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The Associated Colleges of the South: A Case Study Chronicling Program Development at the Consortium and the Significance of Consortium Membership Through the Experiences of Presidents of Member Institutions

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THE ASSOCIATED COLLEGES OF THE SOUTH: A CASE STUDY
CHRONICLING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AT THE CONSORTIUM AND THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSORTIUM MEMBERSHIP THROUGH THE
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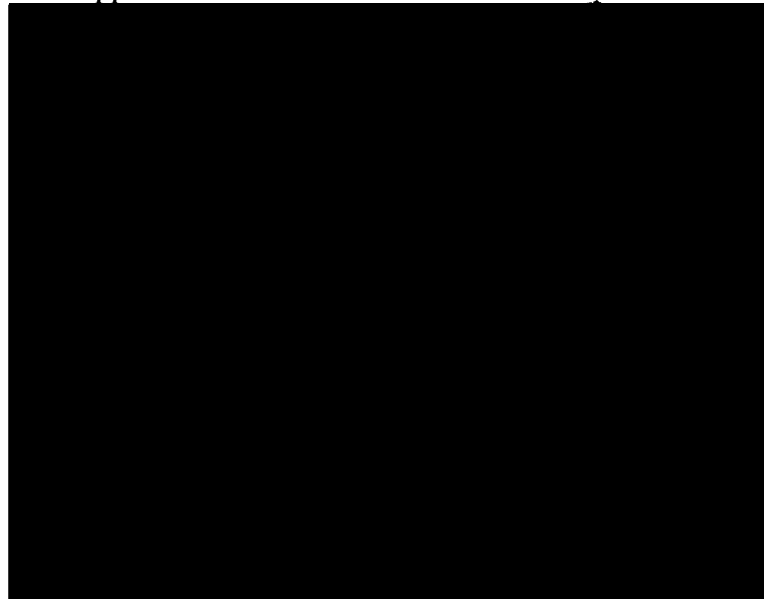
by

Todd Spencer Rose

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:



May 2008

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2008

The University of Southern Mississippi

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ABSTRACT

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The Associated Colleges of the South is a consortium of liberal arts colleges founded in 1991. The consortium serves as a third-party agency to further the collective interests of the member institutions. Since its founding in 1991 and original membership of nine institutions, the consortium has grown to 16 member institutions. This research reviews literature relevant to the history and organization of voluntary consortia in the United States, the history of liberal arts colleges and the challenges that are faced by these institutions, and recent technology and how it affects higher education. In addition, the history of the consortia and the development of the collaborative programs is described, as are the thoughts and views of presidents of the thirteen member institutions regarding their institution's membership in the consortium.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The cost of a college education has risen over the past decade (Dotolo & Strandness, 1999). In addition, educational institutions have been faced with calls for increased accountability for their enterprises. Internal pressures to improve instruction, the demand for meeting new institutional roles, and the challenge of new technologies are forcing colleges to seek creative avenues to survive (Neal, 1988). External forces include pressures from students, their tuition-paying parents, and taxpayers to improve the way value is provided in higher education. As colleges have sought to meet the demands of this environment with increased efficiency and good stewardship of resources, they have become more interested in consortial relationships (Dotolo & Strandness, 1999).

Perhaps the simplest definition of a consortium is provided by Neal (1988). Recognizing there have been activities of mutual interest by institutions of higher education for decades, Neal defines a consortium as a “semi-permanent organization, typically supported by financial contributions from its members, that employs a professional staff whose sole responsibility is to encourage and to facilitate cooperative activities between and among the members, and between them collectively and others” (p.1). A consortium can be formed to address one or more purposes for its members. Although there are many good reasons for starting a consortium, sustaining a consortium is a complicated endeavor (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999).

The Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) was created in 1991 as a collaborative venture among nine liberal arts colleges and universities in seven states with an original focus on the development of international programs (Associated

Colleges of the South, 2001). Since inception, the institutional memberships have expanded to 16, representing 12 states. These member institutions are of comparable academic standing, and have a shared commitment to not only strengthen offerings, but to preserve financial resources.

The ACS has expanded from its initial focus on international studies to initiatives which seek to (a) strengthen faculty teaching, (b) enhance technology use and information fluency, (c) explore collaborative opportunities in curricular and programmatic initiatives, (d) promote information exchange and the creation of academic networks, (e) examine the link between students' intellectual and character development, (f) promote undergraduate research through the cooperation among ACS member institutions, (g) promote cost containment, (h) explore and examine projects and endeavors which will increase revenue, and (i) explore diversity issues and programs on the various campuses (Associated Colleges of the South, 2001).

Success as a consortium has several challenges. The cooperative nature of a consortium is counter-intuitive to the autonomy traditionally valued by academicians (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Other issues challenge a consortium, particularly in the formative stages. There is not an extensive history of successful, long-standing consortia. Funding agencies are concerned about these collaborations that seemingly form for the purpose of requesting funding, as opposed to those that form out of a genuine desire and commitment to cooperate and reap the benefits associated with the collaborative relationship (Peterson, 1999). Agency representatives seek assurance that the institutional support will outlast the grant, that matching funds are committed by institutions, and that the projects receive priority and commitment within the institutions. For these reasons,

executive level support is essential to the inception and the longevity of a consortium (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999).

This study is delimited to the ACS consortium and presidents at ACS member institutions. The study is also confined exclusively to the experiences of the interviewees with only the ACS consortium. The limitations are the voluntary and truthful participation of the men and women interviewed as well as the availability and the accuracy of the documents reviewed at the ACS office.

Although the reasons consortia may cease to exist are as numerous as the consortia themselves, there are several themes that may characterize failures (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). These reasons include lack of support individually and collectively by the member institutions, inability to secure significant funding, and leadership that fails to capitalize on the volunteer strength and the professional staff.

Definitions

For the purposes of this research, the following terms were used:

ACS The abbreviation for the Associated Colleges of the South, a voluntary collaboration of sixteen private liberal arts colleges and universities in the southeastern United States.

Carnegie Commission The Carnegie Commission was founded in the early 1900s as an independent policy and research center focused on the advancement of teaching and higher education.

Consortium “A semi-permanent organization, typically supported by financial contributions from its members, that employs a professional staff whose sole

responsibility is to encourage and to facilitate cooperative activities between and among the member, and between them collectively and others” (Neal, 1988, p. 1).

Cross registration A formal agreement between and among participating institutions wherein students from one institution may enroll in approved courses offered by the other participating institutions, and obtain credit for the courses without having to apply for admission to the institution offering the course.

Liberal Arts College An institution of higher education focused on the undergraduate studies of 18-year old to 21-year old students, highly residential in its nature with a broad curriculum and resistant to highly specialized vocational preparation programs (Graubard, 2000).

Private College A private college is an institution of higher education that receives no on-going, general funding from the local, state, or federal government. The main source of funding for private colleges is student tuition. Local, state, and federal funds are provided to the institution through student financial-aid and research grants.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The primary literature selected for review in this research addressed the issue of consortia in higher education. Supplementary literature reviewed for this study addressed the issue of liberal arts colleges in the United States and technology in higher education.

Literature on the subject of higher education consortia was selected for review if it met at least one of two criteria. First, if it were recognized as a seminal piece of work in the study of volunteer cooperative relationships in higher education. Second, it addressed the issue of higher education consortia in approximately the last 20 years. This period of time was selected as it covers the existence of the consortium being studied and addresses issues relevant to consortia administration. Literature regarding liberal arts education was selected if it was written in the last 15 years and addressed the issues of the status, trends, and challenges of the liberal arts college. Literature addressing technology was selected if it was written in the last 10 years and addressed the issue of technology in higher education.

In the last twenty years, the number of consortia has increased (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Technological advances facilitated this increase, enabling the collaboration. These collaborations are in response to continued calls for cost controls and accountability in higher education. In addition, the ways in which colleges and universities have collaborated has increased. No longer limited to institutions located close to one another and limited to the sharing of libraries and course registration, cooperation also includes institutional purchasing and faculty development programs.

The preponderance of the literature written on formal consortia in higher education has been written by professionals with experience as executives in consortia. Therefore, literature critical of consortia and the role they play in higher education is limited at best.

History of Consortia

There is a relatively short history of formal cooperative agreements between and among colleges and universities in the United States (Patterson, 1974). The earliest formal consortia were recognized to be the Claremont Colleges in California and the historically black colleges and universities of the Atlanta University Center. The Claremont Colleges began the movement of inter-institutional cooperation in 1925 when the president of Pomona College developed a plan to establish a group of small colleges that would share library and other resources. Four years later, three institutions in Atlanta made agreements to form the second recognized formal consortium. These schools, Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spellman College, were later joined by Clark College, the Interdenominational Theological Center, and Morris Brown College. In 1964, a new charter for this consortium was established.

Formal consortia gained momentum in two different periods (Patterson, 1974). The first was in the early 1960s when student enrollment was at its highest level in the history up to that time. Colleges sought new ways of existing and discussed the value of cooperation. In 1965, there was an additional boost to formalizing cooperation with the Higher Education Act. Title III of this federal legislation provided funds for institutions struggling to survive and on the margin of the mainstream if they would develop cooperative agreements with other schools.

Consortia formation increased substantially for a second time in the 1990s as a result of various conditions and incentives. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) describe the rise of information and communication technologies as having increased the pressure on institutions to be more competitive and more efficient.

The reasons for cooperation are numerous. Neal (1988) discussed the increasing pressures to improve instruction, the demand of meeting new institutional roles, and the challenge of new technologies that force colleges to seek creative avenues to survive. Nofsinger (2002) described two reasons the academy was pressured to restructure. First, restructuring was the logical next step that grew from the reform of basic education that happened in the 1980s. Second, there was skepticism from the public which had witnessed higher education become increasingly more isolated from the mainstream and costlier. The increasing costs are also noted by Dorger (1999) who described an increasing number of voices calling for cost controls.

Those who have written about the consortium movement described several bases for having a consortium. Patterson (1974) stated that cooperation will yield a richer and more diverse academic program that is available to students and that individual institutions will see economic benefits by joining together to manage relatively scarce resources. Neal (1988) described the historic challenge that can be met in universities through effective consortia. This avenue provides the opportunity for individuals to accomplish more for the institution, do something better than it is currently being done, or reduce the cost of an activity. The improved academic programs can not happen without some loss of the autonomy and identity institutions have protected for years. In

summary, as Baus (1988) suggested, the cooperation must be achieved by institutions that see additional strength gained by the venture.

Each consortium is unique as its purpose is defined by the particular need, interests, and opportunities of its member colleges and universities (Patterson, 1974). This inherent uniqueness makes it challenging to categorize these organizations. Despite this challenge, all consortia are similar in that they play a neutral, third-party role with their member organizations. Neal (1988) describes this third-party agency as valuable in sustaining these cooperative relationships. In addition, Baus (1988) stated that the “expertise and professionalism of the third-party role are vital to the integrity of the relationship” (p. 30). Horgan (1999) describes this neutrality as a role of communication, coordination, and facilitation. In addition, the consortium is only valuable to the extent that it eases the burden of institutions or adds something to them that may not be there otherwise.

An effective consortium necessitates trust and will lead to a situation in which the consortium can reach its true potential as a safe place for the exchange of ideas and problem solving (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Peterson (1999) stated that key elements in the ability for consortia to raise money and sustain itself are good communication and trust between the agency staff and the member institutions, and among the participating institutions. This can be facilitated by frequent exchanges and meetings organized by consortia staff.

Consortia Governance and Leadership

Patterson (1974) described the governance and leadership of the consortia. The presidents of the member institutions, along with other senior members, must have a

strong commitment to the consortium. They serve as the board of directors that not only develops policy and oversees the activities of the executive director and the staff, but are also limited as to the time they are able to commit to the endeavor. The importance of the presidential role is magnified in the smaller consortia as a negative shift by any member institution can put a consortium at risk. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) stated that executive level support from the member institutions is crucial to the overall success of the consortium. The decisions made in consortia are primarily the result of consensus among the participants.

The executive director, according to Patterson (1974), is the key individual in the operation of any consortium. This individual must be able to get along well with the presidents of the individual institutions and, as Horgan (1999) states, do so by knowing how to use a college president's time wisely and knowing how to serve as an advocate for an organization. In addition, the director must make sure the mission of the consortium is defined and is in place, and often serves as the chief financial officer of the consortium. This entails securing a steady stream of revenue and building an annual budget. An additional role includes working with the participating institutions to ensure that the financial support contributed is calculated fairly in the minds of the institutions and that the direct and indirect benefits of consortium participation are constantly on the mind of the participants.

Decision making in a successful consortium is deliberate and thorough. This is one of the advantages of having the shared knowledge and information available when multiple participants are involved in the deliberation process (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Neal (1988) stated that decision making resulting from long and thorough

consultation with all members of the associated institutions yields decisions of higher quality.

Programs and Initiatives

A variety of programs are provided to member colleges and universities through a consortium. Programs offered address areas including the academic offerings, academic support, and administrative areas of the member institutions.

Academic Programs

The general belief, according to Pritzen (1988), in new consortia was that academic programs would be the most beneficial area for inter-institutional collaboration. This collaboration was counter to the competitive and independent culture that was pervasive on campuses, and required new ways of thinking. Historically, the inter-institutional climate had been competitive, not cooperative. Strandness (1999) described the benefits of joint academic programs. Among them (a) a program unable to exist on a single campus due to scarce resources may be able to exist when resources are pooled, (b) the diverse curriculum resulting from a stronger faculty, (c) the shared costs by the participating institutions, and (d) the increased cooperation that results from a joint program tends to spill over into proactively solving problems that may arise.

According to Pritzen (1988), there are two primary benefits of staff from the consortium office supporting this academic initiative. First, using its third-party facilitator role, the staff can work to identify common needs and expectations from the program. Second, the staff can be present to encourage the completion of the project, provide administrative leadership, and facilitate the discussions and consensus necessary to make the initiative a success.

Faculty

Faculty members benefit from a consortium initiative. The faculty roles in teaching the classes offered through the consortium are critical. Faculty also benefit in the cooperative initiative. Faculty, particularly those that are teaching in small programs, are rarely afforded the opportunity to teach upper level courses in their areas of research. Collaborative initiatives, according to Anderson and Bonefas (2002), often offer this opportunity. Faculty involvement in consortia initiatives is not limited to teaching in joint programs.

After the early frustrations that many consortia felt in trying to develop classes among the institutions, consortia have often shifted their focus to academic support services, such as faculty development and cross-registration, as a way to support the academic missions of each of the institutions (Pritzen, 1988). One area where this has been successful has been in the area of helping faculty members learn to teach better. According to Patterson (1974), this is a subject that consortia can address better in some ways because it pulls faculty out of their home campus where they might feel threatened to fully participate in the faculty development programs. Another example where faculty development has been successful at the consortium level is with teaching faculty how to use new technology and its application in their work environments (Anderson & Bonefas, 2002). As those strategies are mastered by the participant, they can be brought back to the campus where other faculty can learn. As the program progresses, the consortium can focus on more intermediate and advanced subjects that may not have been able to be captured on a particular campus. Another benefit to this is the networking that happens among faculty participants when they are participating in the programs (Marino, 2002). A

consortium initiative will also create an environment where a faculty member can experiment with their ideas and interests in a setting that is free from the judgment and possible scrutiny of their campus peers.

Professional development programs are complicated. According to Rose (1988), there are several challenges. One reason is the difficulty in determining the true needs of the constituents. In addition, the administration of a conference can be a complicated task. Finally, when providing development opportunities for people in a classroom environment, it is difficult to maximize the potential learning of each participant because attention has to be paid collectively to the participants, not individually.

Rose (1988) provided common strategies that successful professional development programs have used. Strategies include (a) focusing the conference on subject areas where the member institutions have little or no previous experience, (b) providing descriptive information upfront so that the institution will match the subject area of the conference with the right participants, and (c) encouraging the consultant or facilitator to include learner participation in their programs.

Cross Registration

Cross registration among institutions was initially only available to those schools in close geographic connection to one another (Pritzen, 1988). As technology progressed, it became more available to institutions lacking this geographical proximity. Cross-registration gives students access to a more extensive curriculum than an individual school can provide. It also allows individual institutions to resist the pressure to expand the curriculum in areas that are covered by other participating schools.

One example of a cross registration program that has worked for over 30 years is the Tri-College University (TCU). In 1970, Concordia College, Moorhead State University, and North Dakota State University formed TCU primarily to provide expanded course opportunities to students at the three institutions (Strandness, 1999). Several characteristics and principles of this venture contributed to the success of the program. Among these (a) the geographic proximity of the institutions, free transportation, and free parking available at the schools for the students from the other institutions; (b) designated registrars at each institution that work with students who are participating in cross registration; (c) academic calendars which are closely aligned; (d) the ability for each institution to independently determine the guidelines and procedures for their student participants and courses in the programs; and (e) the consistent education of faculty and students as to the opportunities for and benefits of cross registration.

Impediments to cross-registration include traditional inter-collegiate rivalries, school academic calendars that do not match one another, differences in educational style existing among schools, and an institutional concern for protecting the integrity of the degree (Pritzen, 1988). Additionally, for cross-registration to be successful, individual institutions must be willing to actively promote and encourage it on the campus and make it as easy for students to access.

Purchasing

Joint purchasing of goods and services is one area in which a consortium can assist institutions with containment of costs and address the primary goal of saving money for the individual schools (Briber, 1988). Historically, joint purchasing has not been a place where schools have progressed. The hesitancy was that the benefits were not

fully understood by the participants or the process might appear to be complicated.

Bishop (2002) describes the benefits to those who participate in the initiative. In addition to the cost savings, purchasing officers can share experiences and expertise when they meet, assist one another with streamlining processes, and create stronger contracts by the substantially larger purchasing power. The role of the consortium is not that of the purchasing agent but to intercede if there is confusion in the relationship such as a failure to deliver items or a member not honoring a contract.

Dorger (1999) stated that there are unlimited opportunities to save money through voluntary cooperation in purchasing products and services. Strategies that have proven successful are (a) the reduction of insurance costs through the sharing of risks as a consortium of institutions purchases policies; (b) sharing resources of larger, often unique, items such as specialty equipment and service contracts; (c) cost reduction through expanded purchasing power when individuals cooperate to buy goods and services; and (d) institutions providing services to other institutions that allow a revenue stream for the providing institution as well as reasonably priced services for the college or university receiving the service.

Library

Library consortia were the earliest forms in higher education (Dunfee, 1988; Neal, 1988). According to Alberico (2002), a consortium is the main source of digital collections offered by the library. In addition, consortia are assuming a major role for managing a state's electronic collections. Activity in this area has been primarily driven by economics and enabled by technology. The costs libraries face escalated during the

consolidation of the publishing industry. This cost increase is a strong motivator for additional cooperation in an industry that has been cooperating for years.

Organizational Structure Critical to Success

Consortia differ in their specific goals and ways in which they operate making categorization difficult. However, there are some common characteristics in successful consortia. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) stated the following characteristics as helping a consortium to succeed in the long-term (a) a commitment from the highest level of the member institutions; (b) clear mission and set of goals; (c) a commitment to the process by all members; (d) a neutral, third-party function; (e) measurements for gauging success; (f) effective structures and systems for communication with and among member institutions; and (g) an ability to be creative, agile, and to develop programs unattainable by individual members in the consortium.

Challenges Faced by Consortia

In addition to the common characteristics possessed by successful consortia, there are common challenges mentioned throughout the literature. Early consortia were criticized by prominent bodies like the Carnegie Commission for lacking substance. Patterson (1974) was also unconvinced that they could be substantive and believed that large consortia were at risk of being ineffective. Baus (1988) described the autonomous and competitive nature of colleges and universities as major challenges to consortia success.

Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) described a consortium as derivative in nature, meaning that its mission is solely obtained from the missions of the member institutions. The continuation of the consortium is tied intricately with the on-going willingness of the

member institutions to participate. Johnson (1988) described two other impediments to successful consortia as inertia and turf. The staff of the consortia must work hard to keep projects moving, thereby not allowing the natural inertia to take over. They must also manage the relationships such that institutions will see success in the consortia as also their own success. The results of these challenges are an organization that is simple in mission, but complex in how it works, thereby being a delicate entity.

Funding for Consortia

Funding for consortia administration and initiatives is realized through a variety of mechanisms (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). First, the member organizations pay fees or dues into the organization. These payments illustrate an ongoing commitment and allow the consortium to begin building a budget. A key to making this funding work is for the consortium to develop a fair and defensible formula for this figure that member schools can support. External funding is also a major source of revenue for the consortium. Patterson (1974) described external funding as seed money, and often short-sighted in that it will help an organization to create some young programs, but not support the ongoing sustainability of those programs.

Consortia have long struggled in getting support from foundations who questioned the true cooperative nature of the member institutions. The history of consortia is filled with stories of organizations unable to last as long as the initial external funding made available to them (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). This history lends itself to the suspicion that external foundations have in supporting consortia leading to questioning not only the commitment to cooperation, but to the project that is outlined in the application for funding (Peterson, 1999). A creative way consortia have increased

their income is to invite non-members to participate in several programs while charging them for their participation (Rose, 1988). Few consortia have full time development officers working for them. The consortia also have to be in constant communication with the development officers of the participating institutions to ensure that applications for funding from the consortia do not unnecessarily compete with those of the individual colleges (Peterson, 1999).

Assessing Consortia Effectiveness

Peterson (2000) discussed the assessment of consortia to determine their effectiveness as organizations. Consortia are in place to enrich the lives of the individual faculty, staff, and students that are affiliated with member institutions. Reports coming from consortia cited that intellectual communities created by the consortia do contribute to a value-added experience for the members. Consortia staff must work with the local institutional administration to define the needs of the individuals that are not participating in the collaborative activities to determine and define new avenues for growth.

Peterson (2002) stated that cost savings through consortia purchasing and contracts are easier to measure than the financial impact of an institutions participating in other programs offered by a consortium. Purchases for goods and services occurred prior to affiliation with a consortium, and can be measured against the cost associated with purchases through the consortium. Although the costs associated with participating in other programs can be measured, the initiatives are new to the institution and yield benefits not easily measurable in monetary terms. For instance, it is easy to measure the costs of sending a faculty member to a faculty development program, but it is not easy to

measure the benefit the attendance had on the job satisfaction of the faculty member or the performance of the faculty member as a result of participation in the program.

Liberal Arts College History

The first institutions of higher education in the United States were modeled after the learning centers of medieval Europe (Koblik, 2000). Harvard University and the College of William and Mary were the earliest institutions in the United States, both founded in the 1600's, were formed to serve a variety of needs including (a) intellectual, (b) spiritual, (c) local, and (d) practical. Lucas (1996) described higher education in the United States as modest from the beginning. Hawkins (2000) stated that models of higher education expanded as a more utilitarian curriculum was proposed. Colleges soon offered alternative programs of studies lacking the requirements for languages and increasing the science curriculum.

During the middle part of the 1800s, universities also distinguished themselves by offering graduate degrees (Hawkins, 2000). Yale offered Ph.D. degrees in 1861. In the latter 1800s, amid criticism that universities were becoming too patriarchal, the presence of clerics on the boards of institutions declined, slowly being replaced by lay alumni. Throughout this period, liberal arts colleges felt pressured to focus on basic education and serve a preparatory role, relinquishing the role of advanced education to universities. Despite these changes and challenges, liberal arts institutions remained the predominant model of higher education. As the 1800's progressed, other types of schools emerged including (a) land-grant universities, (b) technical schools, and (c) research universities (Koblik, 2000). Hawkins (2000) attributes much of this growth to the Morrill Act of 1862. This act provided for the establishment of institutions focused on agricultural and

mechanical arts. Although more traditional liberal arts education programs continued to be offered, the requirements for those courses were loosened. In the mid-1900s, the Zook Commission, appointed by President Harry S. Truman, recommended a more open educational system. This proposed system was one that should be made available to more than just the intellectual elite, with economic, geographic, and ethnic barriers lowered and a broader curriculum. A great surge in the number of college bound men and women occurred at the end of the World War II. Although this increase in the number of students enrolling allowed the liberal arts colleges to be more selective in their admission and increase their prices, it furthered the divide between universities and colleges, with liberal arts colleges appearing even more elitist. Federal and state funds supported the rapid enrollment expansion at public universities (Graubard, 2000; Hawkins, 2000). Private colleges shared only in federal money devoted to the construction of residence halls (Hawkins, 2000).

The number of higher education institutions soared during this period, as did the number of students enrolled in colleges and universities. Lucas (1996) indicated that almost 2,000 institutions of higher education have been started since 1945, and the number of college bound high school seniors increased throughout the latter half of the 20th century. In 1960, 40% of high school seniors applied to college. By 1970, approximately 50% of senior applied, and in 1990 two out of three high school seniors applied for colleges, including increasing percentages of women and ethnic minorities.

While the percentage of high school graduates matriculating to college increased, the percentage of college students attending liberal arts colleges declined (Hawkins, 2000). In the mid-1950s, liberal arts colleges constituted 40% of higher educational

institution and enrolled 25% of the students in colleges. By 1970, the market share had declined. Liberal arts colleges comprised 15% of the institutions and 8% of the enrolled students. Graubard (2000) estimated that liberal arts colleges confer only 4% of the baccalaureate degrees at the end of the 20th Century.

Characteristics of Liberal Arts Education

As various forms of higher education institutions emerged, the term 'college' was not assigned a particular meaning and was understood broadly in the 1800s to refer to any particular form of higher education (Hawkins, 2000). It was not until the 1900s that a liberal arts college gained a specific connotation. A liberal arts college then became commonly understood to mean an institution focused on the undergraduate studies of 18-year old to 21-year old students, highly residential in its nature, a broad curriculum, and resistant to highly specialized vocational preparation programs. Graubard (2000) characterized a liberal arts college as a model of higher education which encourages collaboration between faculty and students at a level distinctly different from any other form of higher education. Breneman (1994) described liberal arts colleges as single in their purpose, rarely enrolling more than 2,500 students, and typically enrolling from 800 to 1,800 full time students. Astin (2000a) described the liberal arts college as a labor intensive experience for faculty in requiring frequent interaction with students with an emphasis on writing and essay exams as well as narrative evaluations on student work by the faculty member.

McPherson and Shapiro (2000) stated that the liberal arts college education contrasted to trends at research universities including (a) increased specialization in course work and subdivision of the curriculum, (b) increased number of part-time

students, and (c) increased non-residential experience for students. Hersh (2000) provided characteristics of the liberal arts education in terms of student experience. He stated that because they are small in size and residential in nature, liberal arts colleges encourage student involvement in the ongoing life of the community. As such, the focus is on holistic student growth through an intentional blending of experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Further, Breneman (1994) extolled liberal arts education as one of the greatest success stories in American education. Although consistently challenged by new and alternative forms of education, the liberal arts colleges have remained a vital part of the educational landscape. Astin (2000, *How Liberal Arts Colleges Affect Students*) echoed this assessment and stated that liberal arts colleges survival during a prolonged time of great expansion in public education illustrated the notion that those interested in education believe that it offers something beneficial and unique.

Challenges Faced by Liberal Arts Colleges

As liberal arts colleges have seen a declining share of the college student market in the 20th century, the challenges facing these colleges increased. These challenges were (a) competition, (b) costs and (c) a change in the profile of those attending college.

Competition

Graubard (2000), Hawkins (2000), Koblik (2000) and Lucas (1996) described the history of higher education in the United States as beginning with colleges based on the European Medieval model and then diversifying as universities offered a broad curriculum and elective course options.

Although differentiating themselves from the small, private, liberal arts college, many large institutions sought to offer programs in direct competition to these by establishing Honors Colleges and residential colleges within the university (Graubard, 2000). The intent was to draw academically talented students who would otherwise have sought out private education options, perhaps even leaving their home state. Neely (2000) stated that this furthered the perception that Universities offered the same quality and type of education but with more options for the student than liberal arts colleges offered, while costing less.

As liberal arts colleges intentionally remained small, media paying attention to higher education generally focused on large, primarily public, institutions (Graubard, 2000). Athletic programs, larger enrollments, and larger alumni bases created more attention for these institutions. In addition, Graubard further characterized the United States as a society that generally equates success with size, and as having a preoccupation with what mass media deem important.

Competition for liberal arts colleges increased as alternatives to the traditional institutions were established. McPherson and Shapiro (2000) indicated that the struggles liberal arts colleges faced intensified as new technologies changed the reasons people needed additional education, and postsecondary educational options has become more specialized. This change not only had a direct impact on the market share of the liberal arts college, but on the liberal arts colleges themselves. Many colleges once committed to the notion of liberal education abandoned their traditional curricula to become business schools, nursing schools, and schools focused on computers and technology. This placed

these schools in the market for the adult and part-time student not often associated with a liberal arts college enrollment.

Cost

The cost of providing an education has been an ongoing challenge for small, private, liberal arts colleges. Neely (2000) stated that because higher education is labor and technology intensive, increases in the cost of a college education outpaced increases in family income. Hawkins (2000) stated that after World War I and World War II, the US government determined that higher education was critical to the future of the country. Accordingly, public policies resulted in an increase in governmental assistance to public institutions. This reduced the reliance of these institutions on student tuition for their budgets. McPherson and Shapiro (2000) stated that private, liberal arts institutions are more dependent on tuition than major public research institutions. Tuition at public research institutions makes up 50% of institutional budget while at private, liberal arts college's tuition constitutes 75% of the operating budget. In addition, spending patterns at the two types institutions differ. Spending on teaching and instruction, as a percentage of total budget, are about equal at liberal arts colleges and public institutions. However, expenses related to student services at a liberal arts colleges are about 1/3 of the budget, compared to 1/5 of the budget at the research institutions. Neely (2000) stated that as more social problems have appeared on campus, services related to addressing these problems have become increasingly demanded, causing further pressure on the budgets of the liberal arts colleges.

Family income is a significant determining factor in where the student will attend college. Approximately half of the college bound students from higher income families

attend private institutions, while only 20% of college bound students from lower income families enroll in private institutions (McPherson & Shapiro, 2000). Neely (2000) stated that tuition expenses as a percentage of family income is three times greater in a poorer family than in a wealthier family.

As the costs of education have increased, it has had a disproportionate impact on small, private schools. Breneman (1994) stated that widely publicized increases in private school tuitions have kept liberal arts education out of reach of more and more families and that private institutions are spending greater percentages of their budget to attract students to their campuses and are unable to charge the full published rates. McPherson and Shapiro (2000) described this problem as a family's willingness to pay, further stating that it is not uncommon to find no students at a private, liberal arts college who are paying full tuition. In addition, Breneman (1994) stated that small independent colleges are the most financially vulnerable as they lack significant financial endowments, are highly dependent on student tuition, and receive no direct support from the federal government. Neely (2000) stated that the financial challenges facing liberal arts institutions may change the very nature of the liberal arts education at many institutions as these schools are tempted to become increasingly focused on research in order to get more federal support, thereby compromising the historical focus on teaching considered to be a primary characteristic of a liberal arts institution.

Changing Student Characteristics

Another challenge being faced by the liberal arts college is the changing profile of the individuals seeking higher education. Astin (2000b) described this population as less interested in seeking a "meaningful life" (p. 26). Neely (2000) stated that students no

longer go to college seeking education that will make them better citizens or provide them opportunities for rich intellectual growth. Graubard (2000) and Brann (2000) both described a modern society which lacked appreciation for the traditional liberal education curriculum of humanities and social sciences. Brann stated that there is a significant decline in interest in challenging reading, while Graubard described students as unwilling to work at understanding complexity.

As a result of being raised in an increasingly materialistic society, college bound students became increasingly narcissistic (Nelly, 2000). This narcissism resulted in students being more focused on vocational preparation and skill development than in a more challenging, broad-based, liberal studies curriculum. In addition, students became more price sensitive in their choices of colleges, approaching the selection process much as they approached the purchase of consumer products. Hersh (2000) described a moral decline at the end of the 20th century, a change in the family structures, and increased economic pressure on families resulting in students that are more fragile and less self-confident than in preceding generations.

Liberal Arts College Student Outcomes

The experiences of students enrolled at liberal arts colleges differed from experiences of students at large, public research universities which led to outcomes for students from the liberal education experience which are distinctive (Astin, 2000a). Astin described a variety of student outcomes from attending a liberal arts college (a) greater satisfaction with faculty, (b) greater satisfaction with the quality of academic instruction and the broad educational requirements, and (c) the perception that they attended an institution more focused on the student experience. In addition, Astin stated that

attending a private liberal arts college increases the likelihood that a student will obtain an undergraduate degree, be elected to a students office, trust the administration of the college, and be part of an institution that is focused on social change. McPherson and Shapiro (2000) attributed the success of liberal arts college graduates to an educational experience which produced a depth of understanding as well as broad intellectual and human capacities. Neely (2000) stated that the liberal arts education provides the critical skills sought by CEOs including (a) critical thinking and reasoning, (b) oral and written skills, and (c) the ability to conceptualize the application of quantitative skills. Koblik (2000) stated that although liberal arts colleges enroll a very small amount of students as percentage of total students enrolled in higher education liberal arts college graduates represent a disproportionate share of the leaders in the country, including doctors, lawyers, researchers, educators and politicians. Astin (2000, *How Liberal Arts Colleges Affect Students*) further stated that this disproportionate number was a result of a liberal arts education which encourages students to tackle questions regarding the purpose and mission of the human experience.

Technology in Higher Education

The connection of teachers to students has been the essence of higher education since its inception (Langenberg & Spicer, 2001). This originally meant connecting one teacher with a few students. As the number of people interested in education outpaced the number of teachers, they began to come together and form institutions meeting in buildings that were dispersed throughout cities. The invention of the printing industry further transformed higher education as it allowed teachers to become authors and connect with interested learners not located close the to the teacher in space and time. As

technology developed and evolved, institutions, teachers, and students have been greatly affected. Dunderstadt (1999) stated that the need for the learning institution will be ever greater than it currently is as technology advances a knowledge-driven society. But, as colleges and universities have long owned the market on advanced education, information technology eliminated barriers and new forces have begun to challenge the traditional forms of higher education. Brown and Duguid (2000) stated that corporate research centers are beginning to challenge universities for funding, as they have begun providing professional development courses once only found on a college or university campus.

The nature of the learning environment was altered by technology. Formal student instruction has expanded from taking place in the physical classroom to instruction that is available at any place at any time (Dunderstadt, 1999). In addition, faculty had been challenged with transforming from being lecturers to designers of educational experiences. Brown and Duguid (2000) stated that as we all live in a heavily technical world, understanding complex technologies is key and we have all become technical designers at some level. In addition, as faculty became designers of learning experiences, technology created an environment where peers are important in the educational process.

The impact of technology on the student learning experience had multiple dimensions. It helped to overcome some social distances, providing a friendlier format for those individuals who are less comfortable interacting in a face to face environment (Brown & Duguid, 2000). Yet, this environmental change has not overcome all social distance, and people who participated in coursework in isolation view their credentials as less valuable than those who participated in traditional classrooms.

The pressures on colleges and universities as a result of information technology created greater competition between and among institutions, a different type of student, and the ability for people to return to college at a variety of stages in their lives (Brown and Duguid, 2000). Dunderstadt (1999) described the learning approach of today's students as more experiential and less sequential as they have become more accustomed to learning in the "plug and play" format, to participation, and to experimentation. As the demands on students changed over time, the demands of students on the institution have also changed (Brown and Duguid, 2000). Students demand institutions that can meet their lifelong needs and support them through multiple stages of life and career changes.

Digital libraries are a new form of collaborative model in higher education that took off when the internet and the World Wide Web became part of the mainstream (Dewey, 2003). These new libraries have offered a variety of formats including (a) content originally provided in traditional formats that had been reformatted for digital use, (b) information originated in the digital format, called "born-digital content" (p. 194), and (c) content available from commercial sources. The digital format has extended beyond libraries into faculty departments for information sources specific to the discipline.

As the teaching role of a faculty member changed in higher education, information technology had a dramatic change in the research function of a faculty member (Langenberg & Spicer, 2001). Faculty can attend conferences and meetings in virtual formats, and collaboration between and among colleagues has been made more accessible. Dewey (2003) stated that the newest steps in the connection of resources include (a) research and teaching information, (b) multi-campus search engines, and

(c) international and global integration.

Themes in technology on the college and university campus are the recognition that (a) technology is not the driving force of education, but a supporter of education, (b) superior technologies will not be noticed by its users, (c) communication has become mobile, and (d) person to person contacts will be less frequent, but reserved for the more high quality opportunities (Katz, 2001). Despite the variety of effects on higher education brought on by information technology, Katz also stated that the traditional residential campus will likely continue to serve the growing needs of higher education, despite the pressures from other vendors and organizations. At its best, technology will allow colleges and universities to achieve their missions in a variety of new ways. In addition, as Langerberg and Spicer (2001) indicated, technology expanded the meaning of the campus to include the total environment for students and faculty.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research methods were used to examine this topic. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) indicated that qualitative methods should be used when the goal of the research is to identify themes. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) noted that the nature of qualitative research is to focus on the qualities of an entity not expressed in measurable terms such as frequency and intensity. Patton (2002) stated that qualitative research enables the researcher to better understand the views of the world as seen by those being interviewed. Discovery of themes regarding the experiences of the presidents at ACS member institutions is the focus of this research. Understanding the reasons the consortium began and the programs at the ACS is a second focus of this research. The quantitative method, on the other hand, would be appropriate to validate, or confirm, themes in existence in a sample or a population.

Qualitative Methods

Although there are many available approaches in qualitative research, the single case study method will be employed in this study. Many professionals have described this method of qualitative research (a) Sari Knopp Biklen, (b) Robert C. Bogdan, (c) Walter R. Borg, (d) Kathy Charmaz, (e) Norman K. Denzin, (f) Joyce P. Gall, (g) Meredith D. Gall, (h) Valerie Janesik, (i) Yvonne S. Lincoln, (j) Michael Quinn Patton, and (k) Robert E. Stake. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) indicated that case studies are particularly appropriate methods when the subject studied is individualized, as would be the instance with a consortium of colleges. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) underscored the

value of the case study approach as it results in a deeper understanding of the specific subject being studied. Patton (2002) stated that case studies often provide lessons and examples that are valuable from which others can learn, illuminating the successes and failures of a particular entity. Stake (2003) identified a case study as appropriate when the researcher primarily wants a better understanding of a subject because of a fundamental interest in the topic, not in pursuit of theory development or because the case represents other cases. This case study had emergent design flexibility (Patton, 2002) which allowed the procedures to be modified appropriately as the study developed. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) described the emergent design method as one in which the research design is altered and refined as the researcher gains insight into the issues of the subjects in the research.

The following questions were addressed in this research:

1. What factors led to the establishment of the ACS?
2. What are the collaborative initiatives of the ACS?
3. What are the perceptions of the presidents at ACS member institutions regarding the consortium and the results of consortium involvement for their individual institutions?
4. Does ACS affiliation enable administrators to do things they would not be able to do absent consortium membership? If so, what are those things?

Researcher's Role

The researcher's role is critical in qualitative research according to Janesik (2003). The ultimate decisions regarding the narrative reside with this individual. Patton

(2003) pointed out that in the qualitative tradition the instrument is the individual conducting the research. In this study, the researcher has read information produced in the last 20 years regarding consortia in higher education. The preponderance of information has been authored by executives leading these third-party agencies. The literature described elements of consortia in higher education. As a result, the researcher had an understanding of the role a consortium is to play. This information led the researcher to the initial belief that consortia add value to the institutions with which they are associated. The researcher anticipated that this research would result in similar findings.

It is important to note that the researcher has had prior contact and positive experience with the organization being studied and with the president of the organization. While a senior student affairs administrator at an ACS member college, the researcher participated in meetings with other senior student affairs administrators at ACS member institutions that were substantive and helpful in his professional role. It is this involvement that sparked the researcher's interest in gaining a deeper understanding of the organization and the thoughts and opinions of the presidents affiliated with the consortium.

Data Sources

Patton (2002) categorized qualitative data as documentation, interviews, or observation. The first two types were used as data for this case study. Also, some limited observation was present during the interview with Dr. Anderson, president of the ACS, and the visits to the ACS headquarters during the document review.

A second source for data was internal documents available at the ACS offices in Atlanta, Georgia. These documents include Bylaws, Newsletters, and other internal reports which provide information relevant to answering the questions at the heart of the research.

Data Collection Methods

The first step in this process was to receive approval by the University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board to proceed with the research. A copy of the approval document is located in Appendix A.

The next step in the research was an examination of documents located at the ACS headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. The documents were provided by the staff of the ACS under the leadership of Dr. Wayne Anderson, President of the ACS. Documents consisted of ACS publications, organization bylaws, and reports from external sources regarding programs affiliated with the ACS. Once the examination of the documents was complete, interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions for open-ended interviews approach. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) described this method as involving a set of topics to be explored with each respondent, but leaving the specific order and wording of the questions to the researcher as the situation arises. Patton (2002) stated that the benefit of this approach as allowing the interviewer the freedom of building a conversation while using a guide to focus on predetermined topics. The purpose of the interviews with presidents of ACS member institutions was to gain a better understanding of the ACS through their experiences as leaders of their respective institutions, including their service on the Board of Directors for the consortium.

Presidents interviewed met the qualification of being in their presidential role for at least an academic year prior to the interview and a willingness to be interviewed. The researcher had a collegial relationship with the subjects being interviewed. As a senior administrator at an ACS institution, the researcher may have had prior contact with the subject of an interview regarding issues of mutual interest. The researcher, however, had not had previous conversations regarding the subject of this research with any of the interviewees.

The first interview was with Dr. Wayne Anderson, president of the ACS. He was asked questions that helped further the understanding of the history and development of the ACS. A list of the semi-structured interview questions he was asked is in Appendix B.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) believed that in qualitative research, people are the primary mechanism for understanding an organization. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) reinforced the importance of getting to the human experience in a qualitative study. The first contact explaining the research with member college presidents was at the annual meeting of ACS member presidents in Atlanta, Georgia. The president of one of the member colleges volunteered to assist the researcher and took information on the research to the annual ACS Board meeting. At this meeting, she asked her presidential colleagues in attendance to participate in the research. The researcher prepared 16 blue, letter-size file folders with printed labels reading "ACS Interview with Todd Rose" for the college president to hand out. Each folder had a letter explaining the research, an informed consent document, stamped envelopes addressed to the researcher to facilitate the return of the informed consent documents, and a list of potential semi-structured

questions that may be asked during the phone interviews. Including the president taking the information to the meeting, nine presidents of ACS members were at the meeting. Their signed consent forms were brought back to the researcher by the president attending and making the request on behalf of the researcher. Of the nine presidents, eight agreed to participate, and one of the eight did not meet the criteria as this was the provost of a member university who was the interim president until the new president would start prior to the new academic year.

Information regarding the research was sent to each of the presidents not in attendance at the annual summer ACS college presidents meeting in Atlanta. The information included a letter explaining the research, an informed consent document, a list of potential semi-structured interview questions that may have been asked in the interview, and a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher with which to return the signed Informed Consent document. The letter explaining the research was on the letterhead of the college employing the researcher. The envelope in which the information was sent was mailed in an envelope corresponding to the letterhead.

A week after the letters were sent to the presidents not attending the initial meeting, the researcher made contact with the offices of those presidents who attended the Atlanta meeting and agreed to participate, and those who were not present at the Atlanta meeting but were sent information requesting the interview.

The researcher did an internet search of each institutional website to locate an administrative representative in the president's office of that institution. The researcher made contact via e-mail with administrative personnel in the each of the presidents' offices asking for assistance in setting up an interview. In one additional case, a

president declined to participate in the interviews. In total, 13 presidents of the 16 ACS member colleges and universities met the criteria and agreed to be interviewed. With the assistance of personnel in each president's office, a time was secured in the Fall 2006 academic semester for the phone interview with the president of the institution.

The researcher contacted each participating president by phone at the appointed time for the interview. At the beginning of the phone conversation, the researcher thanked the president for the interview, reviewed a description of the research, and reminded the president that the phone interview would be recorded and transcribed. The recorder was then turned on and the president was asked a series of semi-structured questions regarding the individual's experiences with the consortium. A copy of the semi-structured interview questions asked of the presidents is in Attachment C. The phone interview was recorded with a Radio Shack TCR 200 Voice Activated telephone recorder. Each interview was taped on a separate Radio Shack LN 90 cassette tape. At the end of each interview, the researcher placed a label on the cassette with the name information identifying the individual interviewed. Each interview tape was transcribed using a Radio Shack CTR 111 cassette tape recorder. After transcription, the tapes were all placed in one plastic shopping bag that was subsequently stored in a metal vertical file in the home office of the researcher.

Data Analysis

The information collected through the review of the documents and the transcripts of the interviews was the raw data for the case study. The document review and interviews with Dr. Anderson and Dr. Harmon, former president of Millsaps College, and one in the role of the institutions president when the ACS was founded, were used to

develop a history of the consortium and the descriptions of the consortium programs. An inductive content analysis (Patton, 2002) was conducted on the transcripts of the interviews with the participating presidents of ACS member colleges and universities. An inductive content analysis consists of a concentrated review of the documents, coding the information and messages contained in the documents into categories and themes that emerged during the review (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). This analysis is appropriate when the goal is to determine what is important to the subjects being interviewed.

To conduct this analysis, the researcher double-spaced the text of each interview and printed each transcript of the interviews with the ACS member presidents on plain, white 20lb. paper. The researcher then read all the transcripts in one sitting to get a sense of information that was present in the transcripts. A second reading of each transcript was made with the researcher underlining key words or phrases in each transcript, and making notes in the space above the text material to summarize the material identified. These notes are considered summary words and phrases which described the terms and parts of the transcripts identified.

Following the second reading of the transcripts, the researcher constructed a frequency chart of the summary words and phrases. This chart was constructed to help the researcher determine the number of times a specific reference was made, and how many different people made that summary. To construct this chart, the researcher reviewed the transcripts and made list of the hand written summary words and phrases on Wilson-Jones G7512 Column Write green ledger paper. At the beginning of this review of a transcript, the date of the interview, the last name of the interviewee, and the name of

the college or university employing the president was listed at the top of the first available column. On the left-hand side of the ledger is a column designed for description of ledger entries. Each handwritten summary word or phrase in the transcripts was written in the first available space in the column for ledger entries. A check mark was made in the column where the name of the person making the comments summarized intersected with the summary word or phrase in the left hand column. If the summary word or phrase already existed in the left hand column, no new summary word or phrase was made but an additional check was made in the row to the right of the existing summary word or phrase, in the column under the name of the president making the comment. At the end of the review, the number of distinct summary words or phrases totaled 83, many with multiple checks in the row to the right of the phrase indicating the number of times that summary word or phrase appeared in the transcripts. After all transcripts were reviewed, the researcher made two calculations. One calculation was the total number of times a summary word or phrase was used. This number was placed in the left box of two small boxes located to the left of summary word or phrase. A second calculation represented the number of different presidents making comments that were summarized with the same summary words or phrases. The researcher believed it was important to know both of these calculations in analyzing the transcript texts.

Once this cataloging of the summary words and phrases was placed on the green ledger paper, a list of the summary words and phrases, along with the calculations representing the number of times the summary word or phrase appeared and the calculation representing the total number of individual presidents making that comment were placed on a Microsoft Word document. A copy of this chart is located in

Appendix D. After this list was made, the researcher made a second copy of the document. The copy of the document was then used as the researcher moved the data around grouping summary words and phrases of similar topics together to discover themes that occurred throughout the transcripts. At which time the researcher could identify a theme of several summary words or phrases, that theme was placed on the sheet of paper and the summary statements with their corresponding frequency numbers were listed under that theme. With the completed the list of themes with the summary words and phrases and frequency numbers listed below them, the researcher then returned to the green ledger sheet to determine which presidents made statements that corresponding to the summary word or phrase. These presidents' last names were listed below the summary word or phrase.

The final computer document used to organize the data from the interviews consisted of a theme typed on a line and bolded. Below that theme is listed the first summary word or phrase that fits under that theme, indented five spaces to the right, with the frequency numbers listed to the right of the summary word or phrase. Below the summary word or phrase is listed the last names of the presidents making statements that correspond that summary word or phrase. The last names were listed in the orders that the interviews were conducted. Once this document was completed, it was printed out in double space format. The researcher accomplished one additional step in analyzing the data. Using the printed sheets of themes, summary statements, frequency numbers and presidents' names, the researcher returned to the transcripts of the presidential interviews to find the original comments corresponding to the summary words and phrases. These were all located to determine the variety of comments that were made under a specific set

of summary words and phrases within a theme. Comments on the originating statements were handwritten next to the last name of the president making the statement. This document was used as the outline for Chapter Four in this study.

Verification

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that field notes should have details regarding the site of the information gathering, as well as the date and time of the information gathering and the names of individuals from whom information is received. This information was kept by the researcher and noted on the field notes with which the details are associated.

Several researchers stated that generalizability should not be the primary concern of qualitative research. Patton (2002) stated that the purpose of basic research is the simple benefit of the knowledge gained. Janesik (2003) indicated that the value of the case study is the uniqueness of the case. Stake (2003) stated that the desire to generalize and theorize with case studies may even do damage when that goal is superior to the understanding of the issues important in the case being studied.

Janesik (2003) wrote that generalization can not be avoided and is often done unconsciously by both the researcher and the reader of the research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that it is not necessarily the expectation of qualitative researchers that separate researchers will yield the same results. They believe, however, that results from two studies that are incompatible can raise questions about the validity of the study.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers such as Patton (2002) and Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) stated that the establishment of an audit trail could be useful in validating the rigor of the field work. For purposes of this research, an audit trail is defined as documentation regarding the

development of the case study. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) recommended the use of a diary in recording the events in the order in which they happen. The researcher kept a diary record of the case study on a Microsoft Word document which included all notes of the source of the raw data as well as data reduction and reconstruction methods.

Validity is also supported by the field notes kept by the researcher during the research process. Janesik (2002) stated that the concept of validity is different in qualitative research from its understanding in quantitative research traditions. In qualitative research, there is not one correct interpretation, and validity has to do with the credibility of the explanation as it relates to the descriptions in the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research was used to answer four areas of questions:

1. What factors led to the establishment of the ACS?
2. What are the collaborative initiatives of the ACS?
3. What are the perceptions of the presidents at ACS member institutions regarding the consortium and the results of consortium involvement for their individual institutions?
4. Does ACS affiliation enable administrators to do things they would not be able to do absent consortium membership? If so, what are those things?

Overview of the Associated Colleges of the South

History of the Consortium

Wayne Anderson (personal communication, June 14, 2006) said that although the ACS consortium officially began in 1991, discussions of starting the new consortium began in the late 1980s, and another consortium had preceded the ACS. Several members of the ACS were once members of a consortium called the Southern Colleges and Universities Union (SCUU) which was primarily organized around a study abroad program in England. Dr. George Harmon was the president of Millsaps College at the inception of the ACS. Prior to his role as president of Millsaps College, Dr. Harmon (personal communication, December 5, 2006) was on the faculty at Southwestern College in Memphis, Tennessee, which became known as Rhodes College in 1984. Southwestern

had a British Studies in Oxford program that had been in existence since the early 1960s. As the years progressed, the program struggled to maintain participation sufficient to stay financially solvent. The director of the program, a faculty member at Southwestern, sought the support of several liberal arts colleges in the area, asking them to promote the program with their students to increase participation. Although it is unclear to Dr. Harmon as to whether or not the SCUU was formed solely to support this program, he believed that the study abroad program in England was the primary program of the SCUU. After receiving support of SCUU member colleges and universities, the British Studies at Oxford program not only became financially solvent, but built up a substantial reserve of money. Dr. Harmon indicated that the member presidents were pleased with the cooperation of the institutions in the SCUU, and were interested in using the financial reserves to investigate other opportunities for cooperation. The SCUU and Southwestern disagreed as to which of their institutions had discretion over the excess funds. A lawsuit eventually determined that Southwestern College, who was a member of the SCUU, had rights to the funds. Subsequently, the members of the SCUU decided to disband its formal association. In the late 1980s, several presidents of private, liberal arts colleges in the south, most of which were in the SCUU, decided to form a new formal, voluntary association (W. Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006; G. Harmon, personal communication, December 5, 2006). The institutions involved were: Birmingham-Southern College, Centenary College of Louisiana, Center College, Furman University, Millsaps College, Morehouse College, Rhodes College (formerly Southwestern at Memphis), The University of Richmond, and Sewanee: The University of the South. Prior to the formal establishment of the ACS, presidents of these institutions met with the

presidents of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest and the Great Lakes College Association, two consortia that had each been in existence for over 25 years. In 1991, Dr. Wayne Anderson was hired to be the president of the new consortium. Prior to being hired as the President of the ACS, Dr. Anderson had been the President of the Alabama Independent Colleges and the Council for the Advancement of Private College in Alabama, and the president of two private institutions of higher education (Anderson, personal communication, September 21, 2007). In 1991, the Associated Colleges of the South was formally organized, and four other institutions joined the consortium: Hendrix College, Rollins College, Trinity University, and Southwestern University (Texas) (Associated Colleges of the South, 1989). Three other institutions subsequently joined the ACS in later years: Washington and Lee University (1997), Davidson College (1998) and Spelman College (2001). The total number of member colleges and universities remains at 16 as of the writing of this research, and no institution that joined the ACS has discontinued membership.

According to the Anderson (personal communication, June 14, 2006) and Harmon (personal communication, December 5, 2006), the ACS was organized primarily around international study and program opportunities and to augment the work of the individual institutions. The autonomy of individual institutions was not to be unnecessarily violated. ACS Bylaws (1989) stated that the consortium would not infringe upon an individual school's autonomy or prevent an institution from participating in other associations.

Originally organized around the principle of expanding international opportunities for students and faculty at member institutions (W. Anderson, personal communication,

June 14, 2006), the consortium began to explore other cooperative opportunities. In 1993, funding from the BellSouth Foundation helped establish the Summer Teaching and Learning Workshop (ACS, 2001) at Rollins College in Florida. This program began after a Rollins College faculty member attended a program designed to enhance curriculum development and faculty teaching hosted by another consortium, and worked with ACS President Anderson and Rollins College President Dr. Rita Bornstein to establish a similar program for ACS member institutions. The ACS (2001) outlined several other programs (a) the use of technology to support the teaching of courses, (b) enhancing environmental education, (c) the provision of virtual academic departments and courses, (d) electronic library programs, and (e) benchmarking efforts to support administrative offices across the consortium.

Financial Commitment of Members

Presidents of the original ACS member institutions established an annual fee structure which remains to this day (W. Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006; G. Harmon, personal communication, December 5, 2006). Each participating institution paid \$15,000 the first year, regardless of institutional enrollment or budget. Each subsequent year, the consortium membership fees increases by \$1,000. In addition to the annual fees, the original members contributed a total of \$225,000 to be held in an account to cover expenses in the event that the consortium closes (W. Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006).

Consortium Management

According to the Bylaws (ACS, 1989), the presidents of the member institutions serve as the Board of Directors with responsibilities for (a) election of member

institutions, (b) authorization of programs, and (c) establishment of general policies for the consortium. The President serves as the chief executive of the consortium and is responsible for (a) completion of resolutions and directives of the Board, (b) executing all consortium contracts, and (c) leading the daily operations of the consortium. In addition, chief academic officers of member institutions serve as the Council of Deans and are charged with operation and supervision of the programs. Anderson (personal communication, June 14, 2006) considered the Council of Deans as critical to the ongoing operations development of the ACS.

Programs at the Associated Colleges of the South

Technology

Technology is the most broad-reaching of the ACS programs. Significant advancement came in 1995 in the form of a \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation. This funding enabled faculty to explore the use of technology in the academic programs of the member schools (ACS, 2001). With this money, the consortium hosted a variety of workshops, meetings, which led to the development of programs in (a) Classics, (b) Economics, (c) Humanities, (d) Archaeology, and (e) Calculus. Subsequent funding from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation enabled the development of programs in Computer Science and languages.

Librarians used technology to support collaborative efforts that began in 1996 (Palladian, 1996). The first efforts were directed toward on-line access to indices and periodicals. This achieved expanded academic and research sources, as well as reduction in costs as the ACS indexes allowed individual schools to cancel their subscriptions in indexes now provided by the ACS. In 1997, Trinity University reported that it was able to

cancel subscriptions that resulted in \$40,000 of savings to the institution. In May 1996, librarians gathered in Atlanta for an intensive workshop in Atlanta where participants were exposed to and trained in the use of on-line periodical and index access. Prior to the workshop, a comprehensive survey of skills and experiences was conducted with the participants to determine the level of expertise held by those participating. This allowed an efficient use of time at the workshop. Thirteen databases were made available through this grant, providing full-text access to over 1,000 titles. Each library was provided with equipment including three workstations, an additional workstation for interlibrary loan access, and two printers. Beyond the training of librarians and the equipment, video teleconferences were used to introduce the expanded resources to faculty. Connections were available through stations in the library, or through the individual institutions websites in faculty offices (Palladian, 1997).

Faculty members in Chemistry and Economics each began to meet in 1996 to discuss opportunities to use technology (Palladian, 1996). Faculty members served as the project directors. Chemistry faculty began with the use of technology to develop simulations. The economists developed an economic database and the use of technological applications in the classroom.

In 1997, fellowships were instituted in the technology initiative, providing up to \$2,500 to faculty in support of developing technology-based teaching materials (Palladian, 1997; Palladian, 1997-1998). Technology was also used to advance the environmental initiatives in the ACS (Palladian, 1997-1998). An electronic clearinghouse for information related to the environment was developed, and an on-line journal focusing on major developments and key issues regarding sustainable development. For

the teaching of Archaeology an online, one-hour course was developed using technology to teach students the semester before they went to a summer program in Turkey. The summer field work used technology to post findings on the web.

The Music departments used technology with music scales, testing, and the teaching of basic Music classes (Palladian, 1997-1998). Biologists on the campus used technology and the World Wide Web to virtually hear and see frogs from South Carolina. In addition to the technological advancements used in teaching the courses, 21 on-line discussion groups connected (a) academic deans, (b) economists, (c) classicists, (d) environmental program committee members, and (e) Mellon Technology program group members for idea sharing and information seeking in the disciplines and on the projects.

Within in Palladian Alliance, the virtual library initiatives, a faculty initiative was directed at examining the hypothesis that greater access to the electronic materials would save money on printed materials (Palladian, 1998-1999). While there were early indications that savings occurred, there was not ongoing evidence to support this hypothesis. Studying this issue revealed (a) a lack of reliability of publications on-line, (b) a lack of assurance that the publications would be available for the long term, and (c) a strong preference in the faculty for hard copy texts as opposed to on-line texts.

Another initiative of the ACS Technology initiative was the Circuit Rider program (Palladian, 1998-1999). This program provided funding for faculty peer teaching regarding technology and its use in academics. Faculty experts in particular areas were able to travel to a specific campus and teach them how to use available technology to advance teaching, research, and scholarship.

The centerpiece for the technology program resulted from a second, large gift from the Mellon Foundation in 1999 (ACS, 2001). This gift funded the ACS Technology Center that was established at Southwestern University. The Center has been the source of workshops, research, database development, and support for the on-line collaborations. This Center was made available, and a competitive process within the ACS was used to determine which campus would serve as the home for the facility. Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX was awarded the center. The institutions provided space for the ACS Technology Center and money for salaries through 2010, and partnered with Austin, TX-based Dell Computers which agreed to provide internships and price discounts on systems. The site served several purposes, including (a) a location for technology development and enhancement workshops, (b) clearinghouse for experts, (c) a support center to provide technical assistance in the integration of technology in college teaching, and (d) a location for ACS technology fellowship recipients to spend some time in the development of their projects. Although the Center was housed at Southwestern, an advisory board was developed with representatives from each ACS campus and campus space dedicated to the technology center was identified as ACS space.

The Information Fluency and Information Training for the 21st Century initiative was made possible by a \$600,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation (Palladian, 2000a). This program had a central initiative on the teaching of research skills and the establishment of learning outcomes, fluency standards, and assessment strategies for programs. A training initiative was focused on linking faculty, librarians, and technology staff on individual campuses with the goal of equipping them to return to their campuses and further train others. In the Palladian (2000a) Dr. Anderson stated that the need for

information fluency was critical in liberal arts education as it assists with critical thinking and reasoning and equips faculty and students to handle the increased information available. There had been a committee looking at these issues to address faculty concerns about the internet and to critically evaluate information (Palladian, 2000b). This committee began its work as it surveyed the campuses to determine what programs existed at the individual institutions that might serve as models for the consortium and extended to the other campuses. An additional Mellon Foundation grant was received to examine how the ACS Technology Center might be able to reduce the burden on the technology departments on the individual campuses (Palladian, 2001a). Meanwhile, the Mellon Foundation indicated that it was looking at how two existing consortia technology centers and one future technology center might work together to serve the top 100 national liberal arts colleges in the United States.

The Mellon Foundation awarded a \$1.7 million grant to the ACS, and similar grants to two regional technology centers and the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education (NITLE) to perpetuate the existing programs and continue to identify new opportunities to use technology within the liberal arts colleges (Palladian, 2002a). As of Winter 2002, 300 faculty members had participated in workshops provided by the ACS Technology program, and 50 faculty members had received program grants enabling them to explore technological opportunities within their disciplines. This development had been the result of six total grants by the Mellon Foundation.

Through the ACS Technology Center, a key initiative was to develop several software programs for use by ACS member institutions (Palladian, 2003b). A course development system was developed by ACS Technology center staff and student interns.

This system was developed to assist with multi-campus teaching in virtual departments. The first usage was in conjunction with Sunoikisis, the virtual Classics department. ACS archaeology departments also benefited from software that enabled the collection and publishing of discipline related data. A second virtual alliance, the Orpheus Alliance, originated in 2000 to serve the Music Departments on the ACS member campuses. This alliance provided an on-line forum for sharing work, collaboration, and mentoring.

In 2004, the president of the Mellon Foundation announced the Foundation's desire to make the regional technology centers and NITLE sustainable for the long-term support and service to the member colleges (Palladian, 2004b). This initiated necessitated redesigning the relationships between the regional centers, NITLE, as well as another new organization funded by the Mellon Foundation. The centers continued to serve the colleges in their regional constituents. However, NITLE became responsible for overseeing the regional centers. On July 1, 2006, this new structure became effective. For the first time, this structure required cost sharing from individual participating institutions. Representatives from ACS institutions and other consortia member colleges would continue to provide input and information to this structure through participation on numerous advisory boards. ACS is now recognized as a partner organization with NITLE (Palladian, 2006c).

International Programs

International programs were central to the inception of the ACS. (W. Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006; G. Harmon, personal communication, December

5, 2006; ACS, 2001). The SCUU, a collaborative effort which preceded the ACS and consisted of many of the same original members of the ACS institutions, was organized around international programs of Southwestern at Memphis, now known as Rhodes College. Dr. George Harmon (personal communication, December 6, 2006) indicated that the success of that collaborative effort led the presidents of the involved institutions to want to expand and try other programs that would enhance the experience and offerings of the involved institutions. Although not possible under the SCUU organizations, the ACS provided the necessary environment for the expanded collaborations.

The earliest collaborations among the ACS schools consisted of a network developed among the member institutions which broadened the international opportunities for students and provided a deeper pool of interested students to perpetuate the programs (ACS,2001). In the first ten years of the ACS, new student experiences expanded to several countries including (a) Japan, (b) Kenya, (c) Greece, (d) Scotland, (e) Italy, and (f) Turkey. International experiences developed beyond students studying abroad. In 1996, the Carpathian Alliance program partnered nine ACS member institutions with 15 representatives from universities in Central Europe. The following Fall, representatives from the ACS visited the Carpathian institutions. The focus of this exchange was the examination partnerships between colleges and their communities. This program was funded by a federal agency working to stimulate international development.

International programs included a collaborative effort with another consortium for studies in Scotland focusing on Sciences, and a partnership with the Council for

International Educational Exchange for summer studies in Hungary (Palladian, 1997-1998). In addition, an Asian Studies program, initiated by a faculty member at one of the ACS member institutions, included partnerships with the International University in Japan and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

A 1998 planning grant by the Mellon Foundation led to a 1999 grant for \$500,000 from the Mellon Foundation to fund collaborative efforts with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) and Great Lakes College Association (GLCA), each of which received similar grants from the Mellon Foundation (Palladian, 1999). A portion of the funding was to establish presences in three foreign locations, with each consortium taking leadership and responsibility for one of the location. The ACS was responsible for the center in Turkey. These established centers were to serve as a centralizing force for (a) study abroad, (b) faculty development programs and research opportunities, (c) service/learning opportunities, and (d) student internships. The consortia also worked together to examine the best practices of various programs, examine the offerings available through the colleges in the three consortia with an eye toward developing new opportunities where none existed and focusing on language study, sciences, and intercultural competencies. In April of 1999, an initial meeting occurred with faculty from each of the consortia to discuss initiatives that existed in the Latin American region and to gather ideas on future opportunities (Palladian, 1999). The ideas included (a) faculty exchanges, (b) joint planning of student internships, and (c) the intentional use of themes for programs that would stimulate interdisciplinary teaching and research. Programs were managed by coordinating bodies that each consisted of a representative of the three consortia. The collaborative program became known as the Global Partners

Program (Palladian, 2000a). The Global Partners program hosted a conference focused on extending outstanding international study program components to existing programs and the planning of new programs (Palladian, 2000b). Under Global Partners, a task force was established to examine the role technology can play in assisting with the teaching of foreign language before an individual goes overseas (Palladian, 2001c). A database was developed as a result of the efforts by faculty, librarians, and technology staff members from consortia institutions. The intention of the development was to provide an electronic database of images and other resources for use as teaching supplements with foreign language faculty members (Palladian, 2001a). This web-based, peer reviewed database was named REALIA, an acronym for Rich Electronic Archive for Language Instruction Anywhere. The database debuted in 2003 with over 200 images available to supplement the teaching of Spanish and Russian, focusing on daily culture of these countries (Palladian, 2003a). Items included in this resource received faculty review prior to addition to the database, and all parties made agreements that there were to be no royalties collected on any of the images.

By Fall 2003, 500 images were available on through REALIA. The database received high ratings from a review panel of the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) (Palladian, 2003b). REALIA and MERLOT became formally affiliated the next Spring which allowed users of one system to access the resources of the other (Palladian, 2004a). In 2004, REALIA also won a \$200,000 grant from the National Endowment of Humanities to develop the database into a permanent archive, ultimately to consist of 21,000 images to support the teaching of

(a) French, (b) German, (c) Spanish, (d) Japanese, (e) Russian, (f) Arabic and (g) Chinese.

The Mellon Foundation awarded additional grants of \$500,000 to each of the consortia involved in the Global Partners Project to continue the program and expand the offerings (Palladian, 2002a). As part of the new initiatives, a series of briefings were held on campuses. These programs provided discussion groups of deans, faculty and other involved parties at member institutions to help connect the core purpose of the institution with international opportunities (Palladian, 2002b).

The Global Partners Program received funding from the Teagle Foundation to assess the learning outcomes from the study abroad programs (Palladian, 2006a). An outside consultant with experience in the design and implementation of assessment programs was retained for this project. The main focus was to determine which aspects of the programs achieve measurable success in reaching the learning outcomes generally associated with liberal arts education.

Virtual Classics Department

Sunoikisis, named after an alliance of cities in Greece that revolted in 428 BC (Palladian, 2000c), is a virtual department in Classics that offers programs to ACS member schools (Frost & Olsen, 2005). This was the first virtual department offered through the consortium and funded by the Mellon Foundation. The ACS regards this program as the flagship virtual department. According to Dr. Anderson (personal communication, June 14, 2006) this grant was a result of follow up conversations with the Mellon Foundation which came after the success of an earlier Mellon Foundation grant. Mellon had awarded a grant to the ACS to explore how technology could be useful

in several areas in the ACS. One area where there was a need was in the teaching of Classics on the member campuses. Through earlier open-ended conversations while visiting campuses, Anderson heard faculty from the Classics departments describe the challenge of being small departments and needing the opportunity to collaborate to survive. The notion was that several small programs on liberal arts campuses could work together, rivaling in numbers of faculty and program depth, many of the top programs in the country, offering additional classes to students on the small campuses previously unavailable. One of the faculty members behind this effort was Dr. Kenny Morrell at Rhodes College. As he shared his ideas for a virtual department, Anderson indicated that others were somewhat skeptical of the potential.

In Fall 2000, the first virtual course, Advanced Latin, was taught to 30 students by 6 professors (Palladian, 2000c). This class met through on-line broadcasts that incorporated the use of live chat rooms for questions and interaction. In addition to the existing faculty at the ACS schools, the format allowed for students to hear from additional guest lecturers from Harvard, the University of Washington, and the University of Toronto.

The Mellon Foundation provided an additional grant of \$700,000 in 2001 to provide for the perpetuation and expansion of this program. The funds were to be used to (a) increase the faculty who participated in the program and the courses offered, (b) provide for a staff member at the ACS Technology Center, (c) forge ties with secondary schools and graduate schools, (d) continue the archaeology program in Turkey, and (e) acquire technology for distance participation in conferences (Palladian, 2001b). Faculty also established a five-year cycle of courses in Greek and Latin, and developed

an interdisciplinary course with the archaeology (Palladian, 2002a). The course delivery program later used for this virtual course was developed by students at the ACS Technology Center at Southwestern University (Palladian, 2002b).

In 2002, the ACS hired an external consulting firm to conduct a three-year study of Sunoikisis to evaluate the program and develop assessment instruments that may be used with other virtual programs offered by the ACS (Frost & Olsen, 2005). The consultants used a variety of assessment processes to ask general and specific questions in an effort to provide a substantive evaluation. The summary of the evaluation indicated that the program was successful in the use of current technology to offer a broader pool of classes, effectively taught, to the participating students. Of the 16 ACS schools, the assessment indicated that 14 of the schools had participated, as well as 42 faculty members. Most of the faculty that participated in the program were from the ACS members schools, but there were faculty who participated at a variety of levels from outside the consortium. Through the Fall 2004 semester, students participating in this virtual program represented 25 different major disciplines, with one-third of the students majoring in Classics.

The evaluation indicated that faculty also benefited from the program (Frost & Olsen, 2005). Faculty who were accustomed to working individually on their scholarship were afforded opportunities to collaborate, share, and review their course materials. In addition, the faculty reported that their participation yielded an increased knowledge of the discipline and the use of technology in teaching, and the majority reported using this increased knowledge of technology in other classes. Students reported overall

satisfaction with the program, but also indicated that future course offerings would be enhanced through clearer expectations regarding assignments and tests.

Environmental

The ACS has benefited from external funding from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation and the B. Kann Rasmussen Foundation to initiate and develop environmental programs and practices on the campus (Palladian, 2006c; ACS, 2001). In Fall 1996, a conference was held at Rollins College for ACS members to focus on energy conservation. With money from the Lettie Pate Evans grant, a firm from Kentucky conducted an energy audit on the Rollins College campus and developed energy conservation steps at other ACS institutions (Palladian, 2006c).

Fifteen students participated in a Spring 1996 semester program in Costa Rica directed at studying the economic, political, and historical conditions behind creating a sustainable development (Palladian, 2006c). In 1997 an Environmental Studies Program Committee was developed in the ACS (Palladian, 1997). Four directions for the consortium were developed by this committee: (a) creating and expanding environmental study options, (b) development of joint research initiatives, (c) designing collaborative efforts with local communities, and (e) developing sound practices and operations on member campuses. Funding for these programs resulted from an unnamed foundation which provided \$1.695 million. An early initiative was the program for faculty and student fellowships to underwrite the study of environmental issues. In addition, funding was provided for career planning offices to assist with developing career preparation and internships in environmental fields. Students conducted system surveys on campuses that funded audits to understand how campuses function in terms of (a) transportation,

(b) energy efficiency, (c) hazardous waste, and (d) solid waste and recycling (Palladian, 1998).

Funds from this anonymous grant were distributed to programs at member schools through a competitive application process. The programs that received money in the first phase included ones which (a) studied sustainable development in Costa Rica, (b) studied the cultural and environmental history of the Maya people in the Yucatan, (c) developed environmental studies curriculum components and options for campuses, (d) promoted campus greening initiatives through field trips, conferences with nationally recognized speakers (e) developed workshops which identified watershed laboratory opportunities on or near member campuses and (f) studied strategies in which liberal arts colleges can educate students on sustainability.

In 1999, Davidson College hosted a conference in conjunction with the ACS and the National Wildlife Foundation's Campus Ecology Program (Palladian, 1999a). This conference focused on the necessity for a variety of campus constituencies to be involved in the environmental programs on campus and to learn about ecological approaches in building design and landscaping.

The ACS environmental initiative funded Challenge Grants to campuses for up to \$5,000 to support installation of energy savings equipments which promoted short-term and long-term cost savings (Palladian, 2000a). In 2001, 20 student interns from ACS institutions met for training in Arkansas (Palladian, 2001a). These interns (a) studied sustainability and environmental issues on campus, (b) learned about creating and promoting programs on campus, and (c) created resource and support groups within the interns. The grant also funded development of paid internships with Heifer Ranch

International, Southface Energy Institute, The Louisville Zoo, The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and the River Basins Research Initiative.

In 2001, ACS received new funding to expand the existing environmental and educational initiatives on member campuses (Palladian, 2001c). The funding was provided by the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation which matched funding provided by ACS member institutions. Each initiative which resulted from this funding was to be led by one member institution. Six alliances resulted from this funding (a) student engagement, (b) faculty/curriculum development, (c) campus as environmental labs, (d) campus/community partnerships, (e) global sustainability, and (f) spirituality and sustainability. In 2003, the ACS announced that these six initiatives would be combined into three initiatives going forward. In 2004, the ACS hosted the first conference on Undergraduate Research and Faculty Development.

Two campuses initiated self-designed and funded environmental initiatives. Furman University placed environmental sustainability on the strategic plan of the institution. Strategies in this effort included (a) the requirement of LEED-certified construction on all projects, (b) the hiring of a writer to compile a comprehensive survey and report on the history of environmental initiative at Furman, and (c) the active recruitment of students interested in environmental programs via highlighting Furman programs on campus tours, the website, and summer programs focused on outdoor environmental activities (Palladian, Winter 2006a). In addition, Spelman College broke ground with the LEED-certified green building to be constructed on a historically black college campus in the United States.

Faculty Development

The centerpiece and most formal faculty development program is the Summer Teaching and Learning Workshops that have been held annually at Rollins College since 1993 (ACS, 2001). This program, funded by the BellSouth Foundation, was the first program to receive outside funding at the ACS (W. Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006). The goal of the program is to help faculty enhance the learning environment for students in their courses (ACS, 2001). This goal is accomplished through a five-day intensive experience wherein faculty participants teach one another, capturing the teaching on video for later playback, while providing and receiving constructive feedback from one another and a professional facilitator focused on collegiate teaching and learning environments.

In addition to the summer faculty workshop at Rollins, faculty members receive additional opportunities to gain skills and experiences useful in their academic pursuits. As of 2001, 140 faculty members had received fellowships through the ACS to further their understanding and academic contributions (ACS, 2001).

Women's Studies

During the first year of the ACS, Dr. Anderson visited each member campus to meet the campus leaders and get a sense of what ideas and opportunities existed for potential collaboration (Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006). Anderson indicated that one of the areas where there was academic and programmatic interest on individual campuses that could benefit from collaboration with other campuses was Women's Studies. The ACS and member institutions began biennial conferences in 1993

(ACS, 2001). By 1999, over 100 faculty, staff and students were participants in the conference (Palladian, 2000a).

The initiative benefited from a grant provided by the Mellon Foundation in 2001 to support the ACS in developing five years of programs (Palladian, 2001a). The conference in 2002 was the first time financing from outside the ACS contributed directly to the program. Expansion of this collaborative effort included workshops focused on helping colleges implement women's studies academic minors, internships, and programming on a campus. International participants became involved at succeeding conferences with individuals from Iran, South Africa, Cameroon and Nigeria attending and presenting (Palladian, 2004a; Palladian, 2006b).

Experiences of Institutional Presidents

The researcher conducted semi-structured, tape recorded phone interviews with thirteen presidents of ACS member institutions to better understand the consortium through their experiences. Collectively, these presidents represent almost 100 years as the senior executives of ACS schools. The average length of service of the presidents interviewed is 7.6 years, while the median service tenure is 6.5 years. One president interviewed began the role when the consortium was founded, while the two with the shortest tenures were in the middle of their third academic year. Three of the individuals interviewed had experience in other non-presidential, senior roles at ACS colleges and universities prior to their current role as president, while two of the interviewees mentioned being presidents of other, non-ACS institutions prior to their current positions. The researcher conducted the phone interviews from his office. Prior to each interview, the researcher went to the website of the college of the president he was about to

interview, reviewed the available biographical information on the president, and looked at the photo of the president. The researcher believed this would be helpful in understanding the context of the comments made by the president.

Institutional Enhancement

The point on which all of the presidents were in agreement was that membership in the ACS has been beneficial to their individual institutions. One president whose tenure exceeded that of most others said that the breadth and depth of the consortium's impact was surprising to its members (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006). A summary of benefits to the individual institutions as stated by presidents of the member institutions and their comments is shown in Table 1.

While membership in the consortium did provide enhancements to the institutions, ten of the presidents specifically indicated that their individual autonomy had not been limited. One president indicated knowing of "no example of where we failed to do something because of our involvement" (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006) in the ACS. This comment represented the majority of the presidents interviewed. One president mentioned not being inhibited by ACS membership, but that the institution did have to pay additional costs that would not have been present but for involvement in the consortium (Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006).

Table 1

Benefits of Membership in the Associated Colleges of the South as Viewed by Presidents of the Member Institutions

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Quote by President of Member Institution</i>
Faculty Development	<p>That's been a real highlight.</p> <p>I think we wouldn't have near the opportunity for faculty development.</p> <p>It's been a valuable asset for faculty who have participated in the faculty development programs.</p>
Fundraising	<p>Wayne has done an excellent job in securing grants.</p> <p>If you measured it as a fundraising organization, it's absolutely hit a home run.</p> <p>By virtue of the ACS's extraordinary success in raising funds.</p>
Technology Program	<p>We've been very involved in the ACS technology center.</p> <p>The technology program is one that comes to mind right away.</p> <p>We've been pleased to have resources in the area of information technology.</p>
Strength in numbers	<p>We can look like 30,000 students and 3,000 faculty.</p> <p>We have, frankly, more political clout.</p> <p>ACS represents an outstanding...institutions.</p>

The only limit cited by any president was the potential of limiting the fundraising efforts or the lobbying of an individual institution because the consortium was pursuing the same funding (Anonymous, personal communication, December 15, 2007).

Mentioned by three presidents was the increased strength that comes through the collaboration. One president described consortium involvement as resulting in an educational organization involving 30,000 students and 3,000 faculty (Anonymous, personal communication, November 19, 2006), and another characterized the effect of cooperation as “amplification and magnification” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006). A third president indicated that involvement in the consortium resulted in increased political influence, with consortium colleges and universities representing 12 states (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006).

Over half of the presidents specifically stated that access to money was a benefit that resulted from their ACS membership. One president described the fundraising efforts of the consortium as “quite successful” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006) while another indicated that the consortium had done an “excellent job of securing money for common initiatives” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 19, 2006), and a third characterized the fundraising efforts as “extraordinary” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006). One president indicated that access to funding was the “primary benefit” of institutional membership in the ACS (Anonymous, personal communication, December 15, 2006). Only on one occasion has the president of the ACS acted on behalf of individual institutions to secure funding (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006). This instance was to assist two institutions who suffered great financial strain from Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Access to additional financial resources was not the only benefit to the member institutions. One president concluded that enhanced prestige and reputation of the individual institutions was a result (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006), a second indicated that involvement with other high-quality liberal arts institutions was useful as tool for marketing the individual colleges and universities (Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006), and a third president pointed to the improved visibility with national foundations (Anonymous, personal communication, September 29, 2006).

The presidents interviewed shared mixed conclusions regarding the level of impact the consortium had on their individual institutions. One stressed that his institution would be “less rich and diverse” if not associated with the ACS (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006), one mentioned a noticeable positive impact on institutional quality (Anonymous, personal communication, November 29, 2006), while another credited the ACS with “influencing the nature” of this individual’s institution (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006). One president stated that all of the individual institutions would be weaker if not for their involvement in the ACS (Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006).

Four presidents believed that membership in the ACS had a less obvious impact on their individual institutions. One stated the impact was not of the level that an uninformed person would notice (Anonymous, personal communication, October 13, 2006), while another stated that the involvement in the consortium did not create a “super tangible” difference for his institution (Anonymous, personal communication, December 21, 2006).

Over half of the presidents interviewed stated that benefits of membership in the consortium included specific programs offered by the ACS. One president described ACS program offerings as “wonderful” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006). The programs were frequently described as enhancements to existing programming offered at individual institutions. One president indicated that ACS programs “supplement the intellectual work” of the institutions (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006), while another described the collective programs as “embellishments” to what currently happens on the campus (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006). Another president indicated that each institution was unique but they all had needs for faculty development and other areas addressed through the consortium’s joint programmatic efforts (Anonymous, personal communication, December 15, 2006), and yet another indicated the value of the programming was that it emphasized the areas where institutions had interests in common with others (Anonymous, personal communication, November 29, 2006).

Two presidents stressed the supplemental nature of the programming by describing it as a “small part” of their institution (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006), and “in addition to, rather than the heart of” what their institutions did (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006).

Faculty development was the most often cited programmatic benefit of ACS membership, mentioned by 11 of the 13 presidents interviewed. In addition it was also the program cited earliest in the interviews with eight of the 11 presidents. One stated that the faculty development was the “most beneficial” program, and that the individual institution would not have nearly the opportunity for enhancing faculty if not through the

programs offered by the ACS (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006). One considered the Summer Teaching and Learning Workshop a valuable asset to those who have participated in it (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006), another indicated that his institution had sent faculty members to the workshop every year, and some years more than one faculty member participated (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006), while a third interviewee indicated that this workshop has strengthened the school (Anonymous, personal communication, November 29, 2006).

One president interviewed indicated that the programmatic efforts of the consortium were beneficial because they were offered as optional, not required, in their participation (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006), while another stated that there was a creativity that resulted when the collaborative approach to programs included institutions with leaner budgets (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006).

Beyond programs that focus on the development of faculty, other programs offered by the ACS were mentioned as beneficial by presidents interviewed. Six presidents stated that programming regarding technology was beneficial, five presidents indicated the benefit of having additional course offerings in Classics offered to students through the consortium, two specifically mentioned their institutional involvement with ACS environmental programs, and one interviewee mentioned the ACS collaboration on the subject of Women's Studies as something in which his institution had participated.

Professional Community

Nine of the presidents interviewed stated that their institutions involvement in the ACS consortium had benefited them professionally. The notion that the consortium provided a forum for common issues was mentioned by eight different presidents. One president specifically indicated that involvement with other presidents was beneficial as it provided an opportunity to exchange ideas with others in a reasonably sized gathering (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006), and another president discussed the benefit of the regular meetings (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006). Presidents interviewed indicated that the forum gave opportunities to “compare notes” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006) with one another and for “cross-fertilization” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006) to occur. One interviewee indicated that the similarity of the institutions was a necessary element for this benefit to take place (Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006).

Six presidents indicated that the benefits extended beyond the sharing of issues. One stated that the consortium afforded them the opportunity to keep up with one another (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006), another pointed to the sociability and value of the professional connections (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006) and a third characterized the connections as a “colleagueship among the presidents” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006). An interviewee who is a relatively newer president indicated that the group provided people who can be contacted if necessary (Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006), another stated being mentored by the president of the

consortium (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006), and an individual with one of the longest tenures discussed the consortium as a mechanism for staying “fresh” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006) as a president.

According to four of the presidents, the professional community extended beyond that which is created among the presidents. One president claimed that the professional community extended from the presidents office down to other offices (Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006) and another attributed this to the independent meetings among professional in similar roles from the member campuses (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006).

Organizational Success

All thirteen of the presidents interviewed indicated that they believed the ACS had achieved its stated purposes. Eleven of the presidents indicated that the organization had been successful, one indicated that the ACS had accomplished a “measure of success” (Anonymous, personal communication, December 21, 2006) and another indicated that it was successful but too early to “declare victory” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 13, 2006).

The single most cited factor in the success of this organization was Dr. Wayne Anderson, president of the consortium. According to one president, Wayne was a remarkable fundraiser, with skills and connections coveted by other consortia (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006). One pointed to Anderson and the leadership of the staff for the success (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006) and another indicated that Anderson was “just right” for the ACS. Anderson was noted as being an excellent executive director (Anonymous, personal

communication, October 13, 2006), making “the difference” for the consortia (Anonymous, personal communication, September 29, 2006), and being responsible for the way in which the ACS had matured (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006). It is also important to note that the only comments made about Dr. Anderson were positive.

There were a number of characteristics the interviewees indicated that made Anderson a reason for the success of the consortium. Six of them pointed to Anderson’s ability to raise money, indicating that he was “good at securing external funding” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006), that he “never misses an opportunity to connect needs with funders” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006) and that his “sway and connectivity” to the national funding community was one of his best traits as president (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006). Presidents indicated that other traits possessed by Anderson are Anderson’s ability at keeping the presidents informed (Anonymous, personal communication, September 29, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, December 15, 2006), his intelligence and fairness (Anonymous, personal communication, September 29, 2006), and his strong leadership (Anonymous, personal communication, October 18, 2006).

Five presidents indicated that the quality and strength of the participating institutions contributed to the success of the ACS. One summed this up by saying that that member schools were a “good group, creative, and ready to move forward” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006).

Beyond the leadership of the consortium and the strength of the member colleges, a variety of other factors were stated as contributing to the success the ACS has achieved. These factors included the continued involvement of the institutional presidents (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006), the clear vision of the organization (Anonymous, personal communication, October 13, 2006), the original design and “geographic footprint” of the organization (Anonymous, personal communication, December 21, 2007), and the role of the chief academic officers of the member schools in managing the programs of the organization.

Three interviewees stated that they believed that the success was partially due to factors outside the organization, indicating that the consortium had benefited by being around at a time when foundations were looking to fund voluntary cooperative endeavors among colleges and universities (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006).

Two presidents indicated that the success of the ACS was something that had been understood by non-members. One referred to an institution that offered land as a permanent location for the consortium if invited to join (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006), and one indicated that other schools were “clammering” to become members (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006).

Organizational Challenges and Opportunities

The majority of the presidents indicated that the challenges faced by the ACS were the normal challenges faced when organizations with differing agendas worked

toward mutually beneficial goals. Several interviewees indicated that consortium involvement produced challenges and tensions for the group. Four of the presidents stated that some tension is due to unequal participation in the consortium by member institutions, with some institutions not feeling the need to be as visible as others (Anonymous, personal communication, September 19, 2006). One framed this tension as limiting to the consortium by saying that the ones who are barely involved could add more to the consortium experience by their presence (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006). Two presidents indicated that the challenge of choosing to pursue external funds through the consortium rather than through individual school initiatives, presented potential challenges for the members, and one mentioned the tensions that come up when discussing potential new programs that meet with mixed support by members (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006). While one president believed that the geographical diversity of the institutions presented a challenge for the consortium (Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006), two others indicated that the geographical diversity helped ease the challenges and tensions within the group as it limited the competition for students and faculty (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006).

In addition to the challenges as mentioned by the presidents, two presidents indicated that the ACS had not been successful in all areas. One pointed to very limited success in connecting the libraries and with the marketing of liberal arts colleges in the South (Anonymous, personal communication, November 29, 2006) while another indicated that the consortium had not been success at providing member colleges ample

opportunities at cost savings (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006).

Although the presidents interviewed did not have a common preference for future opportunities for the consortium, there was no indication in the interviews that any of the presidents saw the consortium ending. One future option which interested four of the presidents was the possibility of securing federal funds for programmatic opportunities regarding a critical languages initiative (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, October 19, 2006). This opportunity is specifically directed at developing programs and a technology infrastructure to support the teaching of languages and cultural understanding throughout the ACS colleges that are not currently being taught at that level (Anonymous, personal communication, November 29, 2006). The languages would include Chinese and Arabic (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006).

Three presidents indicated support for the current direction of the consortium, and the programs currently in development. One stated that expansion of the international programs and academic courses currently in development was the right direction (Anonymous, personal communication, September 7, 2006), one stated support for the on-going strategic planning efforts of the consortium that set new directions (Anonymous, personal communication, October 13, 2006), and one indicated that although there was an opportunity with federal funding for the consortium, he believed that new initiatives should be sought only when other programs are discontinued so as to

not overstretch consortium resources (Anonymous, personal communication, September 27, 2006).

Two presidents indicated interest in the consortium pursuing initiatives around the marketing of the liberal arts education in the south (Anonymous, personal communication, October 6, 2006; Anonymous, personal communication, November 29, 2006), while one was not able to specifically define the new direction, but expressed that the consortium had not utilized the interdependence to the fullest extent of its capabilities (Anonymous, personal communication, December 21, 2006). A final potential direction was outlined by one interviewee as an opportunity for the consortium to look beyond programs which further the member institutions directly and use the combined resources to address the questions confronting higher education through national committees and reports (Anonymous, personal communication, September 29, 2006).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In preparation for the document reviews and the interviews which constituted the data collection for this qualitative study, the researcher reviewed literature describing the qualitative research process, and literature outlining the role of consortia as voluntary, cooperative efforts between and among colleges and universities. The researcher had two primary reasons for this research. One was to learn more about the organizations history and programs, and another was to learn the thoughts and opinions of presidents of the participating institutions. The researcher learned that the qualitative method was the correct approach for his interest in the topic. Although the document review and interviews regarding the history of the consortium were interesting and information rich, the interviews with the presidents of the member institutions were the most enlightening to the researcher. Those conversations lead the researcher to conclude that the Associated Colleges of the South is still an active organization as of the writing of this research, because it had accomplished, and still accomplishes, what it had set out to do. The ACS provided programs and services to the member institutions that would otherwise be unavailable, impractical, or too expensive for the institutions to provide individually. In addition, it did so in a way that only infringed slightly on the autonomy of the member colleges and universities. The programmatic benefits were primarily aimed directly at providing a better academic environment on the campus. The summer workshop for faculty, programs to encourage and equip faculty members in the use of technology for teaching and research, and collaborations which helped expand curriculum in some less popular academic areas were the most often mentioned programmatic benefits of the

consortium. Initiatives involving study abroad programs were infrequently mentioned, although that was the premise behind the founding of the over 15 years ago.

The researcher was surprised at the level of participation by presidents of the member institutions. The ACS has 16 member colleges and universities. Of those institutions, fifteen had presidents who met the tenure criteria established by the researcher to be interviewed. Thirteen of those fifteen presidents voluntarily participated in the tape recorded phone interviews. The researcher believes there are three primary reasons for this level of participation. First, the president of one of the member institutions provided support to the researcher by asking her colleagues at the annual meeting to participate. Second, comments by the presidents of the member institutions were overwhelmingly informative and favorable regarding the consortium. These comments occurred even as the researcher provided written and verbal assurance to each of the participants of references to collective comments and individual comments would be cited as anonymous. The fact that the comments were good led the researcher to believe that the presidents were fundamentally satisfied with the ACS and interested in sharing their views. The third reason for the level of participation is believed to be connected to one of the most often cited benefits of the consortium involvement. This benefit was the presence of a professional community among the member presidents, and among faculty and staff at the participating institutions. One president said "it's a group of people that have long term friendships, and the ability to keep up with each other, and learn from each other and contribute to each other as each is doing their own work" (Anonymous, personal communication, September 26, 2006). Another president indicated that he did think there's a professional connection that exists among the

presidents (Anonymous, personal communication, September 28, 2006). A third president said that the result of the collaboration was that individuals become part of a professional community and have people they can call when necessary (Anonymous, personal communication, October 17, 2006). Although the benefit of the professional community was noticed by the researcher through his professional involvement in the consortium after becoming employed at an ACS institution, the notion that the community was cited by the interviewees as frequently as it was cited surprised the researcher. In reflection, the researcher believed that the isolated nature of liberal arts education in the South, relative to the Midwest and the Northeast, perhaps made the professional community a valuable asset to those involved.

Much of what the researcher learned while studying this particular case confirmed information found in the literature reviews on the subject of voluntary cooperative efforts among colleges. First, involvement at the highest level of the member institutions was particularly necessary to the success of the endeavor. The ACS has involvement of both the presidents, as board members of the consortium, and the chief academic officers who serve as the Council of Deans, meeting three times a year to discuss the programs, budgets, and initiatives of the consortium.

Second, the consortium's vitality was directly a result of focus on programs that augment the work of the individual institutions. The ACS had used its resources to initiate programs that were the ideas of the leaders of the member institutions, beneficial to those institutions, and impractical or unlikely to occur at a singular institution. The involvement of the institutional presidents and Council of Deans in the decision making led to programmatic efforts that had a high relevance to the member institutions.

Third, the role of the president of the consortium in the success of that endeavor was clear in the literature reviewed. The role of the ACS President, Dr. Wayne Anderson, in the organization's success was repeatedly mentioned by the presidents interviewed. His ability to raise money and facilitate the collaborative efforts of presidents and chief academic officers had been critical to the ongoing efforts of the consortium. In addition, his tenure as the president for the entirety of the consortium's existence provided an element of continuity that added value to the efforts of an organization that had seen complete turnover in both the Board of Directors and Council of Dean but for the president of one member school that had been there since 1991, the year the consortium was formally organized.

Several of the presidents interviewed made statements that were also interesting to the researcher based on his reading and preparation for his research. The presidents indicated that the consortium was formed at a time when the foundations had an increased appetite for funding voluntary, cooperative efforts among colleges. These viewpoints were contrary to the review of the literature which indicated that funding organizations were hesitant to fund consortia as they were skeptical of the sincerity of collaborative endeavors.

The researcher also questioned the long-term breadth of the consortium. As the overwhelming perception of those interviewed is that the primary programs of the ACS supported and enhanced the academic life of the institutions, future programmatic efforts to reduce costs or enhance the non-academic areas of the member institutions may be limited.

Despite the success perceived by those interviewed in the research, the researcher believes that the ACS consortium is a somewhat delicate entity. The consortium is successful only as it adds value to the participating institutions which necessitates the ongoing involvement of the presidents and the chief academic officers. Turnover in these positions may have a negative impact on the future vitality of the organization.

Dr. Anderson shared an instance wherein a new president of an ACS member institution was interested in discontinuing the formal affiliation with the consortium. It was only after Dr. Anderson received a phone call from a senior official at that member institution telling him of the new president's intention that Dr. Anderson was able to discuss the consortium with the new institutional president (W. Anderson, personal communication, June 14, 2006). Additionally, as the organization is benefited greatly by the support of foundations, a change in the priorities, leadership, or interests of the foundations, or failure to satisfy the requirements of the foundations, both in technical compliance and in spirit, may severely limit the operations and opportunities of the ACS. Over the tenure of the consortium, funding has come from five foundations. The Mellon Foundation has been the most significant provider of planning money and grant funding for the consortium. The decision by the Mellon Foundation to restructure the funding and the management of the technology centers it had funded for several consortia removed the technology centers and their initiatives from the purview of the individual consortia. This new structure dictated that individual ACS member institutions had to begin paying fees to participate in the technology center they had not had to pay in the prior years.

A third concern for the consortium is the eventual change in leadership at the organization. Dr. Anderson's temperament and skills were routinely cited as matching the

needs of the role and the needs of the ACS. If the ACS continues to exist, there will at some point be a need for a new president who will bring the ability to continue the success achieved to this point, while adding new views, experiences, and skills to the ACS. This selection will be critical. It is the sense of the researcher that the pride the member presidents feel for the organization will fuel their involvement in making the proper selection.

Researcher Impressions of Individuals Interviewed

Interview with Dr. Wayne Anderson

The interview with Dr. Anderson took place in his office at the Associated Colleges of the South in Atlanta, Georgia. The ACS offices are located in a single-story building in an office park off a main thoroughfare in northeast Atlanta. The front door to the offices is off the parking lot, and is locked, requiring the visitor to press a buzzer to be let into the office. The headquarters is spacious, with nice, but non-descript furniture and accessories. Although the office was clean and organized, there were piles of papers on a table in the center of the main room. These papers were apparently being prepared to be collated and sent in packets. It was apparent that there were numerous work related activities in process in the office. Dr. Anderson's office is in the front section of the headquarters, with a window looking out on the parking lot. On the door to Dr. Anderson's office are taped a few copies of grant checks received by the consortium over the tenure of the organization. Dr. Anderson was dressed professionally, and appeared to be very comfortable. He sat in one chair in front of his desk, while the researcher sat in a chair was also located in front of the desk. Dr. Anderson was attentive and thoughtful. He was soft spoken. In fact, he was so soft spoken that the voice activated recorder stopped

several times during the 75-minute interview as it did not detect vocal input from the interviewee. Dr. Anderson had no trouble remembering specific details of the consortium, including the first and last names of the people relevant to the conversation, as well as names of those with whom he does not come into regular contact. When discussing the consortium, Dr. Anderson's voice was paced and deliberate. When recalling several stories about the consortium and the beginnings of several programs, Dr. Anderson's voice would become more animated and his face more expressive.

Interview with Dr. George Harmon

The researcher completed a second interview with a party that had relevant knowledge of the history and development of the ACS. This interview took place on December 5, 2006 and was Dr. George Harmon, retired president of Millsaps College. Dr. Harmon was one of the presidents involved with both the consortium which preceded the ACS, and the founding of the ACS.

The researcher contacted Dr. George Harmon by e-mail to set up a time to meet for the interview. The interview was conducted in the conference room in the president's office at Millsaps College. Dr. Harmon arrived to the conference room on time and had a cup of coffee in his hand.

Dr. Harmon sat down in the conference room chair on the same side of the table as the researcher and the tape recorder. Although he sat in the chair that was closest to the recorder, he rolled the chair away from the table, holding his coffee cup, and crossed the ankle of one leg over the knee of the other. Almost immediately, Dr. Harmon began to casually discuss the ACS consortium. Upon realizing that the information being shared by Dr. Harmon was very relevant to the questions yet to be asked, the researcher asked

for Dr. Harmon's permission to turn on the tape recorder. Dr. Harmon stated that the thought the tape recorder had already been recording. Prior to pushing the record buttons on the tape recorder, the researcher had Dr. Harmon review and complete the release associated with the research and this interview.

Although Dr. Harmon apologized upfront and stated that he probably wasn't going to be able to remember much detail about the early years of the consortium, the researcher was surprised at the level of detail Dr. Harmon was able to provide. He remembered the original membership fees and the fee structure of the consortium, as well as information on Dr. Wayne Anderson's professional background prior to being hired as the first president of the ACS.

Dr. Harmon spoke very fluidly about the early years of the ACS and the previous voluntary collaboration, the SCUU. His understanding of the SCUU and the circumstances that led to the ACS was quite complete. Earlier in his career he had been a faculty member at Rhodes College (then known as Southwestern at Memphis) and knew the faculty member that had started the British Studies program at that institution. When Dr. Harmon came to Millsaps Colleges as the president, he was one of the presidents sought out by Rhodes College when looking to bring additional students into their international study program in Great Britain.

Dr. Harmon told the early years of the ACS in more of a story-like fashion, rather than just a set of facts that were to be laid out. He was able to recall the names of people involved with both the SCUU and the ACS. He recalled the successes of the ACS as if they were a surprise to him. He was ready to point out that one of the reasons that the consortium had, in his opinion, lasted through the years was that the presidents of the

member schools stayed involved in the direction of the organization through regular meetings and communication. He mentioned that he is still in touch with several of the other presidents that he had worked with through the consortium. He even went so far as to state that he still takes trips organized by one of the other presidents and his wife.

Interviews with Current Presidents of ACS Member Institutions

The researcher conducted phone interviews with presidents of the ACS member schools who had been in their role for at least one year, and consented to being interviewed. These phone interviews were recorded and transcribed. Although men are the primary gender representing ACS member presidents, there are also female presidents. The researcher used male pronouns for all impressions in order to protect the identities of the female presidents who participated in the research.

Interview with President Alpha

The interview with President Alpha was scheduled for 2pm on Thursday, September 7th. The researcher had made the appointment with this president by e-mailing the executive assistant to the president as a follow up to the initial letter describing the nature of the research. The researcher called the president's office at the appointed time and was greeted warmly by the executive assistant. Who asked the researcher to hold for a minute while the president concluded another phone call. At 2:03 p.m. the executive assistant took the researcher off hold, thanked the researcher for waiting and put him through to the president. The president greeted the researcher and offered an immediate apology for running a little late for the interview. The researcher reviewed with the president the researcher's interest in the ACS consortium, and the nature of the research. The researcher then shared that, as stated in release that had been sent and subsequently

received that this interview would be recorded but that the identity of all the current presidents of the ACS member schools would be anonymous for purposes of reporting the findings. The researcher confirmed with this individual that recording the interview was okay, and started the tape recorder.

The voice of the interviewee was very warm in tone, a voice that one would expect from a counselor. Although this interviewee was quite expressive, using words such as “absolutely,” “real satisfied,” and an emphatic “Yes!” when expressing satisfaction with the consortium, the volume of the voice rarely increased beyond normal conversational level. From the conversation, the researcher believed this president to be very active in the consortium as a member president and hopeful that the presidents would remain active or become active. A number of specific programs offered by the consortium were mentioned by this president during the conversation, indicating to the researcher that the high level of knowledge this person had about the ongoing work of the consortium. Programs such as faculty development, collaborative programming with NITL, and new initiatives were mentioned.

Relationships that resulted from the collaborative efforts of the consortium were the heart of many of this person’s comments. This president referred to being mentored or “shepherded” by Dr. Anderson when new to the office, and the strong relationship among the presidential colleagues that were “pretty powerful” as a result of the collaborations. The only tension that was seen by this president was between the presidents who participate and those who don’t participate regularly. The interviewee speculated that the lack of the participation by some presented an unfortunate limitation to the consortium.

In addition to the benefits mentioned in the programs offered by the ACS, and the benefit received by this president from association with other presidents in the consortium, this interviewee made it a point to highlight and promote the role of Dr. Wayne Anderson, his leadership in the consortium, and in particular, his ability to fund raise. This president expressed belief that Dr. Anderson's connections and work with the major foundations is something that other consortia would envy.

Interview with President Beta

Five days after the letters explaining the research were sent out, the assistant to this president contacted the researcher by phone to set up the time for the interview. This president was the only one who initiated contact with the researcher based solely on the letter and release mailed. The meeting was set by phone for 10am on a Wednesday. Two days before the interview the researcher received an e-mail confirming the Wednesday appointment with this president. The initial contact from the president's assistant and confirmation e-mail sent to the researcher indicated the willingness of the president to be a part of this study.

At the time of the phone appointment, the researcher called the number provided by the president's assistant in the initial phone conversation. The assistant answered the phone and told the researcher that the president was working from home that day. The assistant indicated that the president was still available to talk with the researcher and forwarded the call to the president's residence.

The president answered the call, and the researcher promptly expressed appreciation for taking the call at home, explaining that the researcher had only seven or eight questions to ask, with a few possible follow up questions in the discussion. The

researcher explained the nature of the research, and reiterated that the phone call would be taped but there would be nothing in the study's report indicating the identity of any president with specific comments. The president confirmed consent in this process.

Although pleasant in vocal tone, this president seemed a bit distracted during the interview. This distraction became most apparent when early in the conversation the researcher asked this president if he had had any involvement with the consortium prior to being named the president of this college. Upon answering that involvement in the consortium had consisted primarily of presidents meetings twice a year, the interviewee quickly inserted that Wayne Anderson had been successful at securing funding for the consortium. This comment seemed out of place as if to make sure that the comment was not forgotten during the conversation.

The tone of the interviewee's voice remained pleasant, although the majority of the answers were short. The pervasive theme in the answers given were regarding the fundraising efforts of the Dr. Wayne Anderson and the funding available to the individual institutions.

Although the questions asked in this interview followed the same semi-structured format as the other 12 interviews, the duration of this interview was the shortest.

Interview with Professor Gamma

The researcher e-mailed the assistant to President Gamma a week after the letter was sent outlining the research and the request to for a phone interview. The researcher and the assistant exchanged e-mails two times during the day and determined that a 1:30 p.m. meeting on a Tuesday would be a mutually convenient time for the appointment. The researcher called the number provided in the e-mail exchange at the

appointment time and was immediately forwarded to speak with President Gamma who had a calm, pastoral-like voice. The researcher thanked the president for this interview, outlined the interest in the topic, and reviewed the confidentiality that would be provided to all of the presidents of consortium schools participating in this research. The president confirmed understanding and agreement with this process and asked if I had received the statement of release that was signed. The researcher confirmed receipt of the release and offered thanks for returning it. The researcher then turned on the tape recorder and began to ask the questions. The researcher found this president to be quite humble in the responses. Although able to list several specific programs and initiatives of the consortium, this president indicated a few times that he was unable to capture all of the ways the ACS has been beneficial to his institution. These statements indicated to the researcher that this president believed that the consortium had impact far beyond his experience, and also underscored an humility that was not expected. This president paused before answering each question as if to truly contemplate the most complete answer. This president also indicated an understanding of both the role of a consortium and the intent of this specific consortium, stating that the consortium is supplemental to, not the heart of, the work of this person's institution, and that the ACS was successful in achieving everything it had intended at its inception.

Interview with President Delta

A week after the letters explaining the research were mailed, the researcher sent a follow up e-mail to the scheduling coordinator in this president's office to inquire if this president was willing to participate in my research study. The researcher received a return e-mail indicating that assistant would check with this president at the next opportunity.

The next morning the researcher received an e-mail back suggesting 9:00 a.m. on a Wednesday morning. The researcher agreed to that time. The researcher sent a confirmation e-mail to the scheduling coordinator the day before the interview and received a brief, professional e-mail in response confirming the interview including the phone number to call.

The researcher called the president's office at the appointed time and was greeted warmly by the president's assistant. The assistant put the researcher on hold and said that the president would be available in a moment. About a minute later the president picked up the phone and wished me a good morning, calling the researcher by his first name. The researcher thanked this president for the interview, using the president's official title. The president then asked the researcher to refer to the president by his first name. The researcher confirmed the confidential nature of the interview and started the tape recorder. The researcher found this person to be very informal in conversation, almost as if there had been a previous conversation. The interviewee spoke in a quick, intense manner, but not rushed. In addition the researcher found this person to be focused and analytical in evaluating the questions, referring to measuring the benefits to his institution, reaching critical mass in collaboration. This president talked about evaluating all of the institution's affiliations with consortia when first taking office, and particularly evaluating them with an eye toward reducing those affiliations with the consortia that were not beneficial to this individual's institution. The interviewee made it clear that he had discussed the benefits of this consortium with several of the leaders at his or her institution within the first year of office. This individual further spoke in terms that indicated to the researcher an ongoing objective relationship with the consortium, making

statements about terms of outcomes to the institution, the “transaction costs” involved in the memberships, and making no reference to any personal benefits resulting from the consortium or connection with the presidents of the other institutions. Although the researcher believed that this individual had evaluated the benefits of the consortium, he did not get the impression that this president felt any personal connection to the organization.

Interview with President Epsilon

The researcher e-mailed the assistant to this president approximately a week after mailing the letters requesting an interview for the research. The researcher received an e-mail back within a few hours indicating that President Epsilon would be happy to participate and offered three options for appointments. The researcher e-mailed his acceptance of one of the times. The day before the interview the researcher contacted the assistant to President Epsilon by e-mail to confirm the appointment time. He received an e-mail confirming the time and saying that the president looked forward to the conversation.

The researcher called the President’s office and was put through to President Epsilon immediately. He thanked the president for the interview, reviewed the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of the interviews, and confirmed the willingness of this individual to participate in the recorded conversation.

The researcher found this interviewee to be very pleasant, yet intense. The president was quick to acknowledge the many benefits of the ACS, speaking in such a way that the researcher believed the president had outlined the points to be made in the conversation prior to the phone interview. This president referred to the “three part

value” of the consortium, and had two or three examples in illustrating the answers he provided. During the interview, this president also used the researchers first name several times, personalizing the answer.

Throughout the interview, President Epsilon said almost exclusively positive things about the ACS, and indicated an unbridled pride in the success of the consortium – referring to the ACS as “profoundly good,” giving credit to the consortium for helping to shape the nature of President Epsilon’s institution, and also crediting the excellence of the individual members for contributing to the success. At one point, in describing the contributions of the Dr. Wayne Anderson to the ACS, President Epsilon was almost protective of Dr. Anderson, stating if others did not believe that Wayne Anderson’s leadership was a key component of the consortium’s success they were “just wrong.” This interview was the longest of the interviews, lasting 29 minutes.

Interview with President Zeta

The researcher e-mailed the assistant to President Zeta a week after the letters requesting an interview were mailed. The president’s assistant called the researcher directly and indicated that President Zeta would be out of town for a period of time in the Fall, but would be happy to participate in the interviews. The researcher and the assistant found a mutually agreeable time on a Friday. The day before the interview the researcher was out of his office but called to confirm the phone interview.

The researcher called President Zeta at the appointed time, was on hold for 90 seconds, then the President picked up the phone, greeted the researcher, and thanked him for holding. The researcher immediately thanked President Zeta for participating in the

interview, reviewed the information contained on the release that was mailed and received confirmation that President Zeta was willing to participate and be recorded.

President Zeta readily indicated satisfaction with the ACS, and mentioned three times how membership in the consortium had increased the national visibility of his institution. This visibility mentioned was in terms of connection to major foundations and the exposure the students at President Zeta's institution to student from other strong liberal arts colleges in the United States. This president readily also had some distinct thoughts on future opportunities that were not mentioned in any of the other institutions. President Zeta indicated that a new avenue for the ACS was to go on the "offensive" in higher education by answering some of the major questions and concerns about access and transparency in higher education brought up by the Spellings Commission and the Lumina Foundation. President Zeta expressed confidence that the strength of the individual schools involved in the consortium, as well as the experience and connections of the ACS, made this a particularly unique opportunity to contribute to the study of higher education. President Zeta also believed that the institutional members of the ACS were actually accomplishing what colleges and universities were often criticized for failing to achieve. These accomplishments were (a) providing access, (b) being transparent, (c) being more affordable, (d) providing funds to individuals who lacked the resources, and (e) providing a lifetime of value for the investment in higher education. I found President Zeta very resolute in the value of this future opportunity.

Interview with President Eta

The researcher contacted President Eta's office by e-mail a week after letters requesting the interviews were mailed. The researcher had not heard back from the e-mail

after a week, and sent a second e-mail. Upon not receiving a return e-mail again, the researcher called the President's office directly and spoke to the receptionist. The receptionist was very helpful and indicated that she would check the president's calendar and call the researcher back. The next day the receptionist and the researcher spoke on the phone and secured a time for the interview. The researcher called the president's office at the appointed time and was put directly through to President Eta. The researcher found the interviewee to be very congenial and paced in responses to the questions, as if the interviewee was thinking and nodding his head while answering the questions. Although this interviewee cited some specific examples with some answers, President Eta's answers were more about broad institutional impact than rather than on specific programmatic achievements. President Eta referred to his institution as having more "breadth and depth" as a result of the ACS affiliation, and later indicated that the institution was more "rich and diverse" as a result of membership in the ACS. This institutional view was underscored further by President Eta stating that from the Presidents office "all the way down" to other offices, cooperation with the other members has made the institution stronger. President Eta also expressed a level of surprise that there did not appear to be noticeable tension among the institutions as a result of the involvement in the consortium. This president was the only president to highlight the possibility of using the ACS affiliation in marketing the schools to potential students.

Interview with President Theta

The researcher made e-mail contact with President Theta's office a week after letters outlining the research and requesting an interview were sent. The president's assistant e-mailed back within a few hours indicating that President Theta would

participate in the interview, but asked if we schedule the phone interview a month in advance. The researcher agreed and set the interview for late on Friday afternoon.

The interviewer called the president's office at the appointed time and was put through to President Theta. President Theta's voice was deep and rich, and President Theta spoke at a very slow pace, placing emphasis on words and phrases throughout the interview, as if to underline the importance of the word. President Theta said that the ACS had "indeed" been very beneficial, referring first to the benefits received by him as an institutional president, and then to the benefits to other professionals at the institution. Although President Theta did mention the technology and environmental programs as beneficial to the institution, the first benefits outlined by President Theta were those that resulted from professionals at his institution being able to share with and learn from their counterparts at the other schools.

President Theta indicated that his institution would be a different place if it were not involved in the consortium, but only at a level noticeable by the employees of the institution, not to the "uninformed person." President Theta stated that the consortium had been successful, but quickly added that the ACS had more to accomplish, referring to a recent strategic effort by the Board of the consortium. President Theta also referred to the "excellent Executive Director" in citing reasons for the success of the consortium thus far. President Theta further illustrated a view toward measuring the personal benefits of experiences. After the researcher thanked him for taking the time to talk with me, he responded by saying "As long as it's been helpful to you."

Interview with President Iota

The researcher e-mailed the assistant in Dr. Iota's office a week after the letters explaining the research and requesting an interview was mailed. The researcher received an e-mail back indicating that Dr. Iota would be willing to participate in the interview, and requesting that the researcher call to set up a time for the phone interview. The researcher called Dr. Iota's assistant and established a time in the middle of a Tuesday afternoon to speak. The researcher called the office at the appointed time and was forwarded to President Iota. President Iota is one of the newer presidents in of the member schools, and many of his comments were references to information he gathered from his colleagues and their impressions of the consortium. Dr. Iota's voice was sincere and reserved, although there was no difficulty hearing him. Many of his comments juxtaposed his experience with the ACS with his previous experiences at other institutions. He indicated involvement in other consortia but none as strong as the ACS, or none that provided the professional community that he believed existed in the ACS. The researcher had the clear impression that President Iota believed that the ACS had been somewhat helpful to him as a President, but that he anticipated more opportunities to be connected to the other ACS presidents in the future. President Iota also spoke to the success of the ACS as being created at a time when cooperation among institutions was becoming more important. He described his understanding of the major funding agencies as having a clear preference for making fewer grants to multiple colleges collectively than to a number of small grants to individual institutions.

Interview with President Kappa

The researcher e-mailed the assistant in President Kappa's office a week after a letter was sent out to secure a phone interview with President Kappa. The researcher received an immediate and positive response. A few e-mail exchanges with the assistant and a Monday afternoon interview with the President was secured. The researcher called the president's office at the time of the appointment and was connected to President Kappa. President Kappa appeared to speak through either a speaker phone or another hands-free phone device as his voice seemed to echo, although not to a level of being distracted. President Kappa spoke to affiliation with the ACS in such a way that the researcher did not have to ask how long the president had been involved, as he readily knew that the president had been involved in the consortium for many years. The president used phrases referring to the broad scope and deep "penetration" of the ACS, and a "persistent source of frustration" regarding the unbalanced participation of the institutions with the ACS and the "ongoing challenges" of collaboration. His comments regarding the impact of the ACS were primarily framed around the programmatic endeavors of the consortium, citing numerous enhancements to his institution resulting from those programs. The program he cited as being particularly beneficial to the institution was the ACS Environmental initiative. The researcher got the impression that had his institution not had the access to the programmatic funding afforded through the consortium, the president believed there would be a measurable difference in his institution's environmental commitments. President Kappa's experience with the consortium was also evident as he talked about ongoing challenges as being ever present in any inter-institutional collaboration.

Interview with President Lambda

President Lambda's assistant readily responded to e-mail follow up of the letter requesting an interview, and determined a mutually agreeable time for late on a Monday afternoon. When the researcher called at the appointed time he was told that President Lambda was running late from a previous meeting and but should be available soon. President Lambda's assistant recommended that she have the President call when he arrived in the office. Approximately 20 minutes later the President's assistant called me, saying that President Lambda was unavoidably detained and would not be back for quite some time. She indicated that he could call at approximately 6:00 p.m. that evening or that the interview could be rescheduled. Another time for the interview was selected for a week after the original date. The researcher called the president's office at that time and was forwarded to President Lambda. The president was apologetic for being unavailable the first time and expressed his appreciation of the researcher's patience. The researcher shared his appreciation for the president's time in assistance with the research, confirmed that information on the release the president had received and started the tape recorder.

President Lambda was very articulate in his comments assessing the work of the ACS and his institution. He referred to programs with a level of specificity uncommon in many of the interviews. His references to the potential of overseas funding of an American Research Center in China, and potential opportunities in Korea, Japan, the Middle East and Latin America. Many other presidents referred to programs in broader terms, making collective references such as "international programs." Although he said the ACS had been successful in its initiatives, he characterized a greater need for it than

just the benefits to the individual institutions or the programmatic opportunities resulting from the collaborations. President Lambda made several references to the nature of liberal arts education and the isolated nature of the liberal arts experience in the South. His comments not only indicated his support and appreciation of the consortium's successes, but underscored the need for advocacy by collaborations in the South to advance the notion of the liberal arts education. Although the president was not critical of the large, research institutions, he said that the collaboration were necessary to achieve a strength and size necessary for visibility in the marketplace.

Interview with President Mu

The researcher e-mailed the assistant to President Mu a week after sending the written request for an interview. A few days later the researcher received an e-mail from the assistant indicating that the President was out of town, is in the middle of a capital campaign, and generally did not accept invitations for interviews as his schedule was very tight. She did indicate that she would check with the president. The researcher thanked the assistant for the consideration, shared with her that the interview would not exceed 30 minutes, and that he had interviewed almost all of the other presidents of the member institutions and would appreciate President Mu's opinions to be part of the research. A day later the researcher received an e-mail indicating that President Mu would be available for a 30-minute interview on a Friday, and an appointment was made. The researcher called the president's office at the arranged time and was put through to President Mu. The researcher thanked the President for his time, confirmed the information in the release he had signed, and started the tape recorder.

President Mu indicated he believed the ACS had been beneficial to his institution primarily in terms of access to resources. This interviewee indicated that faculty development programs and technology resources were the ones he believed were the most beneficial to the institution. President Mu, while indicating that the consortium was beneficial to his institution, also said that the institution benefited from associations other than the ACS too. The researcher believed the President said this to indicate that while his institution was not one of the most involved in the ACS consortium, collaboration was not foreign to his institution and it benefited from a variety of formal and informal associations.

Interview with President Nu

The researcher e-mailed the assistant to the President Nu a week after the letter was mailed requesting an interview. The assistant readily offered the President's agreement to an interview and suggested a time early in the afternoon on a Thursday. Since the interview was about a month after the e-mail exchange, the researcher confirmed the appointment a day prior to the interview and received confirmation. The researcher called President Nu's office at the time of the appointment and was forwarded directly to the president. President NU warmly greeted the researcher on the phone. The researcher reviewed the nature of the research and the information in the release. The researcher found this president to be very thoughtful in his responses. He paused before providing any answers to the questions, as if to completely think through what he wanted to say before sharing it. President Mu, while readily indicating his belief that the ACS was successful, was clear in his belief that the ACS has not reached its potential. Phrases such as "I don't think the consortium is nearly what it could be" and "I think we have not

fully exploited the opportunities to us..." indicated that, although positive about the work of the ACS thus far, he didn't believe the presidents of the member schools should be content. President Nu also indicated that timing was a factor in the success of the consortium. He described the nature of institutional funding showing preference to formal collaborations such as the ACS. He also ascribed success of the ACS to the original design by the founding presidents. He described the design of the consortium as being "just about right."

Opportunities for Further Research

The researcher believes that there are an abundance of new avenues for continued research on the Associated Colleges of the South, and the ongoing efforts of voluntary collaborations in higher education. In further understanding the ACS, the themes illuminated in this research can be verified or contradicted through a thoughtfully organized quantitative study. In addition, both qualitative and quantitative research with the chief academic deans at member institutions should provide information that would further understanding of the consortium. Since their role with the ACS provides them an opportunity to be more involved in development of the programs, their perceptions of the success, challenges, and future opportunities in the consortium would be valuable complement to this research.

Valuable information should also be available through research with those who have been involved with programs of the consortium. Faculty members who have attended the summer teaching workshop, used technology to teach a course to students on multiple campuses, or participated in other symposia offered by the ACS, would have unique experiences that may prove valuable.

The literature on qualitative research indicates that generalizing to other populations is not a primary purpose for the qualitative method, and that the reader of the research has the best vantage point to judge whether the case study being read can be used to evaluate other cases. Qualitative studies resembling this study, but focused on other consortia, will either provide further evidence that the themes revealed in this research have value in many consortia endeavors, or it will underscore the incidental nature of what has been discovered in this effort.

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL DOCUMENT FROM UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI



The University of
Southern Mississippi

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 26070602

PROJECT TITLE: **The Associated Colleges of the South: A Case Study
Examining the Significance of the Consortium Through the Experiences of
Presidents at Member Institutions**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 06/15/06 to 06/15/07

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Todd S. Rose**

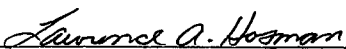
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & Research**

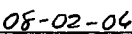
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **07/31/06 to 07/30/07**



Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair



Date

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DR. WAYNE ANDERSON

AND DR. GEORGE HARMON

1. What factors led to the inception of the ACS?
2. What individuals were crucial in starting the consortium? What made them crucial?
3. Was there a model for a consortium that was used when starting the ACS? If so, which model was used?
4. How was the initial group of institutions selected to participate?
5. How is the consortium funded?
6. Has the consortium grown? If so, how?

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR LEADERS AT
ACS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

1. How long have you been the president of an ACS member school?
2. Have you had previous roles at an ACS school?
3. Has membership in the consortium been beneficial to your institution? If so, how?
4. Has membership in the consortium inhibited your institution at all?
5. Would your institution be noticeably different if not involved a member of the ACS?
6. Are there new initiatives that would be particularly helpful to your school?
7. Has the consortium been successful? If so, what factors have lead to this?
8. Is there anything else that you think I need to know in order to better understand your perspective on the ACS?

APPENDIX D

FREQUENCY CHART: SUMMARY WORDS AND PHRASES FOUND IN
TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH PRESIDENTS OF
ACS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

<u>Summary Word or Phrase</u>	Number of Times <u>Mentioned</u>	Number of Presidents <u>Mentioning</u>
ACS -- Benefit to individual institutions	13	13
ACS is successful	13	13
Benefit -- Collective Programming	17	11
Autonomy of individual institution preserved	10	10
Idea sharing/forum for common issues	13	8
Tensions are normal, minimal, or none	11	9
Benefit -- Wayne Fundraising	8	7
Success is due to Wayne	8	7
ACS programs augment existing institutional programs	6	6
Success is due to quality/strength of individual schools	6	5
Benefit -- Presidential Networking	6	5
Success is due to funding received	5	5
Professional networking (non-presidential)	11	4
Tension -- unequal participation	5	4
ACS has made no tangible difference in school	4	4

APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

<u>Summary Word or Phrase</u>	Number of Times <u>Mentioned</u>	Number of Presidents <u>Mentioning</u>
Consortium provides 'strength in numbers'	7	3
Benefit – technology programming	4	3
Benefit – visibility of individual institutions through the ACS	4	3
Presidential Development and Support	3	3
Programming—technology	3	3
Individual Institution is different because of the ACS	3	3
Foundations want to fund consortia	3	3
Success due to manageability of size	3	3
ACS influence – has strengthened the individual institutions	3	3
Reputation/prestige of involvement with the ACS	2	2
Relationships among colleagues	2	2
Individual institution is enriched, more diverse	2	2
Tensions are potential with fundraising	2	2
Professional community resulting from ACS	2	2
Success due to council of deans	2	1
Unsuccessful – library	1	1
Unsuccessful – marketing liberal arts	1	1

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