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# The Relationship Between Organizational Communication and Campus Climate as an Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND CAMPUS  
CLIMATE AS AN INDICATOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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With public higher education currently facing monumental challenges, organizational communication is taking on greater significance in the context of campus climate and organizational effectiveness. Studying the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate could prove to be a valuable indicator of a university's "organizational effectiveness." Without effective organizational communication, employee morale can wane, commitment to the institution can be thwarted, and employee motivation can be weakened. Within this context, campus climate is vital because it can negatively impact student success, as well as affect the ability of faculty and managers to achieve personal and professional goals. Thus, communication and climate together can affect the ability of a university to operate effectively.

This study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design to examine the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Managers ( $N=30$ ) and faculty ( $N=101$ ) from one public university in the northeastern United States participated in the quantitative phase of the study and six respondents took part in the concurrent qualitative phase of the study.

For the quantitative phase of the study, participants completed a web-based survey comprised of the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (Downs & Hazen, 1977) as well as the Personal Assessment of the College Environment Survey (NILIE, 2014). A random sampling technique was used to select six participants for the qualitative phase of the study. During the interviews, participants were asked to reflect on their organization's communication, the campus climate, shared governance, and the organization's effectiveness.

The quantitative and qualitative results indicated that organizational communication is a strong

predictor of the “Total Campus Climate.” The results also showed that each communication factor was a significant positive predictor of campus climate. Through the communication factors links to the dimensions of campus climate, specific factors and dimensions emerged as indicators of organizational effectiveness. Faculty/Faculty Leaders and Females also were positive predictors of satisfaction with campus climate.

This dissertation study updates and deepens the literature on the relationship of organizational communication to campus climate and organizational effectiveness. The study also provides practical implications for managers and faculty and recommendations for future research.

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## DEDICATION

To my family for their boundless and unwavering love. My daughter, Fiona McKenzie, whose positivity and love makes me feel that the worst moments last minutes and the best moments last a lifetime. To my son, Gordon McKenzie, whose kind heart, light spirit, and wisdom helps me to dig through the morass to see things as they should be seen. My husband, Robert McKenzie, whose belief in me and his love saw me through the most challenging moments of my life these past five years.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Public institutions of higher education are facing “significant challenges and opportunities with almost breathtaking change” (Goho & Webb, 2003, p. 379) because of three converging factors. First, they are losing revenue caused by a decline in the traditional college-aged student population and a stagnant attrition rate (Bidwell, 2012). Second, they are experiencing reduced state financial support (Lewin, 2011). Finally, they are facing competition from “for-profit” as well as private post-secondary institutions (Baty, 2009; Bok, 2009; Ross, 2012). At the same time, the federal and state governments are scrutinizing public institutions of higher education because of calls for greater accountability. The result is more pressure on the decision-making relationship between faculty and managers (Birnbaum, 2004). Universities have responded by adopting planning strategies typically associated with private corporate enterprise, such as achieving cost efficiencies, increasing marketing efforts, and streamlining institutional procedures (Birnbaum, 2004; Waugh, 2003).

The changes in higher education outlined above have redefined the nature of faculty work, the responsibility of presidents and their designees, and the types of decisions they now face (Bardo, 2009; Birnbaum, 2004; Minor 2003; Jones, 2011). In this environment, organizational communication in higher education is taking on a more significant role because it is fundamental to the way human beings work through changes and make decisions to achieve organizational success (Kreps, 1990).

Accordingly, organizational communication may be an important determinant of campus climate (Foley & Clifton, 1990; Hardré & Kollmann, 2012; Peterson & Spencer, 1990). A positive campus climate is essential to the vitality of a university because a negative campus climate reduces the likelihood that students will feel a sense of belonging and perform well academically (Edman & Brazil, 2007; Hamilton, 2006), which adversely impacts degree persistence and completion (Edman & Brazil, 2007).

Alternatively, if a campus climate is one where participants enjoy their jobs largely because of their communication with others, the entire university experience is improved for students, faculty, and

managers. It follows that a positive campus climate and clear organizational communication should be related to perceptions of enhanced organizational effectiveness—the degree to which organizational members are satisfied with the internal workings of an organization (Cameron, 1981; Kreps, 1990). To explore that assumption, this dissertation study investigated the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. These three key concepts—organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness—are developed and defined in more detail in Chapter 2, the Review of Literature. It is important to note, however, that the concept of organizational effectiveness is not to be understood as an “either/or” term wherein an organization is considered to be effective or ineffective. Rather, in this study the concept refers to the extent to which faculty and managers are satisfied with organizational communication and campus climate.

### **Background**

The study of organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness matters now more than ever because reduced financial support from state governments is causing tuition at state-supported institutions to increase much faster than at private colleges (Kingkade, 2014). The rising tuition rates are creating anxiety for parents and students about the costs of college (Fischer, 2011). In such an environment, student retention becomes critical to the viability of a university because “each student that leaves before degree completion costs the college or university thousands of dollars in unrealized tuition, fees, and alumni contributions” (DeBerard & Spelmans, 2004, p. 66). Simply put, “attrition represents a direct loss of tuition income” (Bean, 1990, p. 170).

However, at the same time, increasing student enrollment has become more complicated because the number of high school graduates has been decreasing, resulting in a diminished pool of prospective college students (Bidwell, 2012). For example, from 2012 to 2013, overall college enrollment fell from about 20.2 million students to about 19.9 million (National Research Center Clearinghouse, 2013). Of particular importance to this study is the fact that students often decide whether to attend or leave a university based on its campus climate (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Not only

does campus climate have a substantial impact on how satisfied students are with their overall educational experience, it affects student learning and developmental outcomes (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Essentially, a negative campus climate can impede student learning and achievement of academic goals, whereas a positive campus climate may enhance student learning outcomes (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005).

Most current campus-climate studies have focused on students' demographic variables such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability (Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, & Cuellar, 2008; Rankin, 2005). As such, most inquiries have framed campus climate as being related to the satisfaction of underrepresented student groups with the university environment (Hurtado et al., 2008; Rankin, 2005). Such studies have defined a positive campus climate as the degree of respect that constituencies have for diversity (Hurtado et al., 2008; Rankin, 2005).

Additionally, most campus-climate studies have considered only the perceptions of students (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008), ignoring the influence that campus climate for faculty and managers may have on student retention. Thus, very little is known about the impact of faculty and manager perceptions of campus climate on student retention (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009), and even less is known about the effect of managers' perceptions of campus climate on student retention, despite the fact that studies have found that retaining students and quality employees is strongly correlated to a campus climate that is perceived as being supportive (Piercy, Giddings, Allen, Dixon, Meszaros, & Joest, 2005; Rosser, 2005; Tinto, 2006). In essence, university employees who are satisfied with their campus climate tend to flourish both professionally and personally (August & Waltman, 2004; Peterson & White, 1992). Previous studies also have found that managers tend to be more satisfied with campus climate than faculty (Moran & Volkwein, 1988). Yet, managers are rarely included in these studies, with only 10 percent of campus-climate studies including their perceptions of campus climate (Hart & Fallabaum, 2008). Therefore, examining both faculty and managers is essential to a more comprehensive understanding of campus climate (Ayers, 2005).



Of the few studies that have focused on organizational communication specifically as a dimension of campus climate, Bangura (2010) found that faculty are generally positive about the means, frequency, and timing of communication from university management but have negative views about the transparency and reciprocity of the communication. Bangura (2010) also found that faculty believed they were not able to freely express diverse perspectives, that there was very little coordination among units to resolve problems, and that there was very little transparency and inclusivity in decision making on budgets and institutional changes.

Such communication problems have been linked to higher education lacking a formalized and hierarchical structure of communication (Gratz & Salem, 1981). According to Gratz and Salem (1981), several major areas of difficulty have permeated this informal structure of communication in higher education: getting information to the right people at the right time; developing accurate information; conveying information in a way that invites people to pay attention; understanding how the communication process functions and influences the operation of the institution; exchanging information; and disagreeing about who has the primary decision-making authority. Given these difficulties related to communication, the present study examines the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

### **Research Questions for the Study**

Four research questions were developed to guide this study:

1. What is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate?
2. What is the relationship between specific factors of organizational communication and particular dimensions of campus climate?
3. What are the effects of the demographic variables on the relationships between organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate?
4. To what extent is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate an indicator of organizational effectiveness?

### **Significance of the Study**

Developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness allows for generating comprehensive recommendations to assist managers and faculty to optimize organizational effectiveness. Additionally, root causes for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a university's organizational communication can be hypothesized and steps positively taken to impact communication processes and campus climate. Furthermore, if higher education practitioners are more attentive to the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate, they can better work together to enhance perceptions of organizational effectiveness. This focus will provide insight into how to improve campus climate by fostering specific communication processes. To that end, this study highlights the significance of the contributions that both managers and faculty can make to positively develop their communication and campus climate to enhance perceptions of organizational effectiveness.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that guided this study was derived mainly from the field of organizational communication, which focuses on human relationships and interactions within an organization (Kreps, 1990). From this perspective, communication is the constitutive or central phenomenon of organizing, and organizations are continuously constructed and reconstructed through the ongoing interactions of its members (Weick, 1969). In other words, communication is the principal means by which members of an organization construct a reality that frames the sense of the organization itself and the role the member fills within the organization (Mumby & Clair, 1997). Downs and Hazen (1977) theorized that this process is multi-dimensional. Their seminal study advanced organizational communication theory by empirically validating the hypothesis that specific factors constitute organizational communication and that each of these factors impacts organizational outcomes (Downs & Hazen, 1977). The factors that constitute organizational communication in Downs and Hazen's model include: (a) general organizational perspective, (b) organizational integration, (c) communication climate, (d) supervisory communication, (e) horizontal informal communication, (f) subordinate

communication, (g) media quality, and (h) personal feedback.

In this study the literature on organizational climate theory is consulted since there is no cohesive body of literature on campus climate. Organizational climate theory operates on the assumption that organizational life is “felt” within the environment of the organization and that climate unfolds as members of an organization experience interactions with each other (Denison, 1996; Schneider, 2000). Thus, crucial knowledge of the overall atmosphere of a university is essential to understanding campus climate. For the purpose of this study, the specific dimensions of campus climate include:

(a) institutional structure, (b) supervisory relationship, (c) teamwork, and (d) student focus (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996).

Further, this study of campus climate and organizational communication takes into consideration the interaction between faculty and managers in a “shared-governance” context because that is how the vast majority of four-year institutions—approximately 90%—operate (Minor, 2003). This context is limited to higher education and a few other non-profit organizations such as hospitals. Since this context requires key constituencies to have shared opportunities for impacting the policies and procedures of the organization, ideally the organization prospers when both management and faculty participate as true partners and are well-informed about what is occurring (Olson, 2009). Thus, in a university setting, the ability of faculty and managers to engage in good-faith communication and cooperation according to shared-governance is an important variable that likely impacts organizational effectiveness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Studies related to campus climate are proliferating (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009; Rankin, 2005). In these studies, campus climate has often been seen as a barometer for student development in terms of their achievement of personal and academic goals. Similarly, the achievement of such goals by faculty and managers, in addition to their level of commitment to the university and productivity, are also seen as related to the climate of a university. Research on campus climate and organizational effectiveness can reveal critical organizational communication strategies to enhance student success. In such a study, the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate needs to be clarified to provide

greater insight into how they impact faculty and managers' perceptions of organizational effectiveness.

At present there is a gap in the research on the connection between communication and campus climate, a missed opportunity because of the impact that managers and faculty can have on optimizing the effectiveness of an organization. Organizational communication is now viewed as just one dimension of campus climate rather than as a predictor variable. This study addresses the gap in the literature.

### **Methodology**

This study uses a mixed-methods design—one that combines quantitative methods with qualitative methods—in collecting and analyzing the data. In the quantitative phase of the study, the researcher explored the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. During the qualitative phase, the researcher investigated faculty and managers' perceptions of how organizational communication and campus climate relate to organizational effectiveness. The data were collected from a representative sample of managers and faculty at a four-year, public university in the northeastern United States.

Data were collected utilizing a web-based survey and an interview guide. The survey combined two preexisting instruments: (1) The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) and (2) the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE). The CSQ is in the public domain. Permission to use PACE for this study was granted by the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE). Data from the two surveys underwent a descriptive analysis and multivariate multiple regression analyses. An interview protocol was derived from the communication constructs in the CSQ as well as the campus climate literature. These data were analyzed using an interpretive approach that yielded thematic categories that explained the relationship between perceptions of campus climate and organizational communication as indicators of organizational effectiveness.

## **Definitions of Terms**

*Campus Climate:* The current common patterns of important dimensions of university life and its members' perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions (adapted from Peterson and Spencer, 1990).

*Communication Climate:* The degree to which communication motivates and stimulates faculty and managers to meet organizational goals, attitudes toward communication are perceived to be positive, and managers express knowledge and understanding of problems faced by faculty, including how faculty are evaluated (adapted from Downs and Hazen, 1977).

*Department Chair:* Any person who directs the activities of the department and who develops department plans, guidelines, and internal office operation; he/she is responsible for the department's administrative organization and may delegate authority and responsibility as appropriate; and he/she represents the academic discipline both on and off campus either personally or by designated department representatives (adapted from PASSHE, 2011).

*Faculty:* Any person whose primary responsibility is to teach effectively; to perform other tasks characteristic of the academic profession; and to preserve the goals of the university, including the right to advocate for change (adapted from PASSHE, 2011).

*Faculty Communication:* The extent to which faculty respond to downward and upward communication as well feeling responsible for initiating upward communication (adapted from Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Faculty Leader:* Any faculty member who is elected or appointed to a formal leadership position, typically the faculty union or senate (adapted from Neumann, 1987).

*General Organizational Perspective:* Communication about the overall functioning of the organization, specifically whether employees get information about actions affecting the organization, including changes in the organization, financial standing, and policies and goals (Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Horizontal Informal Communication:* The extent to which informal and grapevine communication is active in the organization and the extent to which informal communication is accurate and free-flowing (adapted from Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Institutional Structure:* The extent to which actions of the institution reflect its mission and to which decisions are made at the appropriate level in the organization (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996).

*Manager:* Any person who holds a position that provides specialized support or services to internal or external customers and provides procedural expertise to support the daily operations of the university. These positions are typically administrative or technical and represent the “core” management support of the organization (adapted from PASSHE, 2013)

*Manager Communication:* The extent to which faculty are satisfied with upward and downward communication (adapted from Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Media Quality:* The extent to which organizational media function effectively, in terms of whether meetings are well organized, directives are clearly expressed, organizational publications are helpful, and the amount of communication in the organization is adequate (Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Mid-Level Manager:* Any person who holds a position that is accountable for projects, processes, and functional and/or organizational objectives with broad scope that impact the university. People in these positions provide solutions that have a narrower, more defined impact on the organization than senior-level managers and may be individual contributors or have managerial/supervisory accountability for a particular area of activity (adapted from PASSHE, 2013).

*Organization:* The “social collectives in which people develop ritualized patterns of interaction in an attempt to coordinate their activities and efforts in an ongoing accomplishment of personal and group goals” (Kreps, 1990, p. 5).

*Organizational Communication:* “A process through which people, acting together, create, sustain, and manage meanings through the use of verbal and nonverbal signs and symbols within a particular context” (Conrad & Poole, 1998, p. 5).

*Organizational Effectiveness:* The extent to which faculty and managers are satisfied with communication and campus climate (adapted from Cameron, 1981).

*Organizational Integration:* The extent to which communication about the organization and the immediate work environment, as well as the amount and quality of information received about departmental policies and plans and requirements of one's job, is adequate (Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Personal Feedback:* The extent to which communication related to personal achievements and work is adequate (Downs & Hazen, 1977).

*Public Higher Education:* Institutions in any state that are legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond secondary education and awards bachelor's degrees. Are public, are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, admit as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate (Cornell University Law School, 2010).

*Retention:* A school's first-time, first-year undergraduate students who continue at that same school until graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

*Senior Level Manager:* The individual in charge of core functions, processes, or initiatives that have a major impact on the operations and results of the system and its individual universities. A person in such senior positions develops functional strategies and translates them into tactical plans (adapted from PASSHE, 2013)

*Shared Governance:* A climate in which faculty and managers are collaboratively involved in carrying out the institution's mission and goals and in which any issues concerning mission, vision, program planning, resource allocation, and others, as appropriate, can be discussed openly by those who are responsible for each activity (adapted from Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006).

*Student Focus:* The extent to which student needs are central to the institution, and they are satisfied with their educational experience at the institution (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996).

*Supervisory Relationship:* The extent to which managers seriously consider ideas and employees are given the opportunity to be creative their work (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996).

*Teamwork:* The extent to which there is a spirit of cooperation and coordination of effort in the work team (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996).

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The following are potential limitations of this study: First, the data were collected from university managers and faculty at one public four-year university in the northeastern United States. Therefore, the findings are limited to the participants in this population. Second, the data were self-reported and thus predicated on participants accurately reporting their perceptions of their organization. Self-report bias in organizational research is likely because employees frequently believe there is a possibility that their supervisors will access their responses and retaliate (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Third, the participants were faculty and managers from one institution, so their perceptions may be somewhat similar.

Similarly, the delimitations of this study are related to the selection of the following communication variables: communication climate, personal feedback, communication with supervisors, communication with subordinates, organizational integration, media quality, informal communication, and general organizational perspective. In addition, the campus climate variables selected for the study—institutional structure, teamwork, supervisory relationship, and student focus—limit the study. Finally, focusing on only managers' and faculty members' satisfaction with organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness is a restriction of the study.

### **Summary**

Groups outside universities are calling for greater accountability and increased student retention, which in turn is putting stress on the working relationships of faculty and managers. These two groups are the principal voices in a shared-governance system responsible for the overall effectiveness of a university. Therefore, the relationship between campus climate and organizational communication is an important and timely area of study that can help managers and faculty enhance perceptions of their organization's effectiveness. These concepts have not been directly related in most previous studies.

Also, most previous studies have utilized either quantitative or qualitative methods but not both. This study uses a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these two important variables—organizational communication and campus climate—are indicators of



organizational effectiveness. In conducting this research on organizational effectiveness, communication strategies are proposed to enhance student success through organizational communication and campus climate.

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

The remainder of this study is structured as follows: Chapter 2 provides a detailed exploration of literature related to organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness; chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study; chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data, and chapter 5 discusses the implications and applications of the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The challenges that public higher education in the United States is facing are “virtually unparalleled when compared to any other point in U.S. history” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 435). The main issues are the decline of financial support, the rapidly increasing tuition rates, a call for greater accountability, an ever-diminishing number of prospective college-bound students, and the weakening of student retention rates (Bidwell, 2012; Fischer, 2011; Kingkade, 2014). However, organizational communication strategies can be developed to optimize organizational effectiveness amidst the challenges.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. In order to examine this relationship, a review of the literature was conducted focusing on organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness. The first section on organizational communication reviews the research on organizational communication factors and their impact on organizational outcomes. The second section discusses the literature on climate theory. And the third section reviews the literature on organizational effectiveness in higher education.

#### **Organizational Communication**

Throughout history, communication has been central to how humans organize themselves. However, the first major studies specifically related to “organizational communication” did not commence until the late 1940s (Tompkins & Wanca-Thibault, 2001). During this period, a positivistic, mechanistic view of communication dominated the methodological approaches to studying organizational communication. The primary focus of this research was “downward communication” or communication flowing from superiors to subordinates. These studies tended to assume a one-dimensional view of communication wherein organizational communication was thought of as the “overall degree of satisfaction an employee perceives of his total communication environment” (Redding, 1978, p. 429). As the field of organizational communication developed, the theoretical framework shifted to take into

account a more multi-dimensional view of communication wherein the context of communication was seen as vital to the effectiveness of an organization. The following definition of organizational communication exemplifies this shift: “A process through which people, acting together, create, sustain, and manage meanings through the use of verbal and nonverbal signs and symbols within a particular context” (Conrad and Poole’s, 1998, p. 5).

One particular context that is unique to organizational communication in higher education is shared governance, which influences how messages are conveyed and interpreted (Tierney & Minor, 2004). Thus, the next section of the Review of the Literature of organizational communication focuses on shared governance and the second section focuses on the multi-dimensional approach to the study of communication in organizations.

### **Shared Governance in Higher Education**

Shared governance remains a strong institutional value and constitutes an essential component of institutional identity across universities in the United States (Minor, 2003). The origin of the term can be traced to 1966 when the “Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities” was formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (Kreiser, & Robert, 2001). From the discussions that took place between these three groups a concept of shared governance was formulated on two principles: (1) “important areas of action involve at one time or another the initiating capacity and decision making of all the institutional components;” and (2) the “difference in weight of each voice, from one point to the next, should be determined by reference to the responsibility of each component for the particular matter at hand” (Kreiser, & Robert, 2001, p. 218; Birnbaum, 2004).

The general purpose of the Statement was to protect institutions of higher education from outside interference by fostering collaborative action and establishing mutual responsibility among presidents, faculty, and trustees. Such a perspective assumed that the university community was committed to the democratic ideals of “equality, common goals, respect, and participatory decision making” (Miller & Katz, 2004, p. 88), principles that are meant to ensure that one entity within an organization would not

hold excessive power and control (Birnbaum, 1989). In essence, shared governance allows for faculty, managers, and trustees (also sometimes referred to as Regents) to share in decision-making processes (Birnbaum, 1989).

Faculty members' primary responsibility within this context is perceived to be "educational matters such as faculty status and programs of instruction and research" (Birnbaum, 2004, p. 3). The faculty also are responsible for "educational policy, including the setting of institutional objectives, planning, budgeting, and the selection of managers" (Birnbaum, 2004, p. 3). The university president is considered a chief executive officer, with provosts and academic deans serving as chief decision makers of the organization (Kreiser, & Robert, 2001).

However, the Statement did not lay out a standardized framework for shared governance because universities differ widely from each other (Tierney & Minor, 2003). These differences include institutional size, culture, history, and type (Tierney & Minor, 2003). But because of a lack of a standardized framework, disagreement often exists about what shared governance means and what involvement faculty and managers should have in the decision-making processes (Birnbaum & Eckel, 2005). Tierney and Minor (2003) highlight this disagreement in their investigation of different definitions of shared governance and its relationship to faculty and manager involvement in decision making at 763 institutions across the United States. Their survey of 1,199 department chairs, 411 Academic vice provosts, and 400 senate leaders at 287 public institutions and 476 private institutions yielded the following different definitions of shared governance:

- "47% defined shared governance as 'fully collaborative decision making' or a 'collegial model' of governance. The faculty and management make decisions jointly, and consensus is the goal."
- "27 % defined the concept as 'consultative decision making' where faculty opinions and advice are sought but where authority remains with senior management and the board of trustees. This model revolves around information sharing and discussion rather than joint decision making."
- "26 % defined shared governance as 'distributed decision making,' whereby decisions are made by discrete groups responsible for specific issues. The understanding is that faculty have a right

to make decisions in certain areas, and the management and trustees in others (Tierney & Minor, 2003, p. 9).

Of particular interest to this dissertation is the finding by Tierney and Minor (2003) indicating that more than 70% of respondents believed that communication between the faculty, the president, and the governing board members was sufficient. These findings were similar across all types of institutions of higher education. However, academic vice presidents tended to think that communication was more sufficient compared to how faculty believed, with 30% of faculty indicating that communication is inadequate. Tierney and Minor (2003) cautioned against concluding that this finding means communication is irrelevant to shared governance. They suggested that managers and faculty in their study may have believed that other variables were more important to effective shared governance than communication. In fact, the researchers stated that communication between faculty and managers is a key factor for effective governance.

In another study focused more narrowly on the faculty senate's role in institutional governance, Minor (2003) found that faculty senators are generally disappointed with their involvement in meaningful decision making. The sample in this study included 150 doctoral institutions, 302 master's institutions, and 311 baccalaureate institutions. Of those, 287 were public institutions and 476 were private institutions. Of those respondents, 56% identified the lack of active faculty involvement in campus decision making as a critical challenge to effective governance. Faculty reported having the least amount of influence in areas of strategic planning and setting budget priorities. The finding is important because more than 60% of respondents reported that the most critical issues facing their institution in the upcoming year were budget shortfalls.

Even more pertinent to this study, Minor (2003) found that the quality of communication taking place between university constituents (trustees, the president, managers, and faculty) was perceived to be highly effective. Of the vice presidents surveyed in the sample, 88% reported that communication between constituents is sufficient enough to make progress or good, compared to 70% among Senate leaders, and 66% of faculty. It is important to note, therefore, that a majority of managers believed that

communication was sufficient and effective (88%), but that only 66% of faculty tended to have the same perception. Minor points out that these findings do not mean that communication is unimportant, but rather that other factors may be more important to faculty when participating in decision-making processes.

Along the same line of research, Kaplan's (2001) committee report for the American Association of University Professors examined perceptions of faculty and managers as those perceptions relate to shared governance. Kaplan surveyed a sample population of 882 institutions consisting of 350 public institutions and 532 private institutions. The respondents included: 698 managers, 589 faculty, and 117 American Association of University Professors chapter heads. When asked if the given institution had taken steps within the last 20 years to change the formal role and authorized powers of groups within the institution, the results indicated that faculty were more likely to see deans, chairs, and faculty governance bodies as having less power, with presidents and state boards as having more power. Moreover, Kaplan found that 46.9 % of faculty identified their relationship with management as cooperative while 43.79% characterized their relationship with management as conflicting but collegial. Only 9.31 % described their relationship with management as adversarial. A majority of managers characterized their relationship with faculty as cooperative (62.06%) while a minority (46.9%) described their relationship as conflicted but collegial. Very few (2.91%) identified their relationship with faculty as adversarial.

These shared-governance studies have highlighted differing perceptions of shared governance, the levels of decision making, the sufficiency of communication, and the faculty-manager relationship. In general, the studies show that faculty are more likely to be dissatisfied with their role in shared governance than are managers. However, a missing component of these studies is a focused understanding of perceptions of communication.

Forward and Czech (2007) conducted a study to provide a deeper understanding of managers' perceptions of their communication practices within a shared-governance organization. They used a metaphor analysis to uncover how Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) viewed communication, themselves, and their relationships with others in the organization. Two hundred twenty-four CAOs of the Council of

Independent Colleges completed surveys comprised of prompts suggesting particular types of metaphors related to leadership. They then completed a four-page survey soliciting metaphors about challenges to leadership in academia. Using the “constant comparative method,” four data-driven categories were constructed to explain CAOs’ perceptions of their administrative role in shared governance—hierarchical placement, relational influence, expert knowledge and competence, and irony and paradox. The metaphors created by the CAOs were then placed in each of the four categories.

CAOs tended to create metaphors of servant, cheerleader, and coach to describe their daily responsibilities and their relationship with faculty. These metaphors highlight a concern for the needs of faculty and serving others. When describing their greatest challenges to their leadership, CAOs listed the president as their most major problem, often referring to the president as a micro-manager. They also cited relationship issues that tended to be associated exclusively with faculty. CAOs identified the development of trust with faculty as one of their greatest challenges. Lastly, they described conflict with faculty as a concern, and specifically conflict related to fragmented views of the purpose of the institution. One explanation for the conflict with faculty was the CAO’s inability to communicate interpersonally with faculty.

The preceding literature review illustrates that shared governance is a valued and necessary decision-making context in higher education in the U.S. In this context, managers appear to be more satisfied than faculty with their roles. However, the previously cited literature does not adequately focus on the nature of communication in a shared-governance organization, including two-way communication, sufficient levels of communication, and broad and unending communication (Olson, 2009, Miller, 2002; Jones, 2011). Miller (2002) suggests that faculty should have an opportunity to question policies through a particular communication process as identified by each university in order to improve upon current practices. Simplicio (2006) advocated that this process be developed, utilized, and implemented with input from faculty. Others recommend enhancing communication in a university by creating campus networks while still encouraging questions about policy and procedures (Kezar, Carducci, Gallant, & McGavin, 2007). Though the recommendations mentioned above are based upon the perceptions of

managers and scholars, they do not provide a focused understanding of the communication process in the context of higher education that led to these recommendations. Therefore, the next section of this literature review will examine a specific theory of organizational communication in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of communicating in the university setting.

### **Organizational Communication in Higher Education**

Downs and Hazen's multidimensional theory of organizational communication provides an excellent framework from which to examine organizational communication in higher education. In 1977, Downs and Hazen conducted a study on organizational communication where they set out to prove that communication is multidimensional and to understand how specific dimensions of communication relate to job satisfaction. The study reflected a shift away from the focus on organizational communication as a predictor of worker productivity and profit to a focus on organizational communication as a predictor of one's satisfaction with the organization.

Down and Hazen's (1977) first phase of research consisted of administering a questionnaire that included questions derived from a detailed examination of organizational communication and organization literature, as well as other research instruments, pilot studies, and a collection of critical incidents. The questionnaire consisted of 88 items related to four communication constructs: information types, communication relationships, process factors, and global items. The survey was completed by 181 managerial and professional staff. Factor analysis and validity analysis were performed on all 88 items on the questionnaire to determine whether they differed significantly between the satisfied and the dissatisfied workers. A factor analysis was performed and yielded 10 factors that accounted for 61% of the variance.

Downs and Hazen (1977) then conducted a factor analysis on the ten factors that accounted for the majority of the variance and found that eight factors were significantly correlated with communication satisfaction, proving that communication satisfaction is a multidimensional construct. The important factors found were: communication climate, personal feedback, communication with supervisors,



communication with subordinates, organizational integration, media quality, informal communication, and general organizational perspective.

Based on these findings, Downs and Hazen (1977) began the second phase of their research. They developed a communication satisfaction questionnaire designed to measure each of the preceding eight factors, and then surveyed 510 employees in four different organizational settings. The results from this phase supported the conclusions found in the first phase of the study—that is, communication satisfaction clusters around eight factors. The third phase consisted of examining the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. Findings revealed that the dimensions of communication satisfaction correlating the most highly with job satisfaction are personal feedback, a positive communication relationship with one's supervisor, and communication climate.

Downs and Hazen's (1977) study continues to serve as the defining paradigm for investigating organizational communication. However, few of the subsequent studies have included all eight factors as variables. Most studies have focused on a particular dimension as an independent variable impacting a dependent variable often related to an organizational outcome such as commitment, motivation, or relationship satisfaction (Anderson, 2008; Czech, 2007; Gilley, Gilley, & McMillian, 2009). The next section describes each of the eight factors of organizational communication and their impact on organizational outcomes. The first of the eight factors discussed is Downs and Hazen's (1977) paradigm of organizational communication is communication climate.

**Communication climate.** An important dimension identified by Downs and Hazen (1977) as a factor of organizational communication that is still widely studied by scholars today is "communication climate." Communication climate is the degree to which communication motivates and stimulates workers to meet organizational goals; the degree to which attitudes toward communication are perceived as positive; and the extent to which superiors express knowing and understanding of problems faced by subordinates. Gibbs (1961) was one of the first communication scholars to attempt to identify particular communication behaviors that impact the general communication climate. Gibb's study developed a theoretical construct that frequently was used to study the communication climate in an organization.

His theory centered on the idea that communication is a process taking place between people, rather than a transaction based on the use of language. He hypothesized that an individual can change interpersonal relationships in an organization by improving communication. Following this conceptualization of communication, Gibb conducted a qualitative study where he recorded group discussions during training sessions occurring in a variety of organizations including higher education. His findings revealed that perceptions of communication can lead either to a defensive or a supportive communication climate and that each climate can be identified by certain communication behaviors. A defensive communication climate is characterized as evaluative, controlling, dogmatic, and conveying superiority, whereas a supportive communication climate is characterized as nonjudgmental, empathetic, open, and solution seeking. Gibbs concluded that a defensive communication climate is competitive and destructive, whereas a supportive communication climate is encouraging and open, and one where people are, therefore, less apt to distort messages based on personal anxieties and concerns.

Czech (2007) used defensive and supportive communication as a framework for examining the role that communication climates play in effective leadership. Czech (2007) investigated behaviors of university department chairs in order to provide a practical and definitive communication strategy for university personnel. For the study, she had 220 randomly selected faculty members from the Council of Independent Colleges complete a multi-page survey assessing supportive and defensive communication. The instrument also investigated the Bureaucratic, Machiavellian, and Transformational Leadership behaviors of participants' department chairs. Bureaucratic behaviors focused on using officially mandated policies and procedures, as well as enforcing rules to achieve a result. Machiavellian behaviors referred to using coercion or manipulation to accomplish an outcome. Transformational behaviors related to engaging followers by using supportive actions leading to individual growth and mutual accountability.

Czech's (2007) survey also assessed faculty members' perceived effectiveness of the department chair. Department chair effectiveness was measured by asking faculty to rate how effective their department chair was in doing his/her job, and relational satisfaction was measured by rating how satisfied they were with their chair-faculty relationship. Organizational commitment was defined as the

intention to continue in one's present role, and job satisfaction was defined as the emotional response to one's organizational role.

Czech (2007) found that effective department chairs used supportive communication behaviors characterized by problem orientation and description, while the less effective chairs used defensive communication behaviors of strategy and control. Perceived chair effectiveness explained 53% of the variance, indicating that communication behaviors were powerful predictors of perceived chair effectiveness. Moreover, chairs that used inclusive language and promoted an atmosphere of collaboration by taking into consideration everyone's input and ideas were regarded as highly effective.

Czech (2007) also explored the three types of leadership identified earlier. Her findings revealed that communication behaviors explained 17% of the variance in Bureaucracy scores, 69% in Machiavellianism scores, and 62% in Transformational Leadership. Defensive communication behaviors were highly correlated with Machiavellianism, whereas supportive communication behaviors were highly related to Transformational leadership. Yet, there was little correlation between communication behaviors and a Bureaucratic leadership style. Czech speculates that a relationship did not exist because policies and procedures expressed in written form are straight forward, negating the need for face-to-face interaction.

This study also explored job satisfaction and organizational commitment and found that supportive communication behaviors explained 56% of the variance in faculty job satisfaction, plus 41% of the variance in organizational commitment. This finding demonstrated that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are highly correlated with the department chair exhibiting supportive communication behaviors and creating an atmosphere where faculty feel free to share ideas (Czech, 2007).

Previous studies show that a communication climate viewed as defensive is typified by interactions that are destructive and competitive, whereas a communication climate that is supportive is characterized by exchanges that are encouraging and open (Gibbs, 1961). Accordingly, effective department chairs who engage in supportive communication are seen as highly effective (Czech, 2007).

Generally, satisfaction with the communication climate correlates highly with job satisfaction (Downs & Haze, 1977), organizational commitment (Czech, 2007), and less distortion of information based on individual perceptions (Gibbs, 1961). Therefore, the communication climate may be essential to campus climate and organizational effectiveness. However, communication climate is not the only factor of communication that has been identified as impacting organizational outcomes. Another critical factor of communication is communication with subordinates (Downs & Hazen, 1977).

**Communication with subordinates.** Communication with subordinates takes into consideration the extent to which subordinates are responsive to downward communication, and the extent to which subordinates feel responsible for initiating upward communication (Downs & Hazen, 1977). Downward communication flows from upper management to lower levels in the organizational hierarchy, whereas upward communication flows from lower-level employees (subordinates) to upper-level management (Kreps, 1990). When examining the flow of communication, Downs and Hazen (1977) focused on the flow of communication from subordinates, as well as the extent to which superiors listen and pay attention when communicating and offering guidance for solving job-related problems.

The impact of downward communication on organizational outcomes in a university setting was investigated by White, Vanc, and Stafford (2010). Their study explored the downward communication flow from top managers. They also investigated employees' communication preferences, employees' sense of community within the organization, and how those variables impacted employees' willingness to advocate for the university. In the study, a purposeful sample was used for all employment classifications (top management, professional employees, and exempt and nonexempt staff) at a large, multi-campus, geographically-dispersed university. One hundred forty-seven employees were interviewed and their responses transcribed. The researchers used the constant comparative method to analyze the interview transcriptions until themes emerged. Their findings revealed that faculty perceived top-down communication to dominate the communication process at the university due to the bureaucratic structure of the organization. They also found that faculty wanted to receive information directly from the chancellor because employees' perceived that information coming from managers was distorted.

Conversely, they perceived of information coming directly from the top as more consistent and less ambiguous than information coming from middle-level managers. Employees who had an interpersonal relationship with the Chancellor or top managers were more satisfied with the information that flowed downward from the top, and they felt a greater responsibility to advocate on behalf of the university. Unlike other employees, top managers tended to be highly satisfied with both downward and upward information flow. However, the same managers acknowledged that there was a lack of clarity about what was considered common knowledge in the organization and which information should or should not be conveyed downward. Top managers also pointed out that they were unsure of what happened to the information once it reaches the level below them. According to the researchers, an unexpected finding in their study was that faculty believed they received insufficient information about the organization, whereas top management and lower-level employees felt they received sufficient information.

White, Vanc, and Stafford (2010) also found that feeling well-informed in an organization was strongly related to feeling that a sense of community exists within the organization, which in turn strongly relates to an employee's willingness to advocate for the organization. Additionally, findings revealed that face-to-face communication, interpersonal interactions, and dialogical interactions are highly valued channels for feedback, with the most satisfaction found in units when a top manager conducted walk-about.

During interviews a majority of participants in the study initially identified email as a preferred method of receiving information but later described it as an insufficient communication channel due to the large volume of emails received on a daily basis. The numerous amount of emails resulted in filtering emails to be read at a later time, or deleting emails altogether. A paradoxical finding in this study was that managers think employees are well-informed due to the wealth of information that can be found on the university website. However, employees thought of the website as a library of information, not a channel for communication. White, Vanc, and Stafford (2010) also found that the relationship between feeling well-informed and feeling a sense of community was due to employees having ample opportunity to engage in face-to-face interaction with the Chancellor. The researchers attributed a significant finding

of their study—that high satisfaction with downward communication creates positive organizational outcomes—to those at the lower levels of the organization perceiving that they have an interpersonal relationship with those in top leadership positions.

In contrast, research related to upward communication flow has shown a general lack of satisfaction with upward organizational communication (Gibson & Hodgetts, 1991; Wilcoxson, 2007). Several reasons explain the dissatisfaction with the flow of upward communication, including lack of receptiveness, fear of reprisal, lack of time that supervisors give to listening, and the feeling that ideas are changed as they are transmitted upwards (McClellan, Heald, & Edney, 1980; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Upward communication flow also is hampered by members of an organization remaining silent when they feel uncomfortable speaking to superiors about their concerns with leadership (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003).

Because there is a gap in the current research related to upward communication in higher education, studies in the context of secondary education were consulted for this study. The most recent study investigated the relationship between school climate and teacher attitudes toward upward communication of school-related information. Rafferty (2003) studied teachers in open-climate and closed-climate schools to determine if their perceptions and attitudes regarding upward communication differed from their principal's. Rafferty's (2003) study consisted of 503 secondary education teachers, counselors, and library-media specialists in comprehensive high schools completing a questionnaire combining two existing surveys: the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Secondary School, and the Communication Climate Inventory. Open-climate schools tended to have "confident, cheerful, sociable and resourceful principals," whereas "closed-climate schools tended to have evasive, transitional, worried, and frustrated" principals (Rafferty, 2003, p. 53). The study conceptualized supportive communication as teachers' perceptions of their opportunities for upward communication and the principals' communication supportiveness.

Using a *t*-test for independent means and chi-square analysis, the researcher found a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between teachers' perceptions of open-climate schools and closed-climate

schools. There also was a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of an open-school climate and the perception that principals made upward communication easy; that the principal encouraged upward communication; and that teachers' opinions made a difference in day-to-day decisions. The opposite was the case for teachers who perceived of their school as being a closed-climate school. Additionally, findings revealed a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the willingness of teachers to upwardly communicate information about strategic school issues in an open climate. A significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) also was found in the teachers' unwillingness to communicate upward in closed-climate schools. A chi-square analysis of specific work-related school issues showed that teachers in open-climate schools were much more willing to talk to their principals about classroom management issues, needs of students, and instructional methods. In sum, Rafferty (2003) found that communication patterns creating an open climate are more conducive to the free flow of ideas between principals and teachers.

Rafferty's (2003) research illustrates that top down communication tends to dominate the flow of communication in a university setting. Studies also show that satisfaction with downward communication has a positive relationship to organizational effectiveness in terms of enhancing feelings of belonging to the organization and increasing feelings of comfort about communicating the needs of students upward. Thus far, the aforementioned studies have isolated two dimensions of communication—communication climate and communication flow—as essential to the study of organizational communication. Two additional dimensions that are critical to gaining a clearer picture of how organizational communication impacts organizational effectiveness are organizational integration and general organizational perspective.

**Organizational integration and organizational perspective.** Organizational integration is the measure of satisfaction that individuals have with the information they receive about the departmental environment (Downs & Hazen, 1977). In particular, it measures their satisfaction with the amount of and quality of information regarding departmental policies and plans, and requirements of one's job (Downs & Hazen, 1977). Scholars also have examined general organizational perspective as a communication dimension (Downs & Hazen, 1977). This dimension focuses on information provided to employees about the overall functioning of an organization—specifically whether employees receive

information about changes in the organization, organizational policies and procedures, and financial standing (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Gilley, Gilley, & McMillian, 2009). Communication about the general organizational environment is an essential component of individual motivation to perform well continuously, especially in organizations undergoing change (Gilley et al., 2009).

One study that investigated organizational integration and general organizational perspective focused on the communication process between managers, faculty, and staff at a southern comprehensive university (Thompson, 2000). In addition, the study examined the interaction of gender and number of years employed by the institution. Two hundred sixty-five employees (46% managers, 27% faculty, and 29% staff) completed a survey composed of questions related to communication practices. Five questions on the survey related to being kept informed about university news and activities; five were related to the preferred method of receiving information; five were related to perceptions of two-way communication; and the remaining five were related to demographic information. Results from multiple linear regression analysis showed no significant perceptual differences of the communication process among managers, faculty, and staff. In sum, participants felt that they were kept well-informed, that communication between superiors and subordinates was two-way, and that they had a good understanding of the goals of the university. The results of Thompson's (2000) study are quite different than the findings in White, Vanc, and Stafford's (2010) study. The difference in Thompson's (2000) findings compared to the study that found dissatisfaction with the communication process could be due to the study's over reliance on a sample population of a majority of managers and the fact that the research was conducted at one university.

Another study related to organizational integration and organizational perspective focused on the methods used by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) when communicating the strategic planning process to staff at an educational institute in New Zealand. Wood (1999) used a case-study methodology consisting of three structured interviews with chief executives, two questionnaires administered to 100 randomly selected staff members, two information-sharing sessions, and a number of management meetings where information was collected. Wood's (1999) findings revealed that face-to-face meetings are one of the



preferred methods for staff to receive information from the CEO about the overall state of the organization. Staff identified the grapevine as a primary source of information about what was taking place in the organization when managers did not provide timely information.

In a related study, Gilley et al. (2009) investigated employees' perceptions of their manager's ability to effectively implement changes in the organization. Accordingly, a leadership survey was administered to 513 students in masters and doctoral programs who also were working professionals. Findings revealed that communication effectiveness reflects the greatest positive correlation with a managers' abilities to implement change, meaning that communication is a significant predictor of change effectiveness ( $p < .05$ ). This finding substantiates previous studies showing that effective communication is essential to implementing organizational change. However, this research goes a step further by concluding that the acceptance of change is predicated on the specific leadership behavior of communicating effectively with others.

The preceding section of this literature review has focused on flow of communication as related to individual groups within the organization, as well as communication related to the organization in general. Next, the literature review turns to communication related to the individual, also referred to as the "personal feedback" dimension of communication.

**Personal feedback.** Personal feedback can be the most predictive variable associated with job performance, while supervisory communication about individual performance can be the most predictive variable related to employees' intention to leave the organization (Tsai, Chuang, & Hsieh, 2009). This dimension of communication is referred to as personal feedback, and it examines communication that is associated with personal achievements and work (Downs & Hazen, 1977). More specifically, this communication factor measures satisfaction with information about performance. In the context of higher education, the most immediate feedback is given by colleagues within the unit in which a faculty member works (Anderson, 2008). This dimension was studied as "collegial" communication by Anderson (2008) who investigated faculty perceptions of collegial support and department climate. Two hundred sixty-two faculty at a large state university were surveyed to predict

their global assessment of departmental support based on the relational messages received from department chairs. Anderson found that positive and negative relational messages received during collegial interaction were related to perceptions of organizational support and that perceptions of this support were gender based. According to Anderson (2008):

Positive and negative messages impacted perceptions of the ‘individuals’ sense of relative competence and belongingness in their departments, their perceptions of the extent to which gender is salient in their interactions with colleagues, their level of identification with their departments, and their perceived departmental support (p. 11).

In the study, female faculty members reported that they were more aware of negative messages about their professional competence and that they were more aware of gender in interactions. Females also indicated that they felt less departmental support than males. In other words, results of the study show that males’ relational communication contains more positive expectations for interactions with department colleagues than females. Anderson (2008) concludes that further research is needed to create a complete and an accurate typology of relational messages in an organizational setting.

Thus far, researchers have attempted to quantify perceptions that employees have of communication and how those perceptions are related to specific dimensions of organizational outcomes such as employee job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation (Czech, 2007; Downs & Hazen, 1977; Gilley et al., 2009). In these studies, researchers generated findings showing that a significant association exists between satisfaction with particular types of communication factors and perceptions of organizational climate and effectiveness. Likewise, investigators also have hypothesized that major forms of company media, such as email and web pages, impact employee perceptions of organizational outcomes and effectiveness (Cho, Ramgolam, Schaefer, & Sandlin, 2011; Daft and Langle, 1986).

**Media quality.** The channel by which the message travels from the source to the recipient is also an important factor of organizational communication. Downs and Hazen (1977) referred to this dimension of communication as “media quality.” Of primary interest to this dimension is the extent to which meetings are well organized, directives are clearly expressed, organizational publications are

helpful, and the amount of communication in the organization is adequate. Daft and Langle's (1986) Information Richness Theory (IRT) has become the theoretical standard for studies examining the impact of the channel on the conveyance of organizational messages. IRT is based on the assumption that the capacity of channels varies in their ability to carry different types of information accurately. Research has shown that the most efficient channel for conveying messages with multiple possible meanings and a degree of uncertainty is face-to-face communication; whereas messages related to tasks that are simple, straightforward, and lack uncertainty can be communicated via written text or emails (Fulk & Collins- Jarvis, & 2001).

Because of all of the different channels that are used for communication in an organization—emails, memos, blogs, telephone calls, team meetings, emails, text messages—employees often experience communication overload. Communication overload has been associated with the inability of members of an organization to use information to make decisions, a lack of context in which to understand information, and an increase in anxiety (Bawden & Robinson, 2009; Cho et al., 2011). Cho et al. (2011) investigated perceptions of effects of communication overload and channel synchronicity on organizational identification and job satisfaction. Channel synchronicity pertains to the perception of how fast or slow a message is received, and how quickly a corresponding response is conveyed. A low synchronous channel corresponds to the perception of a delay in delivery and a delay in reply, whereas as a high synchronous channel corresponds to the perception of a quick delivery and a quick response. For instance, face-to-face communication is a highly synchronous channel, but email is considered a low synchronous channel.

Cho et al.'s study (2001) consisted of 903 staff at a large southwestern governmental agency completing a survey related to communication channels, which was derived from Downs Communication Audit Scale (1988). Six items on the survey were related to new communication channels such as blogs, emails, and instant messaging. Findings showed that individuals who utilized low synchronous communication channels reported an increase in feelings of communication overload while those who used high synchronous communication channels reported a decrease in feelings of communication

overload. The study also revealed that low synchronous channels of communication are less useful for increasing organizational identification of employees who perceive that they are overloaded by communication. Perhaps the most interesting discovery in this study is that communication overload can increase an employee's job satisfaction. The researchers speculate that this finding may be due to an employee who continuously receives information about what is taking place in the organization as feeling "in" the communication loop.

As the research shows, organizational communication impacts an array of dimensions related to organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, job commitment, and organizational identification. Studies presented in this literature review thus far have focused on communication that is disseminated and approved formally within the organization. What has yet to be explored is how the communication that occurs in less formal spaces impacts perceptions of organizational outcomes.

**Horizontal informal communication.** Studies related to horizontal informal communication focus on the perceptions of coworker communication and grapevine communication on employee satisfaction by investigating the extent to which communication between colleagues is perceived as accurate and free-flowing (Downs & Hazen, 1977). Horizontal informal communication is communication among members of the organization who are at the same hierarchical level (Kreps, 1990). Horizontal informal communication serves the following organizational purposes: facilitates the coordination of tasks; provides a mechanism for coworkers to share information; offers a tool for problem solving and conflict management among coworkers; and serves as a means of mutual support for colleagues (Lee & Zwerman, 1975)

The precise characteristics of informal communication networks utilizing horizontal communication are difficult to define because they are situational and spontaneous (Subramanian, 2006). Thus, gossip communication, grapevine communication and coworker communication have been neglected areas of research in organizational communication due to the difficulty of studying them (Madlock & Booth-Butterfield, 2012; Waddington, 2011). Such networks can damage formal communication systems by spreading gossip, which can create dysfunction within the organization

(Subramanian, 2006). One rare study indicated that the grapevine is influential but often has an adverse impact on the organization as a whole (Newstrom et al., 1974). Studies are trending toward this area of research due to a shift away from bureaucratic ideals of the past to postmodern or post-bureaucratic principles, which tend to focus on loosely structured networks, management by goals, and visions rather than detailed rules (Heide & Simonsson, 2011).

Madlock and Booth-Butterfield (2012) examined informal horizontal communication by investigating the prevalence of relational maintenance behaviors on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, and work alienation. Participants included 276 working adults from various organizations, with a majority (10.5%) working for educational organizations. A survey was administered to each participant, and findings showed that 88% of employees engaged in coworker relational maintenance strategies. Additionally, results showed that a significant correlation ( $p > .05$ ) exists between coworker relational maintenance behaviors and organizational commitment and communication satisfaction. The researchers concluded that coworkers use communication to enhance workplace relationships and work-related attitudes.

The studies reviewed above found that communication has a significant impact on organizational outcomes as it relates to implementing change, enhancing satisfaction with one's jobs, encouraging commitment to the organization, and fostering leadership effectiveness. Further, ineffective communication has been found to create an inefficient organization where members of an organization become more likely to distort messages and less prone to communicate upward about issues and concerns. While the aforementioned studies have attempted to determine the relationship between organizational communication and interpersonal relationships, communication climate and job satisfaction in higher education, they have not explored how climate might be an outcome of communication. According to Kreps (1990), the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of an organization can be judged by the quality of organizational communication and the interpretations of the quality of organizational life, which in a university setting is known as campus climate.

## **Campus Climate**

Investigating the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate is important because perceptions and attitudes within an organization unfold as people experience actions and interactions (Denison, 1996; Peterson & Spencer, 1990). One of the more common definitions of organizational climate is: “the current common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life and its members' perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions” (Peterson & Spencer, 1990, p. 7). Peterson and Spencer (1990) suggest that there are three main features of organizational climate: (1) its emphasis on common-participant views of a vast array of organizational phenomena that allow for comparison among groups or over time; (2) its focus on current patterns of beliefs and behaviors; and (3) its ephemeral or malleable character. In addition to these essential features of climate, Peterson and Spencer (2000) identified three broad categories of climate: (1) objective climate, focusing on “patterns of behavior or formal activity that can be observed directly and objectively” (p. 11); (2) perceived climate, focusing on impressions that individuals have about how an organization actually functions; and (3) psychological climate, focusing on how people feel about their work, including loyalty, satisfaction, and belonging.

Because the concept of “climate” has evolved so much over the years, it is important to trace its history. Much of the climate research appears to be grounded in Kurt Lewin’s (1951) Gestalt psychology. This theory, as it relates to organizational climate, suggests that climate in an organization is the sense that people make of experience and behaviors. One of the first studies to examine climate was Lewin, Lippit, and White’s (1939) assessment of the impact of the psychological conditions created by leaders in a group home for boys. This study paved the way for future climate studies because it introduced the concept of climate as psychological conditions created by a leader’s behavior (Schneider, 2000). During the 1960s and 70s, climate studies dominated organizational literature. However, the robust period of climate research almost came to a halt because researchers were not discovering the precise dimensions of campus climate (Schneider, 2000). Researchers also had difficulty determining how to interpret the data from their studies (Schneider, 2000). Additionally, there were the following issues with methods of data

analysis that confounded researchers' findings: (a) the individual level for an organizational construct was inappropriate; (b) the individual level of analysis was measuring job satisfaction but not climate; and (c) the reliability of data were questionable when data were aggregated to produce the organizational level variable (Schneider, 2000). Thus, a distinction was made between "organizational climate" at the organizational level and "psychological climate" at the individual level (James & Jones, 1974).

Another unit of analysis that emerged in climate studies was the "subsystem," "subunit," or "group climate" (Awal & Stumpf, 1981; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974). The subsystems perspective argued that perceptions are influenced by experiences that one has within the immediate environment of the organization. According to this point of view, it is inappropriate only to assess perceptions at the organizational level because members of an organization interact with a subsystem environment (Awal & Stumpf, 1981; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974). Powell and Butterfield (1978) theorized that organizational climate viewed from this perspective is "a property of subsystems in organizations and those subsystems may consist of organizational members taken individually, in groups formed on any basis, or as a whole" (p. 155). They conclude "climate exists independently for separate subsystems and, in fact, the relationship may but does not necessarily exist between climates for separate subsystems" (p. 15).

Problems with measuring climate at the subunit level and then aggregating those measurements to the organizational level persisted. Some researchers began to focus solely on finding a statistical model for conducting research at the organizational level. Other complications occurred as well. For instance, researchers could not find any indication that a robust relationship existed between climate and organizational outcomes. The lack of specific conclusions was attributed to the amorphous nature of climate (Schneider, 2000). These issues resulted in the research focusing on a particular dimension of climate rather than an organizational-level climate (Schneider, 2000).

Meanwhile as climate researchers grappled with statistical measurements, other organizational communication researchers began to study culture as an alternative to finding the aggregate of individual experiences in an organization (Schneider, 2000). Thus, organizational cultural studies emerged in the 1980s alongside critical cultural theory with both becoming primary frameworks for

studying organizations. These studies relied mainly on qualitative research methods to explore the aggregate of individuals' experiences in organizations. Utilizing a qualitative research was regarded as a more viable procedure for understanding organizational-level culture because researchers could analyze the shared experiences of individuals (Schneider, 2000). However, this approach still does not present a clear method to measure the variances of the experiences being shared by individuals (Schneider, 2000).

One study that examined these quantitative methodological issues was a campus climate study by Moran and Volkwein (1988). They set out to answer two major questions related to campus climate: (1) does climate have greater relevance at the organizational level, or at the subunit level; and (2) in what ways do organizations with positive climates differ with those with negative climates? They used existing data from nine institutions, yielding 2,937 respondents from the Higher Education Management Institutes (HEMI) data bank. The data consisted of responses to a survey that focused on board members, staff, presidents, managers, faculty, and students' perceptions of thirty-six items related to organizational climate dimensions. The instrument addressed differences in campus climate among institutions to determine if climate significantly distinguishes institutions from each other. Such a finding would substantiate the claim in the literature that climate is an organizational-level attribute (Moran and Volkwein, 1988).

Moran and Volkwein (1988) also examined data from two of the nine organizations to analyze correlations between organizational roles, work groups, and perceptions of organizational climate. There were significant effects for organization role (e.g. faculty or manager) and work group (academic departments) but not for length of service (number of years at the institution). Further, Moran and Volkwein (1988) found that the primary effect of an organizational role does not account for as much of the variance in organizational climate as do work groups.

Moran and Volkwein (1988) also attempted to determine whether the organizational climate scores are significantly more positive for managers than faculty. Their analysis showed that the perceptions of managers and faculty were significantly different, with managers having a more positive perception of



organizational climate. Additionally, they examined the impact of roles within each institution—not across institutions—and found that managers have a more positive perception of organizational climate than faculty. They surmise that in institutions of higher education climate is a construct that may operate more robustly at the intra-organizational (within work groups) level than the organizational level.

Lastly, Moran and Volkwein (1988) explored significant differences between campuses with positive versus negative perceptions of campus climate. Their analysis revealed that the articulation of goals and performance standards is more important than management and faculty relations. Moran and Volkwein (1988) concluded that in higher education, work groups have a strong effect on determining climate, a finding that is in contrast to studies on more general populations of organizations. They hypothesize that this discrepancy may be due to faculty relating extensively to the organization through their departments, which limits the perception that an organizational-level climate exists.

To examine the extent of faculty and managers differing perceptions of campus climate, Peterson and White (1992) examined the impact of organizational culture and organizational and administrative climate on faculty motivational climate. Organizational and administrative climate included members' perceptions of five types of organizational and managerial behavior related to undergraduate education in their institutions: (1) the institutional emphasis on the academic management policies or practices in thirteen functional areas; (2) the patterns of academic innovativeness; (3) the challenge of work and professional treatment in the academic workplace; (4) the academic resource availability, and (5) the degree of academic administrative support (Peterson & White, 1992).

The sample for their study consisted of three community colleges, three private liberal arts colleges, and four comprehensive universities that had participated in a study of the Organizational and Administrative Context for Teaching and Learning conducted at the National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (NCRIPTAL). These institutions were selected from a population of 1,053 institutions that responded to a national survey of Academic Management Practices that was sent to 2,300 institutions of postsecondary education. The 10 universities selected for the study reported a broad range of academic management practices existing on their campuses, as well as an

institution-wide effort to improve undergraduate education (Peterson & White, 1992).

While the community colleges varied in terms of urban-rural locations, the liberal arts and comprehensive institutions represented both urban and rural areas. Data were collected using the Organizational Climate for Teaching and Learning Survey. The survey included sections measuring the institutional culture, the organizational and administrative climate for undergraduate teaching and learning, and faculty motivation. A total of 1,123 faculty responses and 381 manager responses were received. Findings revealed that faculty and managers tended to agree on indices of institutional culture but not on indices of organizational and administrative climate. Interestingly, managers and faculty differed on only 7 of 18 indices of academic purpose and institutional culture, but they differed on all 20 of the organizational and administrative climate indices, revealing that managers more than faculty tended to have an idealized view of their institutions as being more value oriented, innovative, and collegial. In a four-year public university setting, managers saw their institutions as having a concern for values based education and for being leaders in undergraduate education in a teamwork-oriented institution; by comparison, faculty at public universities saw their institutions as responsive to the marketplace (Peterson & White, 1992).

The primary variable (29% of the variance) in Peterson and White's (1992) study of climate factors influencing faculty satisfaction was "education mission and goals." This finding was similar to that of Moran and Volkwein (1988) who found that the clear articulation of objectives and performance standards is correlated with faculty perceptions of a stronger campus climate rather than with a weaker campus climate. Managers in Peterson and White's (1992) research emphasized "professionalism in the academic workplace" (24% of the variance), followed by "academic decision making" (6% of the variance) as a key to what they believed contributed to faculty satisfaction.

Therefore it appears, from the perspective of faculty, an institution that focuses on teamwork, emphasizes educational mission and goals, and stresses undergraduate education (one that is consistent with a cohesive collegial model) is highly correlated to faculty satisfaction. From the perspective of managers, a climate of professionalism in the academic workplace appears to be the primary predictor of

faculty satisfaction. Peterson and White (1992) concluded: “significant contrasts in faculty and administrative perceptions in a consistent direction point to the need to examine the impact of such differences on other institutional variables” (p. 202). Peterson & White (1992) speculated that the perceptual variances are due to different implicit cognitive models of how institutions function as well as how institutions should operate.

Another study that investigated the difference between faculty and managers views of campus climate found that managers have a more positive view of campus climate than do faculty (Thomas, 2008). Thomas (2008) surveyed 957 employees (managers, faculty, and staff) from four evangelical universities located in the Southwest, Midwest, and Eastern United States, in order to determine if perceptions of organizational climate were related to perceptions of organizational commitment. Managers made up the majority of participants (76.7%), followed by faculty (47.4%), and then staff (43.2%). Participants were asked to complete the Personal Assessment of College Environment Survey and The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire.

Thomas (2008) found that both managers and faculty were satisfied with the overall campus climate and each of the four campus climate dimensions—institutional structure, supervisory relationship, teamwork, and student focus. However, managers had a slightly more favorable view of their campus climate than faculty or staff. Results failed to find any correlations between climate factors and commitment types.

As shown in this portion of the literature review, climate theorists hypothesize that climate emerges as people experience actions and interactions (Denison, 1996) and that climate can be analyzed at the organizational level, the subunit level, and the individual level. Furthermore, Moran and Volkwein (1988) proved that climate in a university setting is an organizational-level attribute. They also found that work groups have a strong effect on determining perceptions of organizational climate. Additionally, campus climate research has shown that managers have a more positive perception of organizational climate than do faculty (Moran & Volkwein, 1988; Peterson & White, 1992), which is similar to organizational communication research findings. Specifically, managers, more than faculty,

seemed to have an idealized view of their institutions as being value oriented, innovative, and collegial (Peterson & White, 1992). Managers also tended to perceive that their institutions have a concern for education and for being leaders in undergraduate education in an innovative, teamwork-oriented institution; by comparison, faculty saw their university as responsive to the marketplace (Peterson & White, 1992).

Overall, the primary variable that was found to influence faculty satisfaction with campus climate was “education mission and goals” (Peterson & White, 1992). More recent studies have moved away from focusing on legitimizing the study of organizational climate and the differences between the perceptions of managers and faculty. The focus has now turned to sub-group membership based on gender, race, and ethnicity.

### **Gender, Race, and Ethnicity**

Campus climate research related to gender, race, and ethnicity has become a central focus of research for institutions of higher education (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Hurtado, 1992; Rankin, 2006; Worthington, 2008). For some groups, their “insider” or “outsider” status—based on sub-group memberships such as gender, race, or ethnicity—impact their perceptions of campus climate (Allen, 2003). In a review of literature related to the quality of methods of measurement and assessment in campus climate research, Worthington (2008) found that campus climate surveys consistently showed that White heterosexual males tended to view campus climate more positively than historically oppressed groups. Moreover, underrepresented groups viewed institutions as neglecting campus climate for those groups who have been historically oppressed (Worthington, 2008). While there is an abundance of studies related to race and campus climate, most focus on students’ perceptions of campus climate (Hurtado, 1992; Rankin, 2006), some focus on faculty perceptions of campus climate (Hamilton, 2006; Worthington, 2008), but hardly any focus on managements’ perceptions of campus climate.

In general, universities are looking at demographic variables such as faculty ethnicity, race, and gender to better understand the dimensions of campus climate that lead to a toxic campus climate

(Hamilton, 2006). Assessing campus climate for faculty of color has been of particular importance because recruiting and retaining faculty of color has been strongly correlated to the retention and success of students and junior faculty of color (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009). Similarly, turnover rates are higher for faculty of color than White faculty (Piercy et al., 2005). Faculty of color, however, tend to stay at universities where the campus climate is perceived as positive, meaning that the campus environment is viewed as having a strong sense of community and autonomy; as having pervasive institutional support; and as having an opportunity for people of color to have an active voice (Piercy et al., 2005).

Using critical race theory, Jayakumar et al. (2009) examined how racial climate issues affect retention of faculty of color. Data for the study were obtained from a 2001 national survey of teaching faculty collected as part of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Institutional variables were drawn from the Integrative Postsecondary Education Database System (IPEDS). There were 338 four-year institutions and 78 two-year institutions represented in the data set. Of the four-year colleges and universities, 120 were public institutions while the remaining 218 were private. The data set included 37,582 faculty from 358 institutions. The sample consisted of 942 faculty identifying as Black/African American, 1,630 as Asian/Asian American, 1,097 as Latina/o, and 33,451 as White faculty. Cross-tabulation analyses were used to explore the relationships between faculty intent to leave the academy and racial/ethnic identity, overall job satisfaction, and racial climate. Jayakumar et al. (2009) found that three-fourths of the faculty of color rated the climate at their institutions to be moderately or highly negative. However, they also found that the racial climate of an institution did not appear to deter Black, Asian, or Latina/o faculty from continuing with their jobs at the university.

Scholars who have explored gender aspects of campus climate have produced similar findings to those who have studied campus climate for people of color. That is, there are significant gender-based differences, with women more likely to perceive of inequities in salary and rank and less inclined

to agree that their managers hold female and male faculty in the same regard (Duggan, 2008). According to Duggan (2008), females view campus climate in much the same way as their male counterparts, yet they differ from males in their perceptions of discrimination. In August and Waltman's (2004) study of 247 female tenured and tenure-track faculty conducted at a Research I university, the findings showed that the most significant variables of career satisfaction for women are environmental conditions, with a positive departmental climate being most critical to career satisfaction. A positive departmental climate means having good relations with the department chair, influence within the department, and positive relationships with students.

In addition to findings suggesting that individual and group perceptions of campus climate vary, scholars also have examined four key variables that impact perceptions of campus climate: (1) institutional structure (Moran & Volkwien 1988; Peterson & White, 1992; Somers, Cofer, Austin, Inman, Martin, Rook, Stokes, & Wilkinson, 1998); (2) teamwork (Moran & Volkwien 1988; Peterson & White, 1992); (3) supervisory relationship (Allen, 2003; Sullivan, Reichard, & Shumate, 2005); and (4) student focus (Ayers, 2005). Each of these variables and their impact on perceptions of campus climate will be explored in the proceeding sections.

### **Institutional Structure and Climate**

Institutional structure is the extent to which the actions of an institution reflect its mission and the extent to which decisions are made at the appropriate level (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996). In this respect, researchers have found that perceptions of climate vary, depending upon the structure of the institution (Peterson & White, 1992; Somers et al., 1998; Sullivan, et al., 2005). For instance, research shows that employment at two-year versus four-year institutions impacts perceptions of campus climate (Somers et al., 1998). Peterson and White (1992) found that faculty and managers had differing perceptions of campus climate that were more pronounced in the community colleges and comprehensive universities than in the liberal arts colleges. Managers at community colleges and public universities tended to have a more positive perception of campus climate than did faculty. Similarly in liberal arts colleges, faculty and managers tended to have more positive perceptions of campus climate

than those in community colleges or public universities (Peterson & White, 1992). Research also has shown that faculty tend to have a higher level of satisfaction with the campus climate if the institutions stresses its mission and goals, and if its mission and goals are clearly articulated (Moran & Volkwien 1988; Peterson & White 1992).

### **Teamwork and Campus Climate**

Teamwork refers to the extent to which there is a spirit of cooperation within a work team and the extent to which the work team coordinates its efforts with appropriate individuals and groups (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996). As stated previously, research has shown that faculty are more satisfied with the campus climate if the institution is focused on teamwork whereas managers are more satisfied if the climate is supportive, collegial, and professional (Peterson & White, 1992). Interestingly, management and faculty working as a team was not associated with a stronger climate in previous studies (Moran & Volkwein, 1988). These finding lead to the hypothesis that relations in academic departments are more important for faculty than relationships with other members of the university (Moran & Volkwien, 1988).

### **Supervisory Relationships and Campus Climate**

Supervisory relationships and campus climate refer to the extent to which supervisors seriously consider ideas and the degree to which organizational members are given the opportunity to be creative in their work (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996). Research has shown that at universities where there is a collegial, shared-governance approach to strategic change, there is more likely to be a climate of security, whereas at universities with a more managerial approach, there is more likely to be a climate of insecurity (Allen 2003). Such a climate of insecurity (or security) can be shared at an organizational level and rooted in sub-cultures. In such climates, insecurity can be felt throughout the entire organization or in pockets of the organization that are the most impacted by strategic change efforts.

Allen (2003) conducted research at 12 institutions of higher education in the UK that were undergoing strategic change. Allen (2003) discovered that a more positive campus climate existed at institutions of higher education with “collegial” approach to governance, whereas a more negative campus climate existed in institutions with a “managerial” approach to governance. Specifically, at

institutions where there was a perception of an administrative collegial approach there was more of a willingness to be open and share information, and to engage in a cognitive conflict rather than affective conflict, resulting in more positive interpersonal relationships. In essence, the collegial approach helped to create a sense of consensus, a more widespread understanding and acceptance of decisions, and a commitment to the university. Allen (2003) also found that managers who use coercive power, make frequent, unpredictable changes in policies and procedures, and have a lack of openness and collaboration are more likely to create insecure environments, conflict, and a resistance to change.

In another study related to supervisors, Sullivan et al. (2005) examined the campus climate of a community college that was undergoing a leadership change. This particular college was moving from an authoritarian, bureaucratic model of leadership to a collegial, shared-governance model of leadership. Using a modified PACE survey to establish a baseline for campus climate, researchers found that overall the college was rated as “consultative,” meaning that leaders had some confidence in employees, decisions were made at upper levels rather than at lower levels, and most influence was exercised through rewards. However, findings also showed that there was a need to improve communication, organizational structure, and staff ability to influence decisions. Two years later, after several change strategies were implemented to improve upon participatory governance, the staff was surveyed again and the college was rated at the upper end of consultative scale, “only .01 points away from a full-scale collaborative system” (Sullivan et al., 2005, p. 438).

### **Student Focus and Campus Climate**

Student Focus is the extent to which students’ needs are central to what members in the organization do and the extent to which students are satisfied with their educational experience at the institution (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996). Ayers (2005) conducted a qualitative study examining institutional discourses relating to climate at a rural community college undergoing organizational renewal. Using a discourse analysis, Ayers (2005) investigated how ideological frames of reference impact the ways in which organizational members interpret the signs and symbols embedded in the organization's climate. He hypothesized that members of various subsystems within the institution



differ in the ways they make meaning of the signs and symbols of organizational climate. Ayers (2005) collected documents, observed behavior in meetings, and conducted semi-structured interviews with eight academic chairs and 11 faculty members. From an analysis of the interviews, documents and meetings, four organizational climate conditions emerged: power, collaboration, technology, and shared vision. Members of the organization held divergent views of power, collaboration, and technology, but similar views of the purpose of the college. That is, meanings assigned to the variable “shared focus” consistently reflected a focus on student learning and engagement. To pinpoint the differing perceptions of climate, Ayers (2005) recommended an analysis of detailed data relating to individual characteristics, including divisions or departments, job category, level on the hierarchy, and gender, among others.

Thus far, the literature reviewed on organizational communication and campus climate has shown that both impact perceptions of the institution and the behavior of those in an organization. Studies also show that faculty and manager perceptions of both communication and climate differ, with managers having a more positive view of both. Moreover, previous research has shown that both individually are key to particular dimensions of organizational performance, including the retention of students and faculty, the job satisfaction of faculty, the commitment to the institution, and the level of satisfaction with the institution. However, previous studies have not investigated if the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate is an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

### **Organizational Effectiveness**

The primary focus of this study is organizational communication and its relationship to campus climate and how they together are an indicator of organizational effectiveness. When people communicate, climate develops and unfolds (Denison, 1996). This process may impact perceptions of organizational effectiveness in higher education. However, very little research has been done on the dimensions of organizational effectiveness in higher education (Siddique, Aslam, Khan, & Fatima, 2011), because organizational effectiveness in higher education is somewhat difficult to capture (Cameron,

1981). One definition that has been widely used is: “Organizational effectiveness is the integration of high-quality organizational process and output” (Kreps, 1990, p. 284). The output and process framework is useful for examining organizational effectiveness, depending upon the purposes and constraints placed on the investigation of the organization (Cameron, 1986). Although a valuable framework, there is little consensus about what constitutes effectiveness in these two areas and how to measure it because it is a complex construct (Sowa, Selden, & Sandfort, 2004).

Early research on organizational effectiveness focused exclusively on output. Effectiveness was viewed as achieving a goal and as a characteristic of organizational outputs or behaviors (Gaertner & Ramnarayan, 1983). However, there were numerous concerns with measuring effectiveness according to goal output or goal achievement (Cameron, 1981; Gaertner & Ramnarayan, 1983; Siddique et. al., 2011). Scholars have argued that assessing an organization solely on goal achievement is problematic due to goals being frequently changed and organizations being constantly evaluated for achieving goals that are harmful to those outside the organization (Cameron, 1981; Gaertner & Ramnarayan, 1983). Others have viewed effectiveness in an organization as “a state of relations within and among relevant constituencies of the organization” (Gaertner & Ramnarayan, 1983, p. 97). This conceptualization of organizational effectiveness equates effectiveness with internal organizational practices (Cameron, 1981). As a result, there is a need to understand how internal processes are associated with outcomes (Gaertner & Ramnarayan, 1983).

Within the context of higher education, measuring internal processes is challenging due to a lack of clarity about the primary tasks of organizational members (Cameron, 1981). To identify significant internal process domains that characterize effective colleges and universities, Cameron (1981) surveyed 610 faculty and 707 managers at 41 colleges and universities in seven states in the northeastern United States. The survey instrument consisted of questions related to characteristics and activities as indicative of effective organizational performance. A clustering algorithm was used to determine the sets of activities and dimensions that constitute organizational effectiveness across institutions that are similar versus those that are different. Four clusters of effective dimensions were formed: (1) an external

adaptation cluster, (2) a morale cluster, (3) an academic-oriented cluster, and (4) a personal-development cluster. Most relevant to this study is the “morale” domain, comprised of student educational satisfaction and faculty and manager satisfaction with the internal processes of the organization.

Communication is directly related to internal institutional processes, particularly because one of the most common measures of effective internal processes is organizational satisfaction, which is related to organizational communication (Kreps, 1990). Accordingly, organizational communication has become a key factor for organizational success and functioning (Rajhans, 2012). Downs and Hazen (1977) found that communication climate, personal feedback, and relationship with supervisors are related to positive interpretations of job satisfaction. Czech’s (2007) research suggests that a supportive communication climate where faculty feel free to share ideas enhances organizational commitment and job satisfaction. White, Vanc, and Stafford (2010) found that university employees are more satisfied with their organization if they are well-informed and engage in face-to-face communication with top managers.

Kreps (1990) stated that the effectiveness of internal processes can be judged by the quality of organizational communication and can be “measured by assessing members’ interpretations of the quality of organizational life” (p. 283). Climate studies assess members’ perceptions and attitudes toward organization life (Peterson & Spencer, 1990). Moran and Volkwein (1988) found that the clear articulation of goals and performance standards was associated with having a positive climate. August and Waltman (2004) found that a positive climate for a faculty member meant having good relations with the department chair, adequate influence within the department, and positive relationships with students. Moreover, research has shown that at universities where there is a collegial, shared-governance approach to strategic change, there is more likely to be a climate of security whereas at universities with a more managerial approach a climate of insecurity tends to emerge (Allen 2003). Similarly, Ayers (2005) found focusing on student learning and engagement in higher education was associated with a positive campus climate.

A growing body of literature on organizational climate suggests that a work environment designed to enhance employees’ motivational and affective reactions at work tends to be associated with

organizational effectiveness (Kataria, Garg, & Rastogi, 2013). Brown and Leigh (1996) investigated the perceptions of organizational climate and its relation to job involvement, effort, and performance. They found that a work environment considered to be psychologically safe was conducive to greater job involvement, as well as a commitment of time and energy to the work of the organization. In essence, when climate was perceived as supportive, employees felt free to express themselves, were more involved in their jobs and exerted greater effort toward their work (Brown & Leigh, 1996). Thus, employees who were satisfied with their organizational environments contributed to overall organizational effectiveness (Brown & Leigh, 1996).

One of the most significant factors related to perceptions of the internal life in higher education is student satisfaction (Cameron, 1986), an important determinant of student retention and graduation (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Bean, 1983; Berger, 2001; Elliott & Healy, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Numerous studies have examined the impact of organizational factors on student retention (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Bean, 1983; Berger, 2001). These studies have examined perceptions of college prestige, size of the institution, university image, organizational bureaucracy, and humanistic administrative style (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Blau, 1973). For instance, Astin and Scherrei (1980) found that institutions with strong collegiality benefited student retention. Consequently, “students who perceive the factors of collegiality on campus to be present are more likely to persist” to graduation (Berger, 2001). Cameron and Ettington (1988) found that highly collegial college environments had a positive effect on student satisfaction. Further, Elliott and Healy (2001) found that campus climate was one of the main reasons that students decided to stay at or leave a university.

In a non-profit university setting, organizational effectiveness was created by the perceptions of actions and interactions of stakeholders (Herman & Renz, 2008), a view that positioned organizational effectiveness as a social construct (Herman & Renz, 2008). That was, the constructed reality was dependent on personal beliefs and individual actions, and effectiveness is a stakeholder judgment that was developed and changed through interactions and negotiation (Herman & Renz, 2008). Thus, research on organizational effectiveness of non-profit institutions investigates stakeholders’ perceptions about the

organization in order to develop conclusions about overall effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 2008). By examining the perceptions of stakeholders, a more comprehensive understanding of the organization and the possible dysfunctions that impede organizational effectiveness emerge (Sowa, Selden, & Sandfort, 2004). Therefore, organizational effectiveness is treated in this study as the level of satisfaction that managers and faculty have with two internal processes—organizational communication and campus climate.

### **Summary**

Researchers have attempted to crystallize the many dimensions of communication and campus climate that impact organizational effectiveness. The premise in these studies is that factors of organizational communication and dimensions of campus climate impact employee satisfaction with the university, which ultimately impacts organizational performance. Specifically, the review of the literature on organizational communication identified certain factors of communication that influence the perceptions university stakeholders have about their interactions with others, their institutions, and their position in the organization. One essential component of organization communication in higher education that continues to receive attention from researchers is shared governance. One particular factor that has an impact on higher education is the shared governance relationship between faculty and managers because of the strain placed on faculty and managers relationships due to outside pressures.

The review of literature on climate identified certain dimensions of campus climate that impact the perceptions that internal constituencies have about the affective dimensions of the organizational environment, and it identified how climate affects perceptions at the levels of the individual, the subsystem, and the overall organization. Studies related specifically to campus climate have shown that positive perceptions of campus climate—as measured by levels of satisfaction—are correlated to a clear articulation of goals and performance standards, excellent relationships with internal stakeholders, a focus on students, and a collegial, shared-governance approach to decision making.

Another area that continues to be frequently studied is campus climate—specifically the satisfaction of both faculty and students with the organizational environment. The satisfaction studies

have consistently found that positive campus climates are associated with positive perceptions of organizational life, which results in enhanced organizational effectiveness. Researchers also have found the reverse to be true: negative perceptions of campus climate can impact satisfaction levels and ultimately the retention of faculty and students. However, very few studies have examined managers' satisfaction with specific dimensions of campus climate.

The review of the literature on organizational effectiveness in nonprofit organizations identified internal processes as indicators of an effective organization. The research specifically related to higher education has shown that levels of satisfaction of faculty, managers, and students with internal processes constitute effective dimensions of an organization. Researchers also have found that high levels of faculty and student satisfaction with internal processes impact the climate of a university and student retention.

While each of these individual frameworks provided some insight into the effects of organization variables as indicators of organizational effectiveness, the complexity of the phenomenon warrants combining these three areas of study to deepen our understanding of organizational effectiveness in higher education. Further, what remains to be seen in the research is how internal organizational processes such as communication can be utilized to enhance perceptions of campus climate. Moreover, researchers have not yet examined if satisfaction with organizational communication and campus climate are indicators of overall organizational effectiveness. It is in pursuit of examining these issues more deeply that this dissertation research was undertaken. The following chapter, Chapter 3, describes the methodology used to collect data related to the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of overall organizational effectiveness.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. The chapter begins with an overview of the issues that led to the identification of the research problem and the purpose of the study. Four research questions are identified, followed by a justification for the mixed-methods approach that is used to answer the research questions. Finally, the methods for data analysis are explained.

#### **Background to the Problem**

Public higher education is facing challenges unparalleled in the history of postsecondary education. Amid this period of change, the role of organizational communication is taking on greater significance. As previous studies have shown, without effective organizational communication employee morale can wane, commitment to the institution can decline, and employee motivation can weaken. As laid out in Chapter 2, attention to campus climate is vital because it can negatively impact student learning and engagement as well as the ability of faculty and managers to achieve organizational goals. Since campus climate emerges from the interactions that members have within the organization, together these two dimensions of university life can affect the ability of an institution to operate effectively, known in this study as organizational effectiveness.

In other words, the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate might be an indicator of organizational effectiveness because communication has been and continues to be considered an essential component of a high level of organizational success and organizational vitality (Md Nordin, Halib, & Ghazali, 2011; Rajhans, 2012). Campus climate is a critical factor related to success of a university in that satisfaction with internal processes has a significant impact on a university's effectiveness (Cameron, 1981).

While previous studies provide a framework for understanding organizational communication and campus climate, the methodology of this area of study can be enhanced to provide a deeper explanation for the phenomena under study. For instance, organizational communication can be examined as an independent variable and climate as a dependent variable. This investigation is essential because as the

literature review has shown, climate emerges through the interactions that members of an organization have with one another. However, the specific factors of organizational communication that may impact particular dimensions of campus climate have not yet been identified in the literature; nor have previous studies identified how organizational communication and its relationship to campus climate is an indicator of organizational effectiveness in an organization that has a shared governance context.

While climate studies have been predominately quantitative, organizational communication research has been either quantitative or qualitative, but not both. This almost sole focus on the use of a quantitative or qualitative methodology to study campus climate and organizational communication has resulted in a limited understanding of the specific communication factors that may impact specific dimensions of campus climate and how both influence perceptions of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, the present study expanded the research on communication and campus climate by examining the impact that their relationship has on perceptions of organizational effectiveness. Moreover, this study used a mixed-methods approach to collecting and analyzing the data.

More specifically, the research framework for this study was a convergent parallel design in that the quantitative phase and the qualitative phase were conducted at the same time. The principal purpose of the qualitative phase was to add depth to the quantitative findings. The quantitative phase included the collection of the demographic information and the gathering of communication, climate, and organizational effectiveness data using a web-based survey that combined two existing instruments: the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) and the Personal Assessment of the Campus Environment (PACE) survey. The qualitative phase consisted of interviews with six people: three managers and three faculty selected from the participants who agreed to be interviewed. The qualitative interviews gave managers and faculty an opportunity to share their perceptions of how organizational communication functions and how it impacts campus climate. The qualitative phase also provided insight into how communication and climate influence perceptions of organizational effectiveness. In sum, the qualitative phase attached meaning to organizational events, gave voice to faculty and managers' experiences, and provided insight into how their communication experiences have impacted their



perceptions of campus climate. The combining of qualitative and quantitative data strengthened the understanding of communication and its association with climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

### **Research Problem**

Due to decreased enrollment, increased competition, concerns with student retention, and calls for greater accountability, organizational communication and its relationship to campus climate must be clarified so that organizational effectiveness can be enhanced.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

The data collected were used to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate?
2. What is the relationship between the specific factors of organizational communication and the particular dimensions of campus climate?
3. What are the effects of the demographic variables on the relationship between organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate?
4. To what extent is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate an indicator of organizational effectiveness?

### **Research Design**

In order to examine the relationship between communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness, a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design was used. An approach where data sets are collected and analyzed at the same time allows the researcher to form a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis provides a more in-depth understanding of a research problem than either one alone. For this dissertation study, the

quantitative data provided breadth while the qualitative data added depth (Miles & Hubberman, 1994). Essentially, the quantitative findings were used to validate, interpret, clarify, and illustrate qualitative results in the study (Miles & Hubberman, 1994). Results were then merged to assess the ways in which data converged and diverged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)

While the results from the CSQ and the PACE survey provided numerical data that identified the level of satisfaction that faculty and managers have with both communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness, the statistical analyses alone did not provide a nuanced understanding of faculty and managers' interpretations of specific organizational communication behaviors and how those behaviors are related to beliefs and attitudes toward campus climate.

Furthermore, numerical data did not provide an understanding of communication and climate preferences, which is essential to forming conclusions about organizational effectiveness. By investigating the perceptions of stakeholders, a more comprehensive understanding of the organization and the possible factors that impede organizational effectiveness emerge (Sowa, Selden, & Sandfort, 2004). Thus, the mixed-methods research design is a valuable methodology to address the research questions of this study. Accordingly, the research design for this study proceeded in two concurrent phases. That is, both the quantitative phase and the qualitative phase occurred at the same time. Collecting data simultaneously was critical to the research design because the qualitative data were collected to provide a more complete and deeper understanding of the quantitative data.

During the quantitative phase, a stratified random sample of managers and faculty from a comprehensive public university in the northeastern United States was asked to complete an electronic survey. The instrument consisted of the CSQ, the PACE, and demographic questions related to race/ethnicity, gender, and work group. The CSQ measured perceptions of organizational communication, and the PACE survey measured perceptions of campus climate and organizational effectiveness. In the course of the qualitative phase, a systematic random sampling technique was used to select three managers and three faculty to participate in semi-structured interviews. The criterion for selecting the participants was their willingness to be interviewed as indicated on the web-based survey.

Each interview was audio-taped, and then the researcher transcribed each audio tape after the completion of the interview. Transcriptions were then analyzed according to the constant comparative method by coding statements made by the interviewee into general categories in order to identify themes present in the data.

The independent variable in the study was “organizational communication,” operationalized by the domains of the CSQ and the demographics, which were operationalized as gender, race/ethnicity, and position type. The dependent variables were “campus climate,” operationalized by the constructs in the PACE survey. Organizational effectiveness also was a dependent variable in this study and was operationalized by the level of satisfaction as identified by the CSQ and the PACE survey. The null hypothesis for the study was: There is no relationship between organizational communication and campus climate, and neither of these constructs is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. The null hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant relationship between the two survey results at the  $\alpha$  level of .05.

### **Participant Population**

The population for this mixed-method study was faculty and managers at a public university in the northeastern United States. The particular university selected is similar to the other universities as follows: the university is a regional, selective university; the structure and governing bodies are typical of higher education; a majority of faculty hold terminal degrees; the union acts as one of the bodies of shared-governance; and the tenure track and promotions systems are based on specific criteria. The particular university also was chosen because it is somewhat larger than the average public university, allowing access to a larger sample size of respondents. Moreover, the university provided access to participants who served as a typical sample drawn from the larger population—in other words, originating in an environment that is typical of a public university environment in Pennsylvania.

To determine the minimum sample size necessary to maintain a power of .8, the general analysis program, Gpower 3.1.3, was used. Based on the program’s calculation, a minimum sample size of 123 participants was necessary for this study. In order to meet this requirement, all faculty and managers at

the institution were invited to participate. The invitation to take part in the study was initiated by an email from the researcher. For those who did not volunteer to take part in the study within three days of the initial email, a follow-up email requesting a response was transmitted. Three subsequent emails to non-respondents were sent after the first survey was sent. This method of data collection was used to encourage a maximum number of participants.

After quantitative data collection was completed, participants for the qualitative portion of the study were identified. Those who indicated a willingness to participate in a follow-up interview on the web-based survey by providing their first and last names and their email addresses were identified as potential participants. To select participants for this study, the names of those who agreed to be interviewed were separated into six categories according to work group: midlevel manager, manager, department chair, faculty leader (elected or appointed), and faculty. A senior level manager was not included in the categorization process because a senior level manager did not agree to be interviewed. Each work group was then classified according to gender and race. The purpose of this selection process was to include participants with varying characteristics that were representative of the given population (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). These participants were then classified by last name. Once segmented, participants were randomly chosen from the lists. Interviewees were then notified of their selection by email.

## **Instrumentation**

**Quantitative phase.** During the quantitative phase of the study, managers and faculty were asked to complete a web-based survey using Qualtrics (see Appendix J for survey). The instrument consisted of the PACE questions, which were administered to measure the level of satisfaction with the campus climate, and the CSQ questions, which were used to measure satisfaction with organizational communication and to gather demographic data. The demographic data included gender, race/ethnicity, and employee work group status. Typically, the CSQ has been used to study organizational communication due to its validity and reliability, as well as its ease of use. PACE has been widely used by institutions across the U.S. to assess campus climate and to conduct research for dissertations and

published papers (National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness, 2014).

**Personal Assessment of the Campus Environment (PACE).** The National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE) developed PACE as a data collection tool to examine campus climate. Permission was given to use this instrument for this study by NILIE. PACE has 45 items using a six-point Likert scale ranging from very satisfied to not applicable. PACE has been tested for validity and reliability and is normed on a national database (National Initiative for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness, 2014). The instrument has shown a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.97, providing a high internal consistency estimate of the instrument's reliability (Baker & Manzo-Ramos, 1996). Construct validity has been tested to ensure climate factor validity through two separate factor analysis studies (Caison, 2005; Tiu, 2001). Both factor analysis studies identified correlations between individual items on the survey, demonstrating that the items grouped together into four hypothetical constructs and finding that the instrument measured the intended constructs (Caison, 2005; Tiu, 2001). This survey allowed for operationalizing the following four domains as the following dependent variables: institutional structure, supervisory relationship, teamwork, and student focus. The survey also consisted of factors related to organizational effectiveness. The factors extracted from the instrument related to effectiveness were those items that were rated high in satisfaction (3, 4, or 5 on the Likert scale).

**Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ).** During the quantitative phase, the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) was used for data collection. CSQ is a copyright-free instrument and can be used without permission. The CSQ is a data collection survey designed by Downs and Hazen (1977) to investigate perceived satisfaction of the communication environment in an organization. CSQ provides a 'snapshot' of where the organization currently stands in terms of its communication capacity or performance, and it points out areas in which the organization can strengthen its performance (Coffman, 2004). The 36-item instrument uses a seven-point Likert scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. For the purposes of this dissertation study, a six-point Likert scale was used. The construct validity of the CSQ has been determined primarily through factor analysis (Crino & White, 1981). The coefficient alpha reliability for the eight dimensions has been consistently high at .96

(Potvin, 1991). This survey allowed for operationalizing the following eight domains as independent variables: communication climate, manager communication, organizational integration, media quality, horizontal informal communication, organizational perspective, faculty communication, and personal feedback.

In addition to questions about communication satisfaction, demographic questions were incorporated into the questionnaire related to gender and employee work group type. Lastly, a question was added to the end of the survey to ask participants if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview. If participants were willing to take part in a follow-up interview, they were requested to provide their name and contact information on the questionnaire.

**Qualitative phase: Semi-structured interviews.** The assessments mentioned above provided numerical data regarding the relationship between communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness. They also provided for a more comprehensive understanding of perceptions of communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness. However, interpretations of specific communication behaviors within particular groups that impact perceptions of campus climate and organizational effectiveness cannot be adequately ascertained through the use of the quantitative instruments alone. Therefore, as outlined previously, a qualitative methodology was incorporated into this study. To this end, individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers and faculty. For the interview sessions, a template consisting of twenty-two questions specifically related to the independent and dependent variables was used (See Appendix H for interview guide). In essence, the structured questions allowed the researcher to receive answers to specific, preplanned questions related to the overall research questions, while the unstructured questions or follow-up questions allowed participants to expand upon their responses in order to provide insights and a deeper level of analysis than would otherwise be expected (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

The first interview segment explored participants' perceptions of their campus climate. Examining individual interpretations of campus climate is important because the study of climate centers on how people feel about their work and it focuses on their attitudes toward organizational phenomenon (Peterson

& Spencer, 1990). This segment provided the participants an opportunity to think openly and carefully about the climate of their institution. Unlike the quantitative phase of this study, pre-determined descriptors or dimensions of campus climate were not provided to the participants.

The second segment served to construct an expansion of the participants' perceptions of the relationship between organizational communication behaviors and campus climate by asking participants to describe how their experiences communicating with faculty and managers have impacted their perceptions of campus climate. Having a more in-depth knowledge of participants' perceptions is important because both organizational communication and campus climate have been found to be highly correlated with organizational outcomes (Ali & Haider, 2012; Cutlip et al., 1985; Czech, 2007; Downs & Hazen, 1977; Dortok, 2006; Moran and Volkwein, 1988; Thomas, Zolin, & Hartman, 2009).

The third interview segment investigated the extent to which organizational communication and campus climate were indicators of organizational effectiveness. In a non-profit university setting organizational effectiveness is a stakeholder judgment that is created by the actions and interactions of managers and faculty (Herman & Renz, 2008). By examining the perceptions of stakeholders, a more comprehensive understanding of the organization and the possible situations that enhance and impede organizational effectiveness emerged (Sowa, Selden, & Sandfort, 2004).

The fourth interview segment examined organizational communication in the context of shared governance. The intent of this interview segment was to explore further the relationship between shared governance and communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness.

## **Data Collection**

### **Pilot Study**

Approval was sought from The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania and Indiana University of Pennsylvania to conduct a pilot study. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the effectiveness of the method of collecting data using Qualtrics, as well as to determine the effectiveness of the interview guide and the interview procedures. Three managers and three faculty members at one university in the northeastern United States were contacted via email and

asked to participate in the pilot study (see Appendix A for participant email). This university was not the same college used for the field study for this dissertation.

Participants were asked to provide consent prior to gaining access to the web-based survey after reading the email (see Appendix B for consent form). The participants were then contacted via email and asked to comment on their experience with the survey procedure in order to make any appropriate changes to the survey process if needed (see Appendix C for email). Those who indicated a willingness to be interviewed were contacted via email to schedule a face-to-face interview at a mutually agreed upon time. The interviews were conducted in a private setting.

The researcher began the interview by describing the nature and intent of the study. The researcher then asked the interviewee to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix H for form). The researcher asked if the participant had any questions regarding the intent of the research or the consent form. The researcher asked if the respondent agreed to be audio recorded. Once the interviewee verbally agreed to have their interview audio recorded, the researcher then verbally assured the participant of confidentiality by reiterating the following statement from the consent form:

Any information you provide as part of your participation in this study will be kept confidential.

You will not be identified by name or a particular position, only by an assigned number. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher and the researcher's committee chair will have access to the research records.

The researcher then asked, "Do you agree to participate in the study?" Once the participant verbally agreed, he or she was told to feel free to stop the interview at any time prior to the completion of the interviews. After this phase of the interview, the researcher began to ask the pre-planned questions in the order listed on the interview guide (see Appendix D for interview guide). During the interview, the researcher paid attention to both verbal and nonverbal feedback in order to detect any confusion with the questions or the interview procedure. After the interviews had taken place, the researcher analyzed the recordings and the interview method in order to make any appropriate changes to the interview process



and the interview guide as needed. The researcher noticed that the participants had a difficult time relating specific communication practices in the organization to campus climate, which resulted in the researcher revising the interview guide. To this end, the researcher changed the first questions in the interview guide to one that asked participants to describe their campus climate. The other questions also were changed so that participants would focus on specific rather than general communication practices.

### **Field Study**

Prior to the commencement of the field study, approval was sought from The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of both East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (ESU) and Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) to conduct the study. The IRB and the Permissions Committee at the research site were contacted via email to discuss the nature of the study, and written permission was sought to conduct the study, as well as permission to contact faculty and managers. Sample information was obtained by requesting a data file from human resources with the name of all faculty members and managers and their corresponding email address. Following is a discussion of the data collection process used for the field study.

**Quantitative phase.** The researcher collected quantitative data using a web-based survey method administered through IUP's Applied Research Lab using Qualtrics survey software. The online survey method was chosen for participant convenience. Participants were sent an email informing them of the intent of the study and providing instructions on how to participate (see Appendix E for participant email). After the participants read the instructions, they were asked to provide consent prior to gaining access to the survey by reading the following consent statement: "Having read the information provided, I would like to participate in this research study. My clicking continue indicates my willingness to participate" (see Appendix F for consent form). Once consent was obtained, the participant was automatically linked to the electronic survey. For those who did not participate in the study within three days of the initial email, a follow-up email was sent requesting a response (see Appendix G for email). Subsequent emails were sent asking for nonparticipants for a response six and ten days after the initial survey was sent.

A total of 131 participants responded to the survey. The entire sample of 131 participants answered all items for the campus climate survey and 26 of the 40 items for the CSQ. The 26 organizational communication items that all 131 participants responded to represented five of the eight factors of organizational communication. Sixty-six of the 131 participants responded to all eight of the organizational communication factors and all items of the campus climate survey.

**Qualitative phase.** During the qualitative phase, data were gathered through face-to-face interviews to measure faculty members' and managers' perceptions of communication and campus climate as indicators of organizational effectiveness. Using an arbitrary number from the table of random numbers (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009), the sample was randomly selected from the 32 participants who indicated a willingness to be interviewed. In order to gain an adequate amount of information that could be analyzed, three faculty and three managers were interviewed. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) determined that the number of participants needed for essential overarching themes to emerge is a minimum of six participants.

Participants who were selected received an email inviting them to take part in a 60-minute face-to-face interview at the university in a location convenient for the participant and where there were few distractions. Participants who declined participation were replaced by the individuals appearing directly above them on the list of respondents.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher introduced herself and reminded the respondent about the intent of the study. The researcher then verbally assured the participant of confidentiality and asked the participant to read the consent form. After the participant finished reading the consent form, the researcher asked if he or she had any questions regarding the intent of the research or the consent form (see Appendix H for consent form). After this phase of the interview, the researcher began audio taping and asking the pre-planned questions in the order listed on the interview guide (see Appendix I for Interview Guide). Every 20 minutes the researcher reminded the participant that he or she was being recorded and asked if he or she continued to agree to be interviewed and recorded. The interviews were then transcribed from the recordings by the researcher.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Quantitative Phase**

Data were collected and entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then inputted into SPSS for analysis. Participants were identified by an assigned identification number on the survey instrument. Descriptive data generated from the analysis of the surveys were used to explain the general characteristics of the sample. The surveys were examined in totality for correlations and relationships using Pearson's *r*. In the event that there were correlations between the dependent variables, which constitute the dimensions of campus climate, the Bonferroni correction was applied. This procedure had the effect of reducing the overall level of significance from a .05 to .01 for each of the multiple regressions, which protected against inflating the Type I error rate. Multiple regression statistical procedures were used to determine if there were relationships between the independent variables (the eight communication factors and the demographic data) and the dependent variables (the four campus climate domains and Total Campus Climate), as well as to find indicators of organizational effectiveness.

### **Qualitative Phase**

The qualitative data were analyzed using the interpretive method. The comments were treated as data by coding statements that were made by the interviewee into general categories in order to identify themes present in the data. The first step in the analysis of the qualitative data was reading each transcript of the interviews. Reading the transcripts served to provide the researcher with an idea of the general characteristics of each particular transcript and the transcripts as a whole. The initial reading also assisted with finding possible problems with the transcription prior to the researcher coding the data.

The second step in the analysis was coding the data to find regularities, patterns, concepts, and/or topics in the data and placing these items into categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The independent and dependent variables were used as the categories because they were directly related to the research questions. Once data were categorized, a "constant comparison" method was used, which required the researcher to compare data within each category, and then classify data into more distinct categories. If data did not fit into the specific categories that emerged, new categories were developed.

Once all data were placed under specific categories, themes were identified by grouping data into more precise categories with similar expressions and meanings. After themes were identified, the themes were grouped into core categories that created an understanding of the relationship between perceptions of campus climate and organizational communication as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

To ensure the accuracy of the qualitative data analysis, an external researcher affiliated with the field of Communication was given a transcript of each participant's interview and was asked to note themes that emerged across participants' responses. Then, the external reviewer's understanding of the data was compared with that of the researcher's. There were no discrepancies in interpretation between the researcher's and reviewer's analysis of the transcripts.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the research design, the research procedures for data collection and analysis, as well as the need for this study. A mixed-methods approach was utilized to investigate the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. The quantitative phase of the study included statistical analysis of the relationship between communication and climate. The qualitative phase included an analysis of faculty and manager perceptions of organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness. The results of the study are presented next in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This research study examined the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness by utilizing a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design. The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between, organizational communication and campus climate in order to determine if that relationship is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. In this chapter, the data analysis and findings are provided.

The research design included a concurrent quantitative phase and qualitative phase. First, the results of the quantitative phase are reported. Then the results of the qualitative phase are reported. For the quantitative phase, a survey instrument was administered to faculty and managers at a public institution of higher education in the northeastern United States. For the qualitative phase, six participants—three faculty and three managers—were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. These participants were selected based upon their willingness to be interviewed and their position in the university.

The organizational structure for this chapter follows the convergent parallel mixed-methods research design that guided the collection of data. This frame keeps the qualitative and quantitative strands of data separate and facilitates merging the two strands of data together, allowing for a more complete understanding of the relationship between communication and climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Descriptive characteristics of the participants are given first to provide general demographic information. Then, each research question is followed by data analysis specific to the question. Lastly, the convergence of these quantitative and the qualitative data sets are combined the data analysis.

#### **Descriptive Characteristics**

Faculty ( $N = 101$ ) and managers ( $N = 30$ ) from one public university in the northeastern United States participated in the study. One hundred thirty-one of the 510 possible participants within the university were represented in the sample population. Seventy-seven percent of the sample consisted of

faculty and 23% consisted of managers. The number of participants per position is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Frequency Counts and Relative Frequencies for Study Variables Gender and Position*

Variable	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
<u>Position</u>		
Senior Level Management	6	4
Midlevel	15	12
Manager	9	7
Department Chair	8	6
Faculty Leader	10	8
Faculty Member	83	63

*Note.* The total sample size was comprised of thirty managers and 101 faculty. The participant sample ( $N = 131$ ) represents 26% of the total population of managers and faculty at the university.

Eighty-nine percent of the participant population was White, not Hispanic or Latino, as noted in Table 2. As also can be seen in the Table, more females than males completed the survey portion of the study (53% and 44% respectively). One percent of the population was Other Identified.

Table 2

*Frequency Counts and Relative Frequencies Race/Ethnicity Study Variables*

Variable	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	60	46
Female	70	53
Other Identified	1	1
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
Hispanic or Latino, of any race	2	2
American Indian or Alaska Native, not Hispanic or Latino	1	1
Asian, not Hispanic or Latino	5	4
Black, not Hispanic or Latino	1	1
White, not Hispanic or Latino	117	89
Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino	5	4

Summary statistics for the independent communication variables and dependent campus climate variables are given in Tables 3 - 5. The summary statistics for the eight organizational communication independent variables are shown in Table 3. Since not all participants responded to all eight organizational communication factors, the analyses were done in two sections. One hundred thirty-one participants responded to five of the eight organizational communication variables, and 66 responded to all eight of the variables. Therefore, the three organizational communication variables that only 66 participants responded to constituted an abridged dataset. The first five organizational communication variables in Table 3 are for the full data set where,  $N = 131$ , while the last three organizational communication variables are for the

abridged data set, where  $N = 66$ .

Summary statistics for the dependent variables are given in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 gives the dependent variable summary statistics for the regression models for the full data set ( $N = 131$ ). Table 5 gives the dependent variable summary statistics for the regression models for the abridged data set ( $N = 66$ ). The 99-percent confidence intervals and the means for the dependent variables are given in Tables 4 and 5, which show that all confidence intervals are above 3.00.

Table 3

*Summary Statistics for Independent Variable Survey Factors*

Survey Factor	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	99% <i>CI</i>
Manager Communication <sup>1</sup>	3.41	1.04	[3.17, 3.65]
Faculty Communication <sup>1</sup>	3.73	.89	[3.52, 3.93]
Horizontal Informal <sup>1</sup>	3.63	.79	[3.45, 3.81]
Communication Climate <sup>1</sup>	3.42	.99	[3.19, 3.64]
Media Quality <sup>1</sup>	3.49	.95	[3.27, 3.70]
Personal Feedback <sup>2</sup>	3.43	.94	[3.12, 3.73]
Organizational Integration <sup>2</sup>	3.91	.69	[3.68, 4.13]
Organizational Perspective <sup>2</sup>	3.38	.73	[3.14, 3.62]

*Note.* *SD* = Standard Deviation; *CI* = Confidence Interval.

<sup>1</sup> $N = 131$ .

<sup>2</sup> $N = 66$ .



Table 4

*Summary Statistics for Dependent Variables for Five Organizational Communication Independent Variables*

Dependent Variable	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	99% <i>CI</i>
Institutional Structure	3.45	.90	[3.33, 3.75]
Supervisory Relationship	3.85	.85	[3.66, 4.05]
Teamwork	3.75	.92	[3.54, 3.96]
Student Focus	4.03	.76	[3.85, 4.20]
Total Campus Climate	3.69	.78	[3.51, 3.87]

*Note.*  $N = 131$ . *SD* = Standard Deviation; *CI* = Confidence Interval. Campus Climate = Total Campus Climate survey. The five independent organizational communication variables for this set of dependent variables are Manager Communication, Faculty Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Communication Climate.

Table 5

*Summary Statistics for Dependent Variables for Three Organizational Communication Independent Variables*

Dependent Variable	Mean	SD	99% CI
Institutional Structure	3.47	.85	[3.19, 3.75]
Supervisory Relationship	3.81	.83	[3.54, 4.08]
Teamwork	3.80	1.08	[3.44, 3.89]
Student Focus	4.04	.76	[3.81, 4.26]
Total Campus Climate	3.69	.78	[3.51, 3.87]

*Note.*  $N = 66$ .  $SD$  = Standard Deviation;  $CI$  = Confidence Interval. Campus Climate = Total Campus Climate survey. The three independent organizational communication variables for this set of dependent variables are Personal Feedback, Organizational Integration, and Organizational Perspective.

### Analysis of the Data

To better ensure the reliability and validity of the quantitative findings and to allow for adequate power of the statistical tests, a minimum sample size of 123 was required. The participant sample totaled 131, which exceeded the minimum needed for the first set of statistical analysis. The population for the second set of statistical analysis totaled 66. For each statistical test, the level of significance,  $\alpha$ , was set at .05. To ensure reliability of the quantitative findings and to allow for adequate power for the statistical tests, three of the factors of communication were tested separately. The sample size for this portion of the analysis was 66.

In an effort to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, the six interview participants were selected using a systematic random sampling technique of those who indicated a willingness to be interviewed after being categorized by position. The research questions guided the data analysis because the questions related to both the qualitative phase and the quantitative phase of the research study.

Accordingly, each phase of the study is presented followed by the how the data were analyzed. The data are then reported, and an analysis of the findings is presented.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate? Therefore,  $H_0$ : There is no relationship between organizational communication and campus climate.

To test this hypothesis, organizational communication was operationalized by the eight communication factors in the CSQ as the independent variable. Campus climate was the dependent variable, as operationalized by the four dimensions of campus climate in PACE. All of the 131 participants answered questions related to Horizontal Informal Communication, Manager Communication, Communication Climate, and Media Quality. One hundred thirty respondents answered questions related to Faculty Communication. Sixty-six participants responded to questions regarding Personal Feedback, Organizational Integration, and Organizational Perspective. One hundred thirty-one respondents answered questions about campus climate.

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate, given that the dependent and independent variables were interval/ratio data. The critical value set for rejecting the null hypothesis was  $p < .05$ . Six of the independent variables were strongly correlated ( $p < .001$ ) with the four dependent variables, resulting in the null hypothesis being rejected. The results as shown in Table 6 indicated that there is a positive, significant association between organizational communication and campus climate.

Table 6

*Intercorrelations Between Selected Study Variables*

	MC	FC	HC	CC	MQ	IS	SR	TW	SF
MC	--	.49 (130)	.76 (131)	.91 (135)	.84 (135)	.87 (131)	.73 (131)	.71 (131)	.75 (131)
FC		--	.56 (130)	.54 (130)	.58 (130)	.57 (130)	.47 (130)	.49 (130)	.54 (130)
HC			--	.79 (131)	.81 (131)	.81 (131)	.78 (131)	.81 (131)	.74 (131)
CC				--	.88 (135)	.84 (131)	.73 (131)	.73 (131)	.76 (131)
MQ					--	.88 (131)	.80 (131)	.78 (131)	.74 (131)
IS						--	.85 (131)	.81 (131)	.85 (131)
SR							--	.87 (131)	.76 (131)
TW								--	.80 (131)
SF									-- (131)

*Note.* MC = Manager Communication; FC = Faculty Communication; HC = Horizontal Communication; CC = Communication Climate; MQ = Media Quality; IS = Institutional Structure; SR = Supervisory Relationship; TW = Teamwork; SF = Student Focus; Numbers in parentheses represent correlation sample sizes.

All correlations are significant at  $p < .001$ .

Table 6 indicates that there is a positive, significant association between organizational communication and two dimensions of campus climate: Institutional Structure and Supervisory Relationship. However, the two dimensions of campus climate that were not correlated with organizational communication were Teamwork and Organizational Perspective ( $p > .05$ ).

Table 7

*Intercorrelations Between Selected Study Variables*

	PF	OI	OP	IS	SR	TW	SF
PF	--	.88	.57	.75	.77	.69	.67
OI		--	.48	.69	.58	.76	.65
OP			--	.67	.45	.30	.55
IS				--	.73	.58	.83
SR					--	.83	.69
TW						--	.63
SF							--

*Note.* PF = Personal Feedback; OI = Organizational Integration; OP = Organizational Perspective; IS = Institutional Structure; SR = Supervisory Relationship; TW = Teamwork; SF = Student Focus;  $N = 66$ . All correlations are significant at  $p < .001$ , except the correlations between teamwork and organizational perspective, which was not significant ( $p > .05$ ).

To further investigate the nature of the relationship between organizational communication and the Total Campus Climate, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. This test statistic allowed for measuring the predictive relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Table 8 summarizes the multiple regression analysis for the Total Campus Climate. As can be seen, Manager Communication ( $p < .001$ ), Horizontal Informal ( $p < .001$ ), Media Quality ( $p < .001$ ), Faculty Communication ( $p < .05$ ), and Gender ( $p < .05$ ) scores are positively and significantly correlated with the criterion, indicating that higher scores on these variables tend to have a positive impact on the Total Campus Climate. Other predictor variables did not contribute to the multiple regression models, indicating that these independent variables are not predictors of the Total Campus Climate.

Table 8

*Multiple Regression Analysis for the Total Summary Score for the Total Campus Climate Survey for Five Organizational Communication Factors and Demographics*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Constant	0.37	0.12	
Manager Communication	0.21***	0.05	.27
Faculty Communication	0.08*	0.03	.08
Horizontal Informal	0.29***	0.05	.28
Communication Climate	0.11	0.06	.14
Media Quality	0.25***	0.05	.30
Gender	0.08*	0.04	.05
Race/Ethnicity	0.01	0.06	.00
Managers	0.03	0.05	.02
Faculty/Faculty Leaders	0.11	0.06	.05

*Note.*  $N = 131$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .93$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 9

*Multiple Regression Analysis for the Total Summary Score for the Total Campus Climate Survey for Three Organizational Communication Factors*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>S</i>	$\beta$
Constant	0.65	0.38	
Personal Feedback	0.37**	0.12	.46
Organizational Integration	0.31	0.16	.28
Organizational Perspective	0.19*	0.09	.13

*Note.*  $N = 66$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .70$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The three independent variables—Personal Feedback, Organizational Integration, and Organizational Perspective—that were considered for the regression model for Total Campus Climate are found in Table 9. As can be seen in Table 9, Personal Feedback ( $p < .01$ ) and Organizational Perspective ( $p < .05$ ) are significant predictors of Total Campus Climate, but Organizational Integration is not a predictor in the regression model.

## **Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between the specific factors of organizational communication and the specific dimensions of campus climate?

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between the eight factors of communication and the four dimensions of campus climate identified by the literature. These statistical procedures allowed for a more thorough exploration of the relationship between each of the eight predictor variables and the four dependent variables.

**Institutional structure.** Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between Institutional Structure and the potential organizational communication predictors. Table 10 summarizes the results for five of the eight independent variables. As can be seen in Table 10, Gender ( $p < .05$ ), Manager Communication ( $p < .001$ ), Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .01$ ), and Media Quality ( $p < .001$ ) are significant positive predictors of Institutional Structure. Race/Ethnicity, Faculty/Faculty Leader, Managers, Faculty Communication, and Communication Climate are not significant predictors of the regression model. This analysis suggests that these predictor variables do not have an impact on perceptions of Institutional Structure.



Table 10

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Institutional Structure for Five Organizational Communication Factors and Demographics*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Constant	0.87	0.20	
Manager Communication	0.26***	0.08	.26
Faculty Communication	0.05	0.06	.04
Horizontal Informal	0.19**	0.08	.16
Communication Climate	0.22	0.94	.24
Media Quality	0.27***	0.08	.28
Gender	0.14*	0.06	.08
Race/Ethnicity	0.04	0.10	.01
Faculty/Faculty Leader	0.01	0.09	.04
Managers	0.09	0.09	.04

*Note.*  $N = 129$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients.  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ .  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The three independent variables—Personal Feedback, Organizational Integration, and Organizational Perspective—considered for the regression model are found in Table 11. As can be seen in the Table, Personal Feedback and Organizational Integration are not significant predictors of Institutional Structure. However, Organizational Perspective is an important positive predictor of the regression model for Institutional Structure ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 11

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Institutional Structure for Three Factors of Organizational Communication*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Personal Feedback	0.36	0.15	.39
Organizational Integration	0.21	0.19	.17
Organizational Perspective	0.43***	0.11	.37

*Note.*  $N = 66$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Supervisory Relationship.** A multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate further the nature of the relationship between organizational communication and Supervisory Relationship, which is a dimension of the Total Campus Climate. This test statistic allowed for measuring the predictive relationship between the eight independent variables and Supervisory Relationship. Table 12 summarizes the multiple regression analysis for five of the eight independent variables. As can be seen in Table 12, Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .001$ ) is a significant predictor of Supervisory Relationship. None of the other factors of communication are significant predictors of Supervisory Relationship.

Table 12

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Supervisory Relationship for Five Organizational Communication Factors and Demographics*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Constant	0.88	0.26	
Manager Communication	0.18	0.11	.22
Faculty Communication	0.07	0.07	.06
Horizontal Informal	0.41***	0.10	.37
Communication Climate	0.16	0.13	.18
Media Quality	0.47	0.11	.52
Gender	0.11	0.09	.06
Race/Ethnicity	0.06	0.14	.02
Faculty/Faculty Leaders	0.16	0.13	.07
Managers	0.10	0.11	.05

*Note.*  $N = 129$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The independent variables, Personal Feedback, Organizational Integration, and Organizational Perspective that were considered for the regression model are found in Table 13. As can be seen in the Table, Personal Feedback ( $p < .01$ ) and Organizational Integration ( $p < .05$ ) were significant predictors of Supervisory Relationship, indicating that these independent variables have a meaningful impact on perceptions of Supervisory Relationship. However, Organizational Perspective was not a predictor variable that had a significant impact on perceptions of Supervisory Relationship.

Table 13

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Supervisory Relationship for Three Organizational Communication Factors*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Personal Feedback	0.41**	0.15	.46
Organizational Integration	0.41*	0.20	.34
Organizational Perspective	0.28	0.11	.24

*Note.*  $N = 66$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Teamwork.** Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between Teamwork and the potential organizational communication predictors. Table 14 summarizes the results for five of the independent variables. As can be seen in the Table, Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .001$ ) and Media Quality ( $p < .01$ ) are significant predictors of Teamwork. However, Race/Ethnicity, Faculty/Faculty Leader, Manager, Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Communication Climate, and Media Quality do not contribute to the regression model.

Table 14

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Teamwork for Five Organizational Communication Factors*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Constant	0.35	0.29	
Manager Communication	0.03	0.12	.04
Faculty Communication	0.01	0.08	.01
Horizontal Informal	0.59***	0.11	.50
Communication Climate	0.00	0.14	.00
Media Quality	0.33**	0.12	.34
Gender	0.02	0.09	.01
Race/Ethnicity	0.02	0.15	.01
Faculty/Faculty Leader	0.15	0.14	.06
Managers	0.06	0.13	.03

*Note.*  $N = 129$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The three independent variables that were considered in this regression model are found in Table 14. As can be seen in Table 14, Organizational Integration and Organizational Perspective scores do not have significant positive regressions and are not correlated with the dependent variable, indicating that these independent variables do not meaningfully impact perceptions of Teamwork. However, Personal Feedback ( $p < .001$ ), Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .01$ ), and Media Quality ( $p < .01$ ) are predictor variables that have a positive effect on perceptions of Teamwork.

Table 15

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Teamwork for Three Organizational Communication Factors*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Personal Feedback	0.67**	0.23	.58
Organizational Integration	0.33	0.30	.21
Organizational Perspective	0.19	0.16	.13

*Note.*  $N = 66$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Student Focus.** A multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore the nature of the relationship between organizational communication and Student Focus, a dimension of campus climate. This test statistic allowed for measuring the predictive relationship between the eight independent variables and Student Focus. Table 16 summarizes the multiple regression analysis for five of the eight independent variables. As can be seen, Gender ( $p < .05$ ), Faculty/Faculty Leaders ( $p < .05$ ), Manager Communication ( $p < .05$ ), and Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .01$ ) contributed to the multiple regression model, indicating that these organizational communication variables have a positive impact on Student Focus.

Table 16

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Student Focus for Five Organizational Communication Factors and Demographics*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Constant	0.92	0.25	
Manager Communication	0.20*	0.10	.26
Faculty Communication	0.19	0.07	.11
Horizontal Informal	0.28**	0.10	.27
Communication Climate	0.14	0.12	.17
Media Quality	0.07	0.10	0.8
Gender	0.20*	0.10	.26
Race/Ethnicity	0.15	0.13	.06
Faculty/Faculty Leaders	0.27*	0.12	.12
Managers	0.04	0.11	0.2

*Note.*  $N = 129$ .  $B$  = unstandardized beta coefficients;  $SE$  = standard error of  $B$ ;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The independent variables—Personal Feedback, Organizational Integration, and Organizational Perspective—that were considered for the regression model are found in Table 17. As can be seen in Table 17, Organizational Perspective ( $p < .05$ ) scores were significant and positively correlated with the dependent variable, indicating that this independent variable meaningfully impacts perceptions of Student Focus. However, Personal Feedback and Organizational Integration were not predictor variables that had an impact on perceptions of Student Focus.

Table 17

*The Multiple Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable Student Focus for Three Organizational Communication Factors*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Personal Feedback	0.19	0.15	.26
Organizational Integration	0.30	0.19	.30
Organizational Perspective	0.26*	0.10	.27

*Note.* *N* = 66. *B* = unstandardized beta coefficients; *SE* = standard error of *B*;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Research Question 3

What are the effects of the demographic variables on the relationships between organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate?

The four demographic predictor variables that were considered for five of the regression models for this study are found in Tables 8 - 16. Gender was found to be both a positive and a significant predictor in the regression models (Tables 8, 10, 11, and 17) for Total Campus Climate ( $p < .05$ ), Institutional Structure ( $p < .05$ ), and Student Focus ( $p < .05$ ). Race/Ethnicity was not significant ( $p > .05$ ) in any of the regression models. Faculty/Faculty Leader was found to be an important predictor in the regression model (Table 16) for Student Focus. Managers were not significant ( $p > .05$ ) predictors in any of the regression models.

### Research Question 4

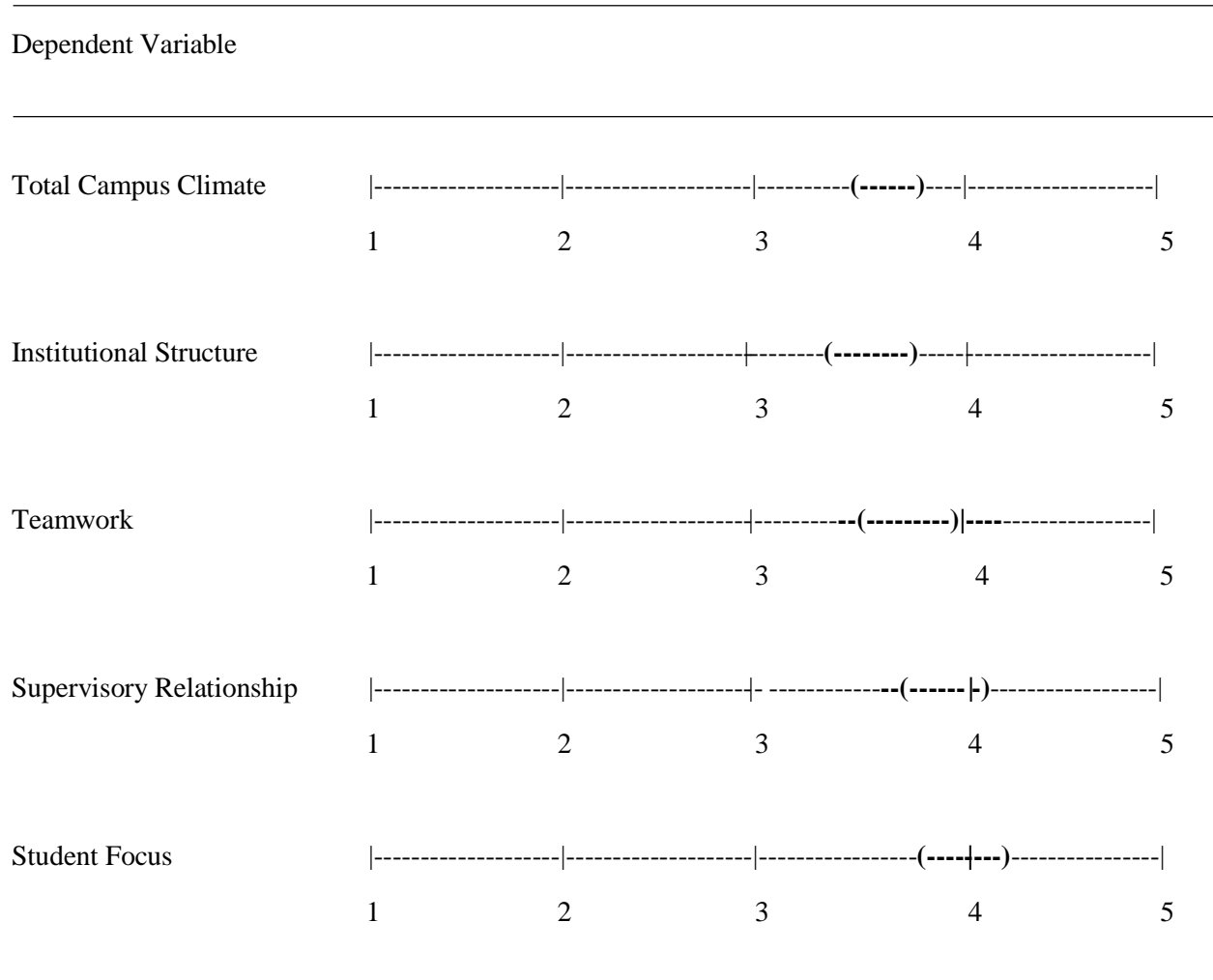
Is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate an indicator of organizational effectiveness?

Research question four is addressed by the organizational effectiveness charts in Figures 1 and 2. The 99% confidence intervals from Tables 4 and 5 are plotted on the numerical scale lines for each of the

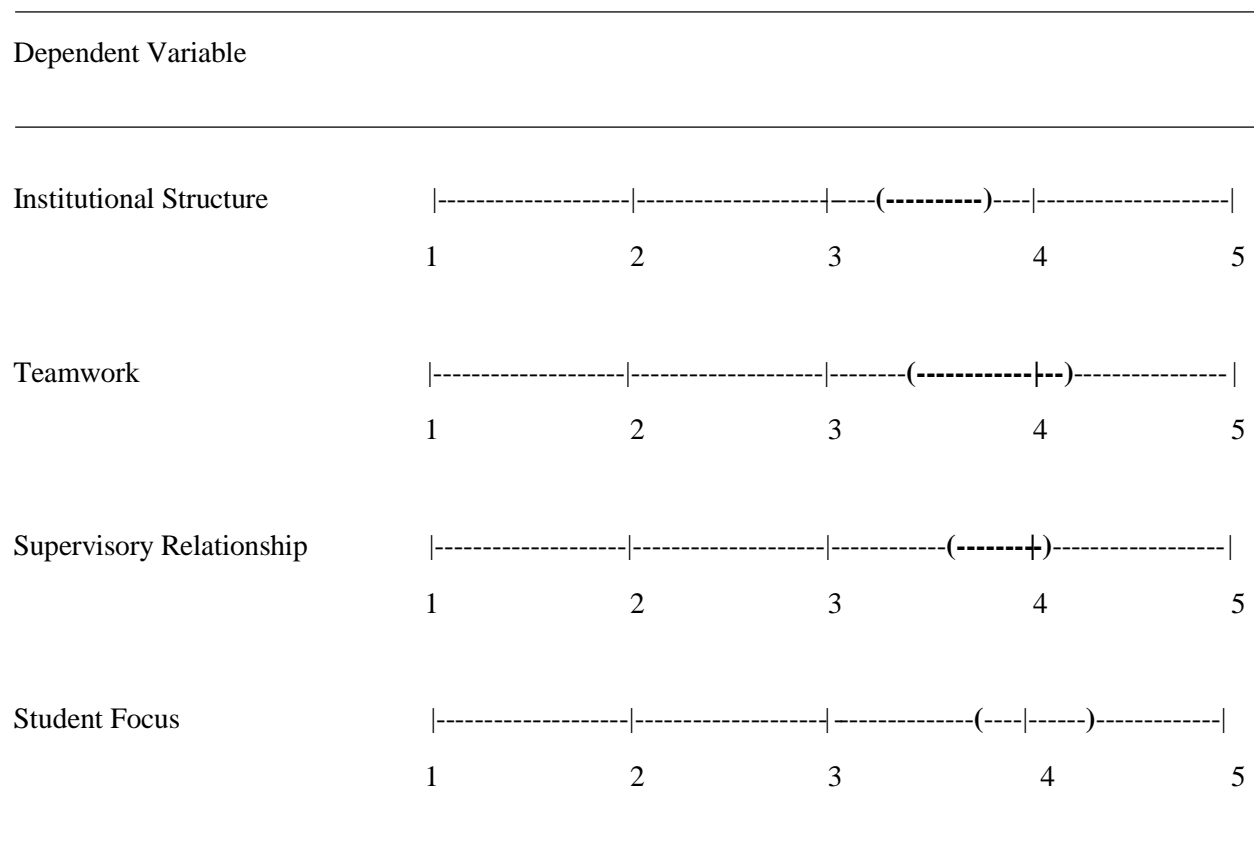


four dependent variables. The numerical scale lines represent satisfaction levels for the dependent variable scores. Therefore, the confidence intervals indicate satisfaction levels for the mean scores for each of the dependent variables. Since each of the confidence intervals is above 3.00 on the satisfaction levels, it can be interpreted that each of the campus climate variables is associated with positive satisfaction for that variable. This finding is crucial to this study because faculty and manager satisfaction with internal processes of the organization constitute organizational effectiveness (Cameron, 1981; Kreps, 1990). Notably, all organizational communication variables are associated with regression models that have significant predictors of dimensions of campus climate. Since the campus climate variable mean scores all indicate positive satisfaction or effectiveness, the significant predictors in the regression models for these campus climate variables are predictors of organizational effectiveness.

For example, for the regression model for Total Campus Climate in Figure 1, the significant predictors are Manager Communication, Faculty Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Personal Feedback, Organizational Perspective, Media Quality, and Gender. The regression models for these predictor variables are in Tables 8 and 9. The significant predictors in the regression model for Institutional Structure were Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Organizational Perspective. Tables 10 and 11 show the regression models for these predictor variables. For the regression model for Supervisory Relationship, the significant predictors are Horizontal Informal Communication, Personal Feedback, and Organizational Integration. The regression models for these predictor variables are in Tables 12 and 13. The important predictors of Teamwork are Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Personal Feedback. The regression models for these variables are in Tables 14 and 15. For the regression model for Student Focus, the significant predictor variables are Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Gender, Faculty/Faculty Leaders, and Organizational Perspective. The regression models for these predictor variables are in Tables 16 and 17. Thus, high scores on these predictor variables and dependent variables are associated with organizational effectiveness.



*Figure 1.* Organizational effectiveness indicators for campus climate dependent variables for the independent variables Manager Communication, Faculty Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, and Media Quality.  $N = 131$ . Parentheses represent 99 % confidence intervals for the respective dependent variable.



*Figure 2.* Organizational effectiveness indicators for campus climate dependent variables for the independent variables Personal Feedback, Organizational Perspective and Organizational Integration.

$N = 66$ . Parentheses represent confidence intervals for the respective dependent variable.

In summary, the quantitative data analysis reveals several important findings. First, there is a significant relationship between organizational communication and campus climate. Second, there is a significant and predictive relationship between specific factors of organizational communication and particular dimensions of campus climate. Lastly, findings show that the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate is an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The purpose of the qualitative phase of the study was to afford the researcher the opportunity to more deeply explore the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate and to examine if that relationship is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Data for this portion of the study were collected using an open-ended question from the CSQ web-based survey and a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide provided a framework for this phase of the study (see Appendix I for

interview guide) and directed the interview process. The questions focused on the relationship between the factors of organizational communication and campus climate, as well as organizational effectiveness. The semi-structured interview format ensured consistency of data collection in that the same questions were asked of each participant. It permitted respondents the opportunity to expand upon and clarify their perceptions of communication and campus climate. It also allowed the researcher to ask additional questions for purposes of clarification and a deeper understanding of the quantitative data.

The results of the qualitative phase of the study are derived by coding the data into themes from the open-ended survey questions and the data from the interviews. The words of the managers and the faculty are used to substantiate the themes. Divergent perspectives and connections between the qualitative findings and the quantitative results are also noted. In the following data analysis, the open-ended question from the web-based survey is discussed and then the interview phase of the study is presented. The research questions and interview questions serve as the framework for reporting findings from the interview data.

### **Qualitative Data from the CSQ**

The open-ended question on the CSQ asked participants to comment on how communication could be changed to increase job satisfaction. Sixty-four of the 131 respondents provided an answer to this question. Participants' comments focused on communication related to senior level management, management, department chairs, and faculty. Twenty-four respondents mentioned that a change in upward communication to senior level management could enhance job satisfaction. Of the twenty-four, nine participants expressed that having more access to senior level management would improve their job satisfaction. Two participants believed that more face-to-face communication with senior level management would improve current communication practices. Four other participants' comments reflected a perception of not feeling valued or listened to because senior level management asks for input after a decision has already been made. Five respondents focused their comments on poor Media Quality, stating that there are too many emails, too much electronic news releases, and that the web pages are ineffective. Their comments reflected feelings of being overwhelmed by electronic messages.

Collectively, respondents' comments revealed a need for communication practices that are more open, honest, transparent, positive, respectful, and constructive. These results differ from the following face-to-face interview results.

### **Descriptive Characteristics of the Interview Participants**

Two female midlevel managers and one male manager participated in this portion of the study. Three male faculty members also took part in the interviews. One was a faculty chair, one was a faculty leader, and one was a tenured faculty member. Each interviewee was named by position type as follows: Midlevel Manager A, Midlevel Manager B, Manager, Faculty Chair, Faculty Leader, and Faculty. A senior level manager was not included in the qualitative phase of the study because no one of this position type indicated a willingness to be interviewed. Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Interviews were then edited to eliminate verbal fillers. Following are the results of the interviews.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis from the Interviews**

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate?

**Interview segment 1: The Total Campus Climate.** Quantitative data show that participants are somewhat satisfied with their Total Campus Climate [CI = 3.51-3.87], and that organizational communication is strongly correlated with campus climate. However, the qualitative findings provide a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions of the Total Campus Climate and its relationship to organizational communication. This interview segment afforded the participants an opportunity to identify and explain important dimensions of organizational life without being restricted by pre-determined questions related specifically to the factors of organizational communication or the dimensions of campus climate.

The quantitative data revealed that the levels of satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate may be due to the communication practices within work groups, among work groups, and at the organizational level. The data also illustrate that perceptions of campus climate are extensively related to the work group, but not entirely related. Moreover, a moderate degree of dissatisfaction was expressed when participants

considered communication among work groups. Dissatisfaction was related to feelings of uneasiness with the particular divisions and their approach to communication. However, the general collegial approach to communication in the organization appeared to have a positive impact on perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. Following is a discussion of participants' comments related to these themes.

Five out of the six participants described the Total Campus Climate as the climate in their work groups. Midlevel Manager B stated, "I think most of us have very good practices within our own little territories. Sometimes between divisions I think things break down a little bit." The following statement also is reflective of a participants' belief that climate is to a large extent rooted in work groups:

I think it's fairly diffused. It's a large enough university that each little segment at the school tends to become self-contained so that the climate I react to is more fully linked than exclusively linked to the department. I have interaction with other people, but I think it's driven department by department (Faculty).

Three other participants' comments reflected the same feelings of disconnectedness among divisions impacting their perceptions of campus climate. For three of the participants, communication among work groups caused a lack of satisfaction with the climate. Faculty Chair's response reflected this lack of contentment:

I am not in the in group up in old main on the third floor, so I can only speak from my personal experiences. It's a combination of I feel good about things because the university is doing well in terms of Enrollment, and we haven't had retrenchment, and all those sorts of things. At the same time, we have a relatively new administration, and I don't think we all know how they communicate yet, because they are very different from the previous administration, so there's a little bit of unease, but at the same time some of the things they're doing they seem to be doing well. So it's kind of a combination of its good; I would say the climate for me as I observe it is good for me on campus.

Manager's comments also reflected a level of dissatisfaction with other work groups:

The faculty really has a group. I feel that they think that this place really revolves around them and that's just a personal perception. I've always felt it here. "We have a Ph.D. You don't." There is a disconnect between us and them because of it. I don't think that people are as happy to work here as they could be. I really feel that they're really looked upon as kind of a lesser position or not important.

Although participants expressed a moderate level of dissatisfaction with the Total Campus Climate among work groups, they also indicated a moderate degree of satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. Five out of the six participants characterized the atmosphere of the university as positive. Faculty described the campus environment as, "pretty good, very collegial, supportive of one another, friendly." Midlevel Manager B states: "By in large it's friendly. It's very friendly to midlevel managers. I think it's open." Similarly, Faculty Leader said: "This campus climate as I'd describe it is very friendly. I feel like it's a pretty safe campus climate and fairly open to discussions and being able to exchange ideas."

The previous statements reveal that communication practices in the organization are impacting perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. Four of the six respondents indicated that the approach to communication is inviting and friendly, which affects their level of satisfaction with the organizational environment. Reflective of this sentiment was Midlevel Manager B's comment: "I think it's open. I think we have excellent multi-directional communication flow [in our own little territories]." Faculty Chair reinforced Midlevel Manager B's positive feelings when he stated: "People are going to listen and get support to do things, so from that perspective I feel it is very positive."

This segment of this research study began to clarify the relationship between Total Campus Climate and organizational communication. The quantitative data revealed that participants are somewhat satisfied with the campus climate. The qualitative data showed that the level of satisfaction may be affected by communication practices in work groups and among work groups. Participants' comments illustrated that perceptions of campus climate were extensively related to the work group but not completely related. Participants expressed satisfaction with their work groups, but also expressed a moderate level of

dissatisfaction with communication among work groups. Dissatisfaction was related to feelings of uneasiness with the particular divisions and their approach to communication. However, the general collegial approach to communication in the organization appeared to have a positive impact on perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. In the next stage of this research study, connections between the numerical data and qualitative data are represented to investigate further the relationships between the specific factors of communication and particular dimensions of campus climate.

## **Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between the specific factors of organizational communication and the specific dimensions of campus climate?

**Interview segment 2: Dimensions of campus climate and factors of organizational communication.** This section of the interview afforded participants the opportunity to describe how specific factors of communication impact their perceptions of campus climate. The data for this portion of the interviews is reported by sections organized according to the factors of organizational communication found in the literature review that impacted organizational outcomes.

***General Organizational Perspective.*** The quantitative findings revealed that communication related to Organizational Perspective is a significant predictor of satisfaction with Total Campus Climate ( $p < .001$ ), Institutional Structure ( $p < .001$ ), and Student Focus ( $p < .05$ ). The qualitative findings further explained the relationship between communication and satisfaction with Institutional Structure. However, the findings did not clarify the relationship between Organizational Perspective and Student Focus. This may be due to interview respondents focusing on the impact of a recent budget crisis on their divisions and the climate of the university when asked about communication related to Organizational Perspective and the Total Campus Climate.

The quantitative data illustrate that Organizational Perspective affects perceptions of the Institutional Structure. Specifically, administrative processes and the decision-making structure of the organization are perceived to be related to the president's communication practices. These practices are identified as providing a sense of security and inclusivity for managers. However, none of the faculty



participants in this segment of the interview described the president's communication as a source of information. Faculty tended to focus on other sources of information that impacted their perceptions of the Institutional Structure and the Total Campus Climate.

All six participants expressed that feeling well-informed about the organization affected their perceptions of the campus climate. As Faculty stated: "I mean I'd turn it around. If there was a lack of communication, then it would definitely, adversely impact campus climate. Two participants' comments also reflected that feeling well-informed can create a perception of security or insecurity in the organization. Focusing on how communication enhances perceptions of Institutional Structure, Midlevel Manager B stated:

I mean it's [communication] a positive impact. I think people know what the bigger picture is, and they also have some conversation about how they fit into it. I think this president has been very aware of that and has really taken special pains, especially during the budget crisis, to keep people in it step-by-step.

Conversely, Faculty Leader's comment reflected that there is a level of discontent with the Institutional Structure due to lack of information regarding the vision of the university, which creates a feeling of uncertainty. He stated:

It [communication] creates some disconnect. There are people who are worried about if they are going to lose their position, because they have low numbers in their programs. I think it's when you don't get that kind of vision out there in leadership; you are not really sure where the university is going. Is what we are trying to do to create value for students and stay competitive?

When considering communication about the state of the organization, all three managers referred to the president's town hall meetings providing information about the state of the university. Their comments suggested that the communication taking place in these meetings has a positive impact on the Total Campus Climate. The faculty did not mention the town hall meeting as a source of information about the state of the organization. Midlevel Manager A described the meeting as follows: "At the last state of the union address it was just so positive after the doom and gloom that I think that really has come

through in peoples' attitudes. They're more relaxed." Manager Level Manager B's comment reflected the same optimistic attitude: "Everyone from every job class is welcome. I think that helps because she is presenting to a mixed audience. It's open invitation, but everyone gets a personal email. It's not just like you are copied on a list." Manager also described the positive impact of the town hall meetings on the campus climate:

She'll have town hall meetings on the state of the university. Due to the budget crises locally here, there were a lot of rumors going around. "They're talking about getting rid of theater. They're talking about consolidating this and firing him and laying off all the secretaries," just the rumor mill goes. She's done a good job with getting everybody in a room and saying this is the way it is. "Don't worry about the rumors you're hearing outside," and it's really curbed that. It's vastly improved campus climate.

The managers' responses showed that they view the president's approach to communication positively. Collectively the three managers described the president's communication practices as focusing on the positive, exhibiting a calm presentation style, inviting everyone to the conversation, being transparent, showing a willingness to address problems, and having a personable demeanor. The following statement reflected the president's communication practices creating a positive atmosphere within the organization:

I think overall it's positive because even if you don't like the message that's being delivered at least you're being told what it is instead of finding out, and I think most people appreciated that. I think the university now is going through a period where it is remarkably transparent. I don't always agree with a decision, but I think her way of presenting the decisions is vastly superior to a couple of preceding presidents. She has a wonderful, very calm, very soothing presentation style, which is very helpful. I think she has the big gatherings for people where everybody of every job class is welcome, and I think that helps, so she's presenting to a mixed audience (Manager B).

Manager's statement also reflected that the president's willingness to address issues and being personable are positive communication practices. He described the president's communication practices as follows:

She's always answering questions, and she doesn't dodge the hard questions. "Are you going to lay off people?" "Unfortunately there probably is going to be some retrenchment." She won't back away from the hard questions. She might sugar coat them, but in the end you know what she's talking about. I think she is a very good communicator. I think she is very personable.

The two statements above reflected that the president's communication practices appear to create a feeling of inclusivity and trust for managers. There were no statements in the three faculty interviews that identified the president's communication style as impacting the Total Campus Climate and Institutional Structure. Rather, Faculty focused on being kept well-informed about what is taking place in the organization via email and communication networks. Faculty Leader comments concentrated on the lack of a clear statement about the mission of the university from senior level management creating a lack of confidence with the direction of the university. Faculty Chair's comments also centered on the Institutional Structure, stating that the desire of faculty, deans, and chairs to work through problems rather than to argue about their concerns positively impacts campus climate.

The quantitative portion of this research study shows that communication related to Organizational Perspective is predictive of satisfaction with the Institutional Structure, Student Focus, and the Total Campus Climate. The interview segment clarified the relationship between communication and Institutional Structure, showing that the decision-making structure in the organization is perceived as positive by managers due to the president's communication practices creating a sense of security and inclusivity for managers. However, the faculty participants did not identify the president as a source of information regarding what is taking place in the organization. When reflecting on communication related to the campus climate, two faculty had positive feelings about email and networking sources that provide information impacting their perceptions of the Institutional Structure and Total Campus Climate. However, one faculty member's comments reflected a feeling of insecurity due to lack of information about the mission of the organization.

***Organizational Integration.*** The qualitative findings revealed that communication related to Organizational Integration is a significant predictor of satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship ( $p < .05$ ). The qualitative results further explain the relationship between Organizational Integration, Supervisory Relationship, and Total Campus Climate. Four of the six participants' statements reflected that communication from their supervisors impacts their satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship. The following statements indicated that communication has a positive effect on perceptions of Supervisor Relationship when communication is clear, open, defines expectations, makes people feel supported, and provides feedback. In this regard, Midlevel Manager A stated: "Our director has weekly meetings with our vice president. She's very open about what's going on. We do have monthly staff meetings and a very open environment in our department about what's going on, and expectations are clearly defined." When reflecting upon communication with her superiors, Midlevel Manager B stated:

I think communications are clearly conveyed. I don't ever feel like I am at a loss. I don't feel like I don't know what I am supposed to do. The reporting structure is known and accepted. I have never felt unsupported. I feel I am very supported by whoever I am reporting to.

Manager's comments also reflected a positive feeling toward the Supervisory Relationship due to feelings of satisfaction related to communication about the immediate work environment. Manager described communication and its impact on his level of satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship as follows:

We have a new vice president who is very good at feedback, and he's big on "thatta a boy." He's clear and concise on what he wants. He's there to congratulate you and to say thank you. The communication between my direct supervisor and me is very good. We're friends as well as coworkers, and we have very free open lines of communication.

Two of the participants' comments showed that when a change occurs in the organization and there is a lack of communication it impacts their satisfaction with the Supervisory Relationship. In this regard, Faculty Chair stated: "It's [communication about the department] been pretty good. It's been pretty clear. It's just adapting to the way of doing things in the college and sometimes communication gets a little garbled, because they forget that we are new and that we don't know how to do this."

Transitioning to a new college for Faculty Chair was somewhat of a challenge due to the ineffectiveness of the communication. Midlevel Manager B's comments also reflected that there are communication challenges when transitioning to a new position due to lack of communication:

I don't know who to tell what it is that I am doing. That's kind of an odd situation. I know what I am supposed to be doing, and I think I am doing it, and I'm doing it very well. I don't know who I am supposed to be telling. I was confused.

The quantitative findings revealed that communication with supervisors impacts perceptions that participants have of their Supervisory Relationships. The qualitative data show that four of the six respondents believe communication related to their immediate work environment influences their satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship and their perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. Clear, open communication that defines expectations, makes people feel supported, and provides feedback appeared to create a positive perception of the Supervisory Relationship. Participants' comments also showed that lack of communication during a time of change seems to create confusion, which impacts perceptions of satisfaction with the environment.

***Personal Feedback.*** The qualitative findings revealed that Personal Feedback is a significant predictor of satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship ( $p < .01$ ), Teamwork ( $p < .01$ ), and Total Campus Climate ( $p < .01$ ). The qualitative findings further explained the relationship between communication related to the Supervisory Relationship and Teamwork dimensions of campus climate, as well as the Total Campus Climate. This stage of the interview afforded participants the opportunity to consider the ways in which the communication related to their performance impacts their perceptions of campus climate.

Results from the interviews showed that participants focused on the Personal Feedback they received from their supervisors as creating positive feelings about the campus climate. They also explained that there are two types of Personal Feedback, formal and informal. Further, faculty identified the nature of feedback as related to their position within the work group. Additionally, a majority of participants identified Personal Feedback as important to making them feel meaningful to their work group and the organization. Lastly, participants felt that Personal Feedback was necessary in order to improve

upon future performance.

Four of the six participants felt that the Personal Feedback they received from their coworkers and their supervisors helps them to feel positive about the campus climate. Midlevel Manager's B statement reflected the perceived impact of communication on perceptions of campus climate: "Very, very positively, and that's whether it's positive or negative feedback, because then it's somebody's listening and letting you know hey you need to think about adjusting here."

Personal Feedback also is perceived as both informal and formal. Of the six participants, two did not receive formal feedback from a supervisor or from coworkers, but four did receive formal feedback about their performance in the organization. All six participants expressed that receiving feedback has a positive impact on their perceptions of their performance. Faculty Leader primarily received formal feedback, which appeared to affect his motivation to improve continuously upon his job performance. He described his feedback as follows:

They'll say [my committee] this is what you did really well in the classes. This is what we observed. Then my chair he'll come through and say I really like what you did on this. You might want to try this, and it's all in writing, and then the dean will come through, and I get her evaluation. There's an atmosphere of continued improvement. They want you to do a better job (Faculty Leader).

While Faculty Leader focused on formal feedback given by superiors, Midlevel Manager A emphasized the importance of informal feedback from other employees in the organization in the proceeding statement: "Again, I do get a lot of positive feedback, and I am lucky in that not just from you know in terms of evaluations but from employees. I get a lot of thanks because people are appreciative."

All three faculty who were interviewed described their Personal Feedback as coming from different sources. For Faculty Leader, formal Personal Feedback was given by students, chairs, and deans. For Faculty, formal feedback came from students, and for Faculty Chair feedback came from the dean and coworkers. The following statement revealed the nature of Personal Feedback from students and its impact on the job performance of a faculty member.

I get feedback from students. I'd like to find out about the student's experience in my class, and if it's good, nice to hear, and if it's bad I want to know the particulars. How can I do it better?

I think it could potentially come more often. I mean we get these student evaluations at the end of each semester, and I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to do it once in the middle of the semester or something (Faculty).

For Faculty Chair, Feedback is mostly informal and comes from the dean and other faculty. He stated:

The dean will say, "Hey, I really like what you're doing." I'll get that type of feedback. Or, you know I'll just hear from another faculty member who will say, "Hey, they told me that they really liked what you did here." So I get that kind of feedback.

All six interviewees conveyed a feeling of being meaningful to the organization by the mere act of receiving Personal Feedback. One respondent commented:

Another way that I kind of get feedback indirectly is when I'm told we need some recommendations from you on faculty who can do this and that and the other thing, and when I send the names forward, and they get picked that makes me feel good. That's more of communication that lets me know I made a good choice (Faculty Chair).

Another interviewee stated that receiving feedback is important, but so too is listening to feedback to improve one's performance in the organization. She recounted:

I think they feel heard, and I think that's really the most powerful thing you can give to people is to listen. I think it's very, very positive. So I think when you get a job evaluation and feedback, it's important to listen to what people are telling you about your performance. You know, to listen not just with your ears but with your eyes. To watch and observe and give feedback and then determine if people are able to course correct from that point, or they might need a little assistance in course correction (Midlevel Manager B).

In sum, the participants' comments reflected that Personal Feedback created positive feelings about the campus climate. Moreover, the nature of Personal Feedback in an environment where people were

satisfied with their campus climate materialized. For faculty, the informal and formal nature of the feedback they received was related to their position within their work group. For all participants Personal Feedback was necessary for them to feel valued in their work group and the organization. For three respondents, Personal Feedback was crucial to providing them with information about how to improve upon their performance.

***Manager Communication.*** The quantitative findings revealed that Manager Communication is a significant predictor of Total Campus Climate ( $p < .001$ ), Institutional Structure ( $p < .001$ ), and Student Focus ( $p < .05$ ). The findings in the qualitative phase of this study were similar to the quantitative findings. The statements in this portion of the interview reflected that faculty and managers do believe that Manager Communication impacts Institutional Structure and Total Campus Climate. Participants' comments also suggested that there is a general satisfaction with how the new senior level managers have formalized lines of communication, which has positively impacted their perceptions of the trustworthiness of decisions that are made in the organization.

All three managers expressed satisfaction with senior level management's communication practices having a beneficial impact on Institutional Structure and Total Campus Climate. In contrast, two faculty members had a less positive view of how senior level management's communication influences campus climate. When asked about how communication with managers affected perceptions of campus climate, one manager stated: "I think it's had a positive impact under our current leadership. I mean just from the way that our current leadership is so inclusive of our campus community" (Midlevel Manager A). Another manager recounted:

I think most of the time positively, because she leads. She's a leader who leads. Are you going to be thrilled with everything she does? No. But, you know, being thrilled with everything that they do is not really a criterion for what's a good leader (Midlevel Manager B).

Faculty expressed less satisfaction with Manager Communication and suggested that their communication with senior level management is mostly with the provost. Faculty interactions being primarily centered on the provost might be due to the changing nature of the role of senior level



management. Faculty Chair explained his perception of senior level management communication as follows:

Sometimes the communication from the very top, the president, is really lacking. A lot of people will say, and I'd be one of them, "President who?" Because she's really a mystery to most of us. Her communication to people in public settings is awful in the sense that she kind of speaks in platitudes. I think that's also representative of the different direction the higher level administration is going. Presidents don't mean a whole lot on the immediate campus. The provost really is the one who is now the central figure academically, but he's kind of really close to the vest as well, and we get a majority of our communication from the deans from him. So we don't get a lot of direct communication.

A similar sentiment about the provost's communication style being somewhat problematic is reflected in Faculty Leader's comment: "Generally pretty good. Although with the current provost, I think people are thinking that there's a lot of decisions made, and it's not always clear as to why the decisions are made."

The Managers' and Faculty's statements related to Manager Communication reflect that managers view their communication as coming down from the president, whereas faculty view senior level management communication coming from the provost. Faculty tend to see their communication with senior level management more negatively than managers, calling their interactions with senior level management "indirect" and "unclear." However, both faculty and managers expressed that they feel upward communication is positive in the organization. Four of the six participants focused on feeling satisfied with organizational changes and feeling valued due to having an opportunity to communicate upward. Midlevel Manager A claimed:

I think, on the whole, they are open to ideas. We've had a lot of changes organizationally lately. I think the communication was very upfront and so as a result of that it seems like these changes have been well received. People have been moved. Their jobs totally changed. Nobody quit. Everyone seems to be embracing the changes.

Faculty comments also reflected a perception that the administration is open to ideas but added that

the openness is authentic. He also stated that previous communication practices in the organization were somewhat corrupt. Following is the exact statement related to these perceptions:

I would say the present administration we have is, from my limited perspective, more open.

Previous ones have been less open. They've attempted to make postures to appear open, but they really were not. They wanted to hear certain things and talk to certain people and got very angry like a dysfunctional family. I think it's different now. There used to be a sense that certain insiders through the bureaucracy of the union and the relationship to administration set up internal channels among themselves, and if you weren't a part of that network, then you had no impact, and if you did, then you could have extraordinary impact in ways at the time from what I saw could be frankly corrupt at its worst. I don't see much of that. I could be wrong, but I don't see as much of that as it used to be (Faculty).

Like Faculty, Faculty Chair focused on the formal lines of communication creating a more positive campus climate. Both of their comments also reflected a greater level of trust in the decision-making process due to the formal channels created for bottom-up communication. Faculty Chair characterized the nature of his personal feedback as follows:

The primary personal communication I have with managers is through my dean because there is a rule sort of in the college that chairs don't go over the dean's head to anybody else above her without clearing it with her, making sure she knows about it. It's different from the old days where the provost and I started together, and we knew each other for 30 years, and if I had an issue I'd say, "Hey." You know? We can't do that anymore. Reporting lines and communication lines are a little more rigid. In one way it's good, because I don't need to worry about who says what. I'm only going to one person. On the other hand, you want a quick answer to something or you know you can get the answer you really can't officially do it. I don't find it an issue. You know you get this little informality build up after a long period of time when the provost and deans all came up through the faculty with you. We don't have that to that degree here anymore. For me, it's not necessarily a bad thing and actually sometimes it makes it a little better because then you don't

have the little favorites at least openly going forward.

The preceding statements provided a deeper understanding of the relationship between Manager Communication and Total Campus Climate and Institutional Structure. Manager Communication appeared to have a positive impact on the Total Campus Climate because participants felt valued and validated due to having an opportunity to communicate upward and receive a response. Participants' comments also reflected a general satisfaction with how the new senior level managers have formalized lines of communication, which has impacted their perceptions of the trustworthiness of the decisions made in the organization. Moreover, these formal lines of communication created a feeling that decision making in the organization is made appropriately because decisions are not based on personal relationships with senior level management.

***Faculty Communication.*** The quantitative findings revealed that Faculty Communication is a significant predictor of Total Campus Climate ( $p > .05$ ). The qualitative findings suggested that there is not a relationship between Faculty Communication and Total Campus Climate. This discrepancy might be due to faculty perceiving that their communication does not impact campus climate. In the following interview segment, faculty and management's different orientations are conveyed as tied to having different concerns. Further, the fact that problems that faculty faced are not understood by managers surfaced. There was no indication that the above factors impacted participants' perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. The following data illustrated these themes.

Five of the six participants' statements reflected that they perceived faculty to be somewhat open to particular ideas. The following declaration reflected the perception that participants have of Faculty Communication:

The question is, are they open to the same set? If it's new ideas especially in the world of academics, where that's what you're supposed to do right? Think about ideas? Process about ideas? Teach perspectives on ideas and ideas are lovely. Managers, on the other hand, have to implement ideas, and that's a whole different ball game. Following through can be trickier (Manager, B).

Manager B's comments reflected that faculty and managers may be open to different sets of ideas due to their roles in the organization. In regard to Faculty Communication, Faculty Chair statements reflected that not all faculty are open to ideas due to their training throughout their academic life. He stated:

That's a loaded question. Don't forget we've been trained through our whole academic life that we know everything and that we're the center of the universe. The reason that someone is an administrator is because they can't teach. I would have to say that's a mixed bag. Some faculty are open to suggestions from administrators; some faculty are not. I'm kind of in the middle myself on that. I think sometimes faculty would like a little more consultation before the idea is formally brought out because there have been a number of ideas that have come down that just won't work and that takes energy to get that cleaned up where it could have been cleaned up before it came down, and it would have worked better, and I think that comes from the two different worlds we live in. Administrators have a very different world. Different concerns than we do.

Wanting to be consulted prior to decisions being finalized was a concern for Faculty Chair, but not for managers. The different orientation of faculty and managers is also reflected in the participants' responses when they are asked if managers understand problems faced by faculty. Four out of the six participants stated that managers do not fully understand the problems that faculty face. However, they did not indicate that this impacted their perceptions of campus climate. Midlevel Manager B declared:

I would have no idea what teaching faculty face in the classroom. I don't even know what that means. I don't know what their teaching load means. I don't actually know what their prep time is. I don't know what the challenges are, teaching this group of students. I imagine there are some very, very intense challenges.

Faculty comments reflected that he did not believe that managers have the time to be involved in issues that faculty face due to their focus on the state government. He declared:

I get a sense that they're so driven now by things that are in their day-to-day realms involving finance and relations with the state government they really don't have time, and it isn't really worth their time to get involved in the pertinent details of what an individual faculty member is doing in

regard to teaching or research. I've gotten feedback from a few others in that regard (Faculty).

The two participants above also reported that the different worlds of faculty and managers impacted their relationships with one another. Faculty Chair and Faculty provided a deeper understanding of these differing perceptions from a faculty point of view. They both described managers as being oriented towards spreadsheets and data, and faculty being oriented toward academics and ideas. Faculty Chair stated:

I think part of that is because administrators are getting further and further and further removed, the higher level administrators, from what it is we actually do. Some of them have been administrators so long that they don't understand classroom dynamics. They don't always understand what it takes to really and truly prepare a class and to make all the adjustments and changes to a class. I don't think they really have a true appreciation for that routine, or they wouldn't call me up and say would you cancel a class and come to a meeting.

The preceding data in this interview segment provided a clearer understanding of how Faculty communication is perceived. Participants described faculty as being somewhat open to a particular set of ideas, which are notions related to the academic side of the organization. Data also revealed that both managers and faculty tended to believe that managers do not understand the problems faced by faculty. Thus, misunderstandings that occur in the organization may be caused by the different orientations of faculty and managers. Participants did not identify Faculty Communication as impacting the Total Campus Climate. In the qualitative findings, however, Faculty Communication was a predictor of the Total Campus Climate ( $p < .05$ ).

***Horizontal Informal Communication.*** In the quantitative portion of the study, satisfaction with Horizontal Informal Communication predicted satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate ( $p < .001$ ), Institutional Structure ( $p < .05$ ), Supervisory Relationship ( $p < .001$ ), Teamwork ( $p < .001$ ), and Student Focus ( $p < .01$ ). The qualitative portion of the study finds that most participants felt that Horizontal Informal communication within their division is related to Teamwork and the Total Campus Climate. Participants' comments did not reflect that Institutional Structure is related to Horizontal Information

Communication.

This stage of the interview afforded participants an opportunity to consider how communication among coworkers affects their perceptions of campus climate. All six participants expressed that communication with their immediate colleagues has a positive impact on how they feel about the Total Campus Climate. As Midlevel Manager A stated: “I think it’s a positive impact. Departments are like little families.” Midlevel Manager B also focused on the positive relationships between coworkers and campus climate:

I think people generally get along with their immediate coworkers. I think there’s a certain camaraderie, and I think it helps the campus. I think people generally like who they work with and like their job. I think people are encouraged a lot. It makes for a good workplace.

The interview data also showed that faculty perceived that coworker communication has a positive impact on their perceptions of campus climate because they believed that there is a spirit of teamwork in their department. Two faculty members expressed positive feelings toward other faculty members who are willing to exchange ideas. The Faculty Chair stated:

People can talk and share ideas even if they differ and then try to work in a way to come to an understanding among those differences. Departments are never as unified as people think we are. Everybody has an opinion and going back to what we have all been taught in our lives and in grad school is we know everything, and we are the ultimate authority and then we come here and you are the ultimate authority, and you are and you are. We all can’t be the ultimate authority on everything, but we still try to think we are.

Faculty also expressed positive feelings toward other faculty but also added that he believed that Horizontal Informal Communication impacts the campus climate for students. He explained:

I think on a day-to-day basis it’s certainly very important to have a good kind of sharing of ideas in the central matter such as teaching; this approach worked for me, this particular reading was good, or this particular approach or reading wasn’t good. I think that kind of sharing is very important. I think if students perceive of an atmosphere in which colleagues seem to be enjoying working with

one another it rubs off on to a more positive kind of climate that students will somehow sense even if they can't put their finger on it (Faculty).

The commonality among the phrases resulted in the following theme: open and collaborative Horizontal Informal Communication creates satisfaction with teamwork in the organization.

When considering coworker communication, participants also were asked to consider the impact of grapevine communication on campus climate. All six participants mentioned that negative grapevine communication can be counterproductive. One of the participants referred to grapevine communication as being similar to a childhood game of telephone where "even if it [the message] started out right, it wound up being horribly wrong, or inaccurate, or people end up spending a lot of time and emotion getting caught up in things that just really aren't true" (Midlevel Manager B). Similarly, Faculty Chair believed that grapevine communication could be harmful: "It can hurt. I don't like grapevine communication. I hear it. I'll get information from people, but it can hurt, and I don't think it's healthy." Two of the three managers felt that the untrue communication propagated by the grapevine can be mitigated by making people feel informed about what is taking place in the organization. Manager A stated:

I think when there's bad communication, when people don't know stuff, that's when I think it grows more because people aren't being told the truth, so they kind of make assumptions, and what do you think and what do you think, and that's how things get spread that maybe aren't right. I think when you have good communication and you're upfront with people they don't have to make it up.

Conversely, two of the three faculty participants believed that sometimes the grapevine can be trusted more than "official communication." Faculty Chair commented:

I shouldn't say this. I do know of instances where it's been healthy because it's the only way for information to get spread. I'll have faculty come to me as chair, and they'll say, "Hey I heard this. This is going to happen," and I'll say, "OK you may know that through whatever source or sources you have, but you have to understand as chair I cannot ask the department to act on your information. The only information we can act on is what I get as chair coming down. Because

maybe you're right. Maybe you're not."

The qualitative data and quantitative data showed that Horizontal Informal Communication is related to positive perceptions of satisfaction with Teamwork and the Total Campus Climate. However, the qualitative data provided a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Horizontal Informal Communication, Teamwork, and the Total Campus Climate. Open and collaborative coworker communication appears to have created a perception of positive, collegial relationships, which enhanced satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. Moreover, grapevine communication, which is a component of Horizontal Informal Communication, can be detrimental to Total Campus Climate; it can spread information that is true but has not been made public by senior level management, as well as spread untruths about what is taking place in the organization. Participants' comments reflected that the extent of the detrimental effects of the grapevine on perceptions of the Total Campus Climate can be lessened by senior level management keeping people well-informed.

***Communication Climate.*** The quantitative data reveal that Communication Climate is not a predictor of dimensions of campus climate ( $p > .05$ ). Conversely, the qualitative data show that positive attitudes toward communication reflect that feeling well-informed impacts motivation toward achieving organizational goals. Further, communication tended to be motivational when it focused on student success. Perceptions of the Communication Climate also appeared to be dependent upon the communication that takes place among work groups. Finally, multidirectional communication can motivate or demotivate, depending upon the free sharing of information and the focus of the information shared. This segment of the interview afforded participants an opportunity to consider how organizational communication motivated and stimulated workers to meet organizational goals, as well as to reflect upon the attitudes toward communication and how this type of communication impacts campus climate.

Four of the six participants focused on senior level management's communication when considering how communication that is motivating and also is stimulating impacts campus climate. One participant, Manager, described communication with faculty as demotivating because of what he perceived as faculty elitism. Another respondent, Faculty, discussed communication within his area as motivating.



The following statement illustrates the perceived positive influence of Communication Climate on campus climate:

I really do think you feel like you are a part of something good here, and I think that is intentional.

I think our president really wants to communicate to the family that whatever you do is important to that mission. I think that she is very good at including everyone from custodians to vice presidents.

It makes you want to do a good job. I think it's contagious when someone high level makes you feel like you're important and what you do matters (Midlevel Manager A).

Midlevel Manager A's comments reflected that she felt motivated by feeling important to the organization.

Midlevel Manager B's remarks also suggested that being motivated is connected to the president's communication practices and associated with being given the information needed to make informed decisions. She stated:

I think if people feel as if they are being given all the information to make decisions, then I think they feel empowered to make the decision. She [the president] seems to motivate people by keeping them focused on students' success and treating people fairly.

In addition to creating an inclusive environment, the preceding statement reflected that the communication taking place in the organization is motivational when it is related to student success. One other participant, Faculty Leader focused on student success when considering communication climate. He stated: They really take evaluations of faculty seriously in a good way. They are saying that we have to have a clear indicator that students are learning in the classroom."

Perceptions of the Communication Climate also appeared to be dependent upon communicating among work groups. Three participants' comments focused on interactions among work groups as somewhat problematic. One participant explained how multidirectional communication can motivate and stimulate people to meet organizational goals and create a perception of a positive campus climate. As Midlevel Manager B commented:

I think if people are willing to communicate multidirectional, I think it's very positive. Some people don't want to communicate. They still go on that information hoarding is power instead of

information sharing is power. So I think you have two different people who work on two different internal platforms. I think you have some people who believe that sharing information is the way to grow success, and then you have other people who think that hoarding information is the way to that because if they are the only one who knows that elevates them. I think that the hoarders, if they are helpful hoarders, I think it's pretty positive. Like if you know this person knows the answer, and they help you then great, but if you know this person has the answer and they are not willing to help you then bad. The university is more sharing. Sometimes I think it might be the finance piece [people are hoarders]. Here I think it's the HR piece.

Information sharing across divisions impacted campus climate in a positive way, according to Midlevel Manager B. However, Faculty Chair had a different perception of communication across groups that motivated and stimulated the faculty to meet organizational goals. That is, if the goals and objectives expressed at the organizational level are related to departmental initiatives, then the communication is perceived as stimulating and motivating. Faculty Chair mentioned that:

The communication has been fairly clear in many areas in what the administration wants to see. What goals and objectives they set, and sometimes we feel kind of confused, "they want to do what?" You know that kind of thing. I don't sense serious problems. It [communication] can be motivating and stimulating. In many cases it is. Particularly if it dovetails with what's going on in your department. But there are other departments that will give you a very different answer because they may be in a department that's going to shrink. I have talked to some faculty members who say I don't like what's happening and other faculty members will say yeah this is great this is just what we need to happen, and I really think it depends on where you are sitting at the time.

All six participants conveyed a somewhat positive attitude toward communication. When considering attitudes toward communication, Manager A and Faculty Chair both focused on the impact that feeling well-informed has on the way people think about the organizational environment. Midlevel

Manager A reflected:

I think the general attitude is not as good as I think it is because I know a lot due to the nature of my job. I know what enrollment is. I know what kind of new programs there are. I know the exciting things that are happening, where the general population of employees may not feel like they're that informed. Again, I think there are ways for people to find out that kind of stuff.

Faculty Chair's statement revealed some suspicion of the information that is being shared by senior level management. He commented:

I tend to be a little cynical about a lot of things, so I always realize at least in my own mind they're going to tell us what they want to tell us, and there are going to be things they don't want to share with us.

The quantitative data and the quantitative data are divergent. The quantitative data found no relationship between Communication Climate and Total Campus Climate or any of the dimensions of campus climate. The qualitative data showed that feeling well-informed created positive attitudes toward communication, which impacted motivation toward achieving organizational goals and impacted perceptions of a positive campus climate. Moreover, communication from senior level management was perceived as motivational when the message was associated with student success. Further, Communication Climate may be related to the communication that occurs among divisions.

Multidirectional communication was cited as motivating or demotivating, depending upon communication experiences. The discrepancies between the quantitative data and the qualitative data may be due to the general faculty population participating in the survey portion of this study, whereas the interviewees were managers, a faculty leader, a faculty chair, and a tenured faculty member. Given the formal and segmented lines of upward and downward communication, the general faculty population may not think of the organization as having a communication climate at the organizational level. Rather, they may think of the communication climate as rooted in particular divisions. This focus on communication climate as existing in pockets may then influence faculty to identify communication with a particular unit rather thinking of communication climate as a property of "the organization."

**Media Quality.** In the quantitative portion of this study, Media Quality was found to be a predictor of Total Campus Climate ( $p < .001$ ), Institutional Structure ( $p < .001$ ), and Teamwork ( $p < .01$ ). The qualitative data showed that town hall meetings impacted perceptions of the Institutional Structure with regard to feelings of satisfaction with the direction of the institution and the decision-making process. Moreover, communication practices were identified as impacting perceptions of Teamwork. Lastly, electronic communication was identified as impacting perceptions of the Total Campus Climate.

Participants' comments related to a particular component of Media Quality, town hall meetings, as associated with Institutional Structure. Three of the participants identified these organizational-wide meetings as creating a perception of trust, openness, and inclusiveness. Manager described the town hall meeting as a positive experience that has helped the senior level management build trust:

She's [the president] the main speaker. It's not like she's the only one who speaks. We'll have one that's from a lower tier, like the division of finance. It's a PowerPoint, and usually they make it available if you want to have a copy. I think it's promoted an openness and a trust with this administration. I really do.

Faculty Chair declared that the meetings can be informative, but they were not interactive and the information provided was not substantive:

Well, we really only have them two times per year and they're really more ceremonial than they are substantive, and some of that can be all well and good you know introduction of new faculty, acknowledgement of faculty who've been here ten, fifteen, twenty-five years, or whatever. They can be informative when the president or the provost goes over particular matters of the budget or anything else, but it's more at that point more informational than it involves any kind of give and take.

The two managers' comments described the communication practices that take place in the organizational-wide meetings as creating positive feelings toward the organization. However, Faculty Chair believed that the university-wide meetings were not as important as meetings where there is an opportunity to have an exchange of ideas with senior level management.

The perceptions related to Institutional Structure are not only impacted by university-wide meetings, but also by written directives. All participants received written directives, but managers received more than faculty. All six participants expressed satisfaction with the approach to communicating about policies and procedures. Midlevel Manager A commented:

When we have directives in our office, it's more of a negotiation. I understand there legal directives or compliance directives that come from ---. In our department, it's more procedural. The way we do things that we're going to change, we talk about it, so I guess I don't feel like I get too many directives from my department.

Similarly, Faculty Chair does not get very many directives. He stated:

I'll get an email that says the provost has a new policy on this or the dean wants this done in this manner, but I haven't had a lot of them. I think collective bargaining kind of channels all that stuff. I mean I got a directive after our five-year review and that was more oral than written.

The one component of Media Quality that was perceived as ineffective by five out of the six interview participants was the quantity of information. Four of the five respondents focused on email communication being problematic due to the abundance of messages received. They thought of the amount of information received electronically as overwhelming. The following statement reflected this:

I think there's a lot out here, and I think that could be a deterrent to some people. I think I don't have time to read all of this just tell me, just give me the punch line you know. People don't have time to read. I think people are deterred by so much stuff (Midlevel Manager A).

The abundance of information received appeared to create an impression that the information lacks substance. The volume of information also seemed to cause distress in the workplace. In this regard, Midlevel Manager B stated: "The amount of emails are overwhelming, and it makes me feel overwhelmed and reduces my job enjoyment. It's like what's the use. If I answer one, it reduces it, but I answer one and seven more come back." Faculty Leader also described a certain level of fatigue due to the amount of information received on a daily basis but also added that the handling of information is problematic. He stated: "I think, like everybody, we're all struggling with 300 emails a day. They haven't figured out yet

how to limit communication and how to manage information.”

The quantity and quality of communication appear problematic. Two participants referred to the information they received as “stuff,” which is an indication that the information is unimportant. Not effectively managing communication and limiting the amount of electronic communication in the organization seems to be related to perceptions of the environment being overwhelming. One interviewee diverged from the common perception among the respondents that there is too much information conveyed. Faculty Chair stated: “Sometimes the quantity of communication is a little sparse. The administration plays it pretty close to the vest, is what I’ve been noticing. So we don’t have a tremendous, tremendous amount.”

In this segment of the interview, Media Quality is identified as impacting perceptions of Institutional Structure, Teamwork, and the Total Campus Climate. The managers felt that the town hall meetings kept them well-informed of what was taking place in the organization. Managers also identified these meetings as creating a sense of inclusivity, trust, and openness. Further, very few written directives were given in the organization. Participants’ comments reflected that directives were typically related to procedures rather than to their job performance, and were usually negotiable. Lastly, participants identified the quantity of information as problematic. Information about the activities taking place in the organization was overwhelming.

**Interview segment 3.** This segment required participants to explain how the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate impacts student retention. All six of the participants expressed that they believed communication and campus climate impact student retention, but they were not sure exactly how. Participants reported that both Horizontal Informal Communication and Manager Communication affected student retention because these communication practices focused on student success.

The three managers and two of the faculty identified their communication practices as reflecting that they care about their students. In this regard, Faculty stated:

Individually, I’d say to just do the best job I can to be open to students, hearing what they have to

say, responding to their needs. To be somebody who is an approachable human being who doesn't compromise standards but at the same time is a human being.

Horizontal Informal Communication practices among faculty and other divisions on campus were also cited as creating a climate for student success. Midlevel Manager A's comment reflected this perception:

I think that faculty are armed with such good tools to help students who are struggling students who have emotional problems, students who have some kind of discipline problem. There are so many good avenues that I think are communicated so well to faculty to get a troubled student to the right place to try to retain them. I feel like the climate is positively affected when I don't deal with students at all, but I know where to direct a troubled student if this is going on or that is going on.

Midlevel Manager B's statement also reflected that student success as a goal among divisions enhanced her perception of the campus climate:

I think when we are working together toward a common goal, excellent. Perfect. I think it helps our students stay, and I think it helps our students be successful. This is a scenario that will happen quite a bit. I have a faculty member who will call me, "this student keeps falling asleep in my class." One of the advisors will call, "the faculty are saying with this early alert they're not going to class or whatever. Will you see them?"

Faculty Leader claimed that good relationships between coworkers enhanced student retention:

Oh, I think it [communication] is very positive. I think it's good. I think students can pick up if there's tension, and there are some problems in other departments, but this particular department with the college and the faculty, and our dean is very good. I think it does have an impact on retaining students. I mean if you have a good work environment and people are pulling together and the dean is trying to create a good work environment, he's expecting us to deliver a good product to our students. I think our students stay.

All three of the preceding statements reflected that establishing particular communication channels allowed coworkers within divisions and across groups to communicate about student success, which

impacted student retention. For all three faculty, Manager Communication affected student retention. Faculty's statement reflected this perception: "In the context of that issue [faculty and administration communication] my only answer is keep it as clear, straightforward and unadorned by political infighting as possible."

Interestingly, in this interview segment, three participants called the organization "a family." In one other interview segment, Manager A called the organization "a family." The family is identified as a campus community that cares about students and cares about one another. The following statement reflected this sentiment:

I mean I hate to use the word family because it's so cliché, but people really get a sense that people do care here. There are people who really care for the kids here. The counseling department, the health center, even the faculty, more than not, they really care for their students. There are some faculty you know who are old school. They really don't care, but I really think the kids feel that there are people who care for them here (Manager).

Faculty Leader also suggested that the family-like atmosphere is created by faculty caring about students and the administration being approachable and open. He stated:

There's also the perception that the faculty care that they're really trying to work with the students. I think a lot of it has to do with the administration. I think the administration is pretty open and engaging. She [the president] is very approachable, and I think that creates the right type of...it's almost a familial type of campus. You know it feels kind of like family here (Faculty Leader).

In this interview segment, participants suggested that their communication practices with students, with coworkers, and within their divisions and across divisions, and with senior level management impacted student retention. The climate created by communication practices related to students is an environment for care, which contributed to student success. Three participants identified the organization "as a family," indicating that the care in the organization is authentic and meaningful.



**Interview segment 4.** This segment of the interview required participants to discuss how shared governance impacts organizational communication and campus climate. The faculty statements reflected an understanding of the shared governance system at the university. However, managers do not consider themselves as part of a shared governance system. For faculty, shared governance was connected to communication and to a positive campus climate. Additionally, faculty participants described shared governance as effective when senior level management and faculty understand their areas of influence in the decision-making process.

This portion of the interview also revealed that managers have a different orientation than faculty when considering how shared governance is related to climate and communication. Two of the three managers did not believe that shared governance impacts campus climate because decision making is hierarchical. Midlevel Manager A referred to the State System when she considered shared governance. She stated: “I don’t think it has a lot of impact. We are a part of a system, but I don’t think it has any negative or positive impact on campus climate. I really don’t.” Midlevel Manager B also believed that shared governance is a not a concern because she does not believe shared governance exists. She stated: “We don’t have shared governance, so it doesn’t impact me. I mean we don’t. It’s a very hierarchical model. It [the hierarchical model] provides a good structure. Communication flow goes around, but it’s not shared governance.”

All three Faculty participants described shared governance as having a connection with the expected communication practices in the organization and as impacting campus climate. The following remark reflected that clear, open, collegial communication is expected in an organization that has shared governance and that this has an impact on campus climate:

I think it [campus climate] is positive. I feel very good about it. Well, I think most of the time when there are shared governance issues that the communication has been very, very well. Its college, and it’s a collegial atmosphere, and so governance is collegial. You know everybody brings something to the table. I think it’s the way it should be done (Faculty).

Faculty Chair declared that shared governance requires faculty to be consulted. He explained:

With shared governance you expect there will be clear and open communication. That's an expectation. It's an ideal. We don't make a whole lot of decisions, but we certainly are required to make a lot of recommendations. We're required to be consulted, and we do have a formal way of providing input, and we have a formal way to redress grievances. I think it impacts what we think should happen. We think we should always be consulted to do this and to do that, but that's not the reality. There are limits to what has to happen and if we understand what shared governance really is then we should have a decent campus climate.

Two of the three faculty focused on having an understanding of what is shared as impacting campus climate. Both of these faculty described the union contract as creating the guidelines for what must be shared. According to the two faculty, union matters are shared between the union and senior level management, whereas academic matters are controlled by the faculty. However, one of the two faculty members said that senior level management can influence academic matters through resource allocation.

Faculty stated:

There are certain things by contract because it is a negotiated item that's the prerogative of the faculty member and there's a framework put up around how that works between faculty and administration with regard to our teaching, with regard to our advisement of students, research, and you know all of those kinds of things. We control the curriculum, which is really the heart of a university and if the administration wants to move the curriculum in a certain way they have ways of doing that, but not directly. They can feed one area with money to encourage people to do certain things and starve another area if they want, but they can't dictate. I think shared governance is that both groups, faculty and administration, share in the operation of the university and the decision-making process. Now what is shared is contractually determined but at least it sets up a framework where faculty can be an active participant.

One faculty participant provided a deeper understanding of what is shared during the process of decision making by referring to the difference between a union matter and an academic matter. He stated:

As long as the relationship is totally defined as it should be in terms of what's a union matter and what's an academic matter because the union is not an academic body and it involves people who are not in academics—the head of the dormitory or librarians, coaches. Don't let the two worlds mix where they don't belong. Make sure they cooperate where they do belong. So shared governance can work. It probably works as well as any kind of system, except when the insiders mess with what the definitions of a union matter and what is an academic matter. Can service to the union coopt in the eyes of the administration academic quality? My answer is it shouldn't, but when it does it can be very alienating to the campus environment and contribute to that in-group approach, because it's so easy to say the way to get ahead is to serve on a whole bunch of committees and work the promotion through those means. That's not academics. That's bureaucracy (Faculty).

In summary, shared governance appears to have a positive impact on campus climate when it is consultative, collegial, and clear. However, two participants underscored that understanding the arena in which faculty and senior level management must share in the decision-making process is helpful to effective decision making. Finally, the administration—through providing or taking away resources—can impact decision making that solely is relegated to the faculty. Conversely, managers perceived that a shared governance system does not exist in the university. This seemed to suggest that there are two different decision-making constructs at work in the organization, which may be problematic when communication occurs among divisions. Hence, faculty may perceive that they should be communicated with when decision making occurs in the organization, whereas managers and midlevel managers may believe that ultimately decision making is primarily the purview of senior level management.

#### **Research Question 4:**

Is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate an indicator of organizational effectiveness?

The quantitative data reflected that the relationship between high levels of satisfaction with

Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, and Organizational Perspective and Student Focus (a particular dimension of campus climate) is an indicator of organizational effectiveness [3.81, 4.26]. The qualitative data further explain this relationship by illustrating that specific Horizontal Informal and Manager Communication practices have a positive impact on Student Focus. Moreover, the relationship between communication and climate is further refined. These three components—student enrollment, retention, and learning—are signs of Student Focus, which relate to effective Horizontal Informal Communication, Organizational Perspective, and Manager Communication.

In this segment of the interview, participants reflected on the relationship between communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. When asked how communication and campus climate impact organizational effectiveness, five out of six participants referred to their satisfaction with these two internal processes as impacting student satisfaction. Further, they identified student success as essential to organizational effectiveness. For example, Midlevel Manager A stated:

I think it [the relationship between communication and campus climate] has a positive effect on all of those factors that make up our effectiveness. I think we're one of the biggest employers in our county. I think we have a positive impact on our community, on our students as a whole, providing a good quality education, a good place to work with sustainable wages and good benefits. I mean if we had bad communication and people didn't feel the way they did, we would be looking at a high turnover, dropping retention rates, and low freshmen classes. I think that good communication and a positive campus climate affects everything we do. There's a general feeling that they want to do a good job, that they feel like they're working for a greater good, and that they're really here for the student. That we're all here in some way to provide a good educational experience for the students.

I think it really infiltrates your campus climate when you have the student as your goal.

This relationship between organizational communication and campus climate impacting student success was explained by Midlevel Manager B:

If communicating well, up, down and around multidirectional, if communication is going well it doesn't necessarily mean that everyone's liking the message that's being said, but the infrastructure

of communicating is going back and forth. If there are log jams or problems in that the information is going down just fine, but it's not coming back up, and then it's very negative. When campus climate is positive more people are willing to forgive mistakes. I think people are more tolerant of each other. I think we're actually very good at collaborating and networking to do stuff for our students. I think we are very effective in helping students be successful.

The above two participants believed that the relationship between communication and campus climate impacted organizational effectiveness. Midlevel Manager B substantiated her perception by referring to specific dimensions of Horizontal Informal communication and Manager Communication—multidirectional communication, free flow of communication, and collaborating—as essential to student success. Faculty Chair added to those dimensions of communication that are essential to a positive campus climate. He commented:

If you have a poor campus climate where people are unhappy and you know there are all kinds of issues boiling about and you come in as new administrators and it makes it hard to set up communication that people believe in. Communication has to be believed. There has to be credibility to it and that's a long process, so it's going to take time to do that. But if things are going as well, I perceive them as going pretty well here in some areas, it's a little easier to communicate and the climate because of that hopefully will be better. If people know that things can flow back and forth, be heard, be considered, you know they're going to feel better about things. From the standpoint of getting students in and they have also drawn us in as faculty for that. I mean the communication there has been good.

Midlevel Manager B and Faculty Chair constructed a clearer picture of the relationship between Horizontal Informal Communication and Manager Communication and campus climate and its impact on organizational effectiveness. Trusted, credible, and free-flowing organizational communication created perceptions of a positive campus climate. Moreover, Manager Communication enhanced campus climate when individuals felt heard and considered. One participant described the relationship between communication and campus climate as creating a positive learning environment for students: "I think it's

[the relationship between communication and campus climate] is only positive. I think people feel like they're [administrators] listening. It makes for a better learning environment, unquestionably" (Faculty Leader).

Collectively, the statements above reflected that the relationship between communication and campus climate impacted student retention, student enrollment, and student learning. When considering organization effectiveness, one participant focused on information about Organizational Perspective as affecting his perception of student success in the organization. He stated:

The fundamental function of a university is to educate students. So you have to start with how well does the admissions department get the best students that we can bring in? How well do we structure the curriculum to serve the needs of students both in their general education and the fields that they study as specialists and how well to serving those ends do faculty contribute?

How well does all that operate? It's too big of a question. I don't know how to answer. I'm just one little corner of that great big picture. I think it's been effective as far as my own work is concerned as largely in a sense I am left alone to do what I want to do, and I'm quite content with that (Faculty).

Quantitative data and qualitative data supported that there is a relationship between two internal processes, communication and campus climate, and they are an indicator of organizational effectiveness. The qualitative data showed that specific communication practices have a positive impact on the perceptions of the campus as focused on student success, which was an indicator of organization effectiveness. In other words, organizational effectiveness is thought of as increased student enrollment, retention, and student success.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the research findings of this convergent mixed-methods research study. The research questions and subsequent data analysis were discussed according to the convergent nature of the research design with the quantitative phase being completed alongside the qualitative phase. The research findings indicated that there is a relationship between organizational communication and campus

climate. A second finding showed that specific factors of organizational communication are related to specific dimensions of campus climate and that this relationship is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. One dimension that was not a predictor of campus climate was Communication Climate. However, qualitative findings showed that communication at the organization level can be motivating or demotivating, which impacts satisfaction with campus climate.

Qualitative data also revealed that shared governance does not influence managers' perceptions of campus climate and organizational effectiveness, but does impact faculty members' perceptions. Data also showed that faculty and managers focused on student success when reflecting upon the relationship between communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

These findings are further discussed in Chapter 5. The key findings are identified and serve as the framework for the concluding discussion. The implications are identified for managers, faculty, and the effectiveness of an organization of higher education. Changes that can improve the campus climate and organizational effectiveness by focusing on critical factors of organizational communication are proposed. Finally, suggestions are made for future research that can extend the knowledge and understanding of the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate and the impact that this relationship has on organizational effectiveness.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

Public higher education faces challenges unparalleled in the history of postsecondary education. Amid this period of change, organizational communication takes on greater significance. Without effective organizational communication, employee morale can wane, commitment to the institution is thwarted, and employee motivation is weakened. Moreover, in a public university environment communication often occurs in a shared-governance context where faculty and managers are the principal voices, necessitating that both parties share in decision-making processes. Attention to campus climate also is vital because it can negatively impact the ability of faculty and managers to achieve personal and professional goals, as well as student retention, learning, and engagement. Since campus climate emerges from interactions that members have within an organization, this internal process can affect the ability of a university to operate effectively.

This study addressed a shortcoming in the literature regarding the relationship between communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness—a gap that positions organizational communication as just another dimension of campus climate rather than as a predictor of campus climate. Ignoring this shortcoming is a missed opportunity because of the impact that communication can have on the overall effectiveness of an organization.

This study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design in which the quantitative phase was initiated at the same time as the qualitative phase, thereby affording the researcher an opportunity to examine more comprehensively the relationship between communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Four research questions were developed to examine this relationship:

1. What is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate?
2. What is the relationship between the specific factors of organizational communication and the particular dimensions of campus climate?



3. What are the effects of the demographic variables on the relationships between organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate?
4. To what extent is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate an indicator of organizational effectiveness?

The participants in the quantitative phase of the study consisted of 30 managers and 101 faculty from a public university in the northeastern United States who answered a web-based survey. Of those participants, three managers and three faculty were selected to be interviewed using a systematic random sampling technique.

This chapter discusses the findings of this research study. First, a brief review of the literature on organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness is presented. Second, the research question and findings are discussed. Since this research study was a convergent mixed-methods design, the findings of the qualitative phase are given along with the quantitative findings, in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the statistical data. Third, the key findings are identified and certain implications of the findings are discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

### **Review of the Literature**

Since the late 1960s, organizational communication has been examined as central to the construction and reconstruction of organizations (Weick, 1969). In the 1970s, Downs and Hazen's (1977) seminal study used a multidimensional framework in an attempt to identify specific factors of communication that constitute organizational communication and to examine how those factors impact organizational outcomes. Thereafter, studies continued to utilize a quantitative approach (Anderson, 2008; Cho et al., 2011; Czech, 2007; Gilley et al., 2009; Rafferty, 2003; Thompson, 2000), with few utilizing a qualitative approach (White, Vanc & Stafford, 2010; Wood, 1999). Both qualitative and quantitative research studies showed that specific kinds of organizational communication are predictive of organizational commitment, job performance, and job satisfaction.

As the field of organizational communication advanced, the context of communication became seen as vital to the effectiveness of an organization. Conrad and Poole's (1998, p. 5) definition of organizational communication exemplifies the renewed emphasis: "A process through which people, acting together, create, sustain, and manage meanings through the use of verbal and nonverbal signs and symbols within a particular context." At most universities, shared governance is an essential component of the organizational context (Tierney & Minor, 2004). Therefore, an examination of communication in an organization with a shared governance context is more complex because climate may unfold differently for sets of people in this anomalous environment.

In total, the studies cited above did not explore how organizational communication impacts the campus climate as experienced by individuals within a university setting. Paying attention to campus climate, as this study does, is essential because students often decide whether or not to attend or leave a university because of the campus climate (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Most studies of climate in higher education have focused on demographics of group membership based on gender, race, and ethnicity. More recent studies also have examined four key variables that impact perceptions of the total campus climate: (1) institutional structure (Moran & Volkwien 1988; Peterson & White, 1992; Somers et al., 1998); (2) teamwork (Moran & Volkwien 1988; Peterson & White, 1992); (3) supervisory relationships (Allen, 2003; Sullivan et al., 2005); and (4) student focus (Ayers, 2005).

Previous studies showed that faculty tend to have a higher level of satisfaction with their campus climate if the institution stresses its mission and goals, encourages teamwork, has a collegial approach rather than a managerial approach, and is consistently focused on student learning. The studies also revealed that managers tend to have a more positive view of campus climate than do faculty, and that managers tend to be more satisfied if the climate is perceived of as supportive and collegial.

Previous research revealed that both communication and climate are individually associated with certain dimensions of organizational outcomes: retention of students, job satisfaction, and commitment (Cabrera, Nora, et al., 1999; Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005; Czech, 2007; Downs & Hazen, 1977).

However, these studies did not investigate if the relationship between communication and climate is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, the primary focus of this study was organizational communication and its relationship to campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. This is an important area of research because when people communicate, climate unfolds (Denison, 1996), a process this study has shown to have an impact on organizational effectiveness. In fact, Kreps (1990) argued that the effectiveness of internal processes can be judged by the quality of communication and can be measured by assessing members' interpretations of organizational life. Such a framework is essential to the study of organizational effectiveness because assessing an organization solely according to output or goal achievement is problematic (Cameron, 1981), especially in non-profit organizations (Herman & Renz, 2008).

In summation, the review of the literature reveals that organizational communication has a significant impact on organizational outcomes and that campus climate has a major effect on whether or not students stay at a university. Since previous research has shown that organizational effectiveness can be judged by the quality of communication and by assessing climate, the present study provided a framework to examine communication and its relationship to campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. The results of this study support the findings reported in previous studies but the results also extend the literature on the interplay between organizational communication and campus climate and the extent to which these two variables when viewed together are indicators of organizational effectiveness.

### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate?

**Finding 1: Satisfaction with organizational communication is highly predictive of satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate.** The results of the multiple regression analysis for Total Campus Climate showed a significant regression model for Organizational Communication and Total Campus Climate (Table 9). Significant Organizational Communication predictors of Total Campus Climate were Manager Communication, Faculty Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, and Media

Quality. Furthermore, Horizontal Informal Communication, Manager Communication, Faculty Communication, and Media Quality were all highly significant with coefficients ranging from 0.21 to 0.29. The interpretations of these significant coefficients are that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase of the value of the coefficient for the Total Campus Climate score when the other variables are held constant. For example, an increase of 1 for the Horizontal Informal Communication score results in an increase of 0.29 in the Total Campus Climate score. In other words, these factors of Organizational Communication are having a positive and significant impact on Total Campus Climate.

These significant findings support Denison's (1990) hypothesis that organizational communication influences perceptions and attitudes within an organization. The findings have additional importance because in previous studies organizational communication has been shown to predict outcomes related to job satisfaction (Downs & Hazen, 1977) and organizational commitment (Czech, 2007), but the research in this dissertation showed that organizational communication is a predictor of campus climate. In this study, the four most important communication factors that impact Total Campus Climate were Personal Feedback ( $p < .01$ ), Manager Communication ( $p < .001$ ), Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .001$ ), and Media Quality ( $p < .001$ ). However, in previous studies the most important communication factors interacting with job satisfaction were Personal Feedback, Manager Communication, and Communication Climate (Downs & Hazen, 1977). In other words, Horizontal Informal Communication and Media Quality were not significant predictors of job satisfaction.

In this study Communication Climate was not a significant predictor of the Total Campus Climate. However, there was some evidence of multicollinearity for Communication Climate, which could indicate that some of the other predictor variables are more significant in the regression model than Communication Climate. In order to further examine the nature of the multicollinearity, regression models in future studies should be implemented by removing some of the predictors to better determine if Communication Climate is a predictor in a reduced model. By eliminating communication factors one at a time from the regression model and by seeing the effect of taking away these variables from the model, a clearer picture of what is

suppressing the Communication Climate factor may surface. Essentially, this procedure allows for discovering the variables that are suppressing Communication Climate as a predictor variable.

Even though the quantitative data did not show a relationship between Communication Climate and the Total Campus Climate, the qualitative data indicated that the Communication Climate for managers, faculty leaders, and chairs enhanced their satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. Participant statements reflected that feeling well-informed created positive attitudes toward communication, which impacted their motivation toward achieving organizational goals. Moreover, the information that came down from senior level management appeared to be perceived as motivational when it was focused on student success. Multidirectional communication also was considered motivating or demotivating, depending upon the information shared and the relationship among the work groups.

The difference in the effect of these factors on organizational outcomes may be due to this study's focus on the Total Campus Climate at an institution of higher education rather than job satisfaction in an organization. Job satisfaction tends to connote cognitive and affective variables that are related specifically to the individual's perceptions of their work environment, while campus climate assesses the attitudes and perceptions among faculty and management of the atmosphere as it relates to the decision-making structure, teamwork, supervision, and student engagement and success. However, the difference also may be attributable to the method of data analysis. As a reminder, this study utilized regression models to analyze the numerical data in order to make predictions about the impact of communication on the campus climate. In other words, this study examined if satisfaction with communication could predict satisfaction with the campus climate. Four key findings emerged to provide more insight into the relationship between communication and the Total Campus Climate.

***Finding 1A: Horizontal Informal Communication may have a strong predictive value of satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate because interaction occurs extensively but not exclusively among coworkers.*** Horizontal Informal Communication was found to be a significant predictor of Total Campus Climate. Thus, informal communication among coworkers is a cause of satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. This finding departs from Downs and Hazen's (1977) study where Horizontal

Informal Communication was not associated with job satisfaction. Therefore, Horizontal Informal Communication may have more predictive value when considering satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate than other factors of communication because interactions occur extensively but not exclusively at the work group level. Similar to previous climate studies, this study found that climate is a construct operating more robustly within work groups in a university setting (Moran & Volkwein, 1988). This dimension was investigated as “collegial” communication by Anderson (2008). Anderson found that positive and negative relational messages received during collegial interaction were related to perceptions of organizational support.

Previous studies also found that coworkers use communication to enhance work relationships and work-related attitudes (Madlock & Booth-Butterfield, 2012), whereas the current study found that “collegial” or coworker communication was predictive of positive perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. Therefore, as might be expected, all six participants in the qualitative phase of the current study expressed that open, friendly, and collaborative coworker communication within their work groups enhanced their levels of satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. This finding also is in keeping with Awal & Stumpf’s study (1981), which argued that perceptions are influenced by experiences that one has within the immediate environment of the organization. One possible reason for the impact of Horizontal Informal Communication on Total Campus Climate may be due to a shift away from bureaucratic ideals of the past towards more postmodern or post-bureaucratic principles. Such principles tend to be related to loosely structured networks, management by goals and visions rather than detailed rules, and self-directed teamwork (Heide & Simonsson, 2011).

Interestingly, when the interview participants in the current study considered communication that occurs with coworkers in other work groups, their comments revealed that there is a feeling of disconnectedness and unease among work groups. Their perceptions may be due to interactions occurring most often within work groups, whereas interactions among different work groups typically are less frequent. These patterns of interaction may be associated with participants’ perceptions that campus climate is diffused and occurs at the work group level. However, the perception that coworker

communication does not impact campus climate—which materialized in this study’s qualitative findings—appears to be inaccurate because the regression models in this study show that coworker communication was a predictor of the Total Campus Climate. As a matter of fact, the one communication factor that was a predictor of all of the dimensions of campus climate was Horizontal Informal Communication.

***Finding 1B: Informal and formal Personal Feedback may be a moderate predictor of Total Campus Climate because interactions enhance feelings of being valued by the organization.*** A second factor of communication, Personal Feedback, was a moderate predictor of Total Campus Climate, showing that the feedback an individual received about personal achievements and work also enhanced their satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. Owing to Anderson’s (2008) finding that in a university setting most immediate feedback is given by colleagues within work groups, the qualitative data in this study showed that two types of feedback, formal and informal—which occur at the work group level and among work groups—did enhance satisfaction with the Total Campus Climate. Managers in the current study described informal feedback from colleagues and senior level management as having a positive impact on their perceptions of campus climate. Faculty characterized communication within their work groups and with senior level managers as having both negative and positive impacts on the perceptions of the campus climate, depending upon the nature of the feedback. Therefore, positive feelings about feedback appear to be related to believing that feedback is constructive. Participants also reported that receiving any type of feedback from others in the organization is related to feeling valued and acknowledged within the work group and by the organization.

***Finding 1C: Verbal and nonverbal communication practices may be a predictor of Total Campus Climate because leader communication can help to create an atmosphere of collegiality.*** The qualitative data revealed that a president’s communication practices have a substantial influence on perceptions of the Total Campus Climate. This conclusion substantiates Lewin et al.’s (1939) finding that leader behavior impacts organizational conditions. Along the same lines, Gilley et al. (2009) found that the acceptance of change in an organization is predicated on the leader communicating effectively with others. This study extends that finding by revealing that a particular type of leader behavior—i.e. communication behavior—

impacts perceptions of the Total Campus Climate.

One finding in this study is somewhat similar to Gibb's (1961) finding that a supportive communication climate is characterized by open and solution-seeking leadership behaviors, which is how participants in this study described their president's communication style. In particular, managers' comments reflected that the president's tone of sincerity and calmness, her willingness to listen and to collaborate, and her inclusiveness all had a positive impact on perceptions of campus climate. Czech (2007) showed similar findings related to the communication behaviors of faculty leaders. That is, a leader's use of inclusive language appears to promote an atmosphere of collaboration. Following those findings, in this study the president's inclusive communication practices were widely identified as enhancing perceptions of the campus climate. Feeling well-informed also was reported by managers as creating positive perceptions of the environment.

In fact, most participants identify nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, tone, voice, and the use of space, as strongly impacting their perceptions of the campus environment. In general, the nonverbal communication practices of senior level management were described as creating an atmosphere of collegiality. Moreover, the president's communication practices also were identified as open, sociable, and cheerful. Rafferty (2003) found that such communication practices create a climate where faculty are more willing to communicate upward about classroom management issues, needs of students, and instructional methods. Although participants in this study did not identify a need to communicate upward about matters related to student learning, they did identify a willingness and a desire to communicate horizontally about improving their classroom instruction. Thus, a university leader who is open and collegial may create an atmosphere in which faculty are more inclined to discuss instructional methods and the needs of students.

Faculty who completed the qualitative portion of the web-based survey called for more upward communication with senior level management. Asking for more interaction with senior level management might be explained as faculty perceiving that top-down communication dominates the flow of communication due to the bureaucratic communication structure. This finding corroborates with other



studies that found that faculty tend to perceive top-down communication as dominating the university environment due to its bureaucratic structure (White, Vanc, & Stafford, 2010).

Unlike the faculty who answered the web-based survey, the managers and faculty who participated in the interview phase of this study reported that interactions with senior management created a sense of being valued and acknowledged at the organizational level due to employees having an opportunity to communicate upward and then receive a downward response. Faculty described senior level managements' willingness to work together to resolve problems as an important leadership behavior. The positive responses from the interviewees in comparison to the web-based survey portion of the study may be due to the interviewed faculty's leadership roles where they have more opportunities to communicate with senior level management. Even though these faculty have more direct access to senior level management, they expressed less satisfaction with top down communication than the managers who were interviewed. Faculty stated that their communication with top management is at times indirect and unclear. The viewpoint may be due to faculty having fewer face-to-face interactions with senior level management due to the formal channels of communication protocols that were recently put in place for faculty. Thus, the dissatisfaction with downward communication may have been due primarily to those at the lower level of the organization perceiving that they have minimal interpersonal communication relationships with those in senior leadership positions (see White, Vanc, and Stafford, 2010).

## **Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between specific factors of organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate?

**Finding 2: Specific factors of organizational communication are highly predictive of satisfaction with particular dimensions of campus climate.** The results of the multiple regression analyses for the factors of organizational communication and the specific dimension of campus climate showed a significant regression model between specific factors of Organizational Communication and particular dimensions of Campus Climate (Tables 10-17). Most of the Organizational Communication factors had a positive and a significant impact on all of the dimensions of campus climate. The

significance of these communication variables supports previous findings that organizational communication is correlated with specific organizational outcomes (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Moran & Volkwein, 1988; Czech, 2007). But this study also found that specific factors of organizational communication can be predictive of specific dimensions of campus climate. What follows is a discussion of each of the findings related to the dependent variables and the organizational communication predictor variables.

***Finding 2A: Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Organizational Perspective are predictive of Institutional Structure.*** The results of the multiple regression analysis for Institutional Structure showed a significant regression model between Institutional Structure and Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Organizational Perspective (Tables 10 and 11). Thus, an increase of 1 in either of the scores for Organizational Perspective, Manager Communication, or Media Quality would result in a rise in the Institutional Structure score of 0.43, 0.26, or 0.27, respectively. The interpretations of these significant coefficients are that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase of the value of the coefficient for the Institutional Structure score when the other scores are held constant. For example, an increase of 1 for the Organizational Perspective score results in an increase of 0.43 in the Institutional Structure score. In this study, organizational communication was found to predict satisfaction with Institutional Structure or the extent to which actions of the institution reflect its mission and the extent to which decisions are made at appropriate levels. Next, a discussion of the three key findings that emerged from the qualitative data follows, providing more insight into the phenomenon of the relationship between communication and Institutional Structure.

***Finding 2B: Feeling well-informed about the state of the university creates satisfaction with the Institutional Structure.*** The interviews with the six participants reflected that feeling well-informed impacts satisfaction with the decision-making processes at the institution. However, faculty and managers differed on their expressed levels of satisfaction. Managers appeared more satisfied with senior level management communication about the effectiveness of the organization than faculty did. This difference

is reflected in the statements that faculty made about communication and their satisfaction with the Institutional Structure. For instance, faculty members stated that downward communication related to the mission and the goals of the institution are typically unclear. It is important to note that in Chapter 4 the interview respondents stated their university had undergone widespread change in the past two years due to budgetary problems caused by reduced student enrollment and decreased student retention rates. This helps explain why previous studies have found that during times of organization change, effective communication regarding the state of the organization is essential to successfully implement changes (Allen, 2003), and that the acceptance of the change may center on effective leadership communication (Allen, 2003).

In this study, the president's town hall meetings were cited as an effective means of keeping managers informed about the changes taking place at the university. The president was cited as mentioning all divisions in the meetings, which created a feeling of inclusion among divisions of management. The president's communication practices also were thought of as creating a perception that the president was not afraid to talk about the problems facing the institution. An example of this, which was cited by respondents, was the honesty and integrity the president displayed when she delivered bad news about the state of the organization. Further, her nonverbal communication style was perceived as open and transparent due to freely disclosing information about the state of the institution and due to her willingness to answer tough questions. Such findings reinforce Wood's (1999) conclusion that face-to-face meetings are the preferred methods to receive information from the CEO about the overall state of the organization. This study extends that conclusion by revealing that a leader's nonverbal communication practices have the potential to significantly impact satisfaction with the decisions made—even problematic ones.

***Finding 2C: Having a formal communication system impacts perceptions of campus climate.***

According to the qualitative data, formal lines of upward communication created a positive perception of how decisions are made. Faculty who worked for the organization for about 20 years described an organization that under a previous senior management team did not have formal upward lines of

communication, meaning that faculty could communicate directly with the provost and president. That system of communication apparently created a perception that senior level management engaged in partisanship. This viewpoint diverges from those who answered the web-based survey expressing a desire to have more direct communication with senior level management.

Thus, formal lines of communication may have the effect of concentrating interaction within work group levels. Because faculty relate extensively to their work group, it may create a perception that an organization-wide climate does not exist (Moran & Volkwein, 1988). Accordingly, faculty interviewees primarily focused on their work groups when referring to the campus climate.

***Finding 2D: The most effective communication in an organization with a shared governance context is utilizing situational communication practices.*** Drawing on qualitative data on shared governance and campus climate provides insight into one particular aspect of the Institutional Structure, which is the extent to which decisions are made at the appropriate level in the organization. Interestingly, shared governance appears not to impact managers' perceptions of campus climate. Managers tended to perceive that shared governance does not exist due to decision making originating from the state system level and from the hierarchical nature of decision making within the university. For faculty shared governance is a contextual variable that impacts their perceptions of campus climate. However, faculty did differ on the meaning of shared governance and the roles that faculty should have in decision making processes. Faculty participants' descriptions fit Tierney and Minor's (2003) framework of shared governance. Shared governance was described as consultative when communication between faculty and managers is collegial and when faculty are asked to make recommendations, not decisions. Shared governance also was considered a distributive method of decision making, characterized as faculty having the right to make decisions in certain areas and management in other areas. Additionally, shared governance was defined as collaborative when faculty and managers made decisions jointly.

The differing definitions of shared governance identified by the faculty participants appeared to depend on the type of decisions to be shared rather than on an overarching expectation of how shared

governance was to operate within the organization. This perception may be due to differences in the weights of each voice being determined by the responsibility of each position for the particular matter at hand (Kreiser, & Robert, 2001; Birnbaum, 2004). In the current study, two participants described the contract as defining those areas in which decision making is relegated to faculty or management. These participants expressed that senior level communication practices should be guided by policies and procedures outlined in the contract. Such a type of interaction would require a somewhat bureaucratic approach to engaging in decision making regarding issues that are deemed as solely a management responsibility. However, two participants expressed that when a change in policy occurs under the purview of senior level management, the expectation is that top-level management will be consultative in their communication practices. Furthermore, two of the faculty in this study expressed satisfaction with their decision-making environment and expressed a desire not be expected to collaborate in areas where they do not have purview. One participant's comments reflected that if there is a problem or a concern in an area where neither the faculty nor senior level management has been given the right to make a decision as outlined in the contract, then a collaborative communication practice is more fitting.

Participants in this study also spoke about a general atmosphere of collegiality where senior level management is open, respectful and willing to share information. Allen (2003) found the "collegial approach" to be a kind of camaraderie among colleagues creating an understanding and acceptance of decisions. Sullivan et al. (2005) established that full-scale collaborative governance—not collegial interaction—is essential to satisfaction with the climate of the campus. Therefore, it appears that if there is an understanding of what decisions are to be shared, what communication practices are to be utilized, what types of decision are to be made, if communication is collegial, then shared governance seems to be productive.

***Finding 2E: Satisfaction with Horizontal Informal Communication, Personal Feedback, and Organizational Perspective is predictive of satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship.*** The results of the multiple regression analysis for Supervisory Relationship showed a significant regression model between Supervisory Relationship and Horizontal Informal Communication, Personal Feedback, and Organizational

Perspective (Tables 11 and 12). The interpretations of these significant coefficients are that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase of the value of the coefficient for the Supervisory Relationship score when the other variables are held constant. Thus, an increase of 1 in either of the scores for Horizontal Informal Communication, Organizational Perspective, or Personal Feedback would result in an increase of the Supervisory Relationship score of 0.41. The qualitative data in this study reveal that Personal Feedback is related to satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship. This finding is key because previous organizational communication studies found that communication is a predictor of organizational outcomes, whereas in this study Personal Feedback is predictive of satisfaction with Supervisory Relationship. In fact, Tsai et al. (2009) established that Personal Feedback was predictive of employee intentions to leave the organization, while Downs and Hazen (1977) found that Personal Feedback was highly correlated with job satisfaction.

The following key finding emerged from the qualitative data related to the relationship between Personal Feedback and Supervisory Relationship in a university environment. Personal Feedback is either formal or informal depending upon the work group and the roles within the work groups. Much of the personal feedback for the non-tenured Faculty Leader appeared to be formal and official, and most of the feedback for other faculty and managers tended to be informal. However, much of the Personal Feedback for non-tenured faculty was communicated verbally in committee meetings with chairs and deans, whereas written documentation of Personal Feedback for non-tenured faculty came from a committee, the chair and the dean. Personal Feedback tended to be different for tenured faculty, with feedback coming primarily in the classroom setting from students. In this study, the tenured faculty member did not appear concerned with the feedback he received from his chair but was concerned about the feedback he received from his students. He said that he wanted to know how he is performing in the classroom. If he is not performing well, he wants to know the particulars from his students so he can improve their learning experiences. For the Faculty Chair, informal Personal Feedback tended to come from the dean. In general, the dean's Personal Feedback was described as positive and focused on improvement. In this study, one participant called the culture of the institution a "culture of continuous improvement." Similarly, Midlevel Manager

B, Faculty Leader, and Faculty, perceived that Personal Feedback helps them to improve upon their job performance. These participants' comments reflect that Personal Feedback creates positive feelings about the campus climate and makes them feel valued in their work group and the organization. Meanwhile, the qualitative data suggest that participants are highly satisfied with their relationships with their supervisors.

***Finding 2F: The results of the multiple regression analysis for Teamwork showed a significant regression model between Teamwork and Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Personal Feedback.*** The results of the multiple regression analysis for Teamwork showed a significant regression model between Teamwork and specific factors of organizational communication (Table 13 and 14). Significant Organizational Communication predictors of Teamwork were Horizontal Informal Communication, Media Quality, and Personal Feedback. All independent variables were highly significant with coefficients ranging from 0.33 to 0.67. The interpretations of these significant coefficients are that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase in the value of the coefficient for the Teamwork score, when the other variables are held constant. For example, an increase of 1 for the Horizontal Informal score results in an increase of 0.59 in the Teamwork score. These factors have a positive and significant impact on Teamwork. This finding is similar to research showing faculty to be more satisfied with campus climate if the institution is focused on teamwork (Peterson & White, 1992). Furthermore, Teamwork relations in academic departments have been shown to have more importance for faculty than relations with other members of the university (Moran & Volkwien, 1988).

A key finding that emerged from the qualitative data in this study is that collegial Horizontal Informal communication created positive perceptions of Teamwork across the organization. For example, faculty cited a willingness to share ideas even if they differ and to be able to come to an understanding after addressing differences as essential to a climate where people can work together. As one participant stated, "If students perceive an atmosphere in which colleagues seem to be enjoying working together, it rubs off to a more positive climate that students will somehow sense." The faculty and managers in this organization appeared to have created a collegial communication system within work groups that enhanced

their perceptions of campus climate.

***Finding 2G: The significant organizational communication predictors of Student Focus are Manager Communication, Organizational Perspective, and Horizontal Informal Communication.*** The results of the multiple regression analysis for Student Focus showed a significant regression model between Student Focus and specific factors of organizational communication (Table 16 and 17). Significant Organizational Communication predictors of Student Focus were Manager Communication, Organizational Perspective, and Horizontal Informal Communication, with highly significant coefficients of 0.20 and 0.28. The interpretation of these significant coefficients is that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase of the value of the coefficient for the Student Focus score when the other scores are held constant. For example, an increase of 1 for the Horizontal Informal Communication score results in an increase of 0.28 in the Student Focus score. These factors of Organizational Communication had a positive and significant impact on Student Focus. In a previous study (Ayer, 2005), findings showed that members of a university held divergent views about other variables related to the climate of the university, but when asked about a “shared focus,” members of the organization consistently focused on student learning and engagement.

Additionally, the qualitative findings suggested that when there was a high level of satisfaction in the organization with senior level management’s communication the perception of the extent to which the organization was focused on student success was optimized. Supporting this conclusion is the fact that every participant who was interviewed for this study expressed an interest in student success, and a majority of participants expressed positive feelings toward senior level management’s focus on student success. However, this study also found that satisfaction with Horizontal Informal Communication is a predictor of student success. Thus, perceived collegial communication among coworkers appears to enhance student enrollment and retention, and ultimately has a positive impact on perceptions of the campus climate.



### Research Question 3

What are the effects of the demographic variables on the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate?

***Finding 3: Gender and Faculty/Faculty Leader are significant predictors of the dimensions of campus climate and Gender is a significant predictor of the Total Campus Climate.*** Gender was a significant predictor of Total Campus Climate, Institutional Structure, and Student Focus, with highly significant coefficients of 0.14 to 0.20. The interpretation for these significant coefficients is that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase in the value of the coefficient for the dependent variable score when other variables are held constant. For example, an increase of 1 for the Gender score results in an increase of 0.20 in the Student Focus score. In other words, Gender has a positive and significant impact on Student Focus.

In particular, female satisfaction was a significant predictor of the campus climate, suggesting that females in this university are typically more satisfied with the climate than males. In addition, female satisfaction was a predictor of satisfaction with the mission of the university and decision-making processes, as well as student learning and success. A previous study (Dugan, 2008) found that the most significant variables of career satisfaction for women are environmental conditions, with a positive departmental climate being most critical to career satisfaction. Similarly, the current study shows that females were more satisfied with the university-wide environmental conditions than were males. The most significant variables related to satisfaction for women were Campus Climate, Institutional Structure, and Student Focus but not coworker or departmental relationships.

Why females tend to be more satisfied than males with the campus climate, emphasizing student success and decision-making processes, was not uncovered by this research and requires further investigation. Moreover, why gender is a predictor of satisfaction with campus climate also remains in area for deeper examination. The results of the multiple regression analysis for Student Focus and Faculty/Faculty Leader showed a significant regression model (Table 17). Faculty/Faculty Leader was an important predictor of Student Focus, with a highly significant coefficient of 0.27. The interpretations of

this significant coefficient are that an increase of 1 in the predictor score results in an increase of .27 in the value of the coefficient for the dependent variable score when other variables are held constant. Thus, Faculty/Faculty leader has a positive and significant impact on Student Focus. These results suggest that Faculty/Faculty leaders were more satisfied than managers with the extent to which students' needs were central to the mission of the organization and the extent to which students are satisfied with their educational experiences. This finding also emphasizes that Faculty/Faculty Leader is a predictor of a focus on student learning and engagement within the institution.

#### **Research Question 4**

Is the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate an indicator of organizational effectiveness?

***Finding 4: Organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate are indicators of organizational effectiveness.*** This study shows that organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate are indicators of organizational effectiveness. That is, specific factors of organizational communication become indicators of organizational effectiveness through their links to specific dimensions of campus climate. Thus, this study shows that in order to understand how organizational effectiveness evolves, communication in the organization and its relationship to campus climate should be examined. By getting a glimpse of communication and climate, a sense of whether or not the organization is effective emerges.

Distinctively in this study, specific factors of organizational communication were established as indicators of organizational effectiveness through their relationship with particular dimensions of campus climate. For example, Manager Communication ( $p < .01$ ), Organizational Perspective ( $p < .01$ ), and Horizontal Informal Communication ( $p < .001$ ) were the most significant predictors of Student Focus. Student Focus was the specific dimension of campus climate that had the strongest link to organizational effectiveness with confidence intervals of 3.81, 4.26. Thus, by understanding perceptions of satisfaction with Manager Communication and its relationship to Student Focus, perceptions of organizational effectiveness materialize. The same holds true for Organizational Perspective and Horizontal Informal

Communication, as well as Gender and Faculty/Faculty Leader. Accordingly, in the organization this study examined, the optimal-performance level was occurring in the focus on student success.

The regression equation used for this study can be used to generate campus climate factor scores from the significant organizational communication predictors. This statistical procedure is an effective method for determining organizational effectiveness, because the campus climate factor scores are related to organizational communication and demographics. For example, the regression equation for Student Focus would be:  $\text{Student Focus} = 1.13 + 0.20 (\text{Manager Communication}) + 0.28 (\text{Horizontal Informal Communication}) + 0.26 (\text{Organizational Perspective}) + 0.20 (\text{Gender}) + 0.27 (\text{Faculty/Faculty Leader})$ .

The equation indicates that higher scores for Manager Communication, Horizontal Informal Communication, Organizational Perspective, as well as Faculty/Faculty Leader and Gender have a positive impact on Student Focus. Essentially, this regression equation suggests that one way to measure organizational effectiveness is to examine organizational communication as the predictor variable and campus climate as the dependent variable.

The qualitative data support that there is a relationship between communication and campus climate and that this relationship is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. This is a meaningful finding because it substantiates Kreps' (1990) assertion that effectiveness of internal processes can be judged by the quality of organizational communication and it can be assessed by measuring members' interpretations of the quality of organizational life. For members of this particular public university, the quality of organizational life they were most satisfied with was Student Focus.

The quantitative findings of this study show that the extent to which individuals were satisfied with Manager Communication is a predictor of satisfaction with Student Focus ( $p < .01$ ). The qualitative findings suggest that managers' ability to listen and pay attention increases satisfaction with the extent to which the institution emphasizes student success. Being open to ideas also may create higher levels of satisfaction with the extent to which the needs of students are central to the institution. One participant's striking comment on how the relationship between Manager Communication and campus climate created a positive learning environment for students was: "I think it [the relationship between communication and

campus climate] is only positive. I think people feel like they [senior level managers] are listening. It makes for a better learning environment, unquestionably” (Faculty Leader). Another participant stated: “She [the president] seems to motivate people by keeping them focused on student success” (Midlevel Manager B).

Horizontal Informal Communication also is a predictor of Student Focus ( $p < .01$ ), which means that satisfaction with coworker communication created satisfaction with a focus on student success. The qualitative findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of this result. Faculty interview respondents described collegial coworker communication related to improving teaching techniques as essential to their positive perceptions of campus climate. Participants believed communication focusing on student success was motivating and enhanced students’ perceptions of campus climate. Moreover, they perceived that coworker communication improved student satisfaction. In order to demonstrate the considerable impact of student success on organizational effectiveness, the following statement is repeated in full:

I think on a day-to-day basis it’s certainly very important to have a good kind of sharing of ideas in the central matter such as teaching; this approach worked for me; this particular reading was good, or this particular approach or reading wasn’t good. I think that kind of sharing is very important. I think if students perceive of an atmosphere in which colleagues seem to be enjoying working with one another it rubs off on to a more positive kind of climate that students will somehow sense even if they can’t put their finger on it (Faculty).

However, participants also described a disassociation across work groups. Because of the importance to providing greater depth in understanding this phenomenon, the following response is stated again in full:

The faculty really has a group. I feel that they think this place really revolves around them and that’s just a personal perception. I’ve always felt it here. “We have a Ph.D. You don’t.” There is a disconnect between us and them because of it. I don’t think that people are as happy to work here as they could be. I really feel that they’re really looked upon as kind of a lesser position or not important (Manager).

As this research has shown, coworkers within work groups can facilitate a focus on student success. But, communication across work groups may be problematic.

Communication related to Organizational Perspective also was found to be a predictor of Student Focus ( $p < .01$ ), meaning that communication related to changes in the organization and the financial standing of the organization is a predictor of satisfaction with student engagement and success. In the qualitative portion of this study, interviewees' statements reflected that information given to them during the town hall meetings was related to student success. Student success was characterized as increased enrollment rates, retention rates, and graduation rates.

Previous studies found that employees who are satisfied tend to contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organization (Brown & Leigh, 1996), and that organizational effectiveness is created by perceptions of the actions and interactions of stakeholders (Herman & Renz, 2008). Similarly Cameron and Ettington (1988) found that highly collegial college environments had a positive effect on student satisfaction. Further, Elliott and Healy (2001) found that campus climate is one of the main reasons for students to stay at or leave a university. In this study, the relationship between communication and climate was investigated to determine if it was an indicator of organizational effectiveness. And it was. Multidirectional communication, free flowing information, collegial communication, and communication that focused on problem solving were shown to enhance the campus climate. Specifically, the results of this study show that the relationship between communication and one particular dimension of campus climate, Student Focus, is an indicator of student retention and student success. Therefore, the relationship between communication and campus climate appears to optimize organizational effectiveness.

### **Implications of the Findings**

Previous studies show that both organizational communication and campus climate are individually associated with important dimensions of organizational outcomes. However, these studies have not investigated if the relationship between communication and climate is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. This area of research is important because, as noted earlier, when people communicate, climate unfolds (Denison, 1996), and this internal process can impact organizational effectiveness. The

present study shows that communication is a predictor of campus climate, and that this relationship is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. These findings have several important practical and theoretical implications.

### **Practical Implications**

Given the association between communication, climate, and organizational effectiveness, it is suggested that current leaders and key constituencies in higher education should be informed of the findings of this dissertation study in order to enhance perceptions of campus climate and to optimize organizational effectiveness. In essence, organizational communication has a significant impact on the way people feel about their institution, which makes it imperative that leaders and members of the organization recognize the possible impact of their communication practices on the effectiveness of the organization. Given the findings in this study, communication practices can be a powerful nexus of activity and influence within an organization. Therefore, following are recommendations for each communication factor that can be utilized to enhance campus climate and organizational effectiveness.

**Manager Communication.** The quantitative findings showed that Manager Communication is a predictor of the Total Campus Climate, Institutional Structure, Student Focus, and organizational effectiveness. Based on interviewees' comments, it appeared that open, inclusive Manager Communication creates positive impressions of the university environment. Inclusive communication practices construct an atmosphere where people perceive that they are key participants in the dialogue taking place in the organization. This communication practice has the potential to cause a sense of feeling valued and accepted within the framework of the organization, which can then contribute to a more positive campus climate.

Participants in this study also pointed out that feeling well-informed creates the perception of leadership being transparent and open. Moreover, awareness of what is taking place in the organization appears to alleviate concerns about uncertainty in the organization. It also seems that if a leader is capable of delivering bad news in a calm, informed, and realistic manner, then members may be more amenable to accepting bad news. In contrast, keeping information from particular members instead of sharing

information with all constituencies tends to perpetuate a feeling that there are inequities. Therefore, an organization seems to benefit from a leader's willingness to openly share information even when it involves serious challenges. This behavior may strengthen feelings of trustworthiness, inclusivity, and authenticity by other members of the organization. When people work in an environment where leadership creates an open exchange of verifiable information organizational effectiveness is optimized.

Further, leaders should consider informing work groups about what is taking place in other work groups outside of their particular area. This is important because managers tend not to know the nuances of problems that faculty face, and faculty do not know the nuances of issues that managers are experiencing. Conveying information about what is taking place within work groups may create more of an understanding of the challenges that others face in the organization, and how each work group can assist in working through those challenges. Hence, keeping others informed about the state of the institution should include keeping them informed about what is taking place in various work groups.

Having a problem-solution orientation as a leader is essential to working through problems that cause dissatisfaction with climate and that therefore impact organizational effectiveness. Collegiality and collaboration create a positive atmosphere where members are motivated to engage in discussion about issues affecting the institution. One participant in this study pointed out that focusing on relationships as causing the problem rather than focusing on solutions may have the effect of creating a dysfunctional organization, because focusing on "who is to blame" diverts the time, energy, focus, and creativity needed to resolve systematic problems and issues affecting the organization. Thus, when working through problems, leaders may want to focus on problem solving processes as creating opportunities for the organization to strengthen itself. Perhaps in the organization in this study, the pressing problems of low student enrollment and retention rates may have become the strength of the organization due to the members working together to resolve issues caused mainly by external forces. Thus, focusing on problems as creating opportunities may have the effect of not being paralyzed by problems but instead as encouraging creative approaches to problem solving.

Another strategy for enhancing climate and effectiveness suggested by this study is that leaders should consider utilizing communication practices that allow for meaningful feedback. Study participants were clear about frustration they feel when asked for input when a decision already has been made. This leadership behavior seems insincere and gratuitous, which creates an atmosphere where future efforts at soliciting dialogue may be ignored, and feelings of distrust created. Moreover, when this scenario happens, members feel that their time nor their particular perspective is valued.

In addition, because nonverbal communication plays a crucial role in the interpretation of organizational messages, leaders need to be aware of their nonverbal communication practices. Nonverbal communication has the potential to create feelings of inclusivity, authenticity, and positivity, which in turn enhances perceptions of the campus climate. For example, holding meetings where there is a scheduled opportunity for feedback serves to communicate nonverbally that the leader is willing to interact with everyone and is open to ideas. Unfortunately, leaders are often trained in verbal communication but not as much in nonverbal communication. They are taught to be mindful of the content and the structure of their messages, but rarely are trained in effectively using nonverbal communication practices to enhance perceptions of their authenticity as a leader.

**Personal Feedback.** The quantitative findings of this study show that Personal Feedback is a predictor of Total Campus Climate, Supervisory Relationships, Teamwork, and Student Focus. Based on interviewee participants' comments, Personal Feedback appears to build positive feelings about the campus climate and creates a culture of continuous improvement that optimizes organizational effectiveness. Therefore, senior level management, other management, and faculty need to use effective communication practices when providing personal feedback to members of the organization, which means being mindful of providing positive feedback both informally and formally. In essence, when engaging in casual conversation or formal evaluations, positive comments enhance motivation. From the interviewee comments in this study it can be seen that positive feedback usually translates into a willingness to work harder and improve upon performance. Therefore, the best approach to personal feedback is to present positive feedback first, and then discuss what can be improved.



Positive feedback is important, but feedback that is accurate, helpful, and intended to improve performance capacity is equally crucial. Thus, the organization should produce guidelines for providing feedback in reviews and evaluations that establish a culture where working to improve performance is valued and not viewed merely as criticism. This protocol should require feedback on a regular basis, because frequent feedback seems to be an important factor in enhancing motivation and improving performance. It is clear that when discussing what can be improved upon, providing specific information about how to improve one's performance increases the willingness and the drive to improve performance. Moreover, feedback should involve communicating how to improve performance by focusing on how it can heighten student success. These communication practices can cultivate a culture of continuous improvement that strengthens organizational effectiveness.

**Horizontal Informal Communication.** The quantitative findings in this study show that Horizontal Informal Communication is a predictor of Total Campus Climate, Institutional Structure, Supervisory Relationships, Teamwork, and Student Focus. Based on interviewee participants' comments, Horizontal Informal Communication has a positive impact on their perceptions of campus climate, especially when faculty are willing to exchange ideas collegially. Furthermore, faculty, more than managers, felt that they relate to the campus climate within their departments, but not at the organizational level. Given the strength of departmental climates, leaders need to widen the circle of communication so that communication takes place beyond the work groups. Breaking through naturally occurring work groups may assist with focusing discussions on the organization's mission, goals, and values, but leaders also need to respect the divisions among work groups. By recognizing the communication that occurs at the work group level, coworker communication can begin to merge with organizational-level communication. In essence, the strength of the interactions that take place in the work groups should not be minimized, but an increase in understanding that everyone is working toward broader goals may optimize organizational effectiveness.

Coworkers also need to be mindful that their communication practices impact the climate of the campus for other coworkers. The informal feedback that a coworker provides to another coworker can

have a profound effect on his or her motivation and work performance. Informally commending the performance of others by making a statement about how they positively contribute to the success of the organization can be a motivational factor. Whereas, only focusing on the weaknesses of someone's work or ignoring their efforts can be demotivating. Moreover, coworkers should be mindful that utilizing a collegial and collaborative approach to communication is paramount to building positive relationships. Collegiality and problem-solving orientations appear to be vital to creating a robust work group environment where employees are motivated and satisfied with their work life. For example, those on search committees may want to ask a prospective colleague about his or her ability to collaborate effectively with others and to be collegial when engaging in disagreements. Additionally, hiring committees should include a line of questioning for a prospective colleague related to their problem-solving orientation.

In addition, the grapevine can hinder the campus climate and ultimately organizational effectiveness. Keeping people informed of what is taking place in the organization and being willing to convey bad news appears to lessen the need for grapevine communication. But the grapevine also can be an effective method of communication because it can convey positive information about what is taking place in the institution. Participants in this study felt that it can be very positive or negative, depending how it is used. The grapevine appears to be most detrimental when a rumor is spread that is true but is denied by senior leaders in the organization. This type of communication behavior can build mistrust and suspicion of leadership. The practice also can cause members of the organization to act on hearsay rather than on factual information. Therefore, if the information is leaked through the grapevine, it is best for leadership to openly and officially address the initial denial of the information and to discuss why the information was withheld. However, the grapevine should not be controlled or squelched, as it is an important form of communication that naturally occurs in organizations. Furthermore, the negative effects of it can be mitigated by creating a perception at the organizational level that information sharing rather than information hoarding is power. Top level leaders also should consider creating a mechanism for unit leaders to "truth check" grapevine information.

**Media Quality.** The quantitative findings in this study show that Media Quality is a predictor of Total Campus Climate, Institutional Structure, Supervisory Relationships, Teamwork, and Student Focus. Based on interviewee participants' comments, Media Quality is both effective and ineffective. This factor of communication is effective as it relates to giving directives. However, it is ineffective as it relates to the amount and quality of information. Thus, in regard to Media Quality, leaders should recognize that directives should be minimized and electronic communication needs to be effectively managed.

Although in a university environment directives are infrequent, there are situations where they are given. These directives tend to funnel downward from the governing boards, senior level management, deans, or department chairs to managers and faculty. The type of directive issued depends on the position that one holds in the institution. Given the nonnegotiable nature of a directive, when giving a directive it may be critical that the person or group initiating the directive ensures that he or she has the right to do so as outlined in the contract. If the person has the contractual right to give a directive, then members are more likely to adhere to the directive without issue or concern. However, if the directive is not under the purview of a particular person or group as outlined in the contract, then the policy or procedural change should be worked through consultatively or collaboratively with the groups affected by the change. For the most part, directives appear not to be much of a concern in a setting where the contract determines who has the right to issue directives, the areas of responsibility that allow for directives, and who should follow through on those directives.

Conversely, another component of media quality, electronic media, needs to be effectively managed and controlled. An abundance of unnecessary electronic media can cause feelings of being overwhelmed, and can create the perception that information is not substantive. Thus, it is essential that institutions learn how to manage electronic communication effectively. Particularly the use of email as a public relations tool could be advantageous if it is formatted in such a way that specific information is easy to find. Websites need to be designed so that they are uncluttered and easy to navigate. Since electronic media frequently are used to convey important information, and software programs are utilized across units, it may be helpful to have an electronic communication committee made up of different members across

campus to redesign the conveyance of information on an ongoing basis. Additionally, training sessions on how to manage information effectively may be helpful to those who are disseminating information for a particular department or program.

**Organizational Perspective.** The quantitative findings in this study show that Organizational Perspective is a predictor of Total Campus Climate, Institutional Structure, and Student Focus. The qualitative data show that keeping members well-informed and keeping them apprised of the mission of the university seems to enhance perceptions of the campus climate. In particular, what emerged from participants' comments is that the impact of these communication practices depends upon how the leader engages different units within the organization. Therefore, an effective leader uses various forms of communication to create opportunities for different types of interactions with different groups. However, based on interviewee participants' comments, it appears that Organizational Perspective and its impact on campus climate is different for faculty than it is for managers. Thus, it is essential to use different communication methods for faculty and managers when engaging in discussions about the state of the university. Managers tend to be satisfied with hearing information related to the state of the organization in an informational meeting. These meetings make them feel included in the organization and help them feel secure about what is happening in the organization. It appears from the qualitative data that faculty would like face-to-face, collaborative interactions where they can discuss their perspectives of what is taking place in the organization. This preference may be because of faculty expectations for communication in the context of shared governance.

Since the provost is becoming a more pronounced leader for faculty on college campuses, the provost should consider meeting with each of the colleges to discuss the state of the university and to engage in discussion with faculty. This practice also could widen the scope of the departments by integrating them into the organizational-level climate by embedding discussions on the collective mission, values, and goals of the university in these meetings. Showing how the departments align with the trajectory of the institution can be motivating and can squelch unmitigated fears that create job insecurity. In essence, leaders should focus on utilizing a variety of communication methods that best meet the needs of

individual work groups in an organization.

**Faculty Communication.** The quantitative findings of this study show that Faculty Communication is a predictor of Total Campus Climate. Based on the interviewees' comments, Faculty Communication may have more of an impact on campus climate than faculty may realize. Faculty are the largest work group and they control fundamental matters that are central to students. Faculty also have different roles than managers as they relate to the structure of the organization. Managers tend to focus on the implementation of ideas, policies, and procedures as they relate to all members of the organization. Faculty tend to be narrowly focused on their disciplines, teaching, and departments. This difference in orientation tends to lead managers to focus on their interaction with faculty. In contrast, faculty appear to be somewhat unaffected by managers' communication behaviors. If faculty focus on management, it tends to be on senior level management, and not on the contributions and challenges of other levels of management in the organization. In fact, one participant gave all the accountability to senior level management, citing them as solely responsible for forming the campus climate. Conversely, managers were aware of and affected deeply by faculty members' communication behaviors. And, as described by managers in this study, faculty communication can be demotivating due to the perceived conceit of the faculty. This demotivation occurs because faculty's informal communication with managers is at times interpreted as elitist. Faculty also expressed a belief that their communication could be perceived as arrogant at times.

Given this dynamic of Faculty Communication having an influence on others' perceptions of the campus environment, faculty must become more aware of how their own communication practices impact other members' motivation, enjoyment, and performance. Faculty should affirm the positive aspects of the organization and also engage in constructive dialogue about what could be better and how to improve upon perceived organizational weaknesses. The activity of faculty building relationships with other work groups is essential because communication among work groups can negatively or positively impact the campus climate. Therefore, faculty should strengthen their communication with other work groups. They should value collegial discussion with others and be mindful of how their informal feedback can motivate or

demotivate those in other work groups.

Moreover, faculty and managers appear to need an opportunity to engage more frequently in interactions that cut across work groups. Creating opportunities for communication between faculty and managers in areas where they overlap should be tied to a deeper understanding of problems that each face in their roles as managers and as faculty. Perhaps by having a more subtle understanding of the complexity and the stress related to role performance, a more supportive environment will emerge. This can be done formally by creating opportunities for both managers and faculty to serve on committees. However, finding ways to informally socialize across roles may prove challenging. Nevertheless, creating informal opportunities for dialogue might be done by creating social engagements where everyone is invited but also where everyone has an opportunity to become acquainted with people who hold different positions across the university.

Communicating upward is also essential to feeling valued by a university community. Communicating upward for faculty takes place by communicating with the chair, who then communicates with the dean, who then communicates with the provost, who then communicates with the president. This communication pipeline creates a critical leadership position for the chair, requiring the chair to have effective communication skills. If the chair does not communicate upward effectively and provide feedback on the progress of department members, problems may be created that trigger a desire by faculty to go directly to the dean or provost. However, having such direct access to senior level management can create perceptions of inequities. Therefore, communication skills of the chair are imperative, and it is advised that chairs utilize the following communication practices as an effective leader: remain positive, inclusive, open, and collegial, while keeping people well-informed. Given the important role of the chair in this communication model, a new awareness of the communication skills needed to perform effectively may be necessary.

**Communication Climate.** The quantitative data showed that Communication Climate is not a predictor of the Total Campus Climate or particular dimensions of campus climate. Based on the interviewees' comments, communicating about how particular individuals or divisions are central to the

mission of the university stimulates and motivates employees. Therefore, senior level managers and chairs should create a sense that the organization does value individuals by connecting their work to achieving the goals of the unit or the university. In a university setting, communication related to student success appears to be motivational for constituencies. Keeping the quality of student development and growth as a core value in the organization and as a central theme in organizational messages may not only keep everyone included in the conversation, but will also keep them motivated to work for increased student success.

**Shared Governance.** The quantitative data showed that the shared governance context requires leaders who want to be effective learn to change their style of communicating depending upon the decision to be made. To this end, bureaucratic communication practices are best utilized when communication is related to processes outlined in the negotiated contract in a public university as either under the purview of the faculty or the management. When decision-making processes are not clearly outlined in the contract, consultative communication practices may work best. In addition, collaborative communication methods appear to work best when there is a problem or concern in the organization that impacts work groups across the organization. These forms of communication should be the prevailing practices when engaging in decision making in a shared governance context.

Embracing shared decision making, when appropriate, also eliminates the loss of energy, focus, and time fighting over decision-making territories, and it takes away from working through pressing issues that the organization may be facing. Therefore, to mitigate arguments over what work group has the right to make a decision, clear guidelines about how to effectively engage in shared governance and when to effectively use shared governance may result in less bickering about who has the right to make a particular decision and cultivate more of a focus on solving difficult problems. Another effective practice may be developing a transparent policy regarding who has authority and responsibility to make particular decisions. When there is a clear understanding of shared governance, faculty may be more accepting of the decisions that are made at the senior management level. Abiding by the definition and spirit of shared governance may allow it to work effectively in the appropriate arenas in the workplace.

## **Theoretical Implications**

Previous studies have shown that there are correlations between particular factors of organizational communication and specific dimensions of campus climate. This study has shown that communication can be a predictor of campus climate. Therefore, by getting a glimpse of organizational communication, a sense of the climate of the organization materializes.

Furthermore, Horizontal Information Communication appears to be the most important predictor of climate in this study. Future theoretical frameworks may want to focus more on the weight of a particular work group's communication and its impact on campus climate. Moreover, studies related to higher education may want to focus on the roles that faculty have in the emerging campus climate. Faculty tend to think they have a minor role, but the findings in this study suggest that their role is much greater. The evolution of units within an organization having more of a role in the construction of campus climate may be due to postmodern or post bureaucratic principles. In other words, organizations are moving toward loosely-structured networks, management by goals and visions, and away from detailed rules and self-directed teamwork (Heide & Simonsson, 2011).

One anomaly of this study that may bare theoretical validity is that coworker or work group interactions predict campus climate. This finding veers away from theories that position climate as occurring exclusively in work groups. This study shows that work group climate rises to the organizational level. Therefore, studying the impact of coworker and work group interactions on the campus climate is a recommendation for future studies.

The impact of organizational communication on organizational effectiveness has not been widely studied. Thus, organizational interactions are rarely considered as predictors of organizational effectiveness. Rather, communication studies tend to focus on the nature of interactions in coworker relationships and their impact on organizational outcomes. Thus, a link based on academic research that is centered on work group interactions and organizational performance has not been made.



### **Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

The present study was limited to managers and faculty at a public university in the northeastern United States during a two-month period. As a result, several limitations restrict the degree to which the findings can be generalized. First, findings cannot be generalized to other institutions because participants were from one public institution in the northeastern United States. Second, the institution's geographic location and socioeconomic demographics may have impacted the type of manager or faculty member who chose to be employed by the university, which may then have influenced their perceptions of the campus climate. Third, the majority of participants were White females. Consequently, it is unclear if the findings of the study are representative of other gender and race/ethnic groups. Fourth, the study relied on self-reported data. Fifth, the qualitative portion of the study only included managers and faculty, not senior level managers. Therefore, the qualitative findings are not indicative of perceptions of senior level management. Sixth, the study did not include the entire campus community. Students, staff, and the Board of Trustees were not included in the participant pool. Thus, this study does not take into account all constituencies who are impacted and who are affected by the campus climate. Seventh, the study primarily utilized a systems approach. Therefore, the interpretations of particular messages were not investigated. Eighth, this study did not take into account the culture of the institution, which has been shown in other studies to impact campus climate and communication. Ninth, this study constituted a snapshot in time, and did not represent a longitudinal investigation of climate, communication, or effectiveness. In addition, the study was delimited to specific communication factors and campus climate dimensions. The study also was delimited to considering a university as an organization and not as an institution. In other words, the approach in this study focused on the university as evolving, rather than as a longstanding entity with static norms and values.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study extended the literature on organizational communication as a predictor of campus climate and showed the relationship between them to be an indicator of organizational effectiveness. In this study, the convergent parallel mixed-methods design was an important component in providing a

comprehensive interpretation of the quantitative findings, suggesting that a similar model be utilized in future research. Replicating this study at other universities is needed in order to determine if internal processes are indicators of organizational effectiveness. By replicating this study in similar and other contexts, a deeper understanding of the relationship between communication, climate, and organizational effectiveness may emerge. Such studies could add to the literature and provide practical guidance for leaders of an organization on how to optimize organizational effectiveness by using communication to create a favorable climate for the organization.

Future research also should be conducted at more than one university to draw multiple comparisons. Performing this research at private universities and for-profit universities may yield different results because they have different structural exigencies affecting the members' communication practices and the resulting campus climate as it relates to organizational effectiveness. Though universities deal with different resources and different decision-making authorities, each share virtually the same organizational units, and each serves the singular purpose of student success. This type of study would result in constructing communication practices that can be utilized in different structural settings.

Because the culture of a university was not taken into consideration for this study, future researchers may want to examine how culture fits into the framework of this study. Culture may influence the interpretation of communication practices within a particular organization. In other words, the norms, values, and rituals of the organization may impact communication practices and influence campus climate, which together may impact organizational effectiveness. Continuing to build a clearer picture of how variables interact with one another will generate a deeper understanding of how to optimize organizational effectiveness.

This study did not investigate how campus climate influences communication practices and the interpretation of those practices. Future studies may want to examine the reciprocal relationship between these two variables. Such studies may provide researchers with a deeper understanding of how leadership communication is affected by the current climate conditions and how the leader can impact the environment of the institution given current climate conditions.

Studies also should be conducted at universities with more diverse populations since the sample for this study was somewhat restrictive. A university with a more diverse faculty and a more diverse student population offers a wider range of experiences, which the literature has traditionally tied to enhancing student development. However, previous research studies have shown that underrepresented populations at universities tend to be less satisfied than dominant groups. The study of internal processes, such as climate emerging from communication, would help to determine how diversity may be a building block for organizational efficacy.

In addition, future studies could include senior level management in the qualitative portion to generate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the relationship between communication and campus climate. Senior level management, more than any other work group, seems to have a level of authority in the organization that is perceived by faculty and managers as creating the campus climate. This study did not qualitatively investigate how senior level managers believe their communication impacts the campus atmosphere. Nor did it uncover how senior level managers believe their communication with other work groups in the organization can impact the college environment. Such a study would allow the researcher to better understand if those in positions with high-level supervisory authority believe they are a strong determinant of campus climate and how they perceive that their communication practices impact campus climate. This would allow for a comparative analysis of what a senior level manager perceives the impact of his or her communication is on the climate of the campus and how those on the receiving ends of messages interpret their communication.

Another area of investigation related to this dissertation is how meetings are used as a conduit of communication. According to interviewees, meetings are where official communication takes place. Therefore, analysis of official meetings will isolate the information presented as separate from coworker communication or grapevine communication, which is perceived as less accurate than official information. In other words, meetings of chairs, departments, unions, and the entire university have the potential to foundationally shape communication in the organization because people are more likely to take information that is conveyed in these meetings as more truthful and more accurate than other venues of

communication. Meetings could be studied through content analyses of meeting minutes, direct observations, and interviews with faculty leaders and senior level managers.

In this study, members who felt well-informed also felt that they can put trust in their leaders, and felt that the leaders are keeping them abreast of changes that might impact their livelihood and their working conditions. When there is uncertainty in an organization, people tend to be more afraid, stressed, and anxious, which may cause them to be extremely cautious when performing their jobs. This reticence may keep employees from developing in ways that could optimize organizational performance. To determine the effects of members feeling well-informed on campus climate, a correlational study can utilize an information survey and link it to a campus climate survey.

In addition, a leader conveying bad news in a calm, informative manner appeared to have a positive effect on the perception of the changes taking place in the institution used for this study, which seemed to impact campus climate. Conveying distressing news in a manner that expresses anxiety and apprehension may create a climate of fear in an organization. Determining how communicating bad news is related to perceptions of campus climate that then impact organizational performance may be informative. In addition, a mixed-methods study related to the intersection of imparting negative information and its implications for campus climate would be advantageous to understanding more completely how a leader can utilize communication practices to avoid harmfully affecting the campus climate.

This study investigated the impact of organizational communication and campus climate as an internal process that affects organizational effectiveness. The current study revealed that horizontal informal communication is a factor of communication that influences campus climate. However, the relationship between informal communication and campus climate should be explored more extensively in terms of the divisions among work groups in a university setting that affect interpretations of interactions within the organization. Such divisions can lead to unhealthy discord among work groups. For example, in this study managers perceived that they lacked importance and value to faculty. In contrast, faculty did not appear to be very cognizant of the role of managers or midlevel managers when thinking about organizational communication. Instead, they tended to focus on communication discord with senior level

management. Therefore, the impact of the lack of communication among the divisions in relation to campus climate and organizational performance should be investigated further.

The nature of formal and informal personal feedback on motivation and job performance also should be studied further—specifically, the manner in which formal feedback is given related to job performance and improvement and whether it yields a sense of continuous improvement among members of the organization. This area of study is important because continuous professional improvement may also relate to climate and performance of the organization being continuously enhanced. Creating a culture of improvement also can construct a feeling of openness about sharing best practices among coworkers in an educational setting in order to strengthen student engagement and success. This process also could create an atmosphere where employees more openly admit that they are in need of improvement and help without fear of reprisal.

There also should be further investigation into how communication structures within an organization can be utilized to change perceptions of the campus climate. In the current study, informal lines of communication were associated with inequities in the organization. It appears that structured and restrictive lines of communication can enhance perceptions of the organizational environment for some members. However, such lines of communication may cause members to perceive that senior level management is lacking transparency and openness, as well as not valuing other's opinions. Studying this difference in perceptions may help organizations construct lines of communication that are not too restrictive, nor too open.

Given that campus climate and organizations continuously change, conducting longitudinal climate studies may enhance an understanding of how organizations evolve over time. This enhanced understanding can provide researchers with a better understanding of how to cope with external problems that are creating internal strife in an organization. Moreover, this may be a mechanism for long-range planning guided by mission statements and organizational values that may be underlying some of the challenges prohibiting increased organizational effectiveness.

There also should be further investigation of students as the main participant population. The participants who were included in this study were highly satisfied with the institutional emphasis on student success and engagement. Those participants cited increased enrollment and retention rates as indicators of that focus materializing into organizational effectiveness. However, this study's participants were not students, the largest constituency on a university campus. Thus, it would be advantageous to higher education practitioners to investigate how communication impacts students' perceptions of campus climate.

Researchers also should consider examining higher education using new constructs to identify how organizations are grouped. The term "institution" tends to connote an adversity to change that is focused on preserving the status quo. It also suggests that members base relationships on entrenched rituals, traditions, and norms. Conversely, the term "organization" tends to connote a more organic entity—one that is more flexible, mobile, and constantly changing to adapt to its surroundings. Therefore, using organization as a root term to describe universities will imply that members must be adaptable to change and progress. Organizational effectiveness may prove to be the most valuable construct of this study because it identifies the need for a fundamental shift in the way we view universities—a conceptual shift that may be necessary to ensure their survival in the face of the profound external forces that are impacting institutions of higher education at the core.

### **Summary**

By studying the communication in a university, researchers can get a glimpse of what the campus climate might be like, and they may be able to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the organization. By deconstructing the systemic set of communication experiences within and among work groups from which the organizational-level climate emerges, a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of an organization materializes. Communication is a leadership behavior and an organizational member behavior that can be enhanced or changed and a uniquely human behavior that can be used to skillfully and ethically generate positive perceptions of human experiences. Thus, to develop effective communication practices is to enhance the organization and the experiences of individuals within

the organization. This is because organizations extend the communication of individuals to a more expansive level. Communication affects an entire system of people impacted by interactions that create an organizational atmosphere known as climate. Moreover, interactions in higher education often occur in the communication context of shared governance, necessitating that faculty and senior level managers partake in the decision making process utilizing collaborative and collegial dialogue.

Fittingly, organizational climate theory operates on the assumption that climate develops as members of an organization experience interactions with each other (Denison, 1996; Schneider, 2000). Therefore, climate has a continuous and profound impact on its members' behaviors. It can create feelings of satisfaction about one's job, it can enhance commitment to an organization, and it can affect a member's willingness to stay or to leave the organization. In a university setting, the development and success of students can be impacted by campus climate and can motivate students to stay at or leave a university. Fortunately, the data from this study show that communication has the potential to enhance levels of satisfaction with campus climate.

Investigating communication, climate, and effectiveness provides a clearer picture of how members of an organization of higher education can impact the climate and optimize organizational effectiveness. When an organization operates at its optimal capacity, it may be due to effective communication practices positively influencing the climate. Therefore, when members of an organization begin to understand how their interactions enhance perceptions of the organizational environment, the organization will be much better equipped to optimize its performance.

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## Appendix A

### Pilot Study: Email to Participants

Greetings,

As you know I am in the early stages of my dissertation study, *The Relationship between Organizational Communication and Campus Climate as an Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness* (my degree program is a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from Indiana University of Pennsylvania).

By way of this email, I am asking you to participate in a survey to help me complete my pilot study. Please click on the link below to participate. I will contact you via email the week of August the 11th to inquire about your experience with taking the survey.

Your responses will be kept confidential. Your responses will be housed on the web-based, privacy protected database system, Qualtrics, and will be maintained by the researcher for three months before being deleted. If at any time you want to exit the survey, you can do so without your answers being submitted.

I deeply appreciate your taking time to participate in the pilot study by completing the survey.

Please click this link: [https://iup.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_9BMzJ84QX60PrdX](https://iup.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9BMzJ84QX60PrdX)

Sincerely,

Kelly McKenzie  
Doctoral Candidate  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

## Appendix B

### Pilot Study: Informed Consent for the Quantitative Phase

***Thank you for your help!***

Your completion of the survey serves as your consent to participate in the study. If you have questions about the study, please contact me at [kmckenzie@esu.edu](mailto:kmckenzie@esu.edu) or 570-350-0429.

This study is being conducted with permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. If you wish to contact the IRB, the chairperson is Dr. Shala E. Davis, who can be reached at 570-422-3336.

If you are not able to complete the survey in one sitting, your survey will be saved and you can complete the survey at a later time. However, your survey will not be submitted until all questions have been answered.

Please complete the survey by August 8, 2014.

**By clicking “Save and go to Next Page” below, you will be taken to the survey.**

## Appendix C

### Pilot Study: Email to Participants asking for Feedback

Hello,

Thank you for participating in the pilot study for my dissertation on the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. One of the main purposes of a pilot study is to gain feedback so that the instrument can be improved for the next pool of participants. I am now contacting you to get your feedback about your experience taking the survey. Please answer the following questions:

1. Approximately how long did it take you to complete the survey?
2. Did you notice any errors in grammar or spelling when taking the survey?
3. In general how was your experience taking the survey?

Please provide any additional comments that you think might be helpful to my study.

I deeply appreciate your taking time to participate in the pilot study.

Best regards,  
Kelly McKenzie

## Appendix D

### Pilot Study: Interview Guide for the Qualitative Phase

Number of sessions: 1

Duration of session: 60-90 minutes

#### **Segment 1 – Communication in the organization**

1. How would you describe communication between administration and faculty in the university?
2. Explain how you feel that the information you receive about the university's current policies.
3. Explain how you feel about the information you receive about the university's future plans.
4. Describe your role in the university? Do you feel you get adequate or inadequate information about your role in the university? Do you feel the information you receive about the expectations of your role in the organization is adequate or inadequate? Why? Why not?  
Do you feel that the information you receive about your department is adequate or inadequate? Why? Why not? Do you feel that you have a firm understanding of how you are performing in the organization?
5. What is your preferred method for receiving information from administration? What is your preferred method of receiving information from the faculty?
6. Do you consider your communication with your coworkers (other faculty or other administrators) as free flowing? Why? Why not? Can you explain how informal communication, such as grapevine communication, plays a role in the climate of the campus?
7. Explain how you feel about the information you receive related to the state of the organization?
8. Do you think communication from faculty to administration is free flowing? Why? Why not? Do you think that your communication from administrators to faculty is free flowing? Why? Why not? Do you think that the communication flow between faculty and administration impacts your campus climate? How?
9. Please describe your perception of the overall communication climate in your organization.

#### **Segment 2 - Campus Climate**

1. Tell me about your campus climate.
2. How do you think communication between faculty and administration impacts your campus climate?

#### **Segment 3 – Communication in a Shared Governance System**

1. What does shared governance mean to you?
2. How does communication play a role in shared governance?
3. Do you believe that both administrators and faculty have an equal voice at the university? Why? Why not?



## Appendix E

### Field Study: Initial Email to Study Participants for the Quantitative Phase

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting a dissertation study titled, *The Relationship between Organizational Communication and Campus Climate as an Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness*. This study is important to our understanding of how organizational communication impacts campus climate and our understanding of the extent to which both are indicators of organizational effectiveness. Right now there is concern about the state of public higher education because of challenges faced by universities—challenges that are unparalleled compared to any other point in U.S. history. This study will deepen our understanding of how organizational communication affects the perceptions of managers and faculty regarding campus climate, and the extent to which organizational communication and campus climate are indicators of organizational effectiveness.

Please consider participating in this important study by completing a survey that will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. If you decide to participate, you will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100.00 gift certificate, and you will have helped me with my dissertation.

Your survey responses will be confidential. You will not be identified by name or institution. You will only be identified by a randomly assigned number.

However, I am also interested in gathering in-depth perceptions of a smaller group of survey respondents in order to gain a clearer picture of how organizational communication impacts campus climate. Therefore, I am requesting that you consider responding yes to the question that asks if you are willing to participate in an interview. If you are contacted for an interview, the answers you provide will be kept confidential. You will not be identified by institution or name. You will only be identified by a randomly assigned number and generically by the position you hold at the university. The respondent data will be kept private and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office for three years after the commencement of the study. Only the researcher and the researcher's dissertation chair will have access to the respondent data. After three years, the data will be destroyed.

I deeply appreciate your time in participating in the study by completing the survey. If you choose to participate in the study, **Follow this link to the Survey:** [\\${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#) or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser: [\\${1://SurveyURL}](#).

If you have questions, please contact me at [kmckenzie@esu.edu](mailto:kmckenzie@esu.edu) or 570-350-0429.

Sincerely,  
Kelly McKenzie  
Doctoral Candidate  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:  
[\\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

## Appendix F

### Filed Study: Informed Consent for the Quantitative Phase

*Thank you for your help!*

You are being request to participate in a research study being conducted by Kelly McKenzie, a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership program offered by Indiana University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with East Stroudsburg University. The title of the study is *The Relationship between Organizational Communication and Campus Climate as an Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness*. The intent of the study is to examine the perceptions of communication and campus climate among faculty and administrators to determine if the relationship is an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

Your participation requires you to complete a survey that will take approximately 15 minutes.

The survey consists of questions about your perceptions of organizational communication and campus climate. I do not anticipate the risks associated with answering the questions to be greater than any risks you encounter on a day-to-day basis, and I do not anticipate the risks associated with answering these questions to be greater than the anxiety that you may experience when you talk about issues related to your job and the relationships in your organization. Your participation will be instrumental in extending the literature on organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness.

Any information you provide as part of your participation in this survey study will be confidential. You will not be identified by name or by institution, only by an assigned number. If you answer yes to the question that asks if you are willing to participate in an interview and provide your name and email address, your answers will be kept confidential. You will not be identified by name or institution only by an assigned number and generically by the position you hold at the university. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher and the researcher's dissertation chair will have access to the research records. After three years, the research records will be destroyed.

If you complete the survey in totality, you will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100.00 Amazon.com gift certificate. The winner will be contacted by email to ask for a mailing address in order to send you the gift certificate via the United States Postal Service.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by not completing the survey.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Kelly McKenzie by phone 570-350-0429 or by e-mail at [kmckenzie@esu.edu](mailto:kmckenzie@esu.edu). You may also contact the dissertation chair, Andrea McClanahan by e-mail at [amccclanahan@esu.edu](mailto:amccclanahan@esu.edu). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the East Stroudsburg University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by phone 570-422-3336 or e-mail at [sdavis@esu.edu](mailto:sdavis@esu.edu).

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. MY COMPLETING THE SURVEY INDICATES MY WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

**By clicking "Save and go to Next Page" below, you will be taken to the survey.**

## Appendix G

### Field Study: Reminder Email to Study Participants for the Quantitative Phase

Greetings,

This is a follow up to my previous email requesting your assistance in completing this survey for my dissertation study by following this link: \${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. If you complete the survey, you will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100.00 Amazon gift certificate, and you will have greatly helped me with my dissertation study.

I am conducting this study to explore the relationship between organizational communication and campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

Your name and the name of your institution will be kept confidential.

In addition to the survey respondents, I am also looking for a smaller group of respondents to provide more in-depth perceptions about organizational communication and campus climate. Participants' names will be kept confidential, as will the name of the institution. Please consider answering yes to the question on the survey that asks you to participate in an interview.

I deeply appreciate your time in participating in the study by completing the survey.

If you have questions or wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me at [kmckenzie@esu.edu](mailto:kmckenzie@esu.edu) or 570-350-0429.

Sincerely,  
Kelly McKenzie  
Doctoral Candidate

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:  
\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

## Appendix H

### Qualitative Phase: Informed Consent

For a Research Study titled “The Relationship between Communication and Campus Climate as an Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness.”

You are participating in a research study being conducted by Kelly McKenzie, a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership program offered by Indiana University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with East Stroudsburg University. The title of the study is “The Relationship between Communication and Campus Climate as an Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness.” The intent of the study is to examine perceptions of communication among managers and faculty to determine if the relationship between communication and campus climate is an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

Your participation requires you to complete a face-to-face interview that will be audio recorded and will take no longer than 60 minutes.

The interview questions consist of questions about your perceptions of organizational communication, campus climate, and organizational effectiveness. I do not anticipate the risks associated with answering the questions will be greater than the anxiety you may experience when addressing issues related to your job and the relationships in your organization. Your participation will be instrumental in extending the literature on organizational communication and its impact on campus climate as an indicator of organizational effectiveness.

Any information you provide as part of your participation in this study will be kept confidential. Your institution will not be identified and you will not be identified by name. You will only be identified by an assigned number and by the position you hold at the university. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office for three years. After three years, the research records will be destroyed. Only the researcher and the researcher’s dissertation chair will have access to the research records.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no compensation for your participation in the study. Your decision as to whether or not you participate will not affect your relationship with faculty, administration, staff, or students. You can withdraw from the study without penalty or repercussion by stopping the interview at any time.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania and Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Kelly McKenzie by phone 570-350-0429 or by e-mail at kmckenzie@esu.edu. You may also contact the dissertation chair, Andrea McClanahan by e-mail at amclanahan@esu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the chair of East Stroudsburg University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Shala Davis by phone 570-422-3336 or e-mail at sdavis@esu.edu.

**HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE AND TO BE AUDIO RECORDED.**

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I

### Field Study: Interview Guide

Number of sessions: 1

Duration of session: 60 minutes

1. How would you describe your campus climate?
2. In what ways do you think that communication related to how the organization is performing impacts the climate on your campus?
3. In what ways do you think the communication in your organization stimulates and motivates people to meet organizational goals? How do you think this type of communication impacts your campus climate?
4. How do attitudes toward communication impact your campus climate?
5. How do you think the communication you receive about your departmental work environment (departmental plans, requirements of your job within your department) affects your campus climate?
6. How do you think the feedback you receive about your performance within the university affects your perceptions of your campus climate?
7. In what ways do you think the communication you have with managers/faculty affects your perceptions of campus climate?

For instance, are managers/faculty open to ideas? Do managers listen and pay attention to the needs of faculty? Does managers understand the problems faculty face and offer you guidance for solving those problems?

8. How do you think the communication between coworkers impacts your campus climate?
9. In what ways do you think grapevine communication impacts your campus climate?
10. In what ways does the quantity of communication you receive impact your perceptions of your campus climate?
11. How does the way university-wide meetings are organized affect your campus climates?
12. How do written directives affect your campus climate?
13. How does communication from the top down impact your campus climate?
14. How does communication from the bottom up impact your campus climate?
15. In what ways do you think communication between faculty and managers impacts your campus climate?
16. In what ways do you think communication between faculty and managers affects student retention?

17. In what ways do you think campus climate affects student retention?
18. How does shared governance impact your expectations about the communication you receive?
19. In what ways do you think shared governance impacts your perceptions of the climate on your campus?
20. What is your perception of how effective your organization is?
21. How do you think communication impacts the effectiveness of your organization?
22. How do you think campus climate impacts the effectiveness of your organization?

## Appendix J

### Web-based Survey Instrument

Read each item carefully and select the response that most closely describes the extent to which you are satisfied with the amount and /or quality of each kind of information. The extent to which I am satisfied with information about...

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
progress in my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
personal news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
organizational policies and goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how my job compares with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how I am being evaluated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
recognition of my efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
departmental policies and goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the requirements of my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
government actions affecting my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
changes in our organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how problems in my job are being handled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
employee benefits and pay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
our organization's financial standing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
accomplishments and/or failures of the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adopted from Downs, C.W. & Hazen, M.D. (1977). A factor analytic study of communication satisfaction. *The journal of business communication*, 14(3), 63-73 and National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness. (2014). *Personal assessment of the college environment (PACE) survey*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University.

The extent to which...

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
managers/administrators understand the problems faced by faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the organization's communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
managers/administrators listen and pay attention to faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
people in my organization have great ability as communicators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
managers/administrators offer guidance for solving job-related problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization's communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the organization's communications are interesting and helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
administrators/managers trusts faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive in time the information needed to do my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



The extent to which...

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
the grapevine is active in the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
administrators/managers are open to ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
horizontal communication with other organizational members is accurate and free flowing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
communication practices are adaptable to emergencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my work group is compatible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
our meetings are well organized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the amount of supervision given me is about right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
written directives and reports are clear and concise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
informal communication is active and accurate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the amount of communication at the organization is about right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you a manager or an administrator?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

The extent to which...

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
faculty are responsive to downward communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
faculty anticipate administrator's/manager's needs for information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can avoid having communication overload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
faculty are receptive to evaluations, suggestions and criticisms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
faculty feel responsible for initiating accurate upward communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If the communication associated with your job could be changed in any way to make you more satisfied, please indicate how.

You are almost there. You are halfway done.

Read each item carefully and select the response that most closely describes the extent to which you are satisfied with the environment at your institution (school). The extent to which...

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
the actions of this institution reflect its mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my supervisor expresses confidence in my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
there is a spirit of cooperation within my work team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the institution effectively promotes diversity in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
administrative leadership is focused on meeting the needs of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
student needs are central to what we do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel my job is relevant to this institution's mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my supervisor is open to the ideas, opinions, and beliefs of everyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
information is shared within this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
the actions of this institution reflect its mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my supervisor expresses confidence in my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
there is a spirit of cooperation within my work team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the institution effectively promotes diversity in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
administrative leadership is focused on meeting the needs of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
student needs are central to what we do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel my job is relevant to this institution's mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my supervisor is open to the ideas, opinions, and beliefs of everyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
information is shared within this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
institutional teams use problem-solving techniques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
positive work expectations are communicated to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
unacceptable behaviors are identified and communicated to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my primary work team uses problem-solving techniques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to appropriately influence the direction of this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
open and ethical communication is practiced at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
faculty meet the needs of the students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
student ethnic and cultural diversity are important at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
students' competencies are enhanced	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive timely feedback for my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
students receive an excellent education at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
this institution is appropriately organized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my work team provides an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my supervisor helps me to improve my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
this institution prepares students for a career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my work team coordinates its efforts with appropriate individuals and teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
this institution prepares students for further learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the opportunity for advancement within this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am given the opportunity to be creative in my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
students are assisted with their personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The extent to which...

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
I receive adequate information regarding important activities at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
students are satisfied with their educational experience at this institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a spirit of cooperation exists in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my work is guided by clearly defined administrative processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the opportunity to express my ideas in appropriate forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
professional development and training opportunities are available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Just a couple of demographic questions and you are done. Please select the option below that most accurately reflects your position at the University:

- ☐ Senior Level Manager
- ☐ Mid-level Manager
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Department Chair
- ☐ Faculty Leader (elected or appointed)
- ☐ Faculty Member

Please select the race/ethnicity that best describes you:

- ☐ Hispanic or Latino, of any race
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native, not Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Asian, not Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Black, not Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, not Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ White, not Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other Identified

Are you willing to participate in an interview related to this study?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thank you for your willingness to participate in an interview for this study. Please provide your phone number and email address so we can contact you to schedule an interview.

Name:

Preferred Telephone Number:

Email: