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Reviewing and Revising the Institutional Vision of U.S. Higher Education

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Highlights

- Institutional mission and vision statements have become ubiquitous in higher education, with strategic planning, recruitment initiatives and student support services predicated on their formulation.
- More than 80% of all colleges and universities have made major revisions in their declarations of institutional vision within the last decade.
- A widely diffused, generally accepted and readily adopted institutional vision must contain language that unifies members of the institution (*Shared*); is unambiguous (*Clarity*); generates enthusiasm (*Compelling*); articulates what is to be gained (*Relative Advantage*); is robustly expressed (*Complexity*); and presents outcomes that are pragmatic (*Observability*).
- The rhetorical flavor of institutional vision varies in accordance with institutional culture and the distinct challenges faced by these types of colleges and universities.
- Institutional size, region, or highest degree granted has little impact on the rhetorical flavor of institutional vision.
- The language contained in vision statements and in mission statements is significantly different.
- The highest scoring institutional visions on each of the rhetorical attributes are: Tribal community colleges (*Shared; Observability*); Catholic immersion schools (*Clear; Complex; Relative advantage*); and Evangelical schools (*Compelling*).
- The lowest scoring institutional visions on each of the rhetorical attributes are: HBCUs (*Shared*); Tribal community colleges (*Relative advantage*); Catholic schools (*Observability*); Secular 4-year public schools (*Clear*); Evangelical schools (*Complex*); and “Christ-Centered” schools (*Compelling*).

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Abstract

This article reviews the literature on the institutional vision of higher education in the United States – that is, the philosophical template through which colleges and universities define and communicate the kinds of human beings they are attempting to cultivate. Key linguistic components found to constitute a well conceived, viable, and easily diffused institutional vision are identified and significant issues, controversies and problems associated with these guiding, governing, and self-promotional mission and vision statements are examined. Particular attention is given to those types of schools recognized in the literature as the most maligned in the academic community or misrepresented in the popular press. A comparative analysis revisits the data of a subset of these investigations with the intention of generating greater insight into the institutional vision of higher education and offering a prescription for how these statements can better serve their institutions.

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Institutional vision is the means by which a college or university's character and value are identified and communicated within the academic community and to outside constituents. It is here that an institution's aspirations are recognized, commitment is established and expectations are reinforced (see Fox, 2003; Pekarsky 1998). Institutional vision defines the kinds of human beings the academic establishment is attempting to cultivate and recognizes the skills, sensibilities, values, attitudes and understandings students should be acquiring during their education (Fox, 1997).

For most colleges and universities, the declaration of their institutional vision takes the form of a mission statement and/or a vision statement. Typically, mission statements identify the physical, social, fiscal, religious and political contexts in which that institution exists, and are often revered as historical text (see Bryson, 2004; Marom, 2003). According to Atkinson (2008, p. 369), mission statements "operate as cultural-cognitive indicators or ideational indicators of group solidarity, shared beliefs and human agreement" on the college campus (see, also, Campbell & Pederson, 2001; Meyer & Rowan, 2006; Scott & Davis, 2007). As such, they are routinely displayed as recruitment, marketing and branding tools, and serve to distinguish one institution or institution type from another (see Kirp, 2003a; Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991; Welton & Cook, 1997).

The mission statement "is about the here and now," suggested Lewis (2005, p. 5), "but vision describes the future." Vision statements complement these characteristics, but transcend them as well. They form a set of aspirations for enhancing the quality of higher education that is distinctive, coherent and appealing (Marom, 1994; Miller, Bender, & Schuh, 2005). A vision statement is a living document (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998; Fox, 1997) that is intended to be employed. It has been suggested by Hartley (2002) that mission statements reflect the realities of their institutions' environments, whereas vision statements drive these realities.

These statements have become ubiquitous in higher education, with strategic planning and student support services predicated on their formulation (see, Abelman & Molina, 2006; Ozdern, 2011). After all, "a shared sense of purpose has the capacity to inspire and motivate those within an institution and to communicate to external constituents" (Morphew & Hartley (2006, p. 457). More than 80% of all colleges and universities have made major revisions in their declarations of institutional vision within the last decade (Association of American Colleges, 1994; Birnbaum, 2000; Meachem, 2008) in response to new challenges, an increasingly competitive and diverse marketplace (see Taylor, 2012), negative press (see Mangan, 2010; Marek, 2005; Marquis, 2011; McArdle, 2012; Sei-Hill; Carvalho, & Cooksey, 2007; Wilson, 2011) or crisis management (see Tentler, 2006; Wilhelm, 2012), and the significance of these mission and vision statements in firmly establishing an institution's identity and place in the higher education landscape.

The Verbiage of Institutional Vision

A "well conceived vision," according to Pekarsky (1998, p. 280), is "an informing idea that is shared, clear and compelling." It is *shared* by the critical stakeholders—students, faculty and staff—and unifies their vision of the institution with that of the upper administration or executive body that wrote it. A *shared* statement has the capacity to inspire and motivate those within an institution and to communicate its characteristics to key constituents (Hartley, 2002). As Meindl (1990, p. 159) noted, institutional vision is a "rich web of negotiated meanings and contextual variables" between leaders and their cohorts, intended to generate a sense of collaboration, cohesion and inclusion.

A vision must be *clear* and concrete enough to identify an institutional identity and offer genuine guidance for making educational decisions and setting priorities on all levels of the learning community (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, & Smith, 1999). A *clear* vision helps organizational members distinguish between activities and services that conform to institutional identity and imperatives and those that do not (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). A clear institutional vision is unambiguous, easy to comprehend and not convoluted or abstract.

An institutional vision that is *compelling* generates enthusiasm among the stakeholders and stimulates them to transform vision into a pattern of meaningful activity (see Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998; Kirkpatrick, Wofford, & Baum, 2002). Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl (2004) have suggested that a compelling message is one of optimism and inspiration. Similarly, George (2000)

noted that the ability to generate and maintain optimism is one of the essential components of effective leadership and vision in a learning community. Optimism in messages from administrative leaders, noted Kelloway and Barling (2000), directly enhances organizational outcomes, particularly during times of transition, uncertainty or turbulence (see, also, Hart, Jarvis, & Lim, 2002).

Communication scholars have discovered that in order for any innovative, pioneering or motivating idea such as institutional vision to be widely accepted, readily adopted and generally effective at countering contradictory information, it must possess components above and beyond Pekarsky's notion of *shared*, *clear* and *compelling*. Rogers (2003; 2004) and others (see, for example, Deffuant, Huet, & Amblard, 2005; Vishwanath & Goldhaber, 2003) have found that four additional attributes are salient and powerful predictors of adoption and diffusion:

- *Relative advantage*: Are ideas or innovations presented in a way that they can be successfully transformed into general or specific actions that generate benefits? That is, is what is to be gained from the idea or innovation well articulated?
- *Complexity*: Are the desired outcomes of the ideas or innovations solid and concrete? That is, is the idea or innovation fully and robustly expressed?
- *Compatibility*: Are the desired outcomes of the ideas or innovations suitable and appropriate to the target audience?
- *Observability*: Are the desired outcomes of the ideas or innovations practical and pragmatic? That is, is the abstract and poetic transformed into something practical or observable?

Collectively, the existence of these linguistic components in innovative, pioneering, or motivating institutional messages and mission statements have served to explain the effectiveness of national health care communication campaigns (e.g, Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004; Haider & Kreps, 2004); public policy programs (e.g., McLendon, Heller, & Young, 2005); crisis management initiatives (e.g, Bligh, Kohles & Meindl, 2004); political persuasion (e.g., Emrich, Brower, Feldman, & Garland, 2001; Holladay & Coombs, 1994); the performance of non-profit organizations (e.g., Braun, Wesche, Frey, Weisweiler & Peus, 2012; Kirk & Nolan, 2010; Wang & Lin, 2011); the priorities set by environmental organizations (e.g., Campagna & Fernandez, 2007); and business and marketing strategies (e.g., Sevcik, 2004). It has also been used to define organizational leadership styles (Carey & Kirkpatrick, 2004; Zaccaro & Banks, 2001).

Until recently, a limited body of research had empirically analyzed the language or served to isolate and measure the linguistic components of institutional vision in higher education. Early work by Chait (1979) simply reported that the verbiage of institutional vision at most schools tended to be vague and vapid. After all, asked the author, "Who cannot rally around 'the pursuit of excellence' or 'the discovery and transmission of knowledge'?" (p. 36). Similarly, after conducting an analysis of college and university mission statements in the United States, Newsom and Hayes (1990) concluded that "most mission statements are amazingly vague, evasive or rhetorical, lacking specificity or clear purposes" (p. 29). Davis and Glaister (1997) concur, reporting that the mission statements of the nation's business schools reflect vague generalities and little else. According to Morphew and Hartley (2006), the rhetorical flavor of mission statements for public and private colleges and universities tend to differ, potentially impacted by their institutional culture (see, also, Kuhtmann, 2004), highest degree granted (see, also, Ayers, 2002a; 200b) and the distinct challenges faced by these types of institutions (see, also, Boerema, 2006). These statements now serve as icons that communicate with stakeholders who have specific expectations of colleges and universities that "have important legitimizing roles, both normatively and politically" (p. 468).

The literature review that follows[1] explores significant issues, controversies and problems associated with the institutional vision of academic institutions that represent the diversity of higher education in the United States. Focus is placed on those types of schools identified in the literature as the most maligned in the academic community, most misrepresented in the popular press, and most misunderstood by the general public. A comparative analysis revisits the data of a subset of these investigations with the intention of generating greater insight into the rhetoric of institutional vision of higher education and offering a prescription for how mission and vision statements can better serve as guiding, governing, and self-promotional documents.

1 Sections of this literature review are also reported in Abelman (in press).

Institution Types: Issues, Controversies, Problems

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

The 105 schools still in existence since the creation of HBCUs in the 1860s constitute only 3 percent of U.S. institutions of higher education, but typically enroll 11% of all African-American students (Hubbard, 2006; Gasman, 2013) and graduate 28% of all African-Americans who earn a degree (Gasman, 2007). They also serve the largest number of disadvantaged students in the nation (Nichols, 2004). Since their inception, these institutions have championed access, opportunity, and cultural empowerment for African-Americans (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Willie, Reddick, & Brown, 2006), and their graduates have higher lifetime earnings (Mills & Mykerezi, 2008) and are more likely to pursue a postgraduate education and become professionals than their counterparts at other institutions (Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Wenglinsky, 1996).

They have also, according to Nichols (2004), perennially struggled with students who are under prepared, dwindling financial resources including low endowments, and an alumni base with limited resources. Competition for quality students and qualified faculty (Burdman, 2005; Nnazor, Sloan, & Higgins, 2004) are constant quandaries. Yet, despite their many accomplishments, HBCUs have been subjected to harsh public criticism. HBCU's problems with student retention and progression (Brower & Ketterhagen, 2004; Nettles, Wagoner, Millett, & Killenbeck, 1999), declining enrollment (Poe, 2002; Walker, 2006), financial instability (Jacobson, 2005; Walters, 2005), accreditation challenges (Bailey, 2003), leadership (Guy-Sheftall, 2006) and technological inferiority (Snipes, Ellis, & Thomas, 2006) have been specifically targeted in the press.

According to Merisotis (cited in Pluviose, 2006, p. 8), "historically Black colleges are the only group of institutions in this country whose right to exist is questioned daily by members of the public." It has been suggested (Minor, 2005, p. 3) that the very survival of HBCUs is heavily dependent on "rejuvenated institutional commitment and new-found vision" and that HBCU Presidents and Chancellors "must find a way to articulate consistent, meaningful and relevant visions for the institutions… even in the midst of an ever-changing social and political climate" (Fields, 2001, p. 23). Gasman and Bowman (2011) noted that "The notion that HBCUs 'never measure up' or are a 'lost cause' permeates the media narrative, and as a result, the general public [and] the higher education community. Those portrayals can and should be challenged and changed." (para.6)

Interestingly, these portrayals of inadequacy are consistent with HBCUs' self-image as reflected in their institutional vision. According to Abelman (2013), fewer HBCUs have clearly defined and identifiable vision statements than other types of schools. The vision statements for other institutions tend to elaborate on the practical and pragmatic outcomes that are desired from an education at that institution (*observability*), discuss how ideas can be successfully transformed into future actions that can generate personal and professional benefits (*relative advantage*) and are highly *compelling* and motivating documents. The vision statements that do exist among HBCUs in general, and HBCUs with a church affiliation in particular, are severely lacking in each of these areas.

HBCUs are grounded in a shared, historical mission (see The Higher Education Act of 1965), which provides legacy, unity and helps give definition and branding to these institutions. However, this may also hinder efforts to identify and promote key characteristics and academic aspirations that make each institution distinctive and appealing (see Riley, 2010; Berger & Milem, 2000). "HBCU's need to do a better job of telling their stories," noted Gasman (2011, para. 3). "It is absolutely necessary to change the national, state, and local conversation."

Religious Colleges and Universities

A decade ago, a conference was held at Harvard University to address the future of religious higher education. According to an article in the *Journal of Higher Education* (Mixon, Lyon, & Beaty 2004), the irony of the meeting's venue was that Harvard had been founded by Puritan Christians in 1636 but, by the 19th century, the Calvinists were ousted and replaced by Unitarians. By the end of that century, Harvard was transformed from a religious college into a prestigious secular university. "This shift in ideological allegiances," noted the authors, "suggests to some that today's religious colleges and universities

are on the horns of a dilemma—maintain a distinctive religious identity or move toward a strong academic reputation" (p. 400).

Catholic Colleges and Universities.

Although American Catholic higher education has existed for more than 200 years, what it means for Catholic colleges and universities to be Catholic continues to be debated (Gallin, 2000). Garrett (2006) and others (see Hellwig, 2000; Provost, 2000; Steinfels, 1997; Wilcox, 2000) reported that Catholic institutions find the role of religion in higher education and the ecclesial dimensions of theological education to be an ongoing challenge. In an effort to generate consensus on this issue, Pope John Paul II published the apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (John Paul II, 1990; see, also, Langan & O'Donavan, 1993) which listed four "essential characteristics" of the identity of Catholic colleges and universities (see Estanek, James, & Norton, 2006). The U.S. Association of Catholic Colleges and Uversities (see Hellwig, 2004) provided higher education administrators with practical ways of implementing the Vatican's vision and effectively communicating the Catholic mission of their institutions to the public and the press. The first recommendation was "a public profession of the Catholic identity in institutional statements and public documents" (p. 115).

Garrett (2006, p. 245) reported that, since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and Hellwig's (2004) provision of pragmatic guidelines, "mission statements, learning objectives, and strategic planning at Catholic colleges are focusing on their Catholic identity and how it is best portrayed" (see, also, Nichols, 2004; Woo, 2005; Young, 2001). Estanek, James and Norton (2006, p. 200) reinforced this observation, confirming that "a vision for the distinct mission of Catholic institutions of higher education has been articulated and implemented." This, suggests the authors, has been achieved through explicit references to foundational heritage and sponsorship, the groups of historical and current constituents the school serves, and how the institution defines its educational enterprise.

However, little attention has been paid to the manner in which this information is actually communicated to stakeholders within the academic community and to critics outside this realm (DiGiacomo, 2007; Kuh, 2004). Research (see Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008) has found that the institutional vision of Catholic colleges and universities do little to effectively unify the students, faculty and staff; coordinate their vision of the institution with that of the administration; or communicate the vision held by all Catholic institutions to external constituents. They do not adequately communicate the pragmatic or practical benefits of a Catholic education to others. Conversely, these mission and vision statements tend to be *compelling* and *complex* when compared to other types of religious schools. They employ more highly optimistic and inspirational language which, suggests George (2000) and others, is an essential component of engagement in a learning community. Davis, Ruhe, Lee and Rajadhyaksha (2007, p. 99) report that students at universities with compelling, ethical statements in their mission statements have significantly higher "perceived character trait importance" and "character reinforcement" than those at typically secular universities whose missions lacked these statements.

"Articulating a clear and authentic vision," notes Cesareo (2007, p. 18), "remains an ongoing but essential challenge" for Catholic institutions of higher education. In fact, Morris-Young (2012) reported that the press continues to "criticize and make distorted claims against Catholic colleges, oftentimes maligning them in the process" (para. 1) without taking time to inquire about context. More effective institutional vision can serve as a powerful self-promotional tool that can help counter bad press by allowing academic institutions to speak for themselves. Purposeful, well-crafted mission and vision statements can help shape public opinion about these private institutions.

Catholic Immersion Schools.

Recently, religious conservatives have accused Catholic higher education leadership of abandoning faith to conform to an increasingly secular world (Bollag, 2004; Shlichta, 2009) and failing to teach young people about a Catholic, moral life (Donoghue, 2010; Drake, 2007). According to Miscamble (2007):

> Catholic universities in the United States possess a certain Potemkin Village quality. While their buildings are quite real, what goes on within them has increasingly lost its distinctive content and come to resemble

> what occurs in secular institutions of higher learning. Students emerge from Catholic schools rather unfamiliar with the riches of the Catholic intellectual tradition and with their imaginations untouched by a religious sensibility (para. 12).

Marsden (2001) has suggested that "religious colleges, instead of feeling that they are under pressure to become more like their secular counterparts, should take pride in the religious character of their education, attempting to strengthen it rather than weaken it" (p. 11).

In response, a spurt of Catholic immersion schools has surfaced (see Morey & Piderit, 2006; Redden, 2007). This wave of theologically conservative colleges mirrors a similar wave in the 1970s, when institutions that include Christendom College, Magdalen College, Thomas Aquinas College and Thomas More College of Liberal Arts were founded. They were created in response to the Second Vatican Council[2], which called for a respect for modern learning, the autonomy of the social sciences, and a greater role for lay Catholics in running Catholic institutions. "These two waves of new colleges are very much a reaction to a perceived failing at the other Catholic colleges" notes Reilly (as cited in Redden, 2007, para. 12), president and founder of the Cardinal Newman Society, an organization dedicated to renewing and strengthening Catholic identity at America's Catholic colleges and universities. "Pope John Paul II said that the only reason a Catholic institution exists is to evangelize," said Derry Connelly, president of the immersion John Paul the Great University. "I would have a tough time looking at the vast majority of Catholic universities and saying that their primary goal is evangelization" (cited in Drake, 2007, para. 8).

These new colleges are small and largely define themselves by their commitments to the Magisterium, the Church's authority on doctrinal teachings (Skojec, 2003). All of them are public about their acceptance of the Church's canon law mandatum for theology faculty (Drake, 2007). Many have adopted a "great books" approach—that is, a large core of required liberal arts courses, stressing the reading of classics of western civilization, starting from ancient Greece and Rome, in history, philosophy, literature, and theology. Most accentuate the Church's liturgy and sacraments as a part of daily life on campus. Students and faculty members attend Mass frequently—often available in Latin, which is a practice largely ended by the Second Vatican Council—and strive to maintain a conservative campus life. There are separate dorm facilities for men and women, and premarital sex is strictly forbidden (Bollag, 2004). "There are students and families," notes Richard Yanikoski, president and CEO of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (cited in Redden, 2007), "that have a strong desire for this kind of insulated, overtly Catholic, small and traditional campus" (para. 21). The impact these schools will have is not in the numbers attending or graduating, but, according to Reilly (cited in Drake, 2007), "in the great pressure that they bring to bear on other Catholic colleges to meet academic and Catholic identity standards" (para. 15).

According to O'Connell (2000), "once the distinctive identity of the religious college is established, the future of the institution depends upon the way in which that identity influences or impacts the academic enterprise and life beyond it" (para. 23). This information is typically found in an institution's vision statement which, in the case of these Catholic immersion schools (see Abelman, 2012), was specifically designed to unify its constituents by offering a message that is *clear*, unambiguous and overtly *compelling*. These statements emphasize and effectively communicate the realities of its institutions' heritage and the more pragmatic outcomes of an orthodox Catholic education. Its leadership realized that, in the competitive sport of college selection, mission and vision statements are often the first point of contact or reference for prospective students seeking a religious education. They are also the first point of comparison for prospective students considering a Catholic school (see Drake, 2007). The National Association for College Admission Counseling (2008), for example, suggests that:

> To find out just how religiously-affiliated a college is, start by reviewing the school's mission statement. This will indicate how much emphasis the school puts on the academic, social and spiritual aspects of college and what is to be gained by this. (para. 3)

The mission statement for Ave Maria's School of Law, one of the newer Catholic immersion schools, purposefully and dramatically emphasizes *relative advantage* and *observability*. It reads as follows:

> Ave Maria offers state-of-the-art facilities and technologies, and a curriculum enriched by a grounding

2 Also referred to as Vatican II.

> in natural law and the enduring truths of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Graduates are prepared to practice law with the highest level of skill and professionalism in law firms, public service, business, higher education, the judiciary, and national, state, and local government (cited in Skojec, 2003, para. 16).

Through the emphasis of attractive selling points for their institution in their institutional vision, these schools sought inclusion in The Young American's Foundation's annual "Top Ten Most Conservative Colleges" list and the national press this generates. The Young American's Foundation is the principal outreach organization of the Conservative Movement, and its list "features ten institutions that proclaim, through their mission and programs, a dedication to discovering, maintaining, and strengthening the conservative values of their students" (The Young American's Foundation, 2008, para. 3). Since its 2007-2008 "Top-10" rankings, four ultra-conservative Catholic schools—Christendom College, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Thomas Aquinas College, and Thomas More College—consistently make the list.

Evangelical Colleges and Universities.

The employment of institutional vision as an expression of religious character and a confirmation of religious identity has not been limited to Catholic schools. Evangelical colleges and universities – that is, those institutions with affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and grounded in the convictions of biblicism, crucicentrism, religious conversion, and activism (Bebbington, 1989) – have also experienced significant shifts in ideological allegiances (see Carpenter & Shipps, 1987). After their early phases of development in the 1870s, suggested Hunter (1987) and Burtchaell (1992; 1998), evangelical institutions accommodated or otherwise secularized their original religious mission to the demands of the American higher education system. "These changes," noted Flory (2002, p. 349), "presage an inevitable trip down the slippery slope of secularization; from intentional religious commitment, to more generalized religious commitments, to giving up any exclusive religious claims or identity."

Since World War II, evangelical institutions of higher education have enjoyed considerable growth, development and ideological realignment. They have not only grown in number but also in the quantity of programs they offer, in the scope of their educational mission, and in the professionalism of their faculties (see "Evangelical Life," 2006; Railsback, 2006), all the while maintaining their religious commitment as a central component of their institutional values and goals. There are, according to Flory (2002), requirements for faculty to be confessing Christians, a continued commitment to the training and religious socialization of evangelical young people, core curricular requirements in the Bible and theology, and behavioral mandates for students. The religious commitment of these institutions, suggests the author, can best be seen through a variety of institutional characteristics. First and foremost is that the "institutional mission statements reference their educational mission within the context of an evangelical Protestant religious identity" (p. 350).

From a Communication science perspective, schools affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offer the most effective and well-rounded mission statements of all Christian-based colleges and universities. These schools offer *shared*, *clear*, highly *compelling* documents that employ language to identify the pragmatic or practical benefits of an education at an Evangelical institution. According to Abelman and Dalessandro (2009a), what the institutional vision lacks is a set of aspirations for enhancing the quality of higher education because Evangelical colleges and universities offer few vision statements. Consequently, the institutional vision of ELCA schools reflect and emphasize the realities of their institutions' environments and lack the same language employed by most secular and Catholic colleges and institutions that drives these realities and looks toward the future.

The Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU).

Created in 1976 and known as the Christian College Coalition, the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities reinvented itself in 1999 and became an international coalition of "intentionally Christian colleges and universities." According to the CCCU (Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, 2008):

> The U.S. Department of Education reports that there are more than 4,000 degree-granting institutions of

higher education in the U.S. alone. About 1,600 of those are private, non-profit campuses and about 900 of these colleges and universities describe themselves as "religiously affiliated." However, only 102 are intentionally Christ-centered institutions that have qualified for membership in the CCCU (Context of U.S. Higher Education, para. 3).

The primary criterion that characterizes the Christ-centered mission of CCCU member institutions, and that distinguishes these institutions from other religious colleges or universities, is that they "have a public, board-approved institutional mission or purpose statement that is Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith" (Criteria & Application for Membership, para. 2).

These statements have been found to be severely lacking in *complexity* and are the least *compelling* of all types of church-affiliated academic institutions examined by Abelman and Dalessandro (2009a). Most "Christ-centered" schools offer brief, vague statements void of expressive, compelling language that can potentially inspire students, faculty and staff. This may be by design. Railsback (2006, p. 59) suggests that CCCU institutions "continue to have a relatively high level of orthodoxy with regard to historic tenets of the Christian faith," which may translate into short, concise, definitive statements. While serving to purposefully distinguish these institutions from other religious colleges or universities, and generate a uniform identity across all "Christ-centered" institutions, the resultant institutional vision of CCCU institutions may be standardized to the point of being less effective as a communication tool.

For-Profit Institutions

The rise in proprietary colleges and universities – defined as private, for-profit, typically multi-campus institutions – has been remarkable. Many were founded decades ago as alternative art institutes or easy access certificate programs specializing in technology, auto repair or business (Kinser, 2006). Today, most are owned by publicly traded corporations and offer a wide variety of packaged undergraduate and graduate degrees that focus on workplace relevance and applied knowledge. Since the advent of the internet, proprietary institutions easily and quickly switch between traditional brick and mortar classes, hybrid classes that combine on-location classes with distance learning, and pure distance learning modules (Danner, 2005; Zumeta, 2005). As a result of their flexibility, accessibility and on-demand curriculum, enrollment at many for-profit schools has exceeded that of traditional institutions ("Numbers," 2005) and many schools have established an international presence (Morey, 2004).

According to the Carnegie Commission on the Advancement of Teaching (2011), there are 483 newly classified institutions in the 2010 classifications (from a universe of 4,633) compared to 2005. The majority of the new institutions (77%) are from the private for-profit sector. The growth in public institutions and private not-for-profit institutions has been minimal, accounting for only 4% and 19% of the newly classified institutions, respectively. As the fastest-growing sector in higher education, investors flocked to for-profit education-industry stocks in recent years, causing share prices to soar (Burd, 2006).

In many ways, proprietary schools are not all that different from non-profit public universities or private colleges in that they seek out students, collect their tuition, and then use that money and other revenue to pay for the costs of instruction and student services. However, to keep their stock prices up the companies that own and operate for-profit schools must constantly show their investors that they are expanding. According to Brown (2004), public and private non-profit schools spend the equivalent of 1% to 2% of their revenue for recruiting while many for-profit institutions spend as much as 23%. Non-profit schools spend a greater percentage of their overall revenue on instruction, faculty salaries and student support services.

The core criticism leveled at for-profit schools in the popular press (see Gramling, 2011; Hechinger, 2005; Kirp, 2003a; Korn, 2012; Yeoman, 2011) is that they are operated as businesses that emphasize corporate profits at the expense of learning and academic standards. Indeed, Stimpson, (2006, p. 30) suggested that for-profit schools have reduced "the faculty to a 'labor force,' students to 'clients' or 'customers,' knowledge to a 'product,' and education to an 'industry.'" At issue, noted Traub (1997) in the *New Yorker*, is whether an academic institution driven by a customer-service model and concerned about market niches and the bottom line embraces the same kind of institutional vision as traditional institutions of higher education.

Not surprisingly, the institutional vision statements that guide proprietary schools are relatively vague, mission-driven documents that strive to unify a highly diverse academic community through a set of common values and objectives (*shared*) that can generate easily obtainable, tangible and pragmatic outcomes (*observability*) and which translate into recognizable benefits (*relative advantage*). According to Abelman, Dalessandro, Janstova, and Snyder-Suhy (2007), their heritage from certificate-granting alternative art and technology institutes permeates their mission statements. The institutional vision statements serve to communicate the corporate brand across multiple campuses while the institutional vision statements of traditional, non-profit schools strive to establish product differentiation, individual identity and legacy. Some for-profit schools attempt to give the impression that each campus branch is unique (see Kirp, 2003b), but to no avail. For example, the mission statement for Brown Mackie College's Cincinnati campus notes that its "uniqueness lies in its dedication to sound business practices." A comparison of the language employed in institutional vision statements at Brown Mackie College's 21 campuses[3] in the Midwest, Southeast, Texas, Colorado and California reveals that this "unique" quality is identical at each location.

The institutional vision statements of for-profit colleges and universities are not *compelling* documents. They lack the language that generates an enthusiasm among the stakeholders and stimulates them to transform institutional vision into a pattern of meaningful activity. Similarly, they lack optimism which, suggests George (2000), is an essential component of effective student leadership and engagement in a learning community. Instead, these statements describe market-driven outcomes and support activities related to matriculation, enrolled, graduation and employment. The emphasis on obtainable outcomes and recognizable benefits in these institutional vision statements lends support to the public criticism (see Kirp, 2003b) that the promise of job placement is more important than academic standards and educational value in student recruitment at for-profit schools.

3 Brown Mackie College currently has 28 campuses.

Community Colleges

From their inception, community colleges have been a critical point of entry to higher education for many Americans (Ayers, 2002a; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Dicroce, 2005). Currently, about 1,000 public community colleges nationwide enroll nearly half of all undergraduates. Operating under an open-door admissions policy and a common mission of providing an accessible, adaptable, and affordable two-year education (see Shannon & Smith, 2006), these schools also enroll a disproportionate share of low-income, minority, and academically unprepared students (Bailey & Smith, 2006).

Providing an accessible, adaptable and affordable education to this diverse population has become an increasingly daunting task. Many of today's social, political, economic, and technological revolutions have advanced educational needs and priorities that differ greatly from those of the recent past (American Association of Community Colleges, 2006; Bragg, 2001). Growing enrollments in community colleges and crucial economic and workforce development pressures have been met with diminishing state budgets (Cejda & Leist, 2006; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). A greater emphasis on outcome-based accountability has generated assessment costs and additional workload responsibilities for administrators, educators, and student support services (Ashburn, 2007; Bragg, 2000). Increasingly aggressive competition from for-profit institutions, many of which are specifically targeting students attending 2-year schools, are threatening the very existence of the community college (Farrell, 2003; Kelly, 2001; McQuestion & Abelman, 2004; Morey, 2004).

To survive these and other challenges, suggest Hill and Jones (2001), successful community college leaders must invest in organizational renewal and in a reinterpretation of the mission, philosophy, functions, and modus operandi of the institutions they serve. Indeed, redesigning community colleges to meet changing needs and expectations has long been identified as a top management priority (Alfred, 1998; Boone, 1992; Cross, 1985; Shearon & Tollefson, 1989) and as a basic expectation for community college presidents and their leadership teams (Baker & Upshaw, 1995; Carlsen, 2003; Gleazer, 1980). Bailey and Smith (2006) suggest that community colleges must think of reform in terms of broad institu-

tional policy that changes the fundamental way a college operates, rather than pursuing discrete, small-scale programmatic changes. "Without a strategic mission," notes Ayers (2002a, p. 12), "there exists the possibility that community colleges… may continue to focus their resources on programs and services that have outlived their relevance." In fact, the most successful community colleges are "those that have developed a well-defined mission and a shared vision of the future" (Boggs, 1995, p. 71).

Most community colleges, according to Abelman, Atkin, Dalessandro, Snyder-Suhy and Janstova (2007), have not developed well-defined mission or vision statements. A lack of *clarity* in the institutional vision of community colleges was rampant across their sample of schools. Although these documents provide language that strives to attract and unify a highly diverse academic community (*shared*) and align student and institutional views of the college experience by offering a set of common values as well as pragmatic and concrete outcomes (*complex*), much of the rhetoric was found wanting, inaccessible and convoluted. This, suggests Abelman and Molina (2006), helps explain why student support services at community colleges have been found to be less likely than those at other types of schools to use institutional vision statements to guide their operations or train their personnel. This was particularly true for academic advising units (see Skolits & Graybeal, 2007; Todd & Baker, 1998; Vaughan, 2005).

Tribal Community Colleges.

For the Native American community, the rates of pursuing, continuing and completing higher education are lower than for any other racial/ethnic minorities in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Tribal community colleges generally serve geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing post-secondary education and cater to indigenous communities that have had inadequate pre-college preparation (Amiotte & Allen, 1989). Thirty-seven tribal colleges currently serve over 30,000 students from more than 250 tribal nations and, over the years, have become "an important and often preferred provider of post-secondary education" (Wright & Weasel Head, 1990, p. 28).

The first tribal community college was formed in 1968, the result of tribal initiative. In 1978, Congress passed the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act "to ensure continued and expanded educational opportunities for [American] Indian students" (U.S. Congress, 1978, p. 3). These institutions receive their charters from their respective tribal governments rather than from the state and ensure institutional autonomy through separate advisory and governing boards whose leadership is derived almost exclusively from tribal members in the local reservation community (Pavel, Inglebret, & Banks, 2001). With the enactment of the federal Educational Equity in Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, tribal colleges became land-grant institutions. Most are located on federal trust territories and, therefore, receive little or no funding from state or local governments and prevents the levying of local property taxes for support.

In addition to their relatively recent development, unique model of governance and limited funding, tribal community colleges offer higher education that is uniquely tribal. That is, the curriculum at these schools is designed to integrate traditional Native American values with vocational training and general education as a way of preparing students to assume responsible roles in their respective communities. These schools tend to attract students who believe that tribal community colleges "should respect them for who they are and become relevant to their world view" (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 1). Tribal colleges have been found to establish a learning environment that supports students who have come to view failure as the norm (Amiotte & Allen, 1989; Gipp, Merisotis, & William, 2007), celebrate and help sustain American Indian traditions (Fogarty, 2007), and have become centers for research that directly benefit their communities' and tribes' economic, legal and environmental interests (see Hernandez, 2006; Marriott, 1992).

Unfortunately, many of these achievements have been unheralded within the academic community and are difficult to apply to student outcome assessments required for accreditation (George & McLaughlin, 2008; Ortiz, 2003)[4]. According to Ambler (2005, p. 3), the founders of tribal colleges and universities "wanted institutions with distinct missions, missions much different than community colleges serving non-Indian communities."

4 Interestingly, the same problems associated with linking accreditation to institutional vision have been identified in universities and colleges of business (see Palmer & Short, 2008).

As such, language is used purposefully by these tribal leaders. Most of the tribal colleges are named after their tribe or tribal community, seven are named after a tribal hero, and six names are in the native language (Braun, 2008). Tribal community colleges have remained true to their founders' desire to interweave distinctive cultural elements and a pragmatic approach into the postsecondary process. They do this by establishing a sense of community and aligning student and institutional views of the college experience (*shared*) in their institutional vision (Abelman, 2011). This reinforces Fogarty's (2007, p. 12) observation that "tribal traditions and values permeate the curricula and learning styles of the colleges."

A survey of tribal community college mission statements (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2006) found that most focused upon sovereignty and community and, to a lesser extent, education. Tribal schools also employ highly optimistic and inspirational (*compelling*) language that offers a set of common values. Many tribal schools include in their mission statements the advancement of their tribes' culture and traditions (Fox, 2006) which, according to Karlberg (2008), does not register on traditional methods of student outcome assessments and has significantly hindered accreditation efforts.

Accreditation is extremely important since it makes institutions eligible for a range of federal student financial assistance programs, assists with eligibility for transferring degrees and credits to other institutions, and private philanthropic groups often look to accreditation as a criterion when distributing funds (Putnam, 2001). Accreditation also provides legitimacy within the higher education community and validity of the tribal institutions' mission (Radell, 2008).

In 2008, the executive director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium announced a strategic plan for tribal colleges' direction and organizational framework that centered around enhancing performance accountability (see Billy, 2008). By emphasizing learning outcomes, noted Karlberg (2008, p. 24), "tribal colleges have an opportunity to redefine their own measures of success and, therefore, their own curricular and pedagogical values." One step in doing so was to revisit institutional mission and vision statements to make sure they effectively and efficiently communicated the nature of the learning community within and outside the college, defined the institution's perceived purpose, priorities and promises, and clearly delineated student outcomes.

As of 2011, this has not been achieved. Abelman (2011) noted that while language employed in the defining documents of tribal community colleges is purposeful, it is not nearly as functional as it should be. The institutional vision of tribal community colleges was found to be significantly less *clear*, less *complex*, and having less *relative advantage* than non-tribal community colleges. Institutional vision that lacks *clarity* and *complexity* fails to provide genuine guidance in making educational decisions and setting priorities on all levels of the learning community. Institutional vision that lacks *relative advantage* fails to identify concrete outcomes of a community college education and the recognizable benefits that a tribal community college offers. This is highly problematic given current concerns over academic accreditation.

Summary and Resultant Research Questions

Institutional vision is a philosophical template—a concept of what, at its best, a college or university is like and the kinds of human beings that the institution is attempting to cultivate (Abelman & Molina, 2006; Marom, 1994). It reflects the nature of the learning community within the college or university and defines the institution's perceived purpose, priorities and promises. "Institutional vision," notes Morphew and Hartley (2006, p. 457), "helps distinguish between activities that conform to institutional imperatives and those that do not … and serves to inspire and motivate those within an institution and to communicate to external constituents."

The literature review provided above suggests that the rhetorical flavor of institutional vision varies in accordance with institutional culture (i.e., Historically Black, tribal, religious, for-profit) and the distinct challenges faced by these types of colleges and universities. Still, questions are left unanswered regarding general trends of rhetorical content of institutional mission and vision statements. In particular, it was noted in the literature that the declaration of an institution's vision typically takes the form of a mission statement and/or a vision statement. While mission statements identify the physical, social, fiscal, religious and political contexts in which that institution exists, and are often revered as historical texts (see Bryson,

2004; Marom, 2003), vision statements form a set of aspirations for enhancing the quality of higher education (Marom, 1994; Miller, Bender, & Schuh, 2005) and serve as a living document that is intended to be employed (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998; Fox, 1997). However, it has not been determined whether or how these statements differ in the language they employ to achieve these objectives. This raises the question:

R1: Are there significant differences in the linguistic components of mission and those in vision statements across the various types of institutions of higher education?

The literature on the diffusion of innovations (see Rogers, 2004; Wejnert, 2002) suggests that what is perceived to be innovative in an organization may very well be a function of the defining characteristics of the institution. This also applies to whether or not that innovation will be accepted, adopted and relayed to others, and the extent of a community's awareness of and access to any formal declarations by its leadership. Regarding academic institutions, this pertains to the size of its student enrollment and its geographic location (see Kuhtmann, 2004; Rozycki, 2004), its academic mission (e.g., highest degree granted; see Ayers, 2002a), and its general mode of operation (e.g., public or private, secular or religious; see Bryson, 2004; Mixon, Lyon, & Beaty 2004). This raises the following questions:

R2: Is the size or region of the institution a significant determining factor in the rhetorical content of institutional vision?

R3: Is the culture (private or public; secular or religious) of the institution a significant determining factor in the rhetorical content of institutional vision?

R4: Is the highest degree granted of the institution a significant determining factor in the rhetorical content of institutional vision?

In an effort to generate greater insight into the institutional vision of higher education and offer a prescription for how these statements can better serve their institutions, an additional research question is asked:

R5: Which types of colleges and universities have an institutional vision that rates highest and lowest on the key linguistic components found to constitute a well conceived, viable and easily diffused institutional vision?

To answer these questions, a comparative analysis was conducted that revisits the data sets of eight compatible investigations that explore the institutional visions of distinctive types of colleges and universities. This is intended to identify more general findings that provide insight into the institutional vision of a greater range of institutions of higher education and trends across these institutions. Though descriptive in nature, findings provide prescriptive insight into how mission and vision statements can better serve as guiding, governing, and self-promotional documents.

Methodology

In each of the investigations revisited in this comparative analysis, the Carnegie Foundation's Classification of Institutions of Higher Education was employed as a guideline to generate the stratified, random sample for each type of institution explored (see Appendix A), as well as for a comparative general sample of academic institutions (see Appendix B).

Unit of Analysis

A school's web-based representation of its institutional vision served as the unit of analysis for these investigations. This information was accessed and downloaded from each school's web site by four trained coders. This was accomplished by searching the home page for direct links to mission and vision statements. If none were accessible, the institution's search engine was utilized by typing "vision statement" and "vision" and selecting the option that contained the institution's vision statement. After the initial search, an additional search for "mission statement" and "mission" was conducted. If no vision or mission statement, or equivalent document, could be found through the web sites, electronic versions of school catalogs were accessed and searched. All searches were duplicated for quality control and inter-coder reliability exceeded .95.

Computerized Content Analysis

The text of each school's institutional vision was processed through DICTION (Version 5.0), a text-analysis software program that codes and compares content using

social scientific methods for determining the linguistic elements in a verbal message. DICTION uses 33 predefined dictionaries, containing over 10,000 search words, to analyze a passage and compares texts to norms created through the analysis of 22,027 texts of various sorts written over a 50 year period. The construction of DICTION dictionaries was based on careful attention to linguistic theory (see Boder, 1939; Easton, 1940; Flesch, 1951; Hart 1984a; 2001; Johnson, 1946; Ogden, 1960). These dictionaries are expressly concerned with the types of words "most frequently encountered in contemporary American public discourse" (Hart, 1984b, p. 110). All of the dictionaries contain individual words only, and homographs are explicitly treated by the program through statistical weighting procedures, which are intended to partially correct for context (Hart, 2000).

Scholars can also create up to 10 customized dictionaries that can be adapted to specific research needs. On the basis of a thorough examination of the words included in each DICTION dictionary, six constructs that corresponded with what Pekarsky (1998) identified as *shared*, *clear* and *compelling* and what Rogers (2004) and his colleagues defined as *relative advantage*, *observability* and *complexity* were developed[5] (see Appendix C).

Statistical Analysis

Because each construct is measured using a different formula comprised of different dictionaries, their respective DICTION scores per se are not comparable. Instead, comparisons relevant to the mean scores of each construct can be made. One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to investigate DICTION score differences in the composite expressions of institutional vision. To determine if the linguistic components of vision statements and mission statements were significantly different, a series of one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANOVA) was conducted. The dependent variables in all the investigations included the six predefined linguistic components, with the expression of institutional vision as the independent factor.

Results and Discussion

The first research question asked whether the linguistic components of vision statements and mission statements were significantly different at each type of institution explored in previous investigations. Significant differences were found for each type of institution and, for the most part, differences were consistent across institution types in accordance with the distinctive functions served by these documents.

For community colleges, significant differences in mission statements and vision statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .65$, $F = 29.75$, $p < .01$), with vision statements being more *shared* ($p < .001$), *compelling* ($p < .001$) and *complex* ($p < .01$). Mission statements for community colleges tend to have greater *observability* ($p < .01$) and *relative advantage* ($p < .001$). In addition, there tends to be more words in the mission statements of community colleges than there are in vision statements ($p < .01$).

For Catholic colleges and universities, significant differences in mission statements and vision statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .67$, $F = 32.66$, $p < .01$), with vision statements being more *clear* ($p < .01$) and *compelling* ($p < .01$). Mission statements for Catholic colleges and universities were more *shared* ($p < .001$) and had greater *observability* ($p < .001$) and *relative advantage* ($p < .001$).

Regarding theologically conservative Catholic colleges and universities, significant differences in mission statements and vision statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .72$, $F = 43.57$, $p < .01$), with mission statements being more *shared* ($p < .001$), more *clear* ($p < .01$), more *compelling* ($p < .05$), more *complex* ($p < .001$), and having greater *observability* ($p < .001$) and more *relative advantage* ($p < .001$).

Only 28.4% of all "Christ-centered" colleges and universities have a vision statement and significant differences in these statements and mission statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .69$, $F = 34.32$, $p < .01$). Vision statements were more *shared* ($p < .01$), *clear* ($p < .01$) and *compelling* ($p < .01$). Mission statements had greater *observability* ($p < .001$) and *relative advantage* ($p < .001$).

Only 14.2% of all Evangelical colleges and universities have a vision statement and significant differences in

5 One relevant attribute from the literature, *compatible*, could not be measured by the software because the construct is based on highly subjective and contextual information that cannot be coded by computer.

these statements and mission statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .54$, $F = 31.43$, $p < .01$). Vision statements were more *clear* ($p < .01$). Mission statements were more *compelling* ($p < .001$) and *complex* ($p < .001$), and had greater *observability* ($p < .001$) and *relative advantage* ($p < .001$).

For Tribal community colleges, significant differences in vision and mission statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .66$, $F = 29.88$, $p < .01$). Mission statements were more *shared* ($p < .001$), more *compelling* ($p < .001$) and have more *relative advantage* ($p < .05$) and *observability* ($p < .01$).

Only 20.9% of all HBCUs have a vision statement and significant differences in mission statements and vision statements on the dependent variables were found (Wilk's $\Lambda = .68$, $F = 30.89$, $p < .01$), with vision statements being more *compelling* ($p < .01$), having greater *observability* ($p < .001$) but having less *relative advantage* ($p < .05$), *complexity* ($p < .05$) and *clarity* ($p < .01$) than mission statements. In addition, there tends to be significantly more words in the mission statements of church affiliated HBCUs than there are in vision statements ($p = .001$).

The second research question asked whether the size and region of the institution are significant determining factors in the rhetorical content of institutional vision. Size categories provided by the Carnegie Foundation's Classification of Institutions of Higher Education are: Very Small (fewer than 1,000 degree-seeking students); Small (1,000 – 2,999 degree-seeking students); Medium (3,000 – 9,999 degree-seeking students); and Large (at least 10,000 degree-seeking students). Findings revealed only one statistically significant difference in the linguistic components of the composite institutional vision statements across institutions based on size: The institutional vision of Very Small schools was more *complex* ($F = 5.01$, $p < .01$) than Large schools.

Regarding the regional locality of the institution is a significant determining factor in the rhetorical content of institutional vision. Region categories were: Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-South, North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Pacific, Rocky Mountain, South Central, and Southeast. Findings revealed no statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) in the linguistic components of the composite institutional vision statements across institutions based on region.

The third research question asked if the culture (private or public; secular or religious) of the institution is a significant determining factor the rhetorical content of institutional vision. The institutional vision of private schools was found to be significantly different than public schools on all six linguistic components. They are more *clear* ($F = 14.47$, $p < .05$), more *compelling* ($F = 4.95$, $p < .05$), more *complex* ($F = 4.52$, $p < .05$), had greater *observability* ($F = 5.46$, $p < .05$) and *relative advantage* ($F = 12.36$, $p < .01$), but are less *shared* ($F = 6.32$, $p < .05$). The mission statements for private schools were more *clear* ($F = 6.23$, $p < .05$), more *compelling* ($F = 5.88$, $p < .05$) and less *complex* ($F = 11.13$, $p < .05$) than those for public schools.

Although previous research suggests important differences in institutional vision based on specific religious affiliation, several statistically significant differences in the linguistic components of the institutional vision of secular and religious schools were found. The institutional vision presented by religious colleges and universities was considerably more *clear* ($F = 23.42$, $p < .05$), more *compelling* ($F = 29.66$, $p < .05$) and more *shared* ($F = 35.54$, $p < .05$), but was less *complex* ($F = 25.32$, $p < .05$) and possessed less *relative advantage* ($F = 23.43$, $p < .05$) than the institutional vision offered by their secular counterparts.

The fourth research question asked whether the highest degree granted at the institution is a significant determining factor in the rhetorical content of institutional vision. Categories of institutions in accordance to the Carnegie Foundation's Classification of Institutions of Higher Education are: Associate's Colleges (includes institutions where all degrees are at the associate's level, or where bachelor's degrees account for less than 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees; Doctorate-granting Universities (includes institutions that awarded at least 20 research doctoral degrees); Master's Colleges and Universities (generally includes institutions that award at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees); and Baccalaureate Colleges (includes institutions where baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees and where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees are awarded).

Findings revealed no statistically significant differences in the linguistic components of the composite institutional vision statements across institutions based on highest degree granted, save one. When compared spe-

cifically with other types of public schools, the institutional vision presented by community colleges was significantly more *shared* than doctorate-granting ($F = 19.36$, $p < .05$), master's-granting ($F = 28.65$, $p < .05$), and baccalaureate-granting ($F = 34.05$, $p < .05$) institutions. It also possessed significantly greater *observability* than did the institutional vision of doctorate-granting ($F = 28.27$, $p < .05$) and master's-granting ($F = 18.75$, $p < .05$) institutions. There were no significant differences in *complexity*, *clarity* or how *compelling* the institutional vision when compared with all other types of public institutions.

The final research question inquired about score differentials on the key linguistic components across the various types of institutions represented in this comparative analysis. Tables 1 – 6 provide the mean scores for composite institutional vision – that is, both mission and vision statements – on each of the six linguistic components.

The institutional vision for Tribal community colleges was the most *shared* of all institution types (see Table 1) and, statistically ($p < .05$), more *shared* than all other types of institutions except Evangelical and "Christ-centered" schools (see Appendix D for an example of a high-scoring institutional vision of a Tribal community college). The institutional vision of Historically Black colleges and universities was the least *shared*.

The institutional vision for Immersion Catholic schools was the most *clear* and, statistically ($p < .01$), was more *clear* than all other types of institution (see Table 2). The institutional vision of secular public schools was the least *clear* of all institution types.

The institutional vision for Catholic schools was the most *compelling* and, statistically ($p < .05$), was more *compelling* than all other types of institutions except Evangelical schools (see Appendix E for an example of the high-scoring institutional vision of a Catholic school). The institutional vision for "Christ Centered" schools was the least *compelling* of all institution types (see Table 3).

Table 2. *Clarity* Mean DICTION Scores

Linguistic Components	M	SD	Range (H-L)
			4.32-7.34
Catholic	5.5	0.35	
Catholic Immersion	4.9	0.42	
Evangelical	5.9	0.39	
"Christ-Centered"	6.0	0.43	
Secular/Public	6.5	0.37	
Secular/Private	6.1	0.50	
HBCU	5.8	0.32	
For Profit	6.0	0.28	
Community Colleges	6.0	0.35	
Tribal Colleges	5.2	0.41	

Note. Low *score* is the equivalent to a high degree of *clarity*

Table 1. *Shared* Mean DICTION Scores

Linguistic Components	M	SD	Range (H-L)
			64.37-41.73
Catholic	47.8	2.95	
Catholic Immersion	53.9	2.47	
Evangelical	56.7	2.41	
"Christ-Centered"	57.2	2.32	
Secular/Public	49.2	4.74	
Secular/Private	54.6	4.66	
HBCU	44.9	3.42	
For Profit	49.6	3.54	
Community Colleges	52.6	3.25	
Tribal Colleges	58.3	3.43	

Table 3. *Compelling* Mean DICTION Scores

Linguistic Components	M	SD	Range (H-L)
			74.92-41.97
Catholic	65.2	3.57	
Catholic Immersion	56.2	3.21	
Evangelical	63.7	2.78	
"Christ-Centered"	48.3	2.42	
Secular/Public	51.6	2.87	
Secular/Private	54.9	3.32	
HBCU	55.7	3.37	
For Profit	55.8	2.41	
Community Colleges	51.8	3.37	
Tribal Colleges	56.3	6.11	

The institutional vision for Catholic Immersion schools was the most *complex* and, statistically ($p < .01$), more *complex* than all other types of institutions (see Table 4). The institutional vision for Evangelical schools was the least *complex* of all institution types.

Table 4. *Complexity* Mean DICTION Scores

Linguistic Components	M	SD	Range (H-L)
			84.19-29.66
Catholic	52.8	7.90	
Catholic Immersion	69.4	5.43	
Evangelical	37.4	3.89	
"Christ-Centered"	40.7	5.94	
Secular/Public	54.6	4.68	
Secular/Private	50.2	4.72	
HBCU	48.5	5.16	
For Profit	48.5	4.71	
Community Colleges	49.6	4.68	
Tribal Colleges	42.9	9.54	

The institutional vision for Catholic Immersion schools scored highest for *relative advantage* and, statistically ($p < .05$), scored higher for *relative advantage* than all other types of institutions (see Table 5). The institutional vision of Tribal community colleges scored lowest on this rhetorical component of all institution types.

Table 5. *Relative Advantage* Mean DICTION Scores

Linguistic Components	M	SD	Range (H-L)
			58.33-30.54
Catholic	40.2	3.28	
Catholic Immersion	54.1	3.17	
Evangelical	44.3	3.77	
"Christ-Centered"	52.3	4.31	
Secular/Public	47.1	3.66	
Secular/Private	46.2	3.57	
HBCU	44.9	3.53	
For Profit	46.3	3.62	
Community Colleges	43.4	3.84	
Tribal Colleges	37.7	4.75	

The institutional vision for Tribal community colleges scored highest for *observability* and, statistically ($p< .05$), scored higher on *observability* than all other types of institutions (see Table 6). The institutional vision for Catholic schools scored the lowest on this rhetorical component of all institution types.

Table 6. *Observability* Mean DICTION Scores

Linguistic Components	M	SD	Range (H-L)
			68.77-18.38
Catholic	39.7	2.56	
Catholic Immersion	48.5	3.41	
Evangelical	50.7	3.42	
"Christ-Centered"	45.9	2.88	
Secular/Public	45.7	3.28	
Secular/Private	42.9	3.76	
HBCU	46.4	2.86	
For Profit	46.0	3.09	
Community Colleges	47.6	2.75	
Tribal Colleges	54.2	2.97	

Conclusions

The literature on institutional vision suggests that purposeful, well-crafted mission and vision statements can help shape public opinion about public and private education. More specifically, it indicates that mission and vision statements serve different albeit complementary functions. The comparative analysis of key investigations confirms this finding and reports significant differences in their rhetorical flavor in accordance with those functions – that is, mission statements tend to emphasize *observability*, *relative advantage* and employ language that is highly *shared*. Vision statements tend to emphasize *clarity* and employ language that is highly *compelling*.

The comparative analysis also found that the rhetorical flavor of institutional vision – and, thus, its ability to be widely diffused, generally accepted and readily adopted by stakeholders within and outside the academic community – varies in accordance with institutional culture (i.e., Historically Black, tribal, religious) and the distinct challenges faced by these types of colleges and universities. This supports findings reported in the literature.

The analysis also reinforces earlier findings that schools with a shared heritage are in some ways handicapped in their interest or ability to create documents that can best serve as recruitment, marketing and branding tools. HBCUs, for instance, are grounded in a common, historical mission that provides legacy, unity and helps define these schools in their institutional vision statements. However, by emphasizing this heritage many of these schools are less successful at identifying and promoting academic aspirations that make each HBCU institution distinctive and appealing. The same is true for Tribal community colleges. Similarly, the institutional vision statements that guide proprietary schools strive to unify a highly diverse academic community through a set of common values and objectives as defined by corporate owners. They are, subsequently, relatively vague, mission-driven documents void of vision and complexity.

To some extent, religious affiliation can have the same impact on institutional vision. "Christ-Centered" schools – that is, those schools affiliated with the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) – purposefully distinguish themselves from other religious schools by generating a uniform identity and shared institutional vision. The comparative analysis demonstrated that such standardization rendered mission and vision statements less effective as compelling communication tools. Interestingly, in an effort to break away from the greater body of Catholic schools, Catholic Immersion schools have purposefully used their shared heritage as an advantage in the formulation of their respective institutional visions. Their institutional vision was found to be highly *shared*, *clear*, *compelling* and *complex*, and scored well regarding *observability* and *relative advantage*.

Interestingly, the rhetorical flavor of institutional vision did not vary significantly based on an institution's size, region, or highest degree granted, which had been suggested (Ayers, 2002a; 2000b; Boerema, 2006; Morphew & Hartley, 2006) but never quantified by earlier research.

Practical Applications

The studies represented in this literature review and, particularly, in the comparative analysis provide baseline points of comparison for specific types of colleges or universities. As the practice of self-marketing and public relations in higher education becomes increasingly important, and as schools find it increasingly difficult to shape their own specific image in the public mind in the increasingly competitive higher education marketplace, institutional vision takes on added significance and can be employed purposefully and proactively.

By identifying, isolating and quantifying the linguistic strengths and weaknesses of institutional visions across varying types of colleges and universities, the normative DICTION scores presented in the comparative analysis provide the means for any college or university to compare and assess its own institutional vision. Using this software, rhetoric can be matched against similar institutions and pre- and post-revision versions of institutional vision statements can be weighed. Of course, other software packages can be employed (e.g., LIWC, TextSmart, Wordstat) to assess institutional vision and provide pre- and post-revision scores on comparable versions of the linguistic components employed in this investigation.

Another option would be to visit the web sites of the institution types identified in this investigation as scoring high on specific linguistic components, access the institutional vision statements (see Appendix D and Appendix E), and visually compare those documents with that of one's own institution. Stonehill College followed this protocol during the revision of its mission statement in 2006. According to the school's President, Rev. Mark T. Cregan (cited in Abelman, 2012, p. 97):

> We wanted to refine the Stonehill mission statement so that it is more concise, memorable, and, therefore, more usable. We wanted to do so in a way that was also consistent with our history. And, we wanted an aspirational mission statement -- one that inspires and guides us as we execute our strategic plan. To generate a starting point, the Committee researched the mission statements of other Catholic colleges and universities including those sponsored by the Congregation of Holy Cross.

High scoring institutional visions provide a prescription for how these statements can better serve their institutions.

Future research by scholars interested in institutional vision is also warranted. As was noted earlier, more than 80% of all colleges and universities have made major revisions in their declarations of institutional vision within the last decade. Their progress in transforming mission and vision statements into more guiding, governing, and

self-promotional document should be monitored and an examination of institution types not included in the comparative analysis performed here should be engaged.

Morris (1994) and West (2001) point out a number of advantages of computerized content analysis. They include: (a) perfect stability of the coding scheme; (b) explicit coding rules yielding comparable results; (c) perfect reliability (freeing the researcher to focus on issues of validity, interpretation and explanation); (d) easy manipulation of the text to create output such as frequency counts and key-word-in-context listings; and (e) the ability to easily uncover co-occurrences of important concepts. In addition, Neuendorf (2002) suggest that computerized content analysis facilitates the analysis and comparison of large volumes of data much more easily and accurately than using human coders.

Despite its strengths, a number of limitations of computerized content analysis have been described as well. These include: (a) a lack of natural language processing capabilities (including difficulties with ambiguous concepts and the loss of broader contextual cues); (b) an insensitivity to linguistic nuances such as negation and irony; (c) the inability of researchers to provide a completely exhaustive listing of key words; (d) the inability of software to resolve references back and forth to words elsewhere in the text; and (e) the danger of word crunching, or transforming rich meanings into meaningless numbers (Morris, 1994). In addition, the methodology presented here can produce a sterility of analysis and, as such, it is important to note that DICTION scores merely provide an objective measuring stick (see Hart, 2001).

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Appendix A. Studies and Samples Included in the Comparative Analysis

1. Abelman, R. (2013)

HBCUs (Church Affiliated) (n = 46)

Allen University	Interdenominational Theological Center	Saint Paul's College
Arkansas Baptist College	Jarvis Christian College	Selma University
Barber-Scotia College	Johnson C. Smith University	Shaw University
Benedict College	Knoxville College	Southwestern Christian College
Bennett College	Lane College	St. Augustine's College
Bethune Cookman College	Lemoyne-Owen College	St. Philip's College
Central State University	Livingstone College	Talladega College
Claflin University	Meharry Medical College	Texas College
Clark Atlanta University	Miles College	Tougaloo College
Clinton Junior College	Morris Brown College	Virginia Union University
Concordia College	Morris College	Voorhees College
Dillard University	Oakwood University	Wilberforce University
Edward Waters College	Paine College	Wiley College
Fisk University	Paul Quinn College	Xavier University of Louisiana
Florida Memorial College	Philander Smith College	
Huston-Tillotson University	Rust College	

2. Abelman, R. (2012)

Immersion Catholic Schools (n = 11)

Ave Maria University	John Paul the Great Catholic University	Thomas More College of Liberal Arts
Campion College	Magdalen College	University of Sacramento, The
Christendom College	Southern Catholic College	Wyoming Catholic College
Franciscan University of Steubenville	Thomas Aquinas College	

3. Abelman, R. (2011)

Tribal Community Colleges (n = 34)

Bay Mills Community College	Ilisagvik College	Salish Kootenai College
Blackfeet Community College	Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College	Sisseton Wahpeton College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College	Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Comm. College	Sitting Bull College
Chief Dull Knife College	Leech Lake Tribal College	Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
College of Menominee Nation	Little Big Horn College	Stone Child College
College of the Muscogee Nation	Little Priest Tribal College	Tohono O'odham Community College
Comanche Nation College	Navajo Technical College	Turtle Mountain Community College
Diné College	Nebraska Indian Community College	United Tribes Technical College
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	Northwest Indian College	White Earth Tribal and Community College
Fort Belknap College	Oglala Lakota College	Wind River Tribal College
Fort Berthold Community College	Red Crow Community College	
Fort Peck Community College	Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College	

4. Abelman, R. & Dalessandro, A. (2009a)

Evangelical Schools (n = 28)

Augsburg College	Gettysburg College	St. Olaf College
Augustana College (Illinois)	Grand View College	Susquehanna University
Augustana College (South Dakota)	Gustavus Adolphus College	Texas Lutheran University
Bethany College	Lenoir-Rhyne College	Thiel College
California Lutheran University	Luther College	Wagner College
Capital University	Midland Lutheran College	Waldorf College
Carthage College	Muhlenberg College	Wartburg College
Concordia College	Newberry College	Wittenberg University
Dana College	Pacific Lutheran University	
Finlandia University	Roanoke College	

"Christ-Centered" Schools (n = 28)

Abilene Christian University	Houghton College	Palm Beach Atlantic University
Anderson University	Houston Baptist University	Roberts Wesleyan College
Bethel College—IN	Indiana Wesleyan University	Simpson College
Bluffton University	John Brown University	Sterling College
Cedarville University	Lee University	Trinity International University
Colorado Christian University	Malone College	Union University
Cornerstone University	Messiah College	Warner Southern College
Evangel University	Mississippi College	Wayland Baptist University
Fresno Pacific University	Northwest Christian College	
Goshen College	Oklahoma Baptist University	

5. Abelman, R. & Dalessandro, A. (2009b)

HBCUs (n = 105)

Alabama A&M University	Hinds Community College	Rust College
Alabama State University	Howard University	S. Un. and Agricultural & Mechanical College
Albany State College	Huston-Tillotson College	Saint Paul's College
Alcorn State University	Interdenominational Theological Center	Savannah State University
Allen University	J.F. Drake State Technical College	Selma University
Arkansas Baptist College	Jackson State University	Shaw University
Barber-Scotia College	Jarvis Christian College	Shelton State Community College
Benedict College	Johnson C. Smith University	Shorter College
Bennett College	Kentucky State University	South Carolina State University
Bethune Cookman College	Knoxville College	Southern University, New Orleans
Bishop State Community College	Lane College	Southern University, Shreveport
Bluefield State College	Langston University	Southwestern Christian College
Bowie State University	Lawson State Community College	Spelman College
Central State University	Lemoyne-Owen College	St. Augustine's College
Charles Drew Univ. of Medicine & Science	Lewis College of Business	Stillman College
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania	Lincoln University, MO	Talladega College
Claflin College	Lincoln University, PA	Tennessee State University
Clark Atlanta University	Livingstone College	Texas College
Clinton Junior College	Mary Holmes College	Texas Southern University
Coahoma Community College	Meharry Medical College	The University of Texas at El Paso
Concordia College	Miles College	Tougaloo College
Coppin State College	Mississippi Valley State University	Trenholm State Technical College
Delaware State University	Morehouse College	Tuskegee University
Denmark Technical College	Morehouse School of Medicine	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Dillard University	Morgan State University	University of Maryland, Eastern Shore
Edward Waters College	Morris Brown College	University of the District of Columbia
Elizabeth City State University	Morris College	University of the Virgin Islands
Fayetteville State University	N.C. Agricultural & Technical State Univ.	Virginia State University
Fisk University	Norfolk State University	Virginia Union University
Florida A&M University	North Carolina Central University	Voorhees College
Florida Memorial College	Oakwood College	West Virginia State College
Fort Valley State College	Paine College	Wilberforce University
Grambling State University	Paul Quinn College	Wiley College
Hampton University	Philander Smith College	Winston-Salem State University
Harris-Stowe State College	Prairie View A&M University	Xavier University of Louisiana

6. Abelman, R. & Dalessandro, A. (2008).

Catholic Schools (n = 21)		
Clarke College	LeMoyne College	Rosemont College
Dominican University of California	Loyola Marymount University	Saint Joseph's College
Edgewood College	Loyola University of Chicago	Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Emmanuel College	Marian College	Saint Paul's College
Gannon University	Marquette University	Saint Thomas University
Holy Cross College	Mount Saint Mary's College	Stonehill College
King's College	Regis University	University of Notre Dame

7. Abelman, R., Dalessandro, A., Janstova, P., & Snyder-Suhy, S. (2007)

For-Profit Schools (n = 30)		
Academy of Art University	Capella University	ITT Technical Institute (Chantilly)
American InterContinental University (Houston)	Cardean University	Laboratory Institute of Merchandising
Argosy University (Chicago)	Colorado Technical University (CO Springs)	Miller-Motte Technical College (Wilmington)
Art Institute of California (San Francisco)	Denver Career College	Northwestern Business College
Art Institute of Houston	DeVry University (Chicago)	Strayer University (Charlotte)
Art Institute of Pittsburgh	DigiPen Institute of Technology	TESST College of Technology
Berkeley College (Garret Mountain)	Five Towns College	University of Phoenix (Seattle)
Briarwood College	IAD&T (Las Vegas)	Virginia College (Birmingham)
Brown Mackie College (Cincinnati)	Illinois Institute of Art	Walden University
Bryant & Stratton College (Rochester)	Institute of Production and Recording	Western International University

Appendix B. General Comparative Sample Institutions

Abelman, R. (in press)

Private Baccalaureate (n = 30)		
Anderson College	Huston-Tillotson University	Peace College
Bethune-Cookman College	Illinois Wesleyan University	Ringling School of Art and Design
Corcoran College of Art & Design	Lafayette College	Robert Morris College
Dean College	Macalester College	Saint Olaf College
Elizabethtown College	McPherson College	Saint Paul's College
Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design	Mount Ida College	Shorter College
Grand View College	Mount Olive College	Stonehill College
Hartwick College	Mount Union College	University of Northwestern Ohio
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	North Carolina Wesleyan College	Walden University
Holy Cross College	Northland College	Wartburg College

Private Masters (n = 30)

Bennington College	Gannon University	Rider University
Clarke College	Indiana Wesleyan University	Rosemont College
Columbia College Chicago	International College	Saint Joseph's College
Converse College	John Brown University	Saint Lawrence University
Curry College	Laurentian University	Saint Thomas University
Dominican University of California	LeMoyne College	Southern California Inst. of Architecture
Drury University	Marian College	Thomas University
Edgewood College	North Central College	Union University
Emmanuel College	Olivet College	Washington College
Franklin University	Quinnipiac University	Wingate University

Private Doctorate (n = 30)

American University	Loyola Marymount University	Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Arcadia University	Loyola University of Chicago	Smith College
Brandeis University	Marquette University	Springfield College
Brigham Young University	Mount Saint Mary's College	Tulane University
Clarkson University	New England College	University of Denver
Drake University	New York University	University of Miami
Drexel University	Northwestern University	University of Notre Dame
Elon University	Nova Southeastern University	University of Regina
Johnson & Wales University	Regis University	University of Rochester
Liberty University	Rochester Institute of Technology	Western Long Island University-CW Post

Public Baccalaureate (n = 29)

Brandon University	Macon State College	SUNY-Delhi
California State University–Channel Islands	Miami University–Hamilton Campus	United States Coast Guard Academy
Chipola College	Missouri Western State University	University of Maine-Augusta
Concord University	Nipissing University	University of Montana–Western
CUNY-York College	Oregon Institute of Technology-Portland	University of Pittsburg–Johnstown
Dalton State College	Penn State University–Lehigh Valley	University of South Carolina–Beaufort
Fairmont State University	Pennsylvania College of Technology	University of South Florida–Sarasota
Kansas State University–Salina	Purdue University-North Central	Utah Valley State College
King's College	Red River College	West Virginia University–Parkersburg
Lewis-Clark State College	Saint Mary's College of Maryland	

Public Masters (n = 30)		
Arkansas Tech University	Missouri State University	The College of New Jersey
Bowie State University	Montana State University–Northern	University of Alaska–Anchorage
Bridgewater State College	Montclair State University	University of Arkansas-Monticello
California State Univer.–Dominguez Hills	Ohio University-Lancaster	University of Maryland–University College
CUNY-Hunter College	Saginaw Valley State University	University of North Carolina–Wilmington
Evergreen State College	San Jose State University	University of Tennessee–Chattanooga
Fort Hays State University	Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania	University of Wisconsin-Stout
Georgia College & State University	Sonoma State University	Weber State University–Davis
Indiana University Northwest	Southern Oregon University	West Texas A&M University
Minnesota State University–Moorhead	SUNY-Purchase College	Western Washington University

Public Doctorate (n = 30)		
Alabama State University	Rutgers State University–New Brunswick	University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth
Bowling Green State University	Texas Southern University	University of Missouri–St Louis
East Tennessee State University	University of Arkansas-Little Rock	University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill
Eastern Michigan University	University of California–Berkeley	University of Pittsburgh
Florida International University	University of California–San Diego	University of South Florida
Grand Valley State University	University of Colorado–Colorado Spring	University of Vermont
Kansas State University	University of Illinois–Chicago	University of West Georgia
Mississippi State University	University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign	University of Wisconsin–Madison
Northern Arizona University–Phoenix	University of Iowa	Wichita State University
Oklahoma State University–Tulsa	University of Massachusetts–Boston	Wilfrid Laurier University

Public and Private 2-Year Colleges (n = 31)		
Arapahoe Community College	Dine College	New Mexico State University–Carlsbad
Bethany Lutheran College	Frederick Community College	Normandale Community College
Blackfeet Community College	Georgia Military College-Augusta	Patrick Henry Community College
Blue Mountain Community College	Grand Rapids Community College	Rockingham Community College
CCC-Malcolm X College	Highline Community College	Seminole Community College
Cloud County Community College	Kent State University–Salem Campus	Tri-County Technical College
Collin County Community, College District	Metropolitan Community College	Tunxis Community College
Community College of Allegheny County	Middlesex County College	University of Wisconsin–Barron County
Corning Community College	Mid-South Community College	Western Wyoming Community College
Cuesta College	Mount Wachusett Community College	
Des Moines Area Community College	New Hampshire Community Tech	

Appendix C. DICTION Constructs, Formulas, and Sample Words

Shared = *[Centrality + Cooperation +Rapport] – [Diversity + Exclusion + Liberation]*

*Centrality (*e.g., basic, innate, paradigm, standardized, expected)
Cooperation (e.g., unions, partner, sisterhood, mediate, teamwork)
Rapport (e.g., congenial, approve, tolerant, equivalent, consensus)
Diversity (e.g., contrasting, non-conformist, unique, individualistic, extremist)
Exclusion (e.g., displaced, outlaws, privacy, discriminate, loneliness)
Liberation (e.g., autonomous, radical, eccentric, liberty, freedom)

Clarity = *– [Complexity]*

"A simple measure of the average number of characters-per-word and convoluted phrasings that make a text's ideas abstract and its implications unclear" Hart (2000b, p. 47). *Complexity* borrows Flesch's (1951) notion that convoluted phrasings make a text's ideas abstract and its implications unclear. *Clarity*, then, is the opposite.

Compelling = *[Praise + Satisfaction + Inspiration] – [Blame + Hardship + Denial]*

Praise (e.g., dear, delightful, mighty, successful, conscientious)
Inspiration (e.g., faith, honesty, self-sacrifice, courage, wisdom)
Satisfaction (e.g., cheerful, happiness, pride, excited, courage)
Blame (e.g., repugnant, blood-thirsty, weary, nervous, offensive)
Hardship (e.g., killers, bankruptcy, enemies, injustice, error)
Denial (e.g., aren't, shouldn't, not, nobody, nothing)

Complexity = *[Tenacity + Leveling + Collectives + Insistence] – [Numerical Terms + Ambivalence + Self Reference + Variety]*

Tenacity (e.g., is, am, will, shall, he'll)
Leveling (e.g., everybody, everyone, always, inevitably, absolute)
Collectives (e.g., crowd, team, humanity, country, world)
Insistence (all words occurring three or more times that function as nouns or noun-derived adjectives are identified and then calculated)
Numerical Terms (e.g., one, tenfold, multiply, percentage, tally)
Ambivalence (e.g., allegedly, perhaps, almost, vague, hesitate)
Self Reference (e.g., I, I'd, mine, myself, my)
Variety (ratio that divides the number of different words by the total words)

Relative Advantage *= [Aggression + Accomplishment + Communication + Motion] – [Cognitive Terms + Passivity + Embellishment]*

Aggression (e.g., explode, conquest, violation, challenging)
Accomplishment (e.g., finish, proceed, leader, manage)
Communication (e.g., listen, read, speak, translate, chat)
Motion (e.g., lurch, circulate, momentum, wandering)
Cognitive terms (e.g., learn, consider, psychology, re-examine, estimate)
Passivity (e.g., tame, submit, yielding, silence, inhibit)
Embellishment (ratio of adjectives to verbs)

Observability *= [Familiarity + Spatial Awareness + Temporal Awareness + Present Concern + Human Interest + Concreteness] – [Past Concern + Complexity]*

Familiarity (e.g., this, that, across, over, through)
Spatial Awareness (e.g., abroad, locale, Poland, fatherland, disoriented)
Temporal Awareness (e.g., century, instant, nowadays, spontaneously)
Present Concern (e.g., touch, govern, make, meet)
Human Interest (e.g., he, ourselves, them, cousin, friend)
Concreteness (e.g., mass, compact, outcome, objective)
*Past Concern (*the past tense forms of the verbs contained in the *Present Concern Dictionary)*
Complexity (the average number of characters-per-word)

Appendix D. Institutional Vision of Barber-Scotia College (Church-Affiliated HBCU)

Mission

We, at Barber-Scotia College believe that human dignity is an endowment from God and that all persons have the responsibility for developing their potential to the fullest and for devoting their creative energies toward making a better world. We believe that all persons have six important aspects- intellectual, physical, emotional, social, ethical and spiritual- and that their development of one aspect is integrally related to the development of all others. We, at Barber-Scotia, believe that this development and this integration must take place within a framework of cultural heritage and through a commitment to ideals arising from Christian and democratic principles.

Recognizing the unique and infinitely significant value of the individual, it's our goal to provide an opportunity for all students to realize their capabilities. We will provide the opportunity through a liberal arts education in a community concerned with the interaction of cultures, Christian heritage, scholarship, citizenship, and leadership. The College continually seeks to provide an atmosphere and an environment in which learning will always be adventurous for the total community of scholars.

DICTION Scores

	Shared	Clarity	Compelling	Complexity	Relative Advantage	Observability
Composite[a]	49.76[b]	5.15[bc]	51.80	47.32[b]	41.82	42.12[b]
Range	63.96-41.73	4.72-7.24	74.92-41.97	83.30-35.76	58.33-32.37	57.29-18.38

[a] = mission only

[b] = value is more than the mean (for "Clarity," less than the mean) calculated from all HBCUs

[c] = value is more than the mean (for "Clarity," less than the mean) calculated from all non-HBCUs

Appendix E. Institutional Vision of Loyola University of Chicago (Catholic University)

Mission

We are Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University—a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith.

Vision

Loyola University Chicago is the school of choice for those who wish to seek new knowledge in the service of humanity in a world-renowned urban center as members of a diverse learning community that values freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth and care for others.

Our Jesuit Catholic tradition of education prepares students for extraordinary lives that will reflect the following characteristics:

- Commitment to excellence: Applying well-learned lessons and skills to achieve new ideas, better solutions and vital answers
- Faith in God and the religious experience: Promoting well-formed and strongly held beliefs in one's faith tradition to deepen others' relationships with God
- Service that promotes justice: Using learning and leadership in openhanded and generous ways to ensure freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth and care for others
- Values-based leadership: Ensuring a consistent focus on personal integrity, ethical behavior in business and in all professions, and the appropriate balance between justice and fairness
- Global awareness: Demonstrating an understanding that the world's people and societies are interrelated and interdependent

DICTION Scores

	Shared	Clarity	Compelling	Complexity	Relative Advantage	Observability
Composite	50.28[a]	5.79	62.00	47.50	44.32[a]	43.42[a]
Range	63.96-42.54	4.72-6.53	74.92-50.73	83.30-35.32	57.32-33.43	56.79-15.92
Mission	45.23	5.57	60.86	48.14	40.48	44.85
Range	68.21-19.90	5.27-6.74	78.01-49.57	60.97-33.93	58.20-33.93	56.25-35.93
Vision	55.98[a]	5.78	68.07[a]	42.46	45.25[a]	45.35[a]
Range	66.70-37.81	4.98-6.06	75.19-51.71	56.90-37.13	52.02-24.41	71.47-38.78

[a] = value is more than the mean (for "Clarity," less than the mean) calculated from all Catholic institutions

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