregated an important question surfaces. Why do African American students account only for 12.9% of the undergraduate student body when they comprise 29% of the population of the State of Maryland, and 66.1 % of the Prince George's county population? In addition, the widely touted high University rankings for graduating large percentages of African American undergraduate and doctoral students belie that fact that graduation rates of African American students at the University of Maryland are lower than those of their peers. The aggregation of enrollment statistics and the general references to graduation rates distort the picture of progress toward racial equity for African American students

Indeed, the packaging of data related to equity efforts distorts the picture and conceals patterns that contradict claims that inclusive excellence has been realized.

Second, claims by informants who perceive elusive equity hold under scrutiny. In addition to pointing out the conflict between University sanctioned evidence of inclusive excellence and actual patterns of access and achievement for African American students and faculty, this group notes also that the dominant message conveyed by the words and deeds of the current University president is that of institutional excellence. These informants also perceive this message as presenting racial equity and institutional excellence as dichotomous goals. The findings of this study support these assertions. An analysis of University documents traced the President's pattern of silence and reserved speech on matters of racial equity back to his early years on campus. For example, analysis of the President's 1999 inaugural address and 2000 State of the Campus Address revealed few substantive references to equity or diversity issues. The documents indicate that the current President emphasizes traditional status-based indicators of excellence. While he called for civility and tolerance in response to the hate crimes which were plaguing the campus, he has not articulated a vision for inclusive excellence. President Mote's lack of leadership on equity issues was so profound that in 2000, a University panel urged the president to embody the roles of diversity spokesperson and diversity advocate. Over the last few years, President Mote has incorporated diversity highlights into many of public remarks about the University. However, both his supporters and his detractors admit that he spends far more time articulating visions of the University that are more aligned with traditional indicators of excellence than with the ideals of racial equity.

Finally, claims of inclusive excellence are questionable given the most recent evidence on key measures of racial equity. For example, a 2005 study conducted by Perna, Milem, Gerald, Baum, Rowan, and Hutchens, found that the University of Maryland, College Park had substantial inequities in Black student enrollment and degree completion. This study gauged equity using an index which measured the representation of Black full-time undergraduate students relative to statewide Black high school graduates. A score of one is considered equity attainment, while scores of less than one or more than one are considered below and above equity attainment, respectively. Using their equity index, Perna et al. found that the University's equity index has declined from a high .53 in 1995 and 1996 to a low of .037 in 2001. This trend is especially telling given that erosion of Black student enrollment began even as the campus was receiving national attention for being a "model" institution of diversity. Alone, numerical indicators which reveal the consistent patterns of inequity at the University are a major challenge to the notion of inclusive excellence. However, when added to the perceptions held by most African American study informants, a compelling counter-story to that of inclusive excellence is evident.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an analytic account of the University of Maryland's response to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence and the impact of those responses on select dimensions of the institution. The findings revealed actors used different responses depending on whether the pressure was for racial equity or institutional excellence.

Institutional actors initially responded to pressures for racial equity with symbolic and rhetorical statements and narrow initiatives to increase number of African American students and faculty. These efforts proved to be institutional “window dressing”, inadequate for the task of addressing deep seeded issues of exclusion and racism on the Maryland campus. University leaders were pressed by equity advocates to match their rhetoric with systematic efforts and substantive change. While these appeals resulted in the commitment of substantive resources for racial equity as well as multiple programmatic initiatives, it was the University’s highly visible defense of the Banneker scholarship program that had stood as a watershed development. The defense of Banneker was a powerful signal that equity was a valued priority of the institution. The national spotlight on the case aided the University in recreating its image and identity to one of a “model” diversity institution. However, shortly after the Banneker case, the campus began to promote an expanded notion of diversity closely linked to the State’s expectation for institutional excellence. The emphasis on diversity, in the minds of some informants, has diluted the attention given to racial equity and to the social justice goals associated with that ideal.

Pressures for institutional excellence were acceded to through emulation of the norms of the upper echelon and elimination of the stigma of discrimination. These strategies have moved the institution from what some termed as its mediocre past to its current norms of excellence. These responses were perceived to have had a profound impact on the institution. Informants agreed that the institution has shed its reputation for blatant racial discrimination and institutional mediocrity. Although these gains were noted by most if not all informants, further analysis revealed that views of study

interviewees could be categorized into two divergent perspectives of the current state of racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park. One group comprised of most informants and most of the Caucasian interviewees, maintained the University had achieved inclusive excellence. The second group, a smaller group comprised mostly of African American informants perceived that racial equity has eluded the core of the University. The researcher's assessment of these two conflicting realities suggests that the elusive equity view may be the more valid characterization.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the research design and key findings, discuss the study conclusions, and highlight recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Research Design

The apparent struggle between the ideals of racial equity and institutional excellence has been long debated, well-cited, and extensively written about in the higher education field (Astin, 1991; Bowen, Kurzeil & Tobin, 2005; Greene & Trent, 2005).

This study builds on the foundation laid by past works to examine how higher education institutions respond to pressures for excellence and equity and to document the extent to which university responses to demands for equity and excellence become part of the inner core of the institution or become relegated to marginal or peripheral positions.

More specifically, this study explored how a public flagship institution, the University of Maryland, College Park responded to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence in higher education. The study sought to answer four central research questions:

1. What are the sources and types of demands for racial equity and institutional excellence recognized by this institution between 1988, when it was designated a “flagship” university and the present (2006)?
2. What strategies did institutional agents employ to mediate these demands?
3. What impact do these strategies have on dimensions of institutional racial equity and institutional excellence?

4. What are the implications of this study for prominent theories that seek to explain how institutions of higher education interact with their environment?

The conceptual framework of this study was informed by two streams of literature. The first stream addressed how the broad notions of racial equity and institutional excellence are defined and measured and whether these ideals are complementary or competing values within the context of American higher education. This body of scholarship provided the foundation for a classification device by which pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence could be distinguished from other institutional pressures.

Generally, the literature revealed that racial equity in higher education is understood as a broad ideal rooted in notions of social justice, fairness and equality. Advocates of equity argue that in order to combat the effects of segregation, racism, and discrimination higher education institutions must take decisive and affirmative steps to provide equitable opportunities and experiences for minority students, faculty, and staff. These steps include providing targeted opportunities for postsecondary access, retention and success. Literature also revealed that institutional excellence is largely captured under two unique frames. The most dominant of these is the traditional conceptualization which ties excellence to a deeply embedded public belief system that equates excellence with status and affluence. Perceptions of excellence rest on and are reinforced by highly visible status-based reputational indicators and available resources. Alternative conceptualizations of excellence such as the inclusive excellence or talent development

frameworks base judgments of institutional excellence on the quality of educational opportunities available to all students.

The second body of literature explores how institutions respond to external pressures and how contextual forces and human agents interact to develop institutional responses. This stream also examines the impact of institutional responses to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. The streams are tied together through a conceptual model which suggests how pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence are mediated by the strategic choices of key actors in the institution. Oliver's (1991) model of strategic choice proposes a range of strategic choices that institutions could use to respond to external demands. Oliver contends that based on contextual factors such as the cause, constituents, content, control, and context of the demands, institutions may respond along a continuum of choices ranging from passive acquiescence to active manipulation.

This study relied on an exploratory case study methodology to investigate the University of Maryland's responses to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence from 1988, when the University was designated the flagship institution of the State of Maryland to 2006. This case study method was a logical choice for this research given its ability to assist researchers in probing, unpacking, and understanding complex social processes and in developing holistic accounts of those processes (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1998).

The study incorporated multiple forms of data including primary and secondary documents, such as: University website text, mission statements, transcripts of presidential speeches and state of the campus addresses, University reports on issues of

equity and excellence, and strategic planning documents. These documents were used to identify the actors and the sources of pressure, to recreate a chronology of events, and to identify areas of impact. Interviews were conducted with nineteen informants who were knowledgeable about the institution's strategies for managing presses for racial equity and institutional excellence. Informants were current and past University employees, namely deans, mid and senior level administrators and faculty.

Data were analyzed through the use of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software. Interview data were coded in NVivo and assigned to broad categories consistent with the conceptual framework. Coded interview transcripts were reviewed by peer debriefers. Categories were refined into themes and developed into a case narrative. The case narrative was audited by two study participants, each representative of the two dominant perspectives which emerged from the case and reviewed by the dissertation committee. The combination of participant and collegial review was incorporated to check for bias and error in the collection, analysis and communication of data.

Summary of Case Findings

The main study findings, which are detailed in chapters four through six, are summarized here. The summary is organized around the study's main research questions.

1. What are the sources and types of demands for racial equity and institutional excellence recognized by this institution between 1988, when it was designated a "flagship" university and the present (2006)?

Data analysis revealed the presence of both internal and external pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence at the University of Maryland, College Park

from 1988 through 2006. The sources of pressures for racial equity were largely from internal and external interest groups of varying strengths and resources, who were working to overcome a history of blatant institutional racism. These groups were often splintered and embattled. Internal pressures for racial equity at the University were preceded by the efforts of external actors who used the law and the courts to force the institution to create more equitable opportunities. For example, in the 1970's, the United States Office for Civil Rights found the State of Maryland to be in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts and ordered a desegregation plan for all State institutions, including the University of Maryland, College Park. Similarly, the Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs sued the institution in 1992 to end discrimination in the hiring process of non-exempt employees. The actions of these external actors reinforced the efforts of the internal advocates who sought to advance racial equity on the University of Maryland, College Park campus.

Prior to the 1980's, internal actors pressing the cause of racial equity operated through the grassroots efforts of small interest groups made up primarily of African American students, faculty, and staff. Groups such as the Black Student Union, and the Black Faculty and Staff Association actively engaged in challenging campus leadership for changes in the institution's climate, policies, and structures. Although the initial efforts of these groups achieved some measure of success in raising awareness and initiating solutions to campus inequities, core areas of the campus remained resistant to change.

Informants credited the actions of a core but informal group of African American faculty and senior administrative staff with having the most direct impact on institutional

policies and practices during the timeframe of 1988-2006. By virtue of their formal positions and their personal convictions, this group elevated issues of racial equity from grassroots efforts to official University channels and brought equity issues to the attention of senior leadership.

The last three University presidents— Slaughter, Kirwan, and Mote—were all cited for their leadership and for their commitment to the ideals of racial equity and diversity. Informants credited President Slaughter, the first African American president of the institution with laying the ground work for President Kirwan’s transformative presidential term. Under the leadership of President Kirwan, the University defended the race based Banneker scholarship program in the case of *Podberesky v. Kirwan*. Although the University lost the case, it gained a reputation as a “model” institution of diversity. Although most informants identified President Mote, the current University president, as a source of pressure for racial equity, most of the African American informants perceived that President Mote’s near exclusive focus on traditional definitions of excellence has been detrimental to University equity efforts. These informants credited William Destler, University Provost from 2001-2007, with sustaining the priority for racial equity.

Other sources of pressure for racial equity included external actors such as the State of Maryland, professional associations and the community. Internal actors, most notably the University Equity Council and various other campus offices and programs were seen as supportive of the concerns of the campus minority community. While informants were able and willing to identify sources of pressure for racial equity, some, noting the transformed nature of the campus, were reluctant to attribute current pressures for equity to either external forces or internal actors. These informants ascribed the

current state of racial equity on campus to pressures generated by individual and institutional values and commitments.

The sources of the pressure for institutional excellence were perceived to be widespread, well-supported and consistent with institutional values. Informants' characterization of the sources of pressures for institutional excellence revealed a high level of consensus concerning the sources of pressure. Respondents perceived that campus constituents including faculty, staff, "top" administrators and students were vested and interested participants who worked cooperatively toward the achievement of institutional excellence. Informants acknowledged the State as a source of pressure for excellence, but added that its designation and mandate to reach "upper echelon" status were compatible with institutional aspirations for merit and prestige. In 2006, the drive for excellence is sustained by widespread campus support.

2. What strategies did institutional agents employ to mediate these demands?

Data suggest that specific strategies to mediate the demands for racial equity were embedded in the institution's over-arching strategy for managing the pressures for institutional excellence. The University's designation as the flagship institution of the State of Maryland and the promise of increased funding created what Kingdon (2003) would describe as a "window of opportunity" for University-wide change. Institutional leaders, beginning with President Kirwan, embraced pressures for excellence by initiating two distinctive strategies—imitating the "upper echelon" and erasing the stigma of discrimination.

Since its designation as the flagship institution, University of Maryland leaders have consistently turned to institutions perceived to be among the "upper echelon" for

emulation and goal setting. President Kirwan initiated this strategy through symbolic gestures and rhetorical communications which, first, modeled the features of the aspirational peers, then promoted the potential of the institution to meet and surpass those institutions previously emulated. Rhetorical tactics to encourage emulation were bolstered by a “carrot and stick” method for motivating campus wide compliance with the University’s goals. During times of retrenchment and budget constraints, programs that had achieved measures of excellence consistent with the aspirational peers were protected and supported. In contrast, programs judged to be weaker or not as closely aligned with the University’s aspiration bore the brunt of budget cuts and program eliminations.

Current University leaders promote institutional excellence by continuing many of the tactics of the past. Leaders rhetorically and consistently emphasize distinction and prestige; mimic peer institutions; promote University achievements; and reward units and individuals for achievements consistent with traditional indicators of excellence.

In the late 1980’s, the University was faced with choice. As a campus aspiring for excellence it could eliminate the stigma of discrimination which was associated with the University or it could retain its well-deserved reputation for being unwelcoming to racial equity and reap the consequences in the midst of its quest for excellence. President Kirwan chose the former option and took strategic steps to alter the image of the institution. Kirwan reframed racial equity as a unique strength of the University and incorporated equity goals in his rhetorical statements and plans for distinction.

Although rhetorical commitments were an important first step in advancing equity ideals, over the course of several years, campus reports spearheaded by African American

staff challenged the leadership to move beyond rhetorical statements and symbolic actions to authentic actions that epitomized equity as a campus value. When campus leaders finally took action, they augmented their initial rhetorical stances with internal programmatic initiatives, additional University resources, and a rigorous and visible defense of the Podberesky v. Kirwan (Banneker scholarship) court case.

University leaders capitalized on the positive momentum created by the Podberesky case by promoting the University as a model institution of diversity and inclusion. Newly-minted campus diversity initiatives which constructed diversity as inclusive and appreciative of pluralism, were linked with the institution's goal for excellence and were publicized in professional and public arenas. While campus leaders promoted this brand of diversity they made fewer public statements about racial equity for African Americans and the Office for Civil Rights desegregation mandates. The combination of these tactics was perceived to give less attention to racial injustice and to dilute racial equity by subsuming it under the umbrella of "diversity" issues.

3. What impact do these strategies have on dimensions of racial equity and institutional excellence?

Informants reported that in response to the demands for racial equity and institutional excellence, the University of Maryland has institutionalized different norms and values. Dramatic institutional improvement can be charted along many traditional indicators of institutional excellence including the profiles of entering students, the awarding of prestigious honors to the faculty, and the financial resources of the institution. These changes have contributed to a growing confidence that the University

should be counted among the best public institutions in the country. Informants noted that the University has relied on traditional measures of excellence as the prevailing yardsticks by which decisions are made, programs are developed, and people are invited in or shut out of the University community.

Informant perceptions of the impact of the institution's responses to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence were sharply divided along racial lines. Four of the five African Americans interviewed for this study perceived that on some measures, racial equity had eluded the core of the institution. In contrast, most of the White informants (and six of the eight deans) perceived that the University had achieved inclusive excellence.

Most of the White interviewees perceived little change in the University's commitment to racial equity since President Mote's aggressive push to institutional excellence. This group confidently asserted that the institution was pursuing both racial equity and institutional excellence. The distinguishing characteristic of this group centered on the perception that equity and excellence constructs were not competing values and/or that the University had achieved inclusive excellence. These informants noted that the reputation of the University of Maryland is no longer marred by the stigma of racial discrimination and oppression, that the institution has exchanged this shameful past for one of diversity and inclusion. For these informants, evidence of the University commitment to realizing core changes geared toward racial equity is reflected in the demographics of the student populations, the number of degrees awarded to minority students, and other programmatic initiatives which are widely touted in University publications and presidential speeches.

While this group perceived that the actions and rhetoric of the University were indicative of inclusive excellence, they acknowledged that the University faced challenges in maintaining and promoting this state. These challenges were largely presented as “to be expected” norms and/or the work of forces external to the institution. According to these informants, some of the challenges that the University faced included the possibility that it may be losing its edge in institutional diversity accomplishments, legal threats to affirmative action, demographic shifts, and difficulty in recruiting and retaining minority faculty.

Another group of informants comprised mostly of the African American informants challenged the majority-held notion of inclusive excellence by offering divergent perceptions of the campus culture. Many in this group affirmed their belief in the ideals of inclusive excellence and the complementary nature of racial equity and institutional excellence. However, they perceived that, to varying degrees, this expressed value was not the reality at the University of Maryland. While these persons agreed that the University had made important strides in both diversity and excellence, their perceptions suggested that the widely heralded message of inclusive excellence had eluded the core of the University. Thus, with core activities, such as the recruitment and retention of faculty and students, equity and excellence surface as competing constructs. Excellence is aggressively advanced and promoted; while equity concerns stagnate or erode. These informants perceived that many diversity efforts were not institutionalized in the culture of the University but were tied to the work of individuals in the administration and faculty. Although not in all instances explicitly articulated, the perceptions of this group suggest a belief that the chronic problems of racial inequity

evident on the campus are due to racism that is imbedded in the structures and policies of the institution and the convictions of some individuals.

4. What are the implications of this study for prominent theories that seek to explain how institutions of higher education interact with their environment?

In answer to the fourth research question, the following section discusses the main conclusions of the study which capture important implications for theories which seek to address how higher education institutions interact with their external environment.

Study Conclusions

This section discusses the six main conclusions that can be drawn from this research. These conclusions address the limitations of the study and the conceptual framework.

1. The framework for defining and distinguishing demands for racial equity and institutional excellence proved to be a valid and serviceable device for classifying and charactering demands for equity and excellence.
2. Institutional theory and resource dependency theory were valid and useful orientations for interpreting how institutional agents mediate pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence.
3. Oliver's model of strategic choice was able to explain how the University managed pressures for institutional excellence but limited in its ability to explain how the University managed pressures for racial equity.
4. The conceptual framework of this study was unable to account for how race and racial beliefs may shape the decisions of mediating agents.
5. Longstanding University efforts to link racial equity to institutional

excellence are perceived to have diluted notions of racial equity of its focus and its connection to social justice.

6. University attention to diversity rather than racial equity may have contributed to the creation of two different perspectives about the status of racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park: inclusive excellence and elusive equity.

Conclusion One: The framework for defining and distinguishing demands for racial equity and institutional excellence proved to be a valid and serviceable device for classifying and characterizing demands for equity and excellence.

The conceptual framework of this study relied on two streams of literature to inform the study design, data collection and data analysis. The first stream was used to develop a framework that could be used to distinguish pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence from other pressures and/or actions of the University. Based on a review of the literature on conceptions of racial equity and institutional excellence, this device highlighted the multiple dimensions and measures of equity and excellence and proved to be a serviceable device for distinguishing and characterizing between these demands and for weighing rhetorical and symbolic proclamations of racial equity against evidence of an authentic adherence to these ideals.

A framework that recognized the multiple dimensions of racial equity was invaluable for sorting through and clarifying the rhetoric of University officials and gauging the extent to which racial equity was perceived to be realized on the campus. The framework also clarified the change in how the University re-conceptualized equity

immediately following the court case of *Podberesky v. Kirwan* and replaced the equity emphasis with a diversity emphasis.

The framework was just as useful for classifying demands of institutional excellence. Scholars note that the dominant conception of excellence in higher education, defines it through status and affluence (Astin, 1985; Chang, 2000; Karabel & Astin, 1975). Thus, highly selective institutions which are deemed to be elite and prestigious occupy the top ranks of the hierarchy, while open and non-selective institutions are relegated to the lower rungs (Lawrence & Green, 1980). Astin (1985) argues against this traditional definition of excellence by advocating for measurements of excellence which contribute to the cognitive and affective development of students, particularly those who enroll with low levels of academic preparation and skill. In their inclusive excellence change model and scorecard, Williams, Berger and McClendon (2005) join Astin by attempting to blur distinctions of equity and excellence by presenting the constructs as complementary and integrated values.

Given the widespread acceptance and use of the traditional indicators of excellence, this study adopted those indicators as a means of identifying the University actions that were aligned with these values. During the timeframe of this study, the rhetoric and the actions of University officials were consistent with this status-driven definition of excellence. Identifying and emulating elite aspirational peers, seeking steady elevation in institutional rank, recruiting faculty and students with conventionally impressive profiles, and facilitating successful fundraising initiatives were all prominent strategies by which excellence was promoted and advanced at the University. In 2006,

these traditional indicators were among items that President Mote asserted to substantiate the proposition that the University had achieved elite status.

The utility of the framework for excellence was essential for understanding the different conceptualizations of excellence and identifying when the actions of the University were aligned with the traditional status-based definition. The device also aided the researcher in distinguishing between the University's dominant prioritization of status-based institutional excellence over that of inclusive excellence as articulated by Williams, Berger and McClendon (2005).

Conclusion Two: Institutional theory and resource dependency theory were valid and useful orientations for interpreting how institutional agents mediate external pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence.

This study used the theoretical constructs of institutional theory and resource dependency theory to examine and interpret how the University of Maryland managed external pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. These constructs turned out to be valid and useful orientations for understanding how institutional actors at the University of Maryland, College Park mediated demands for racial equity and institutional excellence.

Understanding External Pressures

Scholars of institutional and resource dependency theories have long noted the capacity of the external environment to impact the structures, policies, and decisions of organizations (Brint & Karabel, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Edelman, 1992; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Scott, 2001). In particular, institutions are responsive to other organizations or forces which operate within their environmental

field or sector. The environmental field, sector, or industry is described as an arena of similar institutions operating with similar resources and products, and constrained by similar regulators, funding sources, and competition (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001; Scott & Meyer, 1983). Scott (2001) explains that an institution's dependence on the environment for resources or legitimacy "makes the external constraint and control of the organizational behavior both possible and inevitable" (p .43). Within the environmental field, organizations are dependent on and thus influenced by many different forces including exchange partners, competitors, financiers, and regulators (Scott, 2001; Scott & Meyer, 1983).

In this study, external forces were found to be critical in initiating and sustaining pressures for both racial equity and institutional excellence at the University of Maryland, College Park. For example, the State of Maryland, an important regulator and key financier of the University was instrumental in prompting the institution to adopt institutional norms of excellence. The University also was prompted and pressured to assume characteristics of quality and prestige through the influence of external rankings and aspirational peers. While the State exerted formal legalistic control over the University, the influence of the rankings and aspirational peers resided in their capacity to reduce uncertainty and provide legitimacy.

The power of mimetic processes was evident in the early actions of University leaders who sought ways to respond to the 1988 "flagship" designation. Uncertain of how to become "upper echelon", the University immediately identified aspirational institutions for modeling and goal setting. Over time, the campus has mimicked many of the characteristics, programs and standards of these other organizations to reduce

uncertainty and gain legitimacy. This finding supports DiMaggio and Powell (1983) who argued that an institution can be influenced by different forms of pressure, such as coercive, mimetic, and normative expectations.

External actors likewise have played an important role in shaping institutional responses to the calls for racial equity. Interventions of the federal government through the agencies of the Office for Civil Rights and the Office of Federal Contracts Compliance used coercive pressure to force the institution to comply with established federal laws barring desegregation and discrimination. Other external actors such as the broader community, political interests groups, and professional associations have wielded coercive and normative expectations for racial equity. These groups vocalize expectations for the University to admit and graduate students who reflect the racial demographics of the broader society.

Ironically, federal influence through the rulings of the court in *Podberesky v. Kirwan* and the Michigan affirmative action court decisions are perceived by campus actors as in direct conflict with the influence of OCR. Thus, while the OCR mandate specifically focuses on racial desegregation of the University, recent court rulings are perceived to prohibit the use of the programmatic and policy tools required to realize this goal. This perceived incompatibility has resulted in diminished University attention to racial equity for African Americans and institutional uncertainty of how address these demands. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) who note that organizations are often faced with conflicting demands which necessitate that leaders choose what to attend to and what to ignore. According to the authors, “the constraints imposed by satisfying one set of demands affect the organization’s ability to

satisfy others”(p.29).

Understanding Roles and Actions of Mediating Agents

Institutional theory and resource dependency theory also have proven useful as frames to understand the roles and actions of institutional mediating agents. Throughout the study, actions of institutional agents confirmed their capacity to preserve and transmit institutional values (Bacharach, Masters & Mundell, 1995; Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981; Scott, 2001; Zucker, 1991) and influence institutional change (Brint & Karabel, 1991; Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994). Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) explain that mediating agents create institutional symbols and structures to manage demands and to divert attention away from areas of non-compliance. Symbolic action and language are employed to appease external actors that may be pressuring for core institutional changes. The 1976, creation of the Banneker scholarship program, the University’s emphasis on access and enrollment of African American students in the late 1980’s-1990’s, and the University’s current emphasis and promotion of having attained thirty three percent (33%) minority student enrollment in the undergraduate population, are all suggestive of this tactic.

During the early years of his presidency, President Kirwan referred to the institution’s commitment to equity and diversity in numerous University speeches and official documents. Despite these compelling statements, two consecutive reports on racial equity at the University exposed an institutional climate fraught with racism and isolation for African Americans and other minorities. Both reports urged the President to move beyond rhetoric to substantive manifestations of change. Study data suggest that the University has made remarkable strides in banishing overt patterns of discrimination

and racism. However, study findings reveal persistent concern that new rhetorical statements of University leaders that proclaim attainment of “inclusive excellence” or cast the University as a “model of diversity” are little more than contemporary attempts at institutional buffering.

As indicated earlier, the campus has undergone remarkable change in its reality and reputation since the formal designation as the flagship institution. Evidence suggests that this change was initiated and influenced through presidential leaders, who embodied the roles of policy entrepreneurs and boundary spanners. These actors offered viable solutions to long standing institutional problems and mitigated the interests of outside forces against campus norms and patterns of action.

The idea for a flagship institution in the State of Maryland that was worthy to be counted in the “upper echelon” of American higher education was not particularly novel. Numerous State and institutional level plans had endorsed wide spread organizational change only to achieve limited success. However in 1988, the idea for an elite public institution of higher education was, to borrow Kingdon’s (2003) phrase, an idea whose time had come. The formal designation of flagship, the promise of increased state funding, and the rise of a new, ambitious, and well supported president, created a opportunity—akin to what Kingdon (2003) would describe as the joining of separate streams at a critical time. Like other policy entrepreneurs, President Kirwan seized the opportunity to solve the problem of the institution’s mediocre status with a viable strategic plan. Although the plan outlined ambitious goals and dramatic changes to the institution, the political goodwill of internal and external actors, and the promise of financial support engendered wide spread momentum for change.

Although President Mote did not have the leverage of a policy window to jump start his vision of institutional excellence, he used his early days as President to clarify and define how his ideas for building external connections, raising standards, and increasing private financial support could solve University problems and challenges. President Mote's success in leading the University to new heights of excellence is largely attributed to his adeptness at boundary spanning between internal constituents and the external environment. Presidents Kirwan and Mote's extensive use of imagery to create and sustain campus commitment to institutional excellence is also consistent with the theoretical literature that guided this investigation. In this case and in other instances, symbolic images are used in the change process to emphasize and project organizational key areas of importance (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003); and for sensemaking and influence (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994).

Conclusion Three: Oliver's model of strategic choice was able to explain how the University managed pressures for institutional excellence but limited in its ability to explain how the University managed pressures for racial equity.

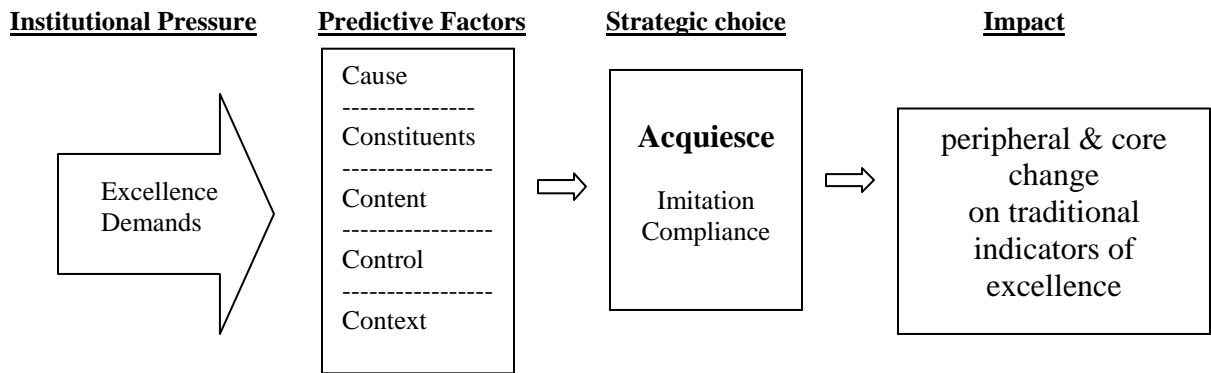
Grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of institutional theory and resource dependency theory, Oliver's model of strategic choice proposes a range of strategic choices that institutions could use to respond to external demands. Oliver contends that based on contextual factors such as the cause, constituents, content, control, and context of the demands, institutions may respond along a continuum of choices ranging from passive acquiescence to active manipulation. Analysis of the University's responses to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence through the heuristic "test" of this

model revealed that Oliver’s model was useful for explaining how and why the University responded to pressures for institutional excellence. The model was less useful for making similar judgments about responses to pressures for racial equity.

Managing Pressures for Excellence

In the case of institutional excellence at the University of Maryland, College Park, Oliver’s (1991) logic of strategic choice, which was modified by the researcher to show the impact of the responses was easily applied and readily supported by the details of the case.

Figure 2. UMD Responses and Impact to Pressures for Institutional Excellence



As Figure 2 shows pressures for institutional excellence were constrained by the unique context (the predictive factor) of the University. For example, examination of the predictive factor of cause revealed that the adoption of excellence was largely perceived by the campus to improve legitimacy and economic advantage. The constituents factor showed that excellence was championed by the State of Maryland, an actor that the institution was highly dependent on for resources and legitimacy. The predictive factor of content shed light on how values of institutional excellence were tied to latent values of the campus community. Finally, the factors of context and control clarified that the

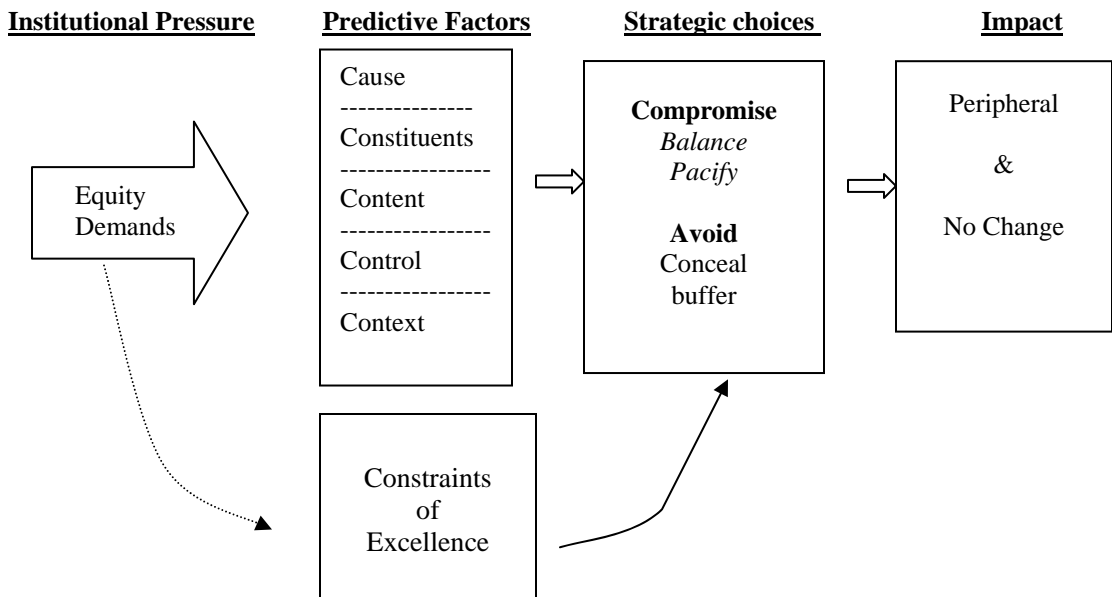
adoption of excellence was tied to legal mandates of the State as mandated in the 1988 and 1999 legislation and that the University’s adoption of status-based norms of excellence was influence also by professional norms and aspirational peers.

The unique alignment of these factors may have motivated the University of Maryland to acquiesce to the demands for excellence through the tactics of compliance and imitation. As described in the case findings, the University’s pursuit of upper echelon status exhibited what Oliver (1991) describes as a “conscious obedience to or incorporation of values, norms, or institutional requirements” (p.152). The tactics of compliance and imitation suggest that the University has incorporated peripheral and core changes on status-based indicators of excellence.

Managing Pressures for Racial Equity

Oliver’s (1991) contextual framework was useful for uncovering broad patterns of University responses to pressures for racial equity. Data suggest that between 1988 and 2006, the University of Maryland responded to pressures for racial equity through compromise and avoidance (Figure 3).

Figure 3. UMD Responses and Impact to Pressures for Racial Equity



Both of these strategies are based on institutional unwillingness or inability to make a conscious choice to incorporate new values and norms. Analysis of the University of Maryland's response to pressures for racial equity suggest that equity has been historically treated as a value inconsistent with core University norms. Thus, early University responses to OCR desegregation mandates (e.g. the founding of several minority serving offices and programs and the establishment of the Banneker scholarship) were only minimally adopted as a means to pacify equity advocates and to create the impression of compliance.

The strategy of avoidance, particularly the tactics of conceal and buffer also align with the responses of the University to pressures for racial equity. This strategy of avoidance is a long-standing response of the University, which dates at least as far back as, what many informants termed the transformational years of the Kirwan presidency. University documents, such as *Access is Not Enough* and the *Excellence through Diversity* report, challenged the Kirwan administration to move beyond symbolic gestures to substantive changes that might advance racial equity. While the University's stance in the Podberesky case is widely perceived as a movement toward racial equity, the data revealed that immediately following the decision in that case, equity was avoided, relegated to "window dressing" and supplanted again by broad notions of diversity. In contrast, the institution shielded core values, such as the critical role of faculty, from the pressures for racial equity. Accordingly, examination of the current faculty ranks reveals that little substantive change has been realized in the area of access for African-American scholars at the University.

Study findings reveal that in addition to the predictive factors described in

Oliver's (1991) model, racial equity was tethered and constrained by commitments to institutional excellence. Thus, campus leaders promoted and advanced equity by tying it to the value of excellence. Since racial equity was not promoted as an independent goal, institutional choices surrounding its realization have been circumscribed if not constrained by the goals of excellence.

Over the years both the context and campus responses to racial equity have been uneven, inconsistent and conflicting. Constituents of the pressures for racial equity are displayed as a splintered group with widely varying power bases and influence who have been able to elicit uneven strategic responses from various "pockets" of the institution. Thus, some campus groups are perceived to be acquiescing to demands of racial equity, while at the same time, others are seen as actively resistant. Given the nature and workings of higher education institutions, particularly depictions of campuses as political systems (Baldrige, 1971) or organized anarchies (Cohen & March, 1974), this splintered response to a highly politicized issue which is not considered a shared or latent value of the academy is unfortunate, but not unexpected.

Conclusion Four: The conceptual framework of this study was unable to account for how race and racial beliefs may shape the decisions of mediating agents.

The late Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun is widely cited in the literature (e.g. Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003 and Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, & Lynn, 2005) for pronouncing that "in order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race, there is no other way". Justice Blackmun's statement, written in his 1978 opinion on the case of Regents of the University of California v.

Bakke and its subsequent iteration by educational scholars are based on the premise that racism is a central and deeply engrained societal phenomenon that is reproduced through everyday norms, institutional structures, and individual actors (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

To counteract these scripts, scholars (e.g. Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) have argued for the use of perspectives that expose the significance of racism in social structures and institutions. One of the central arguments for doing so notes that dominant color blind orientations interpret influences, social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in ways which disadvantage and silence people of color. In contrast, critical paradigms which are oriented around race are hailed for their capacity to expose and challenge racism, and to empower and give voice to historically silenced groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, & Lynn, 2005).

Oliver's strategic choice model is, for all intents and purposes, a "color-blind" model. Although Oliver acknowledges that institutional responses can be constrained by blind acceptance of values and practices which are perceived to be normal, addressing race and racism is not the explicit intent or primary focus of the model. Without this orientation, this model could uncover but not account for the complexities of race and racism that were prominent in this study. This judgment about Oliver's framework is made for two reasons; first, in Oliver's model, the unit of analysis focuses on more easily identifiable external pressures rather than on the less visible and taken for granted societal norms that shape how institutions respond to pressures for equity and excellence. Second, the underlying connotation of the model presents the goal of legitimacy and alignment with societal norms as positive constructs, and casts strategies which seek to

alter or challenge the status quo as deviant.

Oliver's strategic choice model recognizes that institutionalized rules and values can shape how organizations respond to external pressures. However, it does not provide the tools to unpack these less visible forces. Thus, while attention is focused on prominent external pressures, less obvious institutional and societal undercurrents are not fully accounted for. Further, the model does not focus on the belief system of individuals who are in position to influence institutional decisions. Thus, using Oliver's frame, studies of race are naturally oriented to examining how an institution responds to highly visible and potent external pressures. While, this orientation can produce valuable insight, such as those uncovered in this study, the role of racism as a force shaping institutional responses can escape much needed attention.

A second limitation of Oliver's model in studying issues of race is found in the underlying orientation of the frame. In the model, passive strategies such as acquiescence and compromise are credited with the capacity to affect institutional change and alignment to socially accepted norms and values. In contrast, the most active strategies of defiance and manipulation carry negative connotations that signal institutionally deviant or destructive action. For example, Oliver explains the strategy of acquiescence as institutional attempts to elevate legitimacy, to increase good faith business conduct, and to reduce vulnerability to negative assessments. On the other hand the strategies of defiance and manipulation, which in some cases are appropriate responses to unacceptable but normative behavior are inadvertently painted as subversive, corrupt or undercutting the legitimacy of the institution.

These connotations are problematic when the dominant social culture of an

institution, such as the University of Maryland, College Park, was, for a long time, deeply entrenched in racism. In its current orientation, Oliver's model could promote misguided interpretations of actors or groups that worked against the invisible norm of racism as problem makers, out of touch complainers, or social deviants.

Conclusion Five: Longstanding University efforts to link racial equity to institutional excellence and diversity are perceived to have stripped racial equity of its focus and its connection to social justice.

According to the literature, the traditional definition of institutional excellence is deeply entrenched in notions of selectivity, prestige, and elitism (Astin, 1985; Astin & Karabel, 1975; Lawrence & Green, 1980; Tierney, 1997) which pit excellence against values of inclusion, equal opportunity, and equity (Astin, 1985). Manifestations of these conflicting values are reflected in how internal and external constituents perceive the American higher education system. Bowen, Kurzeil, and Tobin (2005) note that “in many quarters, the impressive scale and high quality of American higher education are taken for granted, while the question of fairness in its provision engenders passionate and divisive debate” (p.1).

Although the quality of the University of Maryland, College Park was not a taken for granted condition when it was designated the flagship institution, campus leaders were able to tap into the institution's latent valuing of traditional indicators of excellence to promote change in the core as well as in the periphery of the institution. Recognizing that the institution's long standing reputation of discrimination and racism could jeopardize the institution's quest for excellence, President Kirwan strategically linked

achievement of racial equity to efforts for institutional excellence and called on the campus to achieve both. Over the years, this coupling has resulted in significant institutional change and noticeable improvements along traditional indicators of institutional excellence. The University has steadily climbed (near) the top of popular rankings; student and faculty profile have aligned with status bases indicators of excellence; the endowment has more than tripled, and support from private financiers has increased exponentially. The University has been recognized as a “model” institution of diversity and is celebrated each year by minority focused magazines for leading Traditionally White Institutions in graduating African American and Latino students.

This change has prompted some members of the University community to declare that the institution has attained “inclusive excellence” that the campus has simultaneously achieved the goals of racial equity and institutional excellence. However, assertions that the institution has attained racial equity are not supported by the details of the case. In contrast, study data suggest that over the years, racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park has been diluted of its focus and stripped of its social justice agenda.

Inclusive excellence as advanced by Williams, Berger, McClendon (2005) is attained when an institution achieves success and achievement for all students along four broad indicators. These indicators include equity (measured quantitatively and qualitatively) in access, in the formal and informal curriculum, in campus climate, and in student learning and development. Although the use of Williams, et al.’s tool is not necessary to make a pronouncement of inclusive excellence, the literature suggests that judgments of whether an institution has achieved racial equity is an empirical question

that requires deliberate study and assessment. Moreover, while institutional leaders readily promote the relatively large percentage of minority students in the undergraduate student population, when disaggregated, the enrollment data reveal that African American students are severely underrepresented on the campus relative to their population in the State. Graduation data show that African American students lag ten points behind their peers in six year degree completion rates.

As noted earlier, this finding is supported by a 2005 study conducted by Perna, Milem, Gerald, Baum, Rowan, and Hutchens, which found that the University of Maryland, College Park had substantial inequities in Black student enrollment and degree completion. Alone, numerical indicators which reveal the consistent patterns of inequity at the University are a major challenge to the notion of inclusive excellence. However, when added to the perceptions held by most African American study informants, a compelling counter-story to that of inclusive excellence is evident. These divergent perspectives are discussed in more detail in the next study conclusion.

Conclusion Six: University attention to diversity rather than racial equity may have contributed to the creation of two different perspectives about the status of racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park: inclusive excellence and elusive equity.

Although the University presented racial equity for African Americans as a campus priority throughout the *Banneker* court case, focused attention on this group gave way to broad conceptions of diversity which celebrated University achievements in enrolling minority students and developing “innovative” diversity initiatives. While these diversity efforts went beyond those commonly described as inadequate (i.e. limited

and narrow focus on enrollment) (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005), equity advocates perceived a major shift away from efforts to recruit and retain African American students and faculty and from actions to ensure their success. This perceived shift from the yet unfulfilled commitment to social justice and equity for African Americans, to one of “big umbrella” diversity for all causes and all people reportedly has contributed to divergent perspectives about the status of racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Although unsettling, the existence of these two very different perspectives of the University’s status on racial equity, almost uniformly divided along racial lines, is not an unusual occurrence. According to Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot (2005), “members of the campus community have quite different experiences of the diverse and stratified world in which they live and the environment in which they teach and learn and work. These experiences differ by their racial/ethnic and gender background and by their role or function in the institution” (p.1).

Ladson-Billings (2006) offers a classification schema for understanding the divergent perspectives evident in this case. Although her categories are based on her observations of different ideological positions on K-12 desegregation after *Brown v. Board of Education*, they hold promise for providing critical insight on this closely related issue. Ladson-Billings (2006), notes that post *Brown* at least three different perspectives on school desegregation emerged: racial optimists, racial liberals, and racial realists.

Racial optimists are described by Ladson-Billings as individuals who promote color blindness and argue for decisions without consideration of race. *Brown* is celebrated by these individuals for breaking the dividing color line of the country.

According to Ladson-Billings racial optimists attribute the low achievement of minority students is to cultural or individual failings. Racial liberals are the visible and vocal majority who believe that the *Brown* decision was decided correctly and that desegregation was good for education. Ladson-Billings explains that although these individuals perceive that the promise of *Brown* has fallen short, they attribute these deficiencies to incomplete implementation of the decision that will be fixed over time. Success for this group is measured by integration of formally segregated groups rather than by attainment of equal academic outcomes. According to Ladson-Billings, racial realists, as she identifies herself, “understand the value of *Brown* at its particular historical moment, but are less sanguine about its benefits” (p.308). For this group the determining factor from which *Brown*’s effectiveness can be assessed is whether or not Black students have attained equal educational outcomes, rather than “merely insuring that the numbers meet federal compliance” (p. 308).

This categorization aptly captures the dominant perspectives of informants in this study. Informants espousing the views of inclusive excellence share many similarities with the racial liberal perspective, while the perceptions of the smaller group of primarily African American informants appear to align with those of the racial realists. The very existence of these two very different perspectives on the status of racial equity at the University of Maryland, College Park campus is cause enough to conclude that, although the University stands far better than it used to be, it cannot and should not accept the mantle of inclusive excellence as an ideal that has been realized.

Study Recommendations

This study’s analysis of how a public flagship institution manages pressures for

racial equity and institutional excellence cannot be generalized to other institutions of higher education. Therefore, additional studies of how other flagship universities manage presses for racial equity and institutional excellence are in order. Investigations of different types of institutions (e.g. private universities or community colleges); or different locations would be useful in testing the range, reach, and utility of the conceptual framework. These studies might direct attention to whether or not this study's themes such as the widely different sources and characteristics of racial equity and institutional excellence or the divergent perspectives of White and Black informants are present in other cases.

Given the limits of strategic choice and its underlying framework of institutional theory and resource dependency theory to probe how imbedded and hidden values such as racism constrain institutional action or how individual convictions shape decision-making, frames attuned to these dynamics may be important complements to the frameworks used in this study. Future studies should consider using a race sensitive frame such as Chelser, Lewis, and Crowfoot's (2005) multicultural framework to examine institutional responses to racial equity and institutional excellence as a way to augment Oliver's (1991) broad framework of institutional choice. Conceptual understandings which probe how racial beliefs impact the decision making of institutional leaders could be useful in unpacking how actors respond to the demands for equity and excellence and why they respond as they do.

As more research begins to explore how higher education institutions interact and with and are influenced by their external environment, this study stands as a testament to the usefulness of using institutional theory and resource dependency theory as heuristic

tools to understand complex higher education challenges. Additional study using these frameworks is encouraged to both test their limits and to contribute to the refinement of these broad theories.

APPENDIX A:

Document Summary Form

Document Type: _____

Date Retrieved: _____

Name or description of document:

Author:

Primary or secondary source:

Edited: _____ Yes _____ No. If yes:

Event or contact, if any, with which/whom the document is associated:

Purpose of document:

Intended audience:

Brief summary of contents:

Assessment of clarity, consistency of content, degree of detail:

Other related documents available? _____ Yes _____ No. If yes, details:

APPENDIX B:

Informed Consent Form

Page 1 of 2

Initials _____ Date _____

Project Title	A Balancing Act: An Exploration of How a Public Flagship Institution Responds to Pressures for Racial Equity and Institutional Excellence
Why is this research being done?	This is a research project being conducted by Cassandra C. Lewis under the supervision of Betty Malen, Ph.D. in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements for a Ph.D. in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). The purpose of this study is to explore how a public flagship institution responds to pressures for racial equity and academic excellence in higher education. You are invited to participate in this research project because you were identified as being knowledgeable about how the institutional case, the University of Maryland, College Park manages pressures for racial equity and academic excellence.
What will I be asked to do?	Participants in this research will participate in an individual semi-structured interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. Informants will be asked questions about how UMCP responds to pressures for racial equity and academic excellence. Sample questions may include “How would you characterize the pressures for racial equity and excellence at UMD?” “How has UMD responded to the pressures for racial equity/ academic excellence that you identified?” “What types of strategies do you (or the University) use to manage the press to be both racially equitable and excellent?”
What about confidentiality?	I will do my best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your name will not be included on the collected data or written and oral presentations of the research. Participants will be referred to by their general positions (e.g. dean or senior administrator, a handful of “mediating agents”), not by their names or specific, designated positions. A numerical code will be developed to identify participants. Only the researcher and the dissertation chair will have access to the identification key. The coding identification key will be stored on my home computer in a password protected file. At the conclusion of each interview, each tape will be assigned a numerical code that will be used in data storage, transcription, data analysis and the presentation of findings. If I write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if I am required to do so by law.
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.
What are the benefits of this research?	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about how universities respond to pressures for racial equity and academic excellence.

Initials _____ Date _____

<p>Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?</p>	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p>	
<p>What if I have questions?</p>	<p>This research is being conducted by Cassandra C. Lewis, a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park under the supervision of her dissertation chair, Betty Malen, Ph.D. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact:</p> <p>Cassandra C. Lewis caslewis@hotmail.com 240-535-6661</p> <p>or</p> <p>Betty Malen, Ph.D. malen@umd.edu 301-405-3587</p> <p>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office University of Maryland, College Park College Park, Maryland, 20742 (e-mail) irb@deans.UMCP.edu (telephone) 301-405-0678</p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
<p>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</p>	<p>Your signature indicates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are at least 18 years of age,; • the research has been explained to you; • your questions have been fully answered; and • you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project. <p>_____ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation ion this study _____ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study</p>	
<p>Signature and Date</p>	<p>NAME OF SUBJECT</p>	
	<p>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT</p>	
	<p>DATE</p>	

APPENDIX C:

Letter of Invitation

Dear _____:

You are invited to participate as an informant to my dissertation research study, which investigates how a public flagship institution responds to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. This study relies on an exploratory case study of the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) to understand and explain the phenomena of interest.

As a senior level administrator or faculty at the University it is my hope that you would be willing to consent to a voluntary interview. Your expertise and concern for issues of racial equity and academic excellence would make you an invaluable contributor to my understanding of these issues. Informants will be asked questions about how the University responds to pressures for racial equity and academic excellence. Sample questions may include: “How would you characterize the pressures for racial equity and excellence at UMD?” “How has UMD responded to the pressures for racial equity/ academic excellence that you identified?” “What types of strategies do you (or the university) use to manage the press to be both racially equitable and excellent?” Interviews will be scheduled for approximately 60 minutes at a time and location of your choosing. If you agree, the interview will be audio taped. The researcher will take notes during the interview.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The identity of all participants will be kept in strict confidence. Informants will be identified by their general positions (e.g. a dean or a senior administrator, a handful of “mediating agents”), not by their names or specific, designated positions. The attached informed consent form will provide you with additional information about confidentiality safe-guards.

I will contact you by (insert date) to inquire about your willingness to participate. If you need additional information about the study, please feel free to contact me at 240-535-6661 or caslewis@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Cassandra C. Lewis, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Education Policy and Leadership
University of Maryland, College Park

APPENDIX D:

Description of the Case Study

This case study is a research project conducted in partial fulfillment of the Ph.D. degree requirements for Cassandra C. Lewis in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland, College Park. The purpose of this study is to explore how a public flagship institution responds to pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence. The study additionally explores the impact of those responses on institutional priorities, programs, and operations.

The conceptual framework which directs this study defines and classifies racial equity and academic excellence. It also seeks to explain how contextual forces and human agents interact to develop strategic institutional responses to multiple pressures including those for racial equity and academic excellence.

This study relies on an exploratory case study of the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) to understand and explain the phenomena of interest. UMD was selected as the case for this study for several reasons. One key reason is that UMD is distinct from most flagship institutions because it is designated as both a land grant institution and a flagship research institution. Given this dual mission, UMD presents a compelling opportunity to examine an institution where demands for both equity and excellence will likely be intense.

I will be using documents and interviews to explore the process and strategies that UMD uses to respond to demands for racial equity and academic excellence. These sources will also assist me in gauging the impact of those responses on key aspects of the campus. I am hopeful that results from this work can contribute to our understanding of how racial equity and academic excellence can be treated as complementary rather than competing demands. My finding may also inform how institutions of higher education manage multiple pressures from internal and external stakeholders.

APPENDIX E:
Interview Protocol

Interviewee Code:

Date:

Time of Interview:

-
1. Thank participants for agreeing to participate in this study
 2. Ask them to review and sign the consent form
 3. Provide informant with summary of study description
 4. Turn on tape recorder

I. Background Information

1. How many years have you been at UMD? In what positions?
2. How many years have you been in your current position?
3. What are your major responsibilities?

II. Characteristics and Source of Pressures

1. Over the course of your tenure at Maryland, what sorts of demands for equity and excellence have been impressed on the institution?
2. What were the sources of pressures for equity? For excellence?
 - a. Were any groups, agencies, or individuals pressing for both at the same time?
3. How would you characterize the pressures for racial equity and excellence at UMD?
 - a. Do you see them as complementary or competing?
 - b. How would you describe the intensity of each?

III. Responses to Pressures: Strategic Choice

1. How has UMD responded to the pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence that you identified?
 - a. Why did the university perceive that it had to respond to those pressures? (e.g. fiscal concerns, resources, aspirational peers, social concerns)
2. What types of strategies do you (or the University) use to manage the press for racial equity and institutional excellence?
3. Have the strategies changed over time? If so, how? Why?
 - a. Affirmative action court cases
 - b. Mission Change
 - c. Fiscal conditions
4. Has the University's priorities of equity and excellence changed over the last two administrations (Presidents Kirwan and Mote)? If so how? and Why?

- a. What is the current priority regarding equity? excellence?
(Maintain/preserve status quo, change/enhance, or limit?)

5. How is the progress for equity and excellence monitored or assessed?

6. Many of the documents that I have reviewed, suggest a clear, specific and quantitative way, with firm benchmarks, of measuring the university's progression toward achieving institutional excellence and national distinction (e.g. specific departments are targeted, aspirational peers are named, and actual rankings are listed as goals). In contrast, equity goals appear to be measured more imprecise and qualitatively. Is this an accurate characterization of how equity and excellence are benchmarked? If so, why are these different types of benchmarks used?

IV. Impact

1. The last two University strategic plans have articulated a clear commitment for the university to become one of the top public institutions in the country, and in particular the strategic plan adopted in 2000 speaks of an "aggressive forward push for new levels of distinction".

Where does the University stand in meeting this goal?

How if at all, has this commitment affected efforts to enhance equity now and in the foreseeable future?

2. Many of the documents also speak of the University's reputation for being a leader and a model for its diversity efforts, as well as goals for increasing equity efforts.

Where does the University now stand in meeting this goal?

How does this commitment affect efforts to enhance excellence now and in the foreseeable future?

V. Wrap-up

1. Is there anything that would like to add to help me understand how Maryland manages the pressures for racial equity and institutional excellence?

2. Are there reports or documents that would be useful to me in understanding this issue and the UMD case?

3. Can you recommend another informant with insight into this issue that I would benefit from speaking with?

Thank you for your time and participation.

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