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Faculty Perceptions on the Student Learning Accountability Movement

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Faculty Perceptions on the Student Learning Accountability Movement

by

Tara Ann Rose

M.P.A., Walden University, 2009

M.S., Eastern Kentucky University, 2001

B.S., Eastern Kentucky University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

December 2015

Abstract

Literature examining the impact of the student learning accountability movement on faculty perspectives is insufficient, as little is known about how faculty perceive the requirements related to federal, state, and institutional accountability initiatives. This case study investigated the threat posed by the accountability movement on the stability of faculty engagement, while exploring how faculty perceptions of the movement will impact institutional and state policy. Using Levin's system of accountability as the framework for this study, the central research question explored how understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement could promote policy within an institution. Data were gathered via a qualitative survey of 140 instructional faculty and from 21 semi-structured interviews with instructional faculty, accountability specialists, and state coordinating board officials. Data from the surveys and interviews were inductively coded, and then analyzed through detailed categorical aggregation. Findings indicated a discord with what Levin calls *the feedback loop* in an accountability system. Transparency related to institutional governance, not distinctively academic freedom and faculty engagement, was found to be a key component of a successful accountability system. Results of the study contribute to positive social change by providing higher education institutions with practical recommendations to address accountability pressures through a model for a faculty-driven accountability system.

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Dedication

To my loving husband, Matthew Dale Rose, for his encouragement and support throughout this journey. I could not have completed this dissertation without you by my side. To my beautiful children, Blake and Chase, who had to give up quality mommy time on way too many occasions. This Dissertation I dedicate to you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States higher education system is currently undergoing a student-centered, learning accountability movement in which higher education institutions are now being held accountable to show evidence that students are in fact learning content knowledge as well as performing their learning. The accountability and performance requirements that were new three decades ago are now the standard for higher education (Hutcheson, 2011, p. 57). With the United States trailing other countries, the Spellings Commission (a national strategy to reform higher education), began in 2005 in an effort to address the issue of quality higher education. According to the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education, "We want a world-class higher-education system that creates new knowledge, contributes to economic prosperity and global competitiveness, and empowers citizens" (Spellings, 2006, p. xi). It is essential that policy be taken into account when conversing about student learning, including policy initiatives concerning accountability, accreditation, and the need for increased transparency.

National higher education organizations came to support the Spellings Commission by creating policy initiatives of their own that spoke to accountability, accreditation, and transparency efforts. For example, The Lumina Foundation supports two initiatives; Tuning USA and the Degree Profile. Tuning USA is a faculty driven process that helps to define what students know and can do with what they know within their specific disciplines (Marshall, Kalina, and Dane, 2010, p.1). The Degree Profile articulates specific student learning outcomes that students should be able to achieve at

the associate, bachelor, and master's degree levels (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2011, p. 1). The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has focused on providing quality resources for liberal education to assist institutions of higher education. In 2007, AAC&U launched the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project where professionals across the nation vetted fifteen rubrics that institutions could use to assess authentic student work (Rhodes and Finley, 2013, p. 1). In January 2014, the MultiState Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment, an initiative between AAC&U and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) brought nine states (Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Utah) together to pilot a possible model of student learning outcomes assessment, one focused on assessing authentic student work using the VALUE rubrics noted above (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, 2014). The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), one of several accreditation agencies, has created the *Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning*, a program intended to increase culture and commitment to student learning within those institutions accredited by HLC (The Higher Learning Commission, 2014). Regarding transparency initiatives, the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) is an accountability tool to support "public 4-year universities to supply clear, accessible, and comparable information on the undergraduate student experience to important constituencies through a common web report – the College Portrait" (VSA, 2011). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) remain the foundation to success in our country, as they must ensure effective and efficient services are provided to students, a goal of the policy

initiatives noted above. Faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability movement can be critical in addressing and meeting the goal the Spellings Commission set out to achieve: a world-class higher education system.

Faculty provide services to students in the classroom through curriculum and instruction, feedback and reflection, and active learning. If faculty perceive that policy initiatives threaten their academic freedom in the classroom, they could become disengaged and less inclined to provide a quality education, not only in the classroom but also in the mission and values of the institution as a whole. Because how faculty perceive their institution's accountability system could have an effect on the quality of the education provided, how they view the student learning accountability movement and their institution's system of accountability was explored in this study. The study provides information for faculty, administrators, and higher education policymakers that can aid in improving student learning at the institutional level by discussing how the accountability movement has shaped faculty perceptions. The findings from this research contribute to positive social change in four ways: (a) allowing faculty to share their perspectives on the student learning accountability movement, (b) allowing HEIs to make informed decisions concerning student learning, (c) creating best practice policies that take into account faculty perceptions, and (d) providing a faculty-driven accountability system that could be used as a model for HEIs in the state of Kentucky. By letting faculty have a voice and sharing their perspectives, HEIs are in a better position to use information to guide them in the creation of policies that will enhance continuous improvement initiatives at the institutional level concerning student learning.

The major sections in Chapter 1 include: a background of student learning accountability; specifically three levels of accountability (federal, state, institution); the problem statement, threat of stability in faculty as they may become disengaged in the classroom and institution; the purpose and nature of the study; the research questions and conceptual framework; delimitations and limitations, assumptions; significance of the study; and most importantly, the expected social change.

Background of the Study

Student learning comprises the activities conducted where learning takes place; activities such as those in the classroom. While this study focused specifically on student learning as it relates to the accountability movement, it was important to discuss student learning in general. Stakeholder (federal government, accreditation agencies, state legislatures, and parents) inquisitiveness relating to student learning, particularly at the Department of Education, revolves around one central question: how do we know students are in fact learning? In order to answer this specific question, recommendations (i.e., Spellings Commission Report), and principles followed by actions (i.e., Council for Higher Education Accreditation reports) have been created to assist in quality assurance efforts. These efforts of accountability demand transparency and begin at the federal level with the U.S. Department of Education. States must comply with federal accountability policy initiatives, which in turn place pressure not only on HEIs but the faculty who are responsible for teaching our students.

Extensive literature focuses on why and how student learning is assessed related to best practices in developing, implementing, and sustaining assessment processes in

institutions (Allen, 2004; Huba & Freed, 1999; Maki, 2004; Suskie, 2004, 2009; Walvoord, 2004), with much of it focused on the challenges to student learning and accountability and the need to embrace the student learning accountability movement (Ewell, 2007; Mundhenk, 2006; Peterson & Augustine, 2000; Shurlock & Moore, 2002; Wergin, 2005). There is little research however on how faculty actually perceive that movement (Emil, 2011; Gardner-Gletty, 2002; Saunders, 2007; Vaneman, 2006; Freeman & Kochan, 2012).

While the literature cited above provides information regarding student learning accountability and, in a few cases, faculty perspectives, none of the literature explicitly studied faculty perceptions (the entire population of a university) on the accountability movement as a whole or faculty views on the accountability system within their institutions. A gap remains in the research, providing an opportunity to impact social change. Asking faculty in higher education institutions for their perspectives could aid in creating policies, procedures, and/or guidelines that can assist in improving student learning accountability and continuous improvement in HEIs.

There are three overarching levels of accountability that have driven policy initiatives relating to student learning: federal, state, and institutional. At the federal level, policy such as the Higher Education Act of 1965 (reauthorized in 1992) spurred the Spellings Commission report in 2006, which was a report that focused on reforming higher education. State level accountability is unclear and inconsistent with each state mandating its own policies. Initiatives at the state level such as the VSA encourage states to be transparent about student learning outcomes. At the institutional level (HEIs), there

are multiple accreditation agencies (national, regional, and programmatic) that provide accountability guidance relating to student learning for degree and certificate programs. Additionally, each institution has governing and administration regulations to which they must adhere. The accountability landscape in higher education has seen a gradual shift beginning in the 1960s through today due to economic changes and concerns with performance and efficiency measures (Zumeta, 2011). This landscape continues to shift with stakeholders maintaining pressure on HEIs.

<div align="center">**Problem Statement**</div>

As the need for institutional transparency, assessment, and accountability at the federal, state, and local levels increases exponentially (Ratcliff, 2003), accrediting agencies are putting pressure on HEIs to be more accountable for ensuring students are in fact learning. Related policy initiatives, such as those explained above, may cause a threat of stability in faculty as they could become less inclined to provide a quality education and become disengaged in the classroom or in the institution itself. Student engagement has two components, what the students put into education and what the institution provides, the later dealing with faculty-student interaction (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010, p. 9). Faculty are a constant presence in higher education and although academic freedom and faculty engagement continue to be an important factor, it is critical that faculty embrace new directives from the accountability movement. For policy to make a difference at the institutional level, it is important to inquire into the perceptions of faculty in order to mitigate conflicting views between the institution, administrators, and faculty. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

acknowledges that establishing and assessing student learning in the classroom is one of a few new challenges to faculty academic freedom. In addition to incorporating their expertise into classroom activities, faculty must now work collaboratively with their colleagues and the institution (AAC&U, 2006, p. 1). Anchoring assessment more firmly in the disciplines may be a way to address the vexing and enduring challenge of engaging faculty in ways that lead to real improvement in teaching and learning (Hutchings, 2011, p. 36). This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address the threat of stability in faculty as they could become less motivated to provide a quality education and become disengaged in the classroom or institution. The study also explores faculty perceptions regarding the student learning accountability movement. Perceptions related to institutional student learning assessment policies, the institutional accountability system, faculty engagement, and academic freedom. Understanding faculty perceptions will impact institutional policy by helping to create a meaningful accountability system. A faculty-driven accountability system can aid faculty, administrators, and higher education institutions in the creation of policy not only at the institutional level, but state level as well, by providing a model for best practice that promotes continuous improvement of student learning. Policies that reflect faculty voice encourage deep collaboration between administrators and faculty in meeting accountability demands while providing a quality education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability movement and create a faculty-driven accountability

system at the University of Kentucky (UK). UK is a land grant research university in the southeast region of the state with a high level of research activity and approximately 2,700 full-time and part-time faculty. The qualitative approach encouraged faculty to share their thoughts and views of the issue through multiple data collection methods. The responses from faculty were also examined for commonalities or disconnects amongst their colleagues. As indicated in the background of this study, literature does exist on the how and why of assessing student learning and the relationship between student learning and accountability. However, little literature exists that directly aligns to faculty perceptions and the policies created as a result of the student learning accountability movement as a whole. This study addressed the gap in reportage on faculty perceptions of the student learning accountability movement. For this case study, Levin's system of accountability was utilized as the conceptual framework. The findings may lead to the creation of policies, procedures, and guidelines at the institutional level that could promote improvement of student learning in HEIs and lessen the threat of stability for faculty. The findings could also impact state level policy by providing a model of best practice.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to better understand faculty perceptions on the student learning accountibility movement in higher education and how such understanding can create a faculty-driven accountability system that could be used as a model for all HEIs within the state of Kentucky. The central research question for this study was: How can understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement help

to promote policy such as a faculty-driven accountability system within the institution? Specific sub-questions for this study included:

RQ1. How has the student learning accountability movement impacted faculty perceptions?

RQ2: How do faculty perceive their insitutions' student learning assessment requirements?

RQ3: How do faculty perceive their institutional accountability system?

RQ4: Do faculty perceive academic freedom and faculty engagement as critical components in an accountability system?

RQ5: How could a faculty-driven accountability system instituted by the only land-grant research university in the state be adopted as best practice and impact state policy?

Conceptual Framework

While a few useful conceptual frameworks exist for this study, the philosophical assumptions of ontology lead to the conceptual framework developed by Levin (1974) in his *system of accountability,* which helped guide this qualitative study. Other frameworks that were dismissed include Perie, Park, and Klau's (2007) framework for a state accountability system, which consisted of seven core elements. The core elements include goals, performance indicators, design decisions, consequences, communication, support, and system evaluation, monitoring, and improvement. While the goals stated align with higher education, this study was focused on K-12 education. What the study did not focus on was faculty perceptions of accountability systems in higher education,

specifically at the institutional level. Most recently, a new paradigm was introduced by Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, and Pittenger (2014), also focusing on K-12. Their accountability paradigm included three components: meaningful improvement, professional capacity, and resource accountability to create a new 51st state accountability system that focuses on college ready students. The authors' ultimate goal was to present a new paradigm for accountability in K-12 to begin a conversation leading to a policy framework in the United States (p. 31).

Another model of accountability shared by Kearns (1998) includes two dimensions: (a) explicit and implicit sets of accountability and performance standards generated by internal or external stakeholders, and (b) tactical and strategic sets of responses to these accountability standards from inside the institutions. This study focused solely on student learning accountability whereas Kearns focused on multiple aspects of accountability at the higher education level including legal, negotiated, anticipatory, and discretionary accountability. A framework for HEIs in improving the academic institution provided by authors Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) discussed six cultures one will find in academic institutions: collegial culture, managerial culture, developmental culture, culture of advocacy, virtual culture, and tangible culture. While this is an excellent framework, it is best suited as a follow-up study once faculty perspectives on accountability movement have been collected. The literature briefly noted in the background of the study section above used the theoretical framework of learning organizations (Vaneman 2006) and conceptual framework of a feedback loop (Gardner-Gletty 2002). Vaneman (2006) chose learning organization theory because it

brings together certain elements and techniques necessary "within the culture, the leadership, the assessment practices, and future visionary statements that should enable individual institutions to achieve educational accountability by demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness while maintaining autonomy and quality" (p. 8). Gardner-Gletty (2002) choose the conceptual framework of feedback loop which implied that the information gathered about student learning outcomes is used to improve the department's work in courses and across the curriculum, but only after faculty have first agreed on the outcomes they seek.

Since there is little to no literature that specifically aligns to accountability theory, this study was guided upfront by Levin's system of accountability. Using Levin's system of accountability also allowed for a deeper understanding of accountability, which could help explain faculty perceptions. There are four accountability concepts discussed by Levin: (a) performance reporting, (b) technical process, (c) political process, and (d) institutional process (Levin, 1974, p. 364). Levin (1974) argued the reason for multiple concepts is the perception of social reality. The author then questioned if there might be a system of thought that could help bring together the four concepts (Levin, 1974, p. 372), hence his system of accountability conceptual framework. Levin stated, "an accountability system is a closed loop reflecting a chain of responses to perceived needs or demands; an activity or set of activities that emerges to fill those demands; outcomes that result from those activities; and feedback on outcomes to the source of the demands" (p. 375). Components used in Levin's system of accountability include: (a) constituencies, (b) goals, (c) political processes, and (d) outcomes (p. 376).
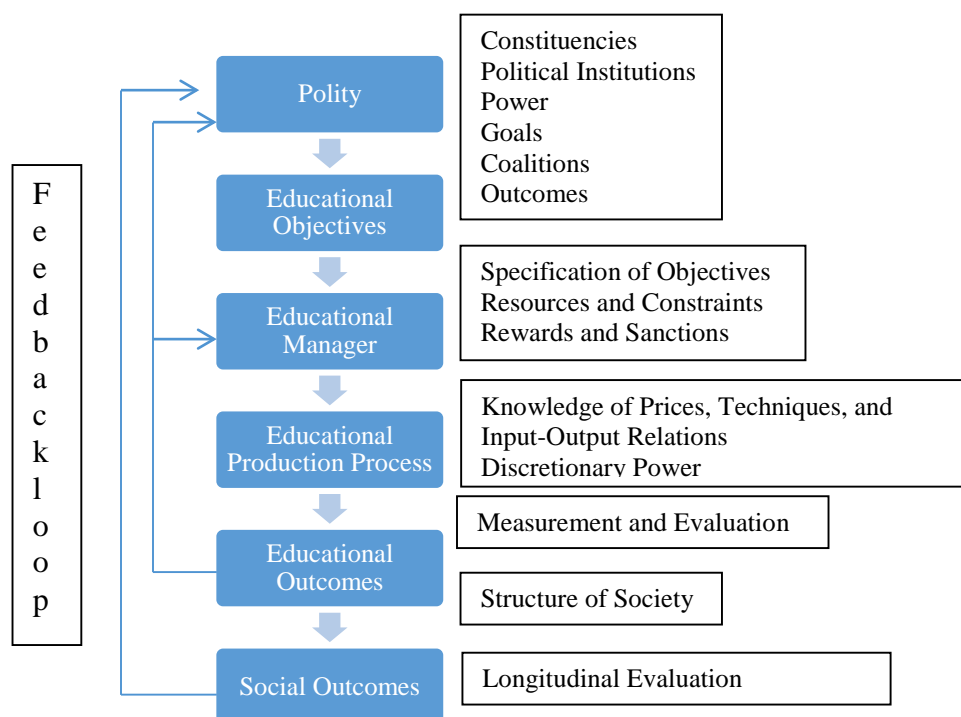
Figure 1. Levin's system of accountability. From "A conceptual framework for accountability in education, by H. Levin, 1974, *The School Review, 83*(3), p. 385.

Incorporating Levin's ideal system of accountability for education and applying it to this single case study design at UK gave insight to the institutions accountability system that is currently in place. The polity in this case was the administration, which expressed its educational outcomes for the university. Those outcomes are communicated to the college, department, and unit "leads". In Levin's model there are three critical types of information that need to be passed down to the leads: (a) the stated objectives and outcomes, (b) resources and constraints (budget to allocate to any activities needed to achieve the outcomes), and (c) rewards (token for being successful) or sanctions

(imposition if unsuccessful). Only when all information is given to the lead are they able to organize educational production (Levin, 1974, p. 386).

All information equals knowledge. In order for faculty to be knowledgeable, the communication and transparency of the communication must be current and regular. UK has no formalized established process that clearly chronicles an accountability system such as Levin describes. A lack of resources, incentives, rewards, knowledge, and even discretionary power may lead to faculty being less likely to be successful and therefore disengaged in the classroom or institution. While faculty are fully aware of the incentive that they are working towards, they are not rewarded for doing so. Faculty complete the task they were given, but do not take full ownership of the task. Whether the outcomes are strategic in nature or specific to student learning, the measurement and evaluation of those outcomes are needed to determine the quality and quantity of the college, department, and unit performance. These analyses are then reported to the leads, and upper administration then must determine what may need to be revised in their educational process as a whole. Continually measuring, evaluating, and revising outcomes increases the chances that those educational outcomes can translate to social outcomes. Only then is the accountability loop completed.

Ontology allowed for full understanding of faculty perspectives, giving them a chance to describe their viewpoints, their own reality. The idea was to listen closely to faculty and let them describe, in relation to the accountability movement, "how things really are" and "how things really work." While other types of assumptions

(epistemological and methodological) were possible options, ontology completely

removed the researchers thoughts.

Nature of the Study

This study conducted was a qualitative single-design case study at UK. UK is a

land-grant institution in the southeastern region of the United States. It is a research

university with very high research activity serving approximately 29,000 graduate and

undergraduate students with just over half of the student body comprised of females

(52%). Nineteen percent of students are minority and international students. UK has more

than 300 academic programs, 16 colleges and professional schools, and 450 student

organizations. The institution has over 10,000 full-time staff and administrators and

approximately 2,300 full-time faculty and 400 part-time faculty. The office responsible

for student learning accountability within UK has two full-time staff and one graduate

student.

This particular case was selected due to convenience and interest to investigate

the accountability system at UK. Case study experts such as Stake and Yin (2014)

describe three purposes for conducting case studies: to explore, to describe, and to

explain (p. 8). Authors Baxter and Jack (2008) elaborate a bit further to include

collective, instrumental, intrinsic, and multiple (p. 547-549). This specific case study

aligns more closely with the instrumental case study type, providing a general

understanding and insight into an issue. A case could be whatever is of interest: an

institution; a program; a responsibility; a collection; or a population (Stake, 1978, p. 7).

Another definition of a case study is "an intensive study of a specific individual or

specific context" (Trochim, 2006, p. 345). Case studies are designed to gather the

perceptions of the participants in the study through multiple data sources (Tellis, 1997,

para. 3). Case studies allow a researcher to explore individuals, groups, organizations,

societies, policies, and phenomena. The desire to explore a certain phenomenon is where

case study research can be the ideal method (Yin, 2013, p. 4). The primary interest in this

case was to provide insight into faculty perceptions of the student learning accountability

movement. The secondary interest was the actual case itself: perceptions by faculty at

UK. Faculty perceptions played a supportive role and facilitated the understanding of the

larger picture, which was policy initiatives in higher education.

    This qualitative single design approach included a qualitative survey, interviews

with faculty, and interviews with key persons who oversee student learning

accountability in their respective colleges (accountability specialists). Further, college

level job descriptions for deans, assistant and associate deans, and faculty, as well as any

administrative or governing regulations pertaining to accountability policies and

procedures, were sought for evaluation. In addition to methods conducted at the case

study site, interviews with representatives from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary

Education (KY-CPE) were conducted. An e-mailed questionnaire on faculty perspectives

served as a qualitative survey. The qualitative survey studies the diversity of a topic

within a given population and is different than a statistical survey, which is primarily

used in quantitative research (Jansen, 2010, para. 18). The survey consisted of

demographic data and open-ended questions allowing faculty to describe their

experiences. Faculty responding to the survey questionnaire were asked if they would be

willing to participate in an interview to discuss the topic further. With permission and full approval from Walden University and the UK Institutional Review Boards, access to all faculty and accountability specialist e-mail addresses was requested. E-mail addresses were stored on a personal computer with a password protected Excel File. Every effort was made to interview all accountability specialists, a total of 16, which represents one per college. Lastly, documents were obtained to look for student learning accountability-defined responsibilities/policies.

Data was collected through completed surveys using Qualtrics survey software and stored in a password protected database. Excel 2010 was used to store e-mail addressed and demographic data. NVivo was utilized to store qualitative data from the open-ended response questions of the survey.

Due to the type of study being conducted, whole population sampling was sought. The survey was e-mailed to 100% of instructional faculty at the UK, both full-time and part-time. The reason for selecting the whole population was to include as many faculty members as possible in the study. While e-mailed surveys produce quicker response time and low costs, the actual response rate is typically low (Sheehan, 2006, para. 4-6). The faculty interviews consisted of those faculty members who indicated an interest in participating after completing the qualitative survey. Accountability specialists were contacted via e-mail requesting availability for an interview. Document gathering was acquired by contacting the Department of Human Resources and reviewing publicly available documents online. Interviews occurred with representatives from the KY-CPE

after the study was concluded to discuss the findings and what a faculty-driven accountability system may look like as a model for institutions in the state of Kentucky.

Definition of Terms

Academic Freedom: "the freedom of scholars to pursue the truth in a manner consistent with professional standards of inquiry" (Downs, 2009, p.2).

Accountability: a way of monitoring both inputs and outputs to gauge the health of HEIs (Brenneman, Callan, Ewell, Finney, Jones & Zis, 2010, p. 34).

Accreditation: the primary means of assuring and improving the quality of higher education institutions and programs in the United States (CHEA, 2014).

Assessment: the ongoing process of articulating student learning outcomes, ensuring students can achieve stated outcomes; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence; and using the results to improve student learning (Suskie, 2004).

Compliance: demonstrating adherence to a certain request (Hodson & Thomas, 2003, p. 377).

Faculty Engagement: the role of faculty in creating conditions conducive to student learning (Chen, Lattuca, & Hamilton, 2008, p. 339).

Learning outcomes: "the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience" (Suskie, 2004, p. 75).

Student learning: "changes in knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes brought about by experience and reflection upon that experience" (Brown, Bull, Pendlebury, 1997, p. 21).

Transparency: disclosure of information (Mol, 2010, p. 132).

Assumptions

It is assumed that the results from the case study approach are not generalizable to the entire population. Another assumption is that faculty members see accountability as a policy compliance issue rather than a commitment issue, and the data collected showed some relation between faculty perceptions and how their perceptions relate to academic freedom and faculty engagement. Further, it is assumed that faculty members are not aware of their institution's system of accountability and how this could affect their perceptions. Lastly, there is an assumption that there will be a connection between the themes from the qualitative survey, which was sent to the whole population of the faculty, and the smaller scope of faculty and other individual interviews. This study will allow for the development of policy within the institution. It was important for this qualitative study to remain free from any bias, especially when conducting the faculty interviews and the interviews with the accountability specialists. Following Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namely's (2005) interviewing skills aided in the process. Those skills are rapport building, emphasizing the participants perspectives, and adapting to different personalities and emotional states (p. 38-39). Further, there was an assumption that the faculty member responding to the survey was an active faculty within UK when the study was conducted. Additionally, it was assumed that the faculty already had previous knowledge about and understood the definition of the accountability movement.

Delimitations

Although this study included the entire population of faculty at UK, the data

collection and analysis were bound by a survey instrument and the number of

respondents that returned the survey as well as the number of faculty who agreed to

participate in the faculty interviews. For this reason, this study is delimited to specific

participants. Additional delimitations include lack of willingness by the accountability

specialists to be interviewed and colleges not wanting to share the documents requested.

In addition, the actual case site is a delimitation, as it is limited to the participants of one

specific university, UK, for convenience.

Limitations

A likely limitation in this study would be generalizability to the faculty in higher

education institutions. Stake (1978), claimed that if case studies are in harmony with a

readers experiences then to that specific person there could be a basis for generalization

(p. 5). Agreeing with Stake, author Flyvbjerg (2006) stated,

> formal generalization is only one of many ways by which people gain and
>
> accumulate knowledge. That knowledge cannot be formally generalized
>
> does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge
>
> accumulation in a given field or in a society. (p. 10)

If the goal of the research is to understand, embrace experience, and increase belief in

what is known, generalizations could occur (Stake, 1978, p. 6).

A second limitation for this study was lack of expertise in conducting qualitative research, however I followed guidelines as described in Choi & Pak (2005) to limit bias in developing questions for the survey instrument and analyzing data.

A third limitation was the low number of faculty responses. The response rates for surveys tend to be low for several reasons: incorrect e-mail addresses, length of time to complete the survey, purpose of the survey, quality and ease of the survey questions, number of reminders sent out, and actual value or benefit to the respondent. Extending the survey range across institutions and states would have been beneficial.

Significance of the Study

National organizations and higher education assessment experts continue to address best practices regarding accountability, assessment of student learning, accreditation, transparency, and faculty engagement in assessment. However there remains very limited published scholarly work on such topics. There is a critical need for further research in this area. The purpose of this qualitative single-design case study was to explore faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement in higher education and create a faculty-driven accountability system at UK. Accountability in higher education is now an everyday reality; exploring faculty perspectives could be advantageous to administrators in HEIs. As Mundhenk (2006) stated, "We can no longer ignore the cries for accountability; we must either seize the initiative or be overwhelmed by a tide of distrust and regulation" (p. 52). This study provided insight for faculty, staff, and administrators regarding the UK system of accountability. Furthermore, this study contributed significantly to higher education literature due to the minimal focus placed on

scholarly studies, specifically faculty perceptions and how their perceptions may intersect with best practice.

Expected Social Change

Astin and Astin (2000) state that social change results only when people take it on themselves to get involved and make a difference (p. iv). It is the goal of this study to make a difference. Understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement at UK can aid in the development of policy in best practice; specifically, a faculty-driven accountability system. Faculty are not often asked their opinion regarding the system and or involved in the development of policies on how to implement transformative accountability directives from higher administration. This study provided a foundation on how to move forward in the accountability movement with faculty perspectives occupying a central role. While this research was being conducted at a single case site, the findings may be useful beyond that site. "Faculty members have developed a mistrust of leadership … an 'us-them' mentality separates the faculty from the administration" (Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 40). The ability to listen to and understand faculty perceptions is critical in developing policy and practice. Only when all voices are heard can transformative institutional change occur (p. 40). It is expected that this research contributes to positive social change by increasing the knowledge of the university community regarding faculty perspectives on the accountability movement and thereby advancing a faculty-driven accountability system as institutional policy, promoting continuous improvement and best practice for institutions in the state of Kentucky.

Summary

Chapter 1 described the background and purpose of the study, problem statement, research questions, conceptual framework for the study, assumptions, limitations, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature surrounding accountability, student learning accountability, academic freedom, and faculty engagement. Chapter 3 details the research method for this intended study. A description of the research questions, selected sample, the survey instrument, data collection and analysis procedures, means for ensuring protection of human subjects, and the role of the researcher will be included. Chapter 4 details the results of the study. Chapter 5 provides the interpretation of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

HEIs across the United States impact a large percentage of communities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National

Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data

System (IPEDS) shows that in the fall of 2011, approximately 18.1 million undergraduate

students in the United States attended a degree-granting institution (NCES, 2013, p. 146).

Many stakeholders hold HEIs accountable for the learning that takes place and expect

students to achieve a certain level of performance when entering the workforce and

economy-driven world (McLester & McIntire, 2006). Policy changes by the U.S.

Department of Education in response to recommendations from the Spellings

Commission mandated assessment of student learning. This study looked at how faculty

view the student learning accountability system as it relates to academic freedom and

faculty engagement within institutions of higher education. As the need for institutional

accountability and transparency at the federal, state, and local levels is ever increasing,

accreditors today are requiring higher education institutions to formatively assess student

learning (Ewell, 2008, p. 11). Literature was sought by searching several databases and

websites. Databases included Academic Search Premier, ERIC, Google Scholar,

ProQuest, and WorldCat, while websites included those authored by the U.S. Department

of Education and the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment. Books were

located through university research libraries and academic bookstores. The process of

searching persisted until saturation in the topic had been achieved.

The initial search in the literature was completed by using key words such as: *accountability theory*, *accountability theory and education*, *student learning assessment*, *student learning and accountability and higher education*, *student learning and academic freedom*, and *student learning and faculty engagement*. A secondary search resulted in key words such as: *academic freedom and higher education*, *accountability system and higher education*, *assessment and higher education*, *faculty engagement and higher education*, and *transparency and higher education*. The remaining chapter will discuss the topics of accountability, policy, and student learning at the federal, state, and institutional levels, as well as faculty engagement, academic freedom, and the qualitative approach.

Accountability

Accountability, access, and affordability are key public policy agenda items in higher education. Accountability is even more of a concern today in HEIs since addressing it could possibly make the issues of access and affordability less critical. Kirst (1990) used Levin's concepts of accountability, adapted them, and provided improved concepts as they relate to K-12. Kirst suggested that accountability policies require a "trial-and-error approach," indicating that some polices work while others may not. The accountability movement in higher education is no different. Whether for K-12 or higher education, it is important that policymakers not rush into accountability approaches without a clear understanding of obstacles and potential unintended consequences (Kirst, 1990, p. 30).

Two intellectual dilemmas between governors and college presidents, as indicated by Heller (2001), were: (a) cost dilemma, and (b) defining and measuring educational outcomes (p. viii-ix). Heller to states that "the upshot of these dilemmas is that, in an atmosphere increasingly devoid of trust, it is difficult to define and implement a meaningful system of accountability" (Heller, 2001, p. ix).

Through accountability efforts, institutions can monitor their effectiveness. The best way to do this is to create a balanced accountability system. According to Daigle and Cuocco (2002), there are six forms of accountability within higher education institutions:

- legal accountability, compliance with regulatory and bureaucratic authority;

- fiscal accountability, compliance with resource allocation and auditing procedures, which could also include performance funding depending on the state;

- programmatic accountability, transparency and public acknowledgement of the extent to which the institution has achieved its stated goals and objectives;

- negotiated accountability, complying with memos of understanding or agreements that may not be written into statute but do exist informally;

- discretionary accountability, complying because it makes sense, which requires judgment, and

- anticipatory accountability, responsibility to forecast future changes within the institution. (Daigle & Cuocco, 2002, pp. 4-7).

The authors further indicate that public accountability in higher education, while challenging, complex, and imperfect; is needed for the education process to be effective.

"Public accountability…suggests that specific individuals, groups, institutions, must answer to public stakeholders (parents, taxpayers, government officials) for achieving specific outcomes with attendant consequences" (Daigle & Cuocco, 2002, p. 4). Acknowledgement of the forms of accountability and integrating them into Levin's system of accountability may help faculty embrace accountability, trust it, and even benefit from it.

Huisman and Currie (2004) mention three categories of accountability: commonly accepted, new phenomena, or contested issue. Specifically within the United States, the process went from internal accountability (improvement) to external accountability (compliance) (Huisman & Currie, 2004, p. 535). The authors continue to discuss soft versus hard monitoring of accountability, which aligns with one of the feedback loops in Levin's system of accountability, the educational manager.

Huisman and Currie suggest the following accountability instruments:

- soft mechanisms for accountability, which involve monitoring and evaluation along with discussion of problems and possible solutions;

- hard mechanisms for accountability, which include rewards and sanctions;

- specification of objectives;

- resources and constraints, the use of budget allocation to achieve outcomes; and

- rewards and sanctions, a token if successful or imposition if unsuccessful.

Levin's system of accountability includes the need for both soft and hard mechanisms in monitoring accountability; however, Huisman and Currie clearly provide

a reasonable explanation as to why there may be a disconnect in faculty viewpoints

related to the accountability movement. Many institutions have focused on the soft

mechanism, the need to monitor and evaluate and then discuss problems and find

solutions to improve (Huisman & Currie, 2004). Institutions have not been focused on

hard mechanisms, such as rewarding and providing sanctions to individuals or their

activities (Huisman and Currie, 2004). According to the authors, movement to the hard

mechanisms means moving away from a professional accountability stance to a political

one. Institutions do not want to wait for the government to enforce more policy but until

accountability is seen as a value and not a hindrance, institutions (faculty and

administrators) may not be onboard. Another weak link in the accountability movement

according to Husiman and Currie, "if institutional leaders do not translate the policies

into institutional mechanisms, then nothing changes" (2004, p. 549). It's also important to

note culture, communication, and leadership - the HEI environment - is dependent on

which mechanism is most effective. Having a system in place such at Levin's system of

accountability could provide a clearer social reality for faculty at UK.

Accountability in higher education through a democratic governance lens is

examined by Dunn (2003). The author suggested, "accountability constitutes a

fundamental concept because its purpose is to achieve public policy that remains

responsive to public preferences" (Dunn, 2003, p. 61). Furthermore, Dunn discussed the

relationship between accountability and responsibility and how these two terms play a

role in higher education policy making. "The author indicates accountability measures are

designed to constrain the actions of higher education administrators and faculty to

produce results that align more closely with the preferences of elected officials" (Dunn, 2003, pp. 71-72). Faculty knowledge of accountability activities could change their perception of responsibility. Dunn indicated learning is difficult to measure and accountability mechanisms put in place could help address this gap; however, if the definition of responsibility has changed for faculty, faculty could be more inclined to teach to the test or perhaps teach to higher retention rates. This may or may not be reflective of actual student learning (Dunn, 2003, p. 72). What Dunn suggested is an active partnership between faculty, administrators, and elected officials; this 'blending' could be what is needed to align professional and political values in higher education policy.

There is difficulty to obtain any clear understanding on the true nature of accountability when so many are redefining it in their own terms (Bovens, 2010, p. 946). The author further suggested that accountability could be seen as a virtue, stating that the term offers fairness and equitable governance opportunities. In addition to the concept virtue, accountability can also be seen as a social mechanism. Therefore, the relationship between actor and forum, for example an institution of higher education and an accreditation agency, in which one - the institution - has a moral and social obligation that can be judged and may face consequences, while the other - accreditation agency – may question and pass judgment (Bovens, 2010, pp. 950-951). Accountability can also be seen as a threat. Romanelli (2013) stated,

mandates that have driven the emphasis towards assessment must be assumed to be rooted in authentic attempts to improve and justify the educational process across the

United States. But perhaps the pendulum has swung too far towards a paradigm that might be encouraging process without purpose (p. 2).

Accountability, if truly genuine, should raise the bar of expectations for learning while triggering intelligent investments and change strategies relating to policy that make it possible to actually achieve such high level expectations (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2014, p. 5).

Accountability and Policy

Policy is central to the student learning accountability movement. The new accountability arena is one where higher education is not exempt from the pressures of the current economy (Zumeta, 2007). The cost of higher education has tripled since the 1980s; as tax shares decrease, parent/student cost commitment has increased. This issue alone causes pressures for accountability (Zumeta, 2007, para. 3). The author argued that higher education and academic research are important for the economy and global competitiveness that the United States is striving to obtain. While policymakers want to see increased retention and graduation rates, business leaders want to see students with the knowledge and skills needed in the workforce (Zumeta, 2007, para. 4-5).

Educational quality, outcomes assessment, and policy change using Levin's framework of policy decisions was explored by Culver (2010). The author focused on four themes provided by Levin (1998), as they relate to Virginia: perceived need for change of the status quo, changes in governance, increased policy with no additional funding, and increased focus on standards (Culver, 2010, pp. 8-9). The author clearly identified policy changes that have been made in the state of Virginia. Policy changes

include: mentality change among state legislatures and governor to include language changes in framing higher education (movement from learned academy to business model); strengthening of the Virginia Coordinating Board; assessment practitioners implementing a regional assessment group; and aligning with Levin's further theme, an increase in focus on standards and accountability – all with limited funds being added to institutional budgets (Culver, 2010, p. 17).

Policy and accountability in higher education, where the role of quality in accountability involves student learning outcomes was discussed by Harvey & Knight (1996, p. 78). The pressures for accountability as it relates to outcomes in higher education translates then into economic issues (Harvey & Knight, 1996; and Zumeta 2001, & 2007). Economic issues, reflect on government budgets, which in turn affect higher education institutions (Harvey & Knight, 1996, p. 79). As higher education institutions adjust to the accountability pressures, there becomes increased tension between accountability and improvement, or compliance versus commitment. Harvey and Knight (1996) suggest this movement has encouraged a compliance culture in higher education institutions rather than a transformative research culture, therefore having a "negative impact on teaching and learning" (p. 95).

Policy debates around accountability deal with issues relating to the balance of trust and regulation; with external stakeholders favoring more regulation and internal stakeholders favoring more trust (Levin, 2012, p. 74). According to the author, "good educational policy mirrors good classroom practice" (Levin, 2012, p. 74). If good educational policy mirrors good classroom practice, then having an accountability system

within one's higher education institution not only addresses policy as mandated by federal, state, and institution levels, but also increases student performance in the classroom; this is of course if the current accountability system in place is effective.

Today higher education institutions board of trustees and accreditation agencies are paying more attention to outcomes and efficiency. While it is critical for institutions to have the freedom and autonomy to create their own efficiencies and processes, they must realize they still need to respond to pressures of public accountability (Zumeta, 2007, para. 16). Furthermore, "If the academic community is to retain much control over its destiny, it must seek a new balance between concepts of academic autonomy and democratic accountability that recognizes the realignment of forces and priorities in higher education's political environment" (Zumeta, 2001, p. 166).

If the accountability movement is having a negative impact on teaching and learning, it would be interesting to understand how faculty perceive their institution's system of accountability and how the movement has impacted faculty engagement and academic freedom in the classroom. This study provided insight into this issue.

Student Learning and Accountability

Historically, students' learning has been measured by degrees awarded. The IPEDS reported 2,642,000 associate and bachelor degrees awarded across the nation for 2010-2011 (NCES, 2013, pp. 152-3). The completion rate of students graduating with a bachelor's degree within six years is 59% and institutions are accountable for the learning that takes place where a degree was awarded (NCES, 2013, p. 182). While the assessment of student learning has been ongoing since the 1980s, what continues to fall behind is the

evidence that shows students are in fact learning. Furthermore, when a degree is awarded, institutions should be able to guarantee that learning has taken place (McKiernan & Birtwistle, 2010, para. 4). What a student knows versus what they can demonstrate with their knowledge represents different levels of development. Federal and state education departments and accreditation agencies are looking for evidence of student learning as determined by the institution. According to Schray (2006) "many proponents of greater accountability in higher education and accreditation argue that the most important evidence of quality is performance, especially the achievement of student learning outcomes" (p. 6). Furthermore, institutions are being asked to share information regarding what students know and can do – their learning – along with being influenced by means of several factors to do so (Jankowski & Provezis, 2011, p. 27).

As the call for accountability increases, the growing demand for openness and transparency in higher education institutions also amplifies. A few reasons leading to this demand could be due to (a) the United States no longer leads in the rate of college completion, (b) four out of ten colleges students do not graduate within in six years, (c) majority of minority students to not graduate, (d) price of higher education continues to rise, while federal grants are beginning cease, and (e) large percentage of science and technology workforce are international students (National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, 2005, p. 6). The report goes on to discuss the Association of American Colleges & Universities, Greater Expectations initiative, "accountability needs to be supported…on the quality of student learning…commitment to both excellence and transparency" (p. 25). According to Ball (2009), transparency can be defined in a few

ways (a) as a public value embraced by society to counter corruption, (b) open decision-making by governments and non-profits, and (c) as a complex tool of good governance in programs, policies, organizations, and privacy (p. 293). For this study, the researcher will focused on (c) transparency as a complex tool of good governance in programs, policies, organizations, and privacy. This definition calls for policymakers to look at transparency in conjunction with accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness (Ball, 2009, p. 293).

The 2006 Spellings Report suggested the criticality of transparency within colleges and universities regarding cost, price, student success outcomes, and the obligation to share this information with their stakeholders (Spellings, 2006, p. 4). Such information facilitates accountability by providing evidence to college and university stakeholders, as well as policymakers in an elementary approach to measure their effectiveness. Faculty perspectives are a key ingredient to ensuring student learning. Faculty must be engaged in the process as well as feel a sense of stability with how they teach.

Student Learning Accountability at the Federal Level

Although the national focus of assessment dates back to the 1980s (Ewell, 2008; Nichols & Nichols, 2005), the National Institute of Education, the Association of American Colleges and the National Governors Association continued to argue about the ongoing need for systematically improving student learning (Ewell, 2008). The federal government highlighted the need to improve student learning assessment with the 1992 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. An Act that "authorizes

most federal postsecondary education programs, including initiatives such as institutional development, teacher professional development and student financial aid such as the Pell Grant program" (DeWitt, 2010, p. 14). Even with the ongoing discussions concerning assessment in higher education nothing caused more havoc than the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) which has brought assessment of student learning to the forefront of education in the early years of the 21st century. The commission report highlights four key areas: access, affordability, quality, and accountability; and six recommendations for colleges and universities, accrediting bodies and governing boards, state and federal policy makers, elementary and secondary schools, the business community, parents, and students themselves (Spellings, 2006). The six recommendations are highlighted below:

1. the U.S. commit to an unprecedented effort to expand higher education access and success by improving student preparation and persistence, addressing nonacademic barriers and providing significant increases in aid to low-income students;

2. the entire student financial aid system be restructured and new incentives put in place to improve the measurement and management of costs and institutional productivity;

3. the creation of a robust culture of accountability and transparency throughout higher education;

4. embrace a culture of continuous innovation and quality improvement by

   developing new pedagogies, curricula, and technologies to improve learning,

   particularly in the area of science and mathematical literacy;

5. the development of a national strategy for lifelong learning that helps all

   citizens understand the importance of preparing for and participating in higher

   education throughout their lives; and

6. increased federal investment in areas critical to our nation's global

   competitiveness and a renewed commitment to attract the best and brightest

   minds from across the nation and around the world to lead the next wave of

   American innovation.

   (Spellings, 2006, pp. 16-26)

The report suggests that graduating students have not achieved the competencies of

reading, writing, and thinking skills that stakeholders expect as they transition from

student to a working citizen (Spellings, 2006, p. x). Moreover, the commission report

clearly articulates the need for higher education reform and that bringing change to

higher education is past due. According to Wagner (2006), the United States in the late

1980s, was a leading country for participation, completion, and learning within the higher

education system. By 2003, the United States had dropped to only an average level.

Wagner (2006) pointed out the below:

Measures of learning quality show U.S. performance below the leading

countries….gains within and across states on assessments within the

United States might be important milestones, but they do not imply

leading positions internationally. Further, leading countries have

demonstrated relatively high levels of achievement and proficiency even

as participation and completion rates have increased. (Wagner, 2006, p.

23)

This average performance is what is driving the need for increased accountability (Ewell,

2009). Due to the deficit of information concerning data and accountability, the higher

education system is unable to share their contributions; such a deficit renders the ability

for educated decisions to be made by policymakers nor the public (Spellings, 2006, p. 4).

Data, also known as evidence, are what accreditors are now mandating.

Student Learning Accountability at the State Level

As indicated previously assessment dates back to the mid 1980's. According to

Zis, Boeke, and Ewell (2010), this time period led states to begin assessing student

learning outcomes for accountability purposes. The honeymoon of assessing student

learning outcomes however, did not last long. By the 1990's states interest began to

decline due to budget shortfalls beginning to take place. Institutions relied on indirect

data (evidence) rather than direct data for student learning accountability measures. By

the mid 2000's, states were concerned with assessment of student learning outcomes

again, yet lacked new state policies (p. 1). While initiatives on accountability efforts

relating to student learning at the federal level have trickled down to states, there are

some states heavily involved in the accountability movement while others are still in the

early stages.

There are differences in how accountability is perceived and defined as well as differences in the components of accountability (Leveille, 2006). The author published a report on issues in public higher education accountability systems to assist decision makers and suggests that a state accountability system should be clearly defined. Leveille (2006) provides five examples; Illinois, Kentucky, New Mexico, Texas, and Virginia, as states with clearly defined accountability systems in place. While each state differs on their process and procedures for implementing a system of accountability, the focus is on accountability. Within these states, "accountability is seen, in its myriad approaches, as a powerful tool for improvement in closing the gap and provides a vehicle for progress toward state priorities and goals" (Leveille, 2006, p. 68). The author used his research to provide recommendations to all states: a) ensure balance between the actual policy and means to achieve that policy, b) policy leaders should communicate and collaborate with stakeholders – especially in those states with no public agenda or strategy, and c) states should recognize the expectations to implementing a system of accountability in addition to roles and responsibilities (Leveille, 2006, pp. 69-70).

The state accountability systems, suggested by Wellman (2001), are unclear and those systems that are being developed present a gap between the actual promises described through their goals and actual performance (p. 48). The author indicated the reason for unclear accountability systems is due to a design that is inherently complex. Student learning and ways to measure at the state level is a continuing hot topic due to the public pressure about performance in teaching and learning (p. 52).

A study conducted by National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), inventoried all fifty states asking various policy questions on accountability and student learning. Results can be located in Table 1. The purpose of providing the information is to show, even with assessment going back to the 1980's, that states are in fact very slow at creating change. There seems to be disengagement occurring between federal and state governments in student learning accountability, with only 21 states having drafted an assessment statute or policy related to student learning. When states do decide to create change, this change not only affects the HEIs but faculty as well.

Table 1

Results From the NCHEMS Study*

Area	States	Comment
Requirement of Cognitive Testing: a standardized test established to aid in National benchmarking	Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, West Virginia	Other states have institutions that may utilize standardized tests, they are not required by the state
Common Test: a test used to govern placement decisions	Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia	Twelve states mandate the use of common cut scores to aid in placement decisions
Student Survey: a survey for students required by the state	Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee	Examples are the National Survey for Student Engagement and the Community College Survey for Student Engagement
Assessment statute or policy: a written statute or policy specifically related to assessment of student learning outcomes	Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia	While a statute or policy is driven by the state, institutions within the state are given the choice on how to assess student learning outcomes, yet are required to submit annual reporting

*Data pulled from Zis, Boeke, & Ewell (2010).

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education publishes a Measuring Up Report Card every two years. The report provides national and state data on how well colleges and universities are doing. States are given report cards with grades assigned to each of the following areas: preparation, participation, affordability,

completion, benefits, and learning. According to the first Measuring Up report published in 2000, states had more responsibility placed upon them because unlike in the past, there was an ever-growing need in our society for individuals to pursue higher education (p. 12). States must be accountable for higher education institutions within their purview. Table 2 below provides the number and percent of states receiving an A or B grade for each of the criteria for given years (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education , Measuring Up, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008).

Table 2

Percent of A/B's by Criteria by Year

	2000		2002		2004		2006		2008		2000 / 2008
Criteria	*A/B*	*Percent*	*A/B*	*Percent*	*A/B*	*Percent*	*A/B*	*Percent*	*A/B*	*Percent*	*% Difference*
Preparation	21	42%	25	50%	24	48%	26	52%	24	48%	+4%
Participation	21	42%	24	48%	26	52%	29	58%	10	20%	-22%
Affordability	16	32%	5	10%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	-32%
Completion	28	56%	30	60%	33	66%	40	80%	31	62%	+6%
Benefits	26	52%	20	40%	31	62%	34	68%	20	40%	-12%
Learning*	0	0%	0	0%	+5	10%	+9	18%	0	0%	0%

*Learning remains to be inconclusive due to lack of data provided by the states regarding actual student performance in education.

Over the past eight years, the national outlook on higher education has not improved much, if at all the criteria States are being graded on seems to remain steady or declining. The table shows the greatest areas of concern are participation – access to education and training beyond high school; affordability – cost of attending college; benefits – contributions of the educated to the economic and civic well-being of their state; and learning – how well do students perform their knowledge and skills.

It remains clear that 'learning', specifically performance of student learning is difficult for states to grasp. Although state policy action regarding assessment of student learning outcomes is incomplete, institutions are beginning to take advantage of creating their own policies due to accrediting requirements. National attention regarding assessment and accountability remain active issues to state leaders.

Student Learning Accountability at the Institution Level

Student learning accountability at the institution level is driven by accreditation. In 2008, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) published, *New Leadership for Student Learning and Accountability: A Statement of Principles, Commitment to Action.* This statement highlighted six principles meaningful to educational accountability and eight actions addressing for transparency and accountability through performance to improve student learning in higher education institutions (AAC&U, CHEA, 2008, pp. 2-5). A few important actions that aid in this dissertation are: *Action 3* – higher education institutions to "develop, articulate and make public (transparency) their mission and educational goals, and encourage student potential (performance) through learning" (p. 4); *Action 5* – assess and report attainment of those goals (p. 5); and *Action 7* – recognizes high standards and direct methods of student performance by faculty in the curriculum (p. 5). Three years after the previous report was published, CHEA mentioned the following regarding accreditation and accountability; accreditors, institutions and programs have done a great deal, however more is needed. CHEA also questions what

counts as successful accountability in higher education (CHEA, 2011, p. 19). From 2011 – present, CHEA continues to host discussions for 'taking action' on the principles identified in their 2008 report. In July 2013, a new document entitled, *Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement,* was created and agreed upon by Six Higher Education Associations and 7 Regional Accrediting Commissions. The document maintained that based upon the goals of an institution devoted to higher education that such an institution only be awarded accreditation providing they can demonstrate student achievement as it relates to their mission (p. 2, para. 1). The principles include a) evidence of the student learning experience, b) evaluation of student academic performance, and c) post-graduation outcomes. Eaton (2011) further stated, "to be responsive to national concerns while preserving the such vital features of U.S. accreditation as peer review and commitment to academic freedom, features that are part of the success of the higher education enterprise" (p. 18).

A study conducted by Welsh and Metcalf (2003) examined faculty perspectives on accreditation-driven institutional effectiveness activities within higher education institutions. Institutional effectiveness activities are those activities that include student learning outcomes, strategic planning, and program review for all administrative and academic units within a higher education institution. The authors surveyed faculty members within institutions going through the accreditation self-study initial or reaffirmation process, specifically those faculty who sat on the self-study committee. Seven hundred and eight faculty members were surveyed at 168 institutions with a response rate of 54.8%. The authors found that faculty support related to accreditation-

driven institutional effectiveness activities is affected by four variables: a) perceived definition of quality, b) internal versus external motivation, c) depth of implementation, and d) reported level of involvement. The findings from this study led the researchers to suggest three best practices in cultivating faculty support in accreditation-driven activities: a) focus should be on institutional improvement not simply adhering to mandates by accrediting bodies b) importance of including faculty in the design, development, and implementation of activities, and c) promote an outcomes-oriented perspective on quality (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003, p. 40-41). Furthermore, Welsh and Metcalf (2003) observe that "attention to such things as clearly defining roles of participants, providing resources to learn and implement…activities and rewards and recognition are critical in generating faculty support" (p. 41).

Faculty Engagement and Student Learning

Higher education is a time for students to learn, become independent thinkers and creative innovators. While it's possible for students to be self-learners, the majority of students need assistance and guidance; they need to be taught and challenged. Hence, faculty engagement in student learning is paramount. According to Chen, Lattuca, and Hamilton (2008) faculty should be well concerned in creating an environment that promotes a student's engagement in learning (p. 339). Not only are faculty responsible for creating this environment they are now being held accountable and asked to provide evidence that students are in fact learning. With any organizational change (and governmental mandates) comes anxiety, resistance, and even deterrence. According to Andrade (2011), as cited in Kuh and Ikenberry (2009), the need for faculty engagement

and cooperation in assessment was recently at the top of the list for provosts in a survey of US HEIs (p. 217). Faculty members are not seen as being engaged or cooperating in the student learning accountability movement. This becomes a challenge for all stakeholders – students, parents, employers, administrators, and the HEIs. The challenge then becomes creating an environment where the public's expectations coincide with the performance of HEIs (Welsh and Metcalf, 2003, p. 33), the public being the above stakeholders. Andrade (2011) continued to discuss the need for faculty buy-in; strategies are needed to aid in managing and encouraging faculty involvement (p. 218). The author cites Wheatley (2005) in her article indicating creativity becomes engaged when one is interested in something. Are faculty interested in student learning? Of course they are. Are they interested in the accountability movement that is driving the need for more assessment to be completed? Understanding and discussing faculty perspectives on the issue will help answer this question.

According to the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, in a 2009 survey, Kuh and Ikenberry found that "gaining faculty involvement and support remains a major challenge. Campuses would also like more assessment expertise, resources, and tools" (p. 3). Furthermore, institutions and faculty would be more likely to survive the accountability movement if transparency were promoted and the value of assessing student learning was apparent (p. 4). Key findings from the 2009 survey related to faculty engagement include: a) in order to effectively assess student learning outcomes, 66% of schools indicated the need for more faculty engagement, and b) about four-fifths of provosts at doctoral research universities reported greater faculty engagement as their

number one challenge (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009, p. 24). The authors conclude that assessment of student learning outcomes in higher education remains a work in progress… it is not surprising that gaining faculty cooperation and engagement is at the top of provosts' wish list (p. 26). Conceivably, the lack of faculty engagement in student learning assessment stemming from the accountability movement may be due to faculty feelings of compliance rather than commitment. Authors Haviland, Turley, and Shin (2011), (as cited in Ewell, 2002; Wehlburg, 2008; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003; Wergin, 2005), state the "accountability agenda…represents a new work in an already busy day as well as belief that it poses a threat to faculty autonomy, curricular control, and academic freedom" (p. 71).

Wergin (2005) brings an interesting take to faculty engagement. The author indicated faculty are not driven by rewards and incentives; rather faculty are driven by autonomy (academic freedom), community (community of scholars), recognition (feeling of being valued), and efficacy (tangible impact) (pp. 50-51). Wergin (2005) suggested strategies for higher education institutions that can promote all four of the above motives: a) align institutional mission, roles, and rewards, b) engage faculty meaningfully, c) identify and uncover disorienting dilemmas, and d) help faculty develop niches, e) encourage faculty experimentation, assessment, and reflection (pp. 52-53).

Academic Freedom and Student Learning

While gaining faculty engagement in student learning accountability activities remains challenging, some argue the accountability movement impedes academic freedom. Academic freedom, defined by Downs (2009), is the "freedom of scholars to

pursue the truth in a manner consistent with professional standards of inquiry" (p.2).

Giving faculty the freedom to develop and construct curriculum which produces high

quality performing graduate students is essential in higher education; faculty are scholars,

who have given years to their discipline. What faculty must realize is that, even though

change is difficult, the accountability movement is just as critical. Andrade (2011) states

that accountability is an expectation for HEIs (p. 231), and while change is difficult, the

challenge then becomes incorporating awareness of assessment into a curriculum when

much of the freedoms and governance of the classroom are solely delegated to faculty (p.

217). Fear of budget cuts, loss of positions, and program discontinuation, many argue that

the assessment process restricts academic freedom (p. 218). Champagne (2011), Elmore

(2010), Gappa & Austin (2010), and Powell (2011) obviously believe academic freedom

is being debased due to the accountability movement. Champagne (2011) views

assessment of student learning as a labor issue, which negates the ability of faculty to

conduct a setting within their own framework of academic freedom and intellectual

inquiry (p. 12). Champagne feels so strongly about his beliefs to state the movement is an

"attack on academic freedom" (p.2). The attack affects both teachers and students,

because faculty now have to redesign curriculum in light of the demands of the job

market (p. 3).

     Scholar Elmore (2010), whom views the movement as an attack on academic

freedom, suggests higher education institutions should stay true to their mission which

was usually focused on democracy and giving faculty academic freedom in the classroom

rather than implementing standardized curriculum. The discussion on the 'attack of

academic freedom' is a reminder on the work of Romanelii (2012) where he stated assessment and accountability as a process without purpose. Powell (2011) would agree with Romanelli, the author stated "it demands enormous efforts for very little payoff, it renounces wisdom, it requires yielding to misunderstandings, and it displaces and distracts us from more urgent tasks, like the teaching and learning it would allegedly help" (p. 21).

Contrary to this belief, there is literature (Porter 2012 and Graff 2008), that supports student learning assessment and does not see this movement impeding academic freedom. Porter (2012) believes that academic freedom should not give immunity to faculty, for assessment along with academic freedom should provide faculty with information to improve in the quality of educational programs (2008, p. 24).

Are we doing student learning assessment to improve or are we doing assessment to be accountable to those who are mandating HEIs to assess? The accountability movement does instill fears in those that teach our students. It's apparent that academic freedom is a core value in higher education institutions and continues to be respected amongst professoriates (Gappa & Austin, 2010, p. 7). Porter (2012) stated "It is time to get over our fears, and get on with our work" (p. 26).

Constructivism as the Qualitative Approach

While the conceptual framework rests in Levin's system of accountability, the paradigm that will shape the framework is constructivist (also known as interpretivst). A paradigm "is a set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba 1990, as cited in Creswell 2007, and Guba & Lincoln 1994). Constructivism's relativism can be multifaceted with

conflicting realities amongst colleagues but also has the ability to reform as said colleagues acquire further knowledge and become more educated on the topic (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). It is possible that through social reality reform, the four concepts of accountability Levin discusses (performance reporting, technical process, political process, and institutional process) could be brought together into one thought system. The constructivist researcher will study participant viewpoints on a specific subject (Creswell, 2003, p.8). The use of quantitative data by a constructivist researcher is used in regards to support and strengthen the primary implemented and relied upon qualitative methods (Mckenzie & Knipe, 2006, para 7). This was the goal of this study, to focus heavily on qualitative data while incorporating demographic data.

Constructivism is a process in which we gain understanding and knowledge (Savery & Duffy, 1996, p. 135). This process incorporates a) understanding is in our interactions with the environment, b) cognitive conflict or puzzlement is the stimulus for learning and determines the organization and nature of what is learned, and c) knowledge evolves between social negotiation and through the evaluation of the viability of individual understandings (p. 136). Allowing the researcher to reach as many faculty as possible is ideal. The environment in which faculty work is their reality; its critical institutions take action on the views of faculty, allow faculty to learn from each other, and share their knowledge and experiences. "The learners have ownership of the problem. The facilitation is not knowledge driven; rather, it is focused on metacognitive processes" (Savery & Duffy, 1996, p. 146).

While extensive literature exists on student learning, faculty engagement, and academic freedom – as individual topics, a gap remains in the literature when examining the impact student learning accountability has had on faculty perspectives of student learning in conjunction with academic freedom and faculty engagement. This study was needed to understand faculty perspectives and how faculty, administrators and policymakers address such perspectives to create polices and promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Assessment of student learning has evolved as a result of external needs and factors. Federal and state policy, along with accreditation efforts focusing on evidence and transparency, has begun to shape the way faculty teach and students learn within the higher education system of accountability. While student learning accountability has made a wide-sweeping application within higher education in general, determining the faculty perspective of the student learning accountability movement as it relates to faculty engagement and academic freedom is critical in promoting policies and continuous improvement.

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature surrounding accountability, student learning accountability, academic freedom, and faculty engagement. Chapter 3 details the research method for this intended study. A description of the research questions, selected sample, the survey instrument, data collection and analysis procedures, means for ensuring protection of human subjects, and the role of the researcher will be included. Chapter 4

details the results of the study. Chapter 5 provides the interpretation of the findings and

recommendations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore faculty perspectives on student learning accountability at UK. The data collected from faculty was examined for commonalities or disconnects amongst their colleagues in order to gauge how academic freedom and faculty engagement may be impacted and to further understand how faculty view their institution's system of accountability. Faculty are a constant presence in higher education. Therefore, it is critical that faculty embrace the new directives from the accountability movement. Understanding faculty perceptions may lead to the creation of policies that promote continuous improvement of student learning in higher education institutions.

The following chapter will explain the research design, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness, and provide a closing summary with a brief introduction to Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was intended to better understand faculty perceptions on the student learning accountibility movement in higher education and how awareness of these perceptions can create a faculty-driven accountability system that could be used as a model for all institutions within the state of Kentucky. The central research question for this study was: How can understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement help to promote policy within the institution such as a faculty-driven accountability system? Specific sub-questions for this study included:

RQ1. How has the student learning accountability movement impacted faculty perceptions?

RQ2: How do faculty perceive their insitution's student learning assessment requirements?

RQ3: How do faculty perceive their institutional accountability system?

RQ4: Do faculty perceive academic freedom and faculty engagement as critical components in an accountability system?

RQ5: How could a faculty-driven accountability system, described by the only land-grant research university in the state, be adopted as best practice and impact state policy?

The accountability movement includes two types of phenomena, institutional accountability and faculty accountability. The concepts of institutional and faculty accountability include: transparency, being open to stakeholders; responsiveness, responding to stakeholders; and compliance, complying with stakeholders' requests (Ewell & Jones, 2006). As illustrated in Figure 2, for the current higher education system of accountability, the burden of academic freedom and faculty engagement tends to fall on faculty when considering the concepts of faculty accountability. While institutions are accountable to federal, state, and local entities, as well as to students and parents; faculty are employed by the institution and must uphold any policies and procedures related to accountability.

Figure 2. Current model of higher education system of accountability

One aspect of a case study is that the researcher explores in depth one or more

individuals (Creswell, 2003, p.15). A case study is particularly helpful when trying to

understand an issue or a problem (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). I intended to investigate faculty

perspectives on the student learning accountability movement to determine if it was

viewed as a burden, a threat of stability regarding engagement, or a positive process.

Incorporating Levin's system of accountability for education and applying it to this

single-design case study at UK gave insight to the institution's accountability system

currently in place. Figure 3 below was a proposed model of a higher education system of

accountability. Studying faculty perspectives on the accountability movement allowed the

gathering of information regarding whether the proposed system could work at UK.
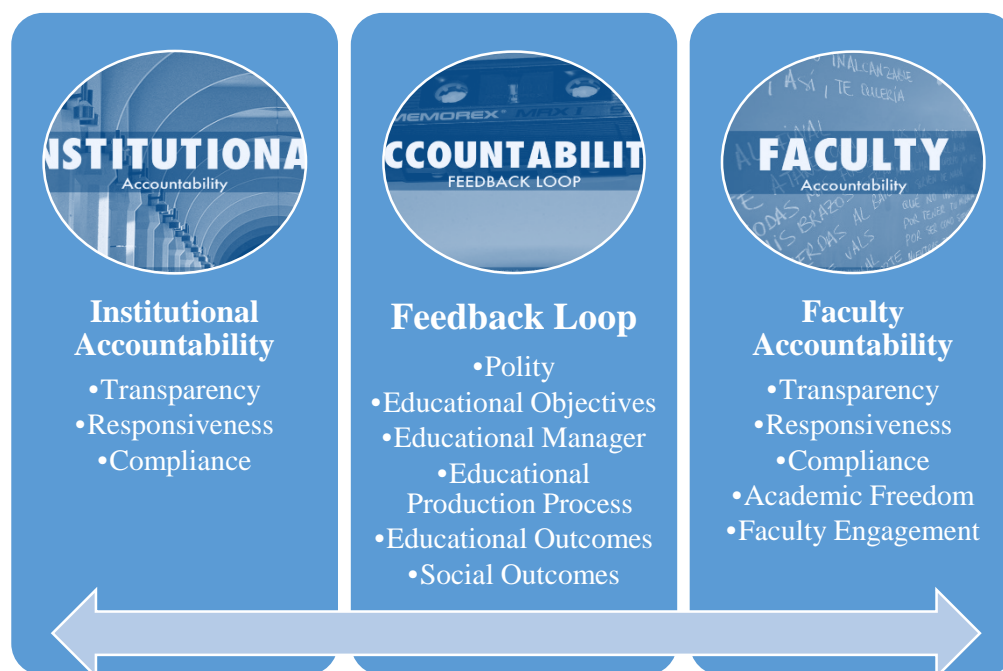
Figure 3: Proposed model of higher education system of accountability

Four paradigms of qualitative research are discussed by Guba and Lincoln (1994):

positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. This study used the

paradigm of constructivism, which allowed faculty to fully describe their perceptions of

the student learning accountability movement. Guba and Lincoln applied the four

different paradigms to ten issues; four of those issues were deemed important for this

study: inquiry aim, nature of knowledge, knowledge of accumulation, and goodness of

quality criteria. Below is Table 3 describing why constructivism fits this study as the

paradigm rather than the other three paradigms.

Table 3

Paradigms and Issues to Consider*

Paradigms	Inquiry aim	Nature of knowledge	Knowledge of accumulation	Goodness of quality criteria
Constructivsim	*Understand and reconstruct*	*Multiple knowledge can co-exist, continuous revision is possible*	*Accumulates only in relative sense and through informed sophisticated constructions*	*Trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability*
Positivism	Predict and control	Accepted as facts	Accumulates through accretion	Benchmark of rigor
Postpositivism		Regarded as probable facts		
Critical theory	Critique and transform	Historical/structural insights that transform as time passes	Not absolute, grows and changes	Historical situations of inquiry

*Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1994, pp. 112-114)

The Role of the Researcher

As mentioned earlier, this study used the constructivism approach to qualitative research; therefore the intention was to explore and try to understand faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement. As with any study, there is an expectation to share with the readers the role of the researcher. I am the director of assessment at the UK, as well as an adjunct faculty member at a different institution. I have been in the field of student learning assessment for over seven years. I am currently on the board of a national association that focuses on assessment in higher education. My position is not one of authority; it is to support the university in its student learning efforts. I work primarily with the accountability specialists within each college at the University and only with faculty by request. The participants involved in this research study are not my subordinates, nor do I have any decision-making authority. Taking this

into consideration, I accept the influence of my values and I am open to the fact faculty

may have their own reality (Greenback, 2003). With this said, it was important for me to

remain objective during the data collection and analysis process. Remaining impartial

allowed faculty and accountability specialists to provide their perspective on the

accountability movement, as they see it and to provide narrative analysis for

administrators to take into account when developing policy in this area. I served as an

observer to the data only by reviewing the data in search for patterns and emerging

concepts that could be formalized into policy. Since faculty participants had to volunteer

to participate in the study, I may or may not have known the participants. I do have

experience working with some faculty in an academic setting through assessment

consultations, workshops, or other university projects; therefore, I and the faculty

member may have had previous collegial relationships. As the co-chair of the University

Assessment Council at UK I do work very closely with the accountability specialists,

therefore I knew all sixteen of them professionally. I also contacted the Human Resources

office via e-mail requesting certain documents for data collection. Although employed

with the University for five years, I did not know anyone personally in the Human

Resources office. The document request was sent to the generic contact human resources

e-mail. Subsequently, ethical issues could arise, as the pool of participants came from

my own work environment. I addressed this issue by creating a cover letter to accompany

the request for participants clearly outlining the purpose of the study, roles of researcher

and the participants. It was important for the researcher to minimize bias as much as

possible, specifically in designing the questions and analyzing the results. Mack et al.

(2005) offered insight on how to minimize bias when designing questions. The process developed by McNabb (2007) was utilized to help reduce bias in the data collections and analysis process (pp. 359-370).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative single-design case study methodology. Qualitative researchers explore data that represents personal experiences in specific situations (Stake, 2010, p. 88). Data collected in this study intended to include a qualitative survey, focus group interviews, individual interviews, and document gathering; however a change in methodology was needed due to availability of faculty members to participate in a focus group setting. For this reason, the focus groups were replaced with faculty interviews. Employing multiple methods of data collection yielded for better and more consistent results thus allowing the researcher to engage in a more meaningful in-depth analysis of the issue.

Qualitative Survey

While uncommon to use a survey in qualitative research, Jansen (2010) introduced the label *qualitative survey* as a research design. Further "qualitative survey analyses the diversity of member characteristics within a population" (Jansen, 2010, para. 1). This type of survey is simple and allows the study of diversity in a certain population, in this case, faculty. Guba and Lincoln (1998), as cited in Jansen (2010), stated the qualitative survey is useful in multiple types of paradigms including constructivist. Stake (2010) further elaborated in the usefulness of a survey, allowing the qualitative researcher to change the survey items to interpretive items where each item is considered separate

and has a single focus (2010, p. 99). In this study, the researcher learned how faculty perceived the accountability movement by interpreting each answer to each of the questions separately. The approach allowed faculty to be open regarding their perspectives on the impact of the accountability movement as it related to student learning in higher education. Research data was collected on faculty demographics and responses to open-ended questions. The instrument and specific questions were developed by the researcher that relate to each of the research questions, further using the guidelines provided by Mack et al. (2005), which minimized bias, specifically ensuring the researcher asked unbiased questions, rather than leading questions. The research population for the qualitative survey approach consisted of a whole population of instructional faculty – approximately 1, 231 faculty at UK. According to Babbie (1998) an adequate response rate is 50% (p. 262). With that said, he further stated that responses rates widely vary and a demonstrated lack of response bias is far more important than a high response rate. By surveying the entire faculty population, the estimated response rate should be 615.5 responses to provide adequate analysis and reporting. If however, the researcher chose to sample faculty, rather than the survey the whole population, the rule of thumb for a population of 1,231 faculty would be 5% for a total of 61.55 faculty (Yount, 2006, p. 4). Due to the fact that response rates are a potential source of bias (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003, p. 264), this researcher would have been pleased if 62 faculty responded which is slightly greater than the appropriate sample size for UK faculty.

Once the IRB application had been approved, the researcher created a flat file of all full-time and part-time instructional faculty e-mail addresses from its client information system at the University. Faculty were contacted via e-mail and provided a link to the questionnaire that was created by using Qualtrics survey software. Notifications and reminders about the survey is said to increase response rates when sent out multiple times (Yammarino, Skinner, & Childers, 1991, p. 629). The data collection period was open for four weeks (31 days) at which time the survey closed. Reminder e-mails requesting the faculty to complete the survey was sent on the 7th day, 14th day, 21st day, 28th day, and closed on day 31. In a study conducted by Christensen, Ekholm, Kristensen, Larsen, Vinding, Glumer, and Juel (2014) their response rate increased from 36.7% to 59.5% after implementing multiple reminders. The researcher was hopeful that by leaving the survey window open for 31 days and sending multiple reminders, this study could reach the 50% response rate for adequacy. Data received was exported into Excel 2010 to analyze the demographic data. Descriptive techniques were used for all demographic data. Collecting demographic data on the participants allows for comparison and was (2008) another way to ensure transferability (Krefting, 1991, p. 220). NVivo was used to assist in managing the open-ended questions. NVivo had the ability to code, however the analyses was completed by the researcher. Coding, as defined by Corbin and Strauss, is the process of taking your raw data and turning the data into something more conceptual (p. 66). Analysis was achieved by comparing concepts, asking questions about the data, and delving deep into the data to make meaning (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 66). The coding strategy for this study utilized inductive reasoning,

which is appropriate for open-ended questions and studies that are more exploratory in nature (Trochim, 2006)

The survey allowed respondents to withdrawal from the survey at any time. There was a link to close out the survey on each screen. Due to the nature of the qualitative method chosen there was not a follow-up plan due to low response rates. Faculty responding to the survey questionnaire were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group with the researcher and other faculty to discuss the topic further. The focus groups were planned to be held within two months after the close of the survey. Even though the focus group method was changed to interviews, those faculty members indicating their interest were the ones actually contacted and asked to participate in the interviews.

Interviews

The faculty participating in the interviews participated voluntarily and identified themselves as being interested in participating in the original methodology of focus groups by indicating so on the survey. The emphasis is truly on a voluntary nature (Mack et al., 2005, p. 6); therefore, no faculty were asked to participate in an interview unless that completed the qualitative survey and indicated they were interested in participating in the focus group. Small (n.d.), points out that qualitative work should come from understanding the how and why, and not focus on how many (p. 8). It is understanding the how and why faculty perceive things the way they do that will guided this study; therefore the number of faculty volunteers was not of high concern. Each interview session was recorded Dragon was used for transcription. All faculty participating in the

interviews were made aware of the recordings and asked to sign a consent to record statement. Further, the interviews followed the suggestions from Mack et al. (2005) which encouraged researchers to create a note-taker form. The interviews, consisted of both full-time and/or part-time faculty, actively employed at UK throughout the entire duration of the study and were available on the dates/times the researcher and faculty member set. Accountability specialists at UK were contacted, one per college for a total of sixteen, to participate in an individual qualitative interview. The interviews took place within one month after the qualitative survey had been completed. Stake (2010) stated three main purposes for conducting interviews: a) to obtain unique information of interpretation held by the interviewee, b) to collect information from many interviewees for numerical aggregation purposes, and c) finding that one thing that the researcher was unable to observe themselves through other methods (p. 95). The main focus of this study was to understand faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability movement. Though interviewing the accountability specialists in each college at UK supported the data for this study, the researcher was able to better understand a faculty's perceptions. Qualitative interviews, according to Yin (2010), are conversational where, a) the researcher should speak in modest amounts allowing the interviewee to fully speak their mind, b) the researcher should be nondirective allowing the conversation to flow naturally and not structured, and c) the researcher should stay neutral and maintain rapport with the interviewee (pp. 136-138). As with the faculty interviews, the accountability specialist interviews were recorded and uploaded into NVivo for coding and transcription. Further, the individual interviews followed the interview note-taker

guide, provided by Mack et al. (2005), and was completed by the researcher. Each

accountability specialist was asked to sign a consent to record statement. Interviews also

occured with representatives from the KY-CPE after the study had concluded to discuss

the findings and how a faculty-driven accountability system developed at UK could be

adopted as best practice and impact state policy.

Document Gathering

Documents were requested from the Department of Human Resources –on college

level job descriptions for deans, assistant/associate deans, and faculty. Documents

pertaining to administrative or governing regulations relating to accountability were

acquired via online as these were public documents. "Collecting refers to the compiling

or accumulating of objects…related to your study topic" (Yin, 2010, p. 147). Yin (2010)

recommended determining the amount of time to invest in collecting and examining the

documents collected. The usefulness of the documents in this particular study were

dependent on the ease of accessing the documents and quality. I do not consider

document gathering to be central to this study, rather extra material to help expand on the

issue being explored, faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability

movement. Data analysis for document gathering was a manual process and hand coded

for themes and aggregated.

<div align="center">Issues of Trustworthiness</div>

There are four criteria to consider when conducting a qualitative study that

includes trustworthiness. Krefting (1991), as cited in Guba (1981), described four

strategies that can establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability (p. 217). There are many possible criteria that could be utilized for each strategy. To achieve trustworthiness, this study focused on triangulation, dense description, and code-recode procedures. The strategy credibility and confirmability was sought by using the triangulation criterion; the researcher utilized multiple methods – a qualitative survey for faculty, interviews with faculty, individual interviews with accountability specialists, and document gathering. Krefting (1991) stated, "that triangulation maximizes the range of data that might contribute to complete understanding of the concept" (p. 219). Further, this study used dense description to achieve transferability. A means to ensure transferability is to describe in depth the participants in the study through demographic data. The last strategy a researcher should establish is dependability. Dependability was achieved through the code and re-code criteria. The researcher used a process, described by Krefting (1991), that entails coding the data initially and then waiting two weeks and re-code (p. 221). The ability for the researcher to address issues of trustworthiness is important in qualitative approaches. The criteria above addressed these issues in hopes of establishing trustworthiness within this particular study.

The population included men and women and did not discriminate. All qualitative survey participants were given an information sheet, which included a study overview and frequently asked questions, in addition to the survey. By completing the survey, participants consented to take part in the study. Participants had the choice to remove themselves from the study at any time. Participating in the interviews required a consent to record statement be signed. As with the survey, participants were allowed to withdraw

from the study at any time. There were no risk associated with participating in this study. Subjects' participation in this study was entirely voluntary and enrolled subjects could have chosen not to answer survey or interview questions without risk or penalty. All data obtained during the study was kept in the strictest confidence and was maintained in a secure database.

Summary

Chapter 3 detailed the research method for this intended study. A description of the research questions, selected sample, the survey instrument, data collection and analysis procedures, means for ensuring protection of human subjects, and the role of the researcher was included. Chapter 4 details the results of the study. Chapter 5 provides the interpretation of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability movement. Engaging in a single-design case study, described by Stake (2010), as a way to explore experiences in a specific situation, this study was conducted at one specific university. I used multiple qualitative methods to gauge a broader understanding of faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability movement. The results from this study helped me as I endeavored to build a faculty-driven accountability system at UK that could could also be used as a model for other insitiutions throughout the state. The central research question for this study was: How can understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement help to promote policy within the institution such as a faculty-driven accountability system? Specific sub-questions for this study include:

RQ1. How has the student learning accountability movement impacted faculty perceptions?

RQ2: How do faculty perceive their insitutions student learning assessment requirements?

RQ3: How do faculty perceive their institutional accountability syste

RQ4: Do faculty perceive academic freedom and faculty engagement as critical components in an accountability system?

RQ5: How could a faculty-driven accountability system, described by the only land-grant research university in the state, be adopted as best practice and impact state policy?

In terms of organization, the chapter presents how the data was collected and recorded, followed by the demographics of those responding to the qualitative survey, as well as the prcoess used to develop themes. Finally, the findings from each method will be integrated and presented for each research question. Research Questions maybe be shortened throughout Chapter 4 by using the following:

- RQ1: Impact

- RQ2: Assessment requirements

- RQ3: Accountability system

- RQ4: Academic freedom and faculty engagement

- RQ5: Model for best practice

Data Collection Process

Institutional Review Board approval was sought and obtained from both Walden University (approval number 03-13-15-0018724) and UK (15-0135-P4S). It is important to note that the UK is the IRB of record. The study consisted of multiple methods: (a) faculty qualitative survey, (b) faculty electronic or phone interviews, (c) accountability specialists' electronic or in-person interviews, (d) document gathering, and (e) in-person interview with the staff of KY-CPE.

Qualitative Survey

The qualitative survey was sent via qualtrics, an online survey software tool, to the entire population of instructional faculty (1,231), both full-time and part-time, at UK. According to the university website, "Instructional Faculty is defined as those members of the instructional-research staff whose major regular assignment is instruction, including those with released time for research" ("Instructional Faculty and Class Size," 2015). Originally, I had intended to include all faculty, instructional and clinical. After speaking with the Office of Institutional Research, however, it was decided to remove all clincial faculty from the study. Clinical faculty primarily focus on clinicals and rotations in the field, not instruction in the classroom. Therefore many of the questions in this study would have been unfamiliar to them.

The first e-mail to instructional faculty was sent on April 14, 2015 with reminder e-mails being sent on day 7, 14, 21, and 28. The survey closed on Day 30. Each e-mail included the cover letter, consent form, and the survey itself. Table 4 provides the return responses rate for each reminder e-mail. The standard in sampling a population is 5% (Yount, 2006, p. 4). In this study, 5% of 1,231 instructional faculty is 61.55. Rather than sampling, this study surveyed the entire population to ensure responses received fell above at least the standard threshold of 61.55. The overall qualitative survey response rate was 16.57% (204 out of 1,231). Partial surveys are those where the respondents selected the "I agree to participate in this study"' section, but never completed either the demographic or survey questions.

Table 4

Response Rates

Day of reminder e-mail	Date of reminder e-mail	Number started	Overall response rate
Open	April 14	N/A	
Day 7	April 21	146	11.86%
Day 14	April 28	172	13.97%
Day 21	May 5	215	17.46%
Day 28	May 12	245	19.90%
Close	May 15	267	21.68%
Consent		*(204/267)*	
Did Not Consent		*(14/267)*	
Start with Immediate Close		*(49/267)*	
Total Usable		**204**	**16.57%**
Survey dropout (after demographics)		64	
Total Finished			
		140	**11.37%**

Table 5 represents each open-ended question asked on the survey and the
corresponding instructor responses to each question. Faculty were allowed to skip the
questions and withdraw from the study at any time. With each additional question, the
number of faculty respondents become smaller and smaller. As soon as the demographic
questions ended, the number of responses quickly dropped from 204 to 140, providing
this study with an 11.37% completion rate, meaning those that actually finished the
survey. With the rule of thumb sampling at 5%, the 140 responses are well above the
minimum of 61.55 target for this study.

Table 5

Qualitative Survey Open-Ended Questions

Question	Respondents
In your opinion, what impact, if any, do federal policies have on student learning?	135
In your opinion, what impact, if any, do state policies have on student learning?	136
In your opinion, what impact, if any, do institutional policies have on student learning?	133
What is the primary purpose of assessing student learning at UK?	124
How did you come to understand this purpose?	119
Describe your perceptions regarding UK's student learning assessment requirements.	119
Student learning assessment at UK reflects a commitment to:	120
Based on your above answers, would you say your institution has established shared principles governing student learning assessment across the department/college/institution?	115
Describe your perceptions regarding UK's student learning accountability system.	108
How is student learning accountability monitored at UK?	105
What role does faculty engagement have in an accountability system?	105
What role does academic freedom have in an accountability system?	107
What suggestions do you have to improve student learning accountability and monitoring at the University of Kentucky?	100
Please share any other insights, ideas, or comments that you have about your institution's accountability system?	64
Would you be willing to participate in a focus group consisting of 6-10 faculty?	26

Each question was explored individually and will be discussed below, in the

results and analysis section, in relation to the research sub-questions for the study.

Findings that are provided indicate the number of respondents that referenced a particular

theme. Therefore, the total number of respondents indicating a theme may be higher or

lower than the total number of completed surveys. The difference is dependent on (a)

whether the particular questions were answered by all respondents and/or (b) whether the

respondents provided more than one theme for each question.

Once the survey window closed, the results were imported into NVivo 10, a

qualitative data analysis computer program. In addition to a computer program to assist in

the coding of the data, Stake's categorical aggregation for case study research was the

primary method utilized (Stake, 1995). As mentioned in Chapter 2, this research is an

instrumental case study. While Stake suggests four ways to analyze case study research:

categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, establishing patterns, and developing

naturalistic generalizations; the author indicates categorical aggregation is more suitable

for an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). The purpose of categorical aggregation is to

examine the data in a way that seeks a collection of instances from the data, hoping that

issue-relevant meanings will emerge (Creswell, 2007, p. 163). The first step in analysis

was to manually look through and systematically catalog the text data provided by each

respondent for each question in the qualitative survey. Data was then aggregated into any

number of 8-23 categories per question. Once the categories were created, they were

collapsed into themes. The number of themes varied by question. Once the categorical

aggregation was completed and themes were created; NVivo 10 was used to assist in the

coding process and support the findings.

When reviewing the top 20 most consistently words used overall, there was no

surprise in the findings. Table 6 depicts a query that was set to pull the top 20 words of

all 13 open-ended questions in the survey that were five letters or more in length. The

reason the query was set to five letters or more was to exclude four letter words that came up quite often in the responses, such as "none", "good", "less", and "fair", etc. All the words did have a clear connection to the questions asked and the responses given for each question. For example, many responses mentioned "content", whether this was due to student accountability, faculty accountability, or academic freedom; content was brought up 973 times. One term that was quite commonly used and seemed anomalous at first is "bodies" being cited 433 times. However when faculty talk about accreditation they would often indicate accreditation bodies or accrediting bodies. The purpose of utilizing both categorical aggregation and a qualitative software collectively was to reduce bias and human error. Comparing the results of themes to high frequency words revealed only minor differences, as you will read in the proceeding narrative.

Table 6

Top 20 Words of all Qualitative Survey Questions

Word	Count
Content	973
Changes	948
Activities	757
Process	756
Knowledge	754
Education	699
Learning	566
Think	513
Working	503
Evaluations	501
Making	497
Quality	488
Artifacts	483
Student	444
Bodies	433
Transfer	410
Organizations	408
Understand	387
Ability	382
Communication	370

Faculty Interviews

Faculty were contacted three separate times via e-mail, June 5, 15, and 29, and asked to participate in a face-to-face interview, phone interview, or electronic interview. Each e-mail included the cover letter including a confidentiality statement. Orignally, faculty were asked to participate in a focus group by indicating their willingness to volunteer on the survey. Twenty-six faculty members indicated interest in participating in a focus group. When contacting faculty with optional dates and times, there were no dates and times that worked well for at least six of the instructional faculty. For this reason a

modification to the research method was sent into both UK and Walden IRB offices. Faculty were given the options to either meet face-to-face for an individual interview, meet over the phone, or complete the questions electronically. The reason for multiple options was due to the fact that the intent of the focus group was to gather at least six faculty and when this became unachievable, providing multiple ways of interviewing seemed appropriate given the timing and nature of faculty work. While 26 faculty volunteered, only eight (30%) completed the interview. Five faculty chose to complete the questions electronically, three faculty chose to complete the additional questions via phone, and 18 faculty did not respond. Faculty interviews took place between the dates of June 5 -19, 2015, with noone responding to the June 29th call for interviews. All faculty phone interviews were recorded and transcribed using Dragon transcription software. Table 7 presents the eight questions asked during the interviews (both for faculty and accountability specialist) relating to student learning accountability.

Table 7

Interview Questions

Question
In your opinion, what constitutes a solid accountability system? Please think about the values and principles of an accountability system in your response.
How has the student learning accountability movement impacted your perception of student learning in general?
What do you perceive is a benefit of student learning assessment?
What challenges exist in a student learning accountability system? Please think about rewards, incentives, and sanctions within the system as part of your response.
Based on the challenges described, what strategies might you offer to address the challenges?
Describe the communication and transparency between faculty, administrators, and the institution regarding the topic of student learning accountability.
Describe what you, the faculty, should be held accountable for in terms of student learning.
Describe what the administration should be held accountable for in student learning.

Accoutability Specialist Interviews

The seventeen accountability specialists were contacted via e-mail through multiple mailings, May 20 and June 5, and asked to participate in a face-to-face interview. Each e-mail included the cover letter including a cofidentiality statement. All interviews were conducted in person, except for one, in the place of their choosing. One accountability specialist could not meet, due to traveling, however they agreed to answer

the questions in electronic format. All in-person interviews were recorded and transribed

using Dragon transcription software. Seventeen accountability specialists were contacted;

only 11 (65%) completed the interview. The interview consisted of eight questions

relating to student learning accountability and can be viewed in table 4 above.

Document Gathering

Supporting information for this study was collected by looking at administrative

and governing regulations at UK, as well as searching for job descriptions on either the

UK website or the Internet. All regulations were gathered by searching the following

terms, 'academic freedom', 'accountability', 'assessment', 'compliance', 'workload', and

'distribution of effort'. The Office of Human Resources and the Office of Faculty

Advancement at the Univeristy of Kentucky were contacted asking for examples of job

descriptions for the following positions, 'dean', 'associate dean', 'assistant dean',

'department chair', 'director of undergraduate studies', 'associate/assistant professor'

and/or 'lecturer'. Neither office could provide examples due to the fact the each position

is description is created and mainatined by the individual colleges. For this reason, job

descriptions were pulled by searching the Internet and the university online emplyment

system. The rationale for gathering documents such as regulations and job descriptions

was to search for pertinent terms relating to student learning accountability.

Interviews with State Representatives

Interviews with representatives from the KY-CPE was conducted in September

2015. The goal of this meeting was to share the findings of this study and to see if there

could be model for a system of accountability statewide. The meeting took place in

Frankfort, Kentucky with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the

Senior Associate in the Academic Affairs area.

Results and Analysis

Demographics

Descriptive techniques were used for all demographic data and were analyzed

using Excel 2010. Demographic questions were asked in order to obtain a more accurate

portrait of the instructor completing the qualitative survey. Of the respondents to the

qualitative survey, 67% self-identified themselves as a tenured rank instructor, while 15%

were non-tenured tenure track. Table 8 represents the breakdown of rank among the

faculty completing the survey. Table 9 represents faculty that were either employed full-

time (96%) or part-time (1%).

Table 8

Instructor Rank

Rank	Number	Percent
Tenured	136	67%
Non-tenured tenure track	31	15%
Non-tenured	11	5%
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	5	2%
Endowed professor	5	2%
Administrator with instructional assignment	3	1%
Other	3	1%
Research professor	3	1%
Emeritus professor	2	1%
Voluntary faculty	1	0%
No response	4	2%
Total	204	100%

Table 9

Full-time or Part-time Employment of Those Completing the Survey

	Number	Percent
Full-time	195	96%
Part-time	2	1%
No response	7	3%
Total	204	100%

Respondents were also asked the number of years they have been employed at UK, which college best represents where their discipline resides, their ethnicity, age range, and sex. Nearly half of the respondents have been employed at UK 20 or more years (Table 10). The College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), College of Agriculture, Food, Environment (CAFÉ), the College of Communication and Information, and the College of Medicine had the most individuals respond to the survey with 27%, 11%, 10%, and 10% respectively. A&S and CAFÉ are the two largest colleges on campus, which directly correlates to those colleges providing a larger percentage of respondents. Table 11 represents the number of respondents from each college.

Table 10

Number of Years Employed at UK

Years at UK	Number	Percentage
20 or more years	89	44%
11-19 years	47	23%
6-10 years	32	16%
3-5 years	21	10%
0-2 years	10	5%
No Response	5	2%
Total	204	100%

Table 11

College Where the Respondents' Discipline Resides

College	Number	Percent
College of Arts and Sciences	56	27%
College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment	23	11%
College of Communication and Information	20	10%
College of Medicine	20	10%
College of Education	14	7%
College of Engineering	13	6%
College of Business & Economics	9	4%
College of Health Sciences	9	4%
College of Fine Arts	7	3%
College of Nursing	7	3%
College of Pharmacy	7	3%
College of Public Health	5	2%
College of Design	3	1%
College of Social Work	3	1%
Graduate school	1	0%
No response	7	3%
Total	204	100%

Table 12 demonstrates that the majority of faculty responding to the survey were of white ethnicity. This majority constituted 76%, which is representative of the University. Regarding the age of the respondents, 19% were less than 40 years old, 53% were between the ages of 41-60, and 22% were over age 60. Table 13 represents the age of the respondents who completed the survey. Figure 4 shares the sex of the respondents, with 50% being female and 39% male, which is not indicative of the actual representation of the University makeup. In 2014, UK had 19% more males than females.

Table 12

Ethnicity of Respondents Who Completed the Survey

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White	155	76%
No response	13	6%
Prefer not to answer	12	6%
Asian	11	5%
Black or African American	8	4%
Hispanic or Latino regardless of race	3	1%
Two or more races	2	1%
Total	204	100%

Table 13

Age of Respondents Who Completed the Survey

Age	Number	Percentage
51-60 years old	55	27%
41-50 years old	54	26%
61-70 years old	39	19%
31-40 years old	37	18%
71 or older	6	3%
Prefer not to answer	3	1%
20-30 years old	2	1%
No response	8	4%
Total	204	100%
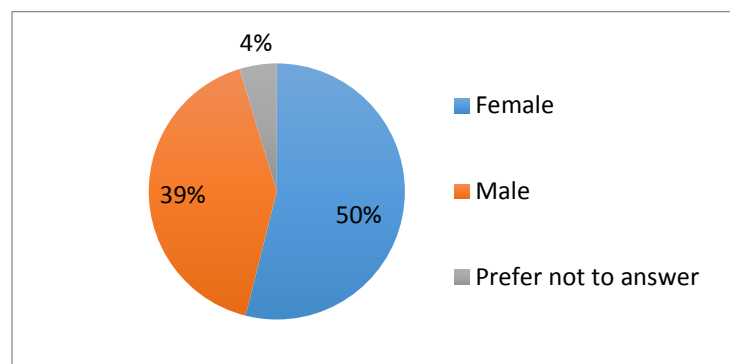
Figure 4. Sex of respondents who completed the survey

Collecting demography helps to provide valid information in similar situations (Malterud, 2001, p. 486). The goal was to provide contextual information regarding the respondents in this study so external validity could be applied. While the findings may not directly apply to other universities, the demographics do provide minimal information indirectly that may be of use to institutions across the state.

The next section discusses the results from the survey and faculty and assessment specialist's interview questions. The findings are presented in a way that align to each individual research study question.

Survey and Interview Questions by Research Question

All questions asked in the qualitative survey and interviews were aligned to each research question. Below is a matrix, Table 14, aligning the instrument questions and number to the study research questions. Instruments include the survey (S), faculty interviews (F), and accountability specialists interviews (I).

Table 14

Question Alignment

Question alignment instrument question	Instrument question	Research question
In your opinion, what impact, if any, do federal policies have on student learning?	S10	R1: impact
In your opinion, what impact, if any, do state policies have on student learning?	S11	R1: impact
In your opinion, what impact, if any, do institutional policies have on student learning?	S12	R1: impact
What is the primary purpose of assessing student learning at uk?	S13	R2: assessment requirements
How did you come to understand this purpose?	S13	R2: assessment requirements
Describe your perceptions regarding uk's student learning assessment requirements.	S14	R2: assessment requirements
Student learning assessment at the institution reflects a *commitment to:*	S15	R2: assessment requirements
Based on your above answers, would you say your institution has established shared principles governing assessment across the department/college/institution?	S16	R2: assessment requirements
Describe your perceptions regarding uk's student learning accountability system.	S17	R3: accountability system
How is student learning accountability monitored at uk?	S18	R3: accountability system
What role does faculty engagement have in an accountability system?	S19	R4: academic freedom and faculty engagement
What role does academic freedom have in an accountability system?	S20	R4: academic freedom and faculty engagement

What suggestions do you have to improve student learning accountability and monitoring at the university of kentucky?	S21	R3: accountability system
In your opinion, what constitutes a solid accountability system? Please think about the values and principles of an accountability system in your response.	F1, I1	R3: accountability system
How has the student learning accountability movement impacted your perception of student learning in general?	F2, I2	R1: impact
What do you perceive is a benefit of student learning assessment?	F3, I3	R2: assessment requirements
What challenges exist in a student learning accountability system? Please think about rewards, incentives, and sanctions within the system as part of your response. Based on the challenges described, what strategies might you offer to address the challenges?	F4, I4	R3: accountability system
Describe the communication and transparency between faculty, administrators, and the institution regarding the topic of student learning accountability.	F5, I5	R3: accountability system
Describe what you, the faculty, should be held accountable for in terms of student learning. Describe what the administration should be held accountable for in terms of student learning.	F6, I6	R3: accountability system

The next section discusses the results for research question one. It explores how the student learning accountability movement has impacted the perceptions of faculty.

Research Question 1. How has the student learning accountability movement impacted faculty perceptions?

Varying degrees of impact and awareness. There were four questions that aligned to the impact of the student learning accountability movement. Respondents were asked how the federal, state, and local policies impacted their perception. Further faculty and accountability specialist were asked how the student learning accountability movement has impacted student learning in general. There were two overarching themes related to impact: (a) varying degrees of impact and (b) awareness.

Federal policy impact on student learning. Participants were asked what impact do federal policies have on student learning. Table 15 below presents the twelve themes emerged from the data to produce 147 coded references. It was very common for respondents to provide a reference to at least two or more themes. Little impact was referenced most often at 45 times. It is important to note that the entire answer was coded for a theme only once regardless of how often the theme was referenced. For example, little impact might be mentioned within the given reply more than once, but it was only coded one time. Therefore, it can be quantified that 45 different instructional faculty (33%) reported that federal policies have a little impact on student learning. Table 16 presents the top three themes by instructor rank. Thirty-two of those were tenured faculty, nine were non-tenured tenure track, three were endowed professors, and one was an adjunct faculty. An example of little impact is provided here by survey respondent 74 whom stated, "federal policies themselves have very little impact on student learning. The impact of these policies is on the opportunity for students to learn." From the data

gathered on this question federal policies seem to support state level policies. "These policies influence the creation and conduct of state initiatives (survey respondent 75)." Further, survey respondent 161 stated, "very little, I don't consider them when planning curriculum and testing."

Seventeen respondents (13%) indicated that federal policy has an impact on student learning as it relates to funding, budget, and/or resources. Ten of those were tenured, five were non-tenured, one was an endowed professor and one an adjunct faculty member. For example, "they can affect funding and student loans which can indirectly affect student learning (survey respondent 100)." Similarly, survey respondent 151 stated, "the biggest federal policy that affects student learning is the underfunding of the Pell Grant/student loan crisis."

Sixteen respondents (12%) indicated federal policy have no impact on student learning. Fourteen of the 16 were tenured and two were non-tenured faculty. When comparing the categorical aggregation to the NVivo high frequency query, the theme little impact included words such as 'little', 'fair', and 'minor'. The term funding included words such as 'funding', 'underfunded', 'budget', and 'resources'.

Table 15

In Your Opinion, What Impact, if any, do Federal Policies Have on Student Learning?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Little impact	45	33%
Funding, budget, and/or resources	17	13%
No impact	16	12%
Programmatic initiatives, curriculum, and/or educational instruction	15	11%
Student learning environment/performance	15	11%
Negative impact	9	7%
Don't know	8	6%
Large impact	8	6%
Depends	6	4%
Other: accreditation, accountability, state initiatives	5	4%
Academic freedom	2	1%
Access, affordability, equity	1	1%
Total coded references	147	109%
Total respondents	135	99%
No response	5	4%
Total	140	103%

Table 16

Instructional Faculty Rank: In your Opinion, What Impact, if any, do Federal Policies

Have on Student Learning?

Rank	Little impact	Funding, budget, resources	No impact
Adjunct instructor	1	1	0
Endowed professor	3	1	0
Non-tenured tenure track	9	0	0
Non-tenured	0	5	2
Tenured	32	10	14
Total	45	17	16

State policy impact on student learning. When asked what impact does state

policies have on student learning, the apparent themes were nearly the same that were

found in the previous question regarding federal policies. Table 17 indicates 140 coded

references where 36 instructional faculty (26%) seem to also perceive that state policies

have little impact on student learning. Survey respondent 41 stated, "very little. Most

state policies are vague at best, and have little impact on learning." Another example was

stated by survey respondent 77 stated, "state policies themselves have some impact on

student learning."

Further, funding, budgeting, and resources were also cited by 34 faculty (25%).

For example, "in the context of public universities, the financial support or lack thereof,

would have a direct consequence (survey respondent 39)." Another response related to

funding is by survey respondent 118 whom states state policy, "impacts funding which

impacts the opportunities students have and increases in tuition."

Fourteen faculty (10%) indicated that state policy impact programmatic initiatives, curriculum, and or education instruction. In terms of curriculum based responses, "state regulations overly influence our degree programs and what we teach (survey respondent 184)." Further, survey respondent 135 stated, "they influence the measures we use in assessment which in turn affect curricular decisions." Table 18 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 17

In Your Opinion, What Impact, if any, do State Policies Have on Student Learning?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Little Impact	36	26%
Funding, budget, and/or resources	34	25%
Programmatic initiatives, curriculum, and/or educational instruction	14	10%
No impact	11	8%
Negative impact	10	7%
Large impact	10	7%
Depends	9	7%
Don't know	7	5%
Student learning environment/performance	4	3%
Transfer issues	2	1%
Accreditation	1	1%
Access, affordability, and equity	1	1%
Teacher effectiveness	1	1%
Total coded references	140	103%
Total respondents	136	100%
No response	4	3%
Total	140	103%

Table 18

Instructional Faculty Rank: In Your Opinion, What Impact, if any, do State Policies Have on Student Learning?

Theme	Little impact	Funding, budget, and/or resources	Programmatic initiatives, curriculum, and/or educational instruction
Tenured	24	20	10
Non-tenured; tenure track	8	6	2
Non-tenured	0	5	0
Endowed professor	3	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	0	1	0
Administrator with instructional assignment	1	1	1
Other	0	0	1
Total	36	34	14

Institutional policy impact on student learning. The top three themes regarding institutional policy and the impact on student learning were large impact, student learning/performance based impact, and little impact. Fifty faculty (38%) indicated that institutional policies had a large impact on student learning. Faculty such as survey respondent 53 indicated, "because the institution and its employees are at the point of contact with students, I'd have to say institutional policies have the strongest impact. Again the effects are complex, especially in the ways institutions interpret and implement state and federal policy." Survey respondent 42 stated, "yes absolutely - guides the content and activities that one might choose to use to guide the content."

Twenty-seven faculty (20%) indicated institutional policies had an impact on the student learning environment/student learning performance. "These are the most direct effects. Institutional policies directly influence student learning by changing the entire culture of the university, faculty members, and the student body (survey respondent 184)." Survey respondent 43 stated, "these are the most impactful covering everything from the learning environment to the general atmosphere on campus."

Twenty-three faculty (17%) indicated there was little impact on student learning. Survey respondent 74 stated, "Institutional policies have a little impact on student learning." Survey respondent 81 stated, "very little, except that we try to meet basic accountability standards." Table 19 provides a breakdown of the 161 coded references indicated by the instructional faculty. Table 20 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 19

In Your Opinion, What Impact, if any, do Institutional Policies Have on Student Learning?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Large impact	50	38%
Student learning environment/performance	27	20%
Little impact	23	17%
Programmatic initiatives, curriculum, and/or educational instruction	13	10%
Funding, budget, and/or resources	10	8%
Depends	10	8%
Teacher effectiveness	10	8%
Negative impact	6	5%
No impact	5	4%
Don't know	4	3%
Academic freedom	2	2%
Accreditation	1	1%
Total coded references	161	121%
		0%
Total respondents	133	100%
No response	7	5%
Total	140	105%

Table 20

Instructional Faculty Rank: In your Opinion, What Impact, if any, do Institutional Policies Have on Student Learning?

Theme	Large impact	Student learning environment/ performance	Little impact
Tenured	34	14	18
Non-tenured; tenure track	8	7	1
Non-tenured	4	3	2
Endowed professor	0	2	2
Research professor	1	1	0
Administrator with instructional assignment	1	0	0
Other	2	0	0
Total	50	2	23

 Student learning movement. When asking faculty and accountability specialists how the student learning accountability movement has impacted their perception of student learning in general, Table 21 below shows the common theme between both groups were being more aware and looking at performance of student learning rather than just content. For example interview respondent 4 stated, "I'm paying more attention and weighing in more often", while interview respondent 3 stated, "it allows me to have a better understanding of how my students are performing." These statements indicate that faculty are becoming more aware of the student learning accountability movement and how it may actually affect them in the classroom. "Thinking beyond mere content of the subject to deeper and more meaningful long term learning outcomes (interview respondent 2)." Statement such as this shows that some faculty are truly thinking about lifelong learning and what students will actually know and be able to do once they

receive a degree. Interview respondent 10 stated, "it's actually not for the content

material it's for learning critical thinking."

Aside from the common themes, one respondent indicated the need for students to

be a partner and that accountability needed to be balanced effort between all parties,

faculty, students, and administration. Student accountability comes up quite often in some

of the responses throughout the survey, specifically in research question 3 regarding

perceptions on the institutions accountability system.

Table 21

*How has the Student Learning Accountability Movement Impacted Your Perception of
Student Learning in General?*

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Awareness	Awareness
Performance vs content	Performance vs content
Shared partnership	Curriculum alignment
Sustainability	Competitive vs cooperative

Summary of findings for research question 1. I have coined the term

'Accountability Movement' to include multiple student learning related policies and

initiatives at the federal level, state level, and institutional level. From the themes above it

is clear that each level of policy has a varying degree of impact on student learning

assessment. Faculty indicate that federal policy has very little impact, if any, on student

learning. Some recognize that funding and resources are connected at the federal level,

however faculty felt that funding has more of a relationship with student learning at the

state level. While funding was mentioned at the institutional level, it was lower in its

percentage than at state and federal level. Institutional level policy, according to faculty,

has a large impact as well as an impact that focuses on actual performance of student learning. When interviewing faculty and accountability specialists, performance of student learning was also discussed as well as the theme awareness. The accountability movement as a whole has made faculty more aware of how students are actually performing rather than looking simply at content.

The next section discusses the results for research question two. It explores the perceptions of the Universities student learning assessment requirements, as well as the purpose and benefit of student learning assessment.

Research Question 2. How do faculty perceive their institutions student learning assessment requirements?

Teacher effectiveness and quality education. There were six questions that aligned to the institutions student learning assessment requirements. Respondents from the survey were asked the purpose of assessing student learning, their perceptions of assessment requirements, a question regarding commitment to assessment, and shared governing principles. Further through interviews, faculty and accountability specialist were asked their perception of the benefit to student learning assessment. There were two overarching themes related to assessment requirements: (a) teaching effectiveness and (b) quality education.

Primary purpose of student learning. Of the 162 coded responses to the question relating to the primary purpose of assessing student learning, 40 faculty (32%) indicated student competency. For example, "to certify that students have acquired a core set of knowledge relevant to the course subject matter (survey respondent 66)." Survey

respondent 117 stated, "To ensure students have mastery of the content." The majority of these faculty were tenured or in a non-tenured tenure track position. Any comment related to achieving competency, knowledge, or to meet outcomes were coded under the particular theme, competency.

Thirty-four faculty (27%) indicated teacher effectiveness as a primary purpose for assessing student learning. The majority of faculty again being in a tenured or tenured track position. Comments such as, "effectiveness of teaching methods for student learning (survey respondent 68)" and "to evaluate the teaching of faculty (survey respondent 108)", are examples of the theme 'teacher effectiveness'.

Nineteen faculty (15%) indicated that the primary purpose of student learning was to improve learning. Survey respondent 2 stated, "to improve students learning processes, to encourage them", while survey respondent 113 stated, "to know that students have learned."

When faculty were asked how they came to understand this purpose, 65 faculty (55%) indicated experience, 12 faculty (10%) cited assessment activities, and ten faculty (8%) indicated accreditation. Tables 22 and 24 provides the breakdown of themes related to the primary purpose of assessing student learning at UK, while Tables 23 and 25 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 22

What is the Primary Purpose of Assessing Student Learning at UK?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Competency	40	32%
Teacher effectiveness	34	27%
Improve learning	19	15%
Accreditation	18	15%
No response	16	13%
Policy requirements (federal, state, institutional)	6	5%
Institutional effectiveness	6	5%
Grades	4	3%
Accountability	4	3%
Quality education	4	3%
Retention	3	2%
Other	2	2%
Motivate students	1	1%
Lower standards	1	1%
Funding, budget, and/or resources	1	1%
Improvement	1	1%
Generate data	1	1%
Benchmarking	1	1%
Total coded references	162	131%
		0%
Total respondents	124	100%
No response	16	13%
Total	140	113%

Table 23

Instructional Faculty Rank: What is the Primary Purpose of Assessing Student Learning at UK?

Rank	Competency	Teacher effectiveness	Improve learning
Tenured	23	19	8
Non-tenured; tenure track	11	5	3
Non-tenured	1	5	0
Endowed professor	0	1	3
Emeritus professor	1	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	1	1	2
Research professor	1		1
Administrator with instructional assignment	2	0	0
Other	0	2	2
Total	40	34	19

Table 24

How did you Come to Understand This Purpose?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Experience /engagement	65	55%
Assessment activities	12	10%
Accreditation	10	8%
Course development/implementation/ classroom	7	6%
Implied	6	5%
Don't know	5	4%
Other	4	3%
Dew rates/retention	3	3%
Bureaucracy	3	3%
Personal belief	3	3%
Student accountability	2	2%
Total coded references	120	101%
Total respondents	119	100%

No response	21	18%
Total	140	118%

Table 25

Instructional Faculty Rank: How did you Come to Understand This Purpose?

Rank	Experience /engagement	Assessment activities	Accreditation
Tenured	41	9	7
Non-tenured; tenure track	9	2	0
Non-tenured	5	0	0
Endowed professor	2	0	1
Emeritus professor	1	0	0
Adjunct instructor/Lecturer	2	0	0
Research professor	2	0	1
Administrator with instructional assignment	1	0	1
Other	2	1	0
Total	65	12	10

Student learning assessment requirements. When asked their perceptions on UK's student learning assessment requirements, the coded responses were a bit more varied in comparison to the other responses on the survey. Twenty-seven (23%) indicated the requirements were good or adequate. Responses such as "good, but not comprehensive. Real problem solving can make it better (survey respondent 3)," and "I think the requirements are sound but I'm not sure departments are doing a very good job outlining their learning outcomes (in a way that is consistent with professional expectations in their fields) and assessing them with tools that make sense based on those outcomes (survey respondent 123)." Other examples of the theme 'good and/or adequate' include items like good effort, appropriately executed, and useful.

Fifteen faculty (13%) indicated the requirements were burdensome, cumbersome, or time consuming. Survey respondent 72 stated, "burdensome and not used in any meaningful way." Further, "they get in the way of doing what we would internally think of as meaningful assessment. The upside is that the requirements ensure we do assessment, the downside is that we spend more time trying to appease the evaluators than measuring metrics that are meaningful to faculty (survey respondent 29)."

Eight percent of faculty indicated they did not know what the student learning assessment requirements were or if they did know, felt they were negative. Table 26 provides the categorical aggregation related to assessment requirements. Table 27 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 26

Describe your Perceptions Regarding UK's Student Learning Assessment Requirements.

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Adequate/good	27	23%
Burdensome/cumbersome/time intensive	15	13%
Don't know	10	8%
Negative	9	8%
Bureaucratic	8	7%
There are no requirements	6	5%
Program/faculty responsibility	6	5%
Ineffective	6	5%
Disconnected/unclear	5	4%
Curriculum	4	3%
Minimal	3	3%
Grades	3	3%
Generate data	3	3%
Other	3	3%
Constantly changing	2	2%
Effective	2	2%
No consequences/follow-through	2	2%
Academic freedom	2	2%
No perception	2	2%
Student accountability/student success	2	2%
Training	1	1%
Funding/budget / resources	1	1%
Teacher effectiveness	1	1%
Awareness	1	1%
Lack of faculty engagement	1	1%
Total coded responses	125	105%
Total respondents	119	100%
No responses	21	18%
Total	140	118%

Table 27

Instructional Faculty Rank: Describe your Perceptions Regarding UK's Student Learning Assessment Requirements.

Rank	Adequate/ good	Burdensome/ cumbersome/ time intensive	Don't know
Tenured	13	11	7
Non-tenured; tenure track	7	2	1
Non-tenured	2	1	1
Endowed professor	1	0	0
Emeritus professor	0	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	1	0	0
Administrator with instructional assignment	2	0	0
Other	1		1
Total	27	15	10

Student Learning Commitment. When faculty were asked their perceptions on the statement, 'student learning assessment at UK reflects a commitment to', the 108 coded responses also varied in comparison to the other responses on the survey with 15 themes. Twenty faculty (17%) indicated student learning at UK was a commitment to student competency. "Mastery of content and passing the students (survey respondent 117)", and "develop a group of capable and broad-minded future citizens for the Commonwealth (survey respondent 172)" are example comments related to competency.

Nineteen faculty (16%) indicated a commitment to providing a quality education such as excellence, quality, quality control, improving education, and integrity. Seventeen faculty (14%) indicated a commitment to improvement. For example, "evaluating and maybe improving the average" was mentioned by survey respondent 49.

Survey respondent 2 stated, "to improve students learning processes, to encourage them."

Table 28 provides the categorical aggregation related to assessment requirements. Table

29 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 28

Student Learning Assessment at UK Reflects a Commitment to:

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Competency	20	17%
Quality education/excellence	19	16%
Improvement	17	14%
Accreditation	15	13%
Satisfying stakeholders/adhere to requirements	13	11%
Teacher effectiveness	12	10%
Accountability	6	5%
Other	6	5%
Retention	4	3%
Administration	4	3%
Bureaucracy	3	3%
Negative	3	3%
Attrition	3	3%
Paperwork	2	2%
Don't know	1	1%
Total coded responses	108	90%
Total respondents	120	100%
No responses	20	17%
Total	140	117%

Table 29

Instructional Faculty Rank: Student Learning Assessment at UK Reflects a Commitment to:

Rank	Quality education/ excellence	Competency	Improvement
Tenured	13	12	10
Non-tenured; tenure track	5	4	1
Non-tenured	0	2	2
Endowed professor	1	0	1
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	0	0	1
Research professor	0	1	0
Administrator with instructional assignment	0	1	0
Other			2
Total	19	20	17

Shared Principles Governing Student Learning Assessment. When faculty were asked if their institution had shared principles governing student learning assessment across the department/college/institution, 48% indicated 'no', 27% indicated 'yes', 19% indicated 'somewhat', and 5% indicated they did not know. Although the majority of respondents indicated yes, defining whether this was at the department, college, or institution level was not always clearly noted. Table 30 provides the categorical aggregation related to assessment requirements. Table 31 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 30

Based on Your Above Answers, Would you say Your Institution has Established Shared Principles Governing Assessment Across the Department/College/Institution?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
No	55	48%
Yes	31	27%
Somewhat	22	19%
Don't know	6	5%
Total coded responses	108	94%
Total respondents	115	100%
No responses	25	22%
Total	140	122%

Table 31

Instructional Faculty Rank: Based on Your Above Answers, Would you say Your Institution has Established Shared Principles Governing Assessment Across the Department/College/Institution?

Rank	No	Yes	Somewhat
Tenured	39	23	11
Non-tenured; tenure track	4	5	4
Non-tenured	4	1	2
Endowed Professor	2	1	1
Emeritus Professor	0	0	1
Adjunct instructor/Lecturer	2	0	1
Research Professor	1	0	1
Administrator with instructional assignment	2	0	0
Other	1	1	1
Total	55	31	22

Student Learning Benefit. Table 32 below shows the themes that became apparent

by interviewing both the faculty and the assessment specialists. The conversations

indicated the benefit of student learning assessment is to provide evidence of

achievement, teacher effectiveness, and improvement. Assessing student learning is the

best practice that provides optimal evidence needed to satisfy stakeholders. Interview

respondent 18 stated, "we do try to do a good job and ensuring nobody leaves here

without the skills they need, assessing student learning provides official documentation

that a student was assessed and deemed to be qualified or competent at certain level."

Both groups also mentioned that a benefit to student learning assessment is

encouraging faculty to become more effective teachers. "If we find that our students

aren't meeting one or more learning outcomes, we can tailor our curriculum, teaching

methods, etc. in order to help students better meet those outcomes (Interview respondent

3)." Similarly, interview respondent 13 stated that student learning "reinforces the idea of

a self-reflection practitioner, which is crucial for successful teaching."

Another common theme was improvement. Student learning assessment helps to

improve student learning and improve the curriculum. Interview respondent 4 stated a

benefit to student learning is that students can be better prepared, "faculty and staff can

have a more intentional role in that preparation and allows students to measure progress

and make changes as needed." To support this comment further, interview respondent 17

stated,

> If you do it right, it can help you think through the quality of programs and
>
> the quality of your students, the needs of public and employers and if you
>
> do it right it helps faculty understand themselves better and their students

better. Students understand themselves better and the program better and

the goals of the program.

Below is an excellent analogy given by interview respondent 19 regarding the benefit of

student learning,

It provides guidelines with flexibility…a willow tree…it has to be really

strong but the branches tend to move. They flex and bend. It's not having

that rigid immobile situation, but its clarity on how is it that you're going

to bend and move so that you can grow into the next step.

Table 32

What do you Perceive is a Benefit of Student Learning Assessment?

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Evidence of achievement	Evidence of achievement
Teacher effectiveness	Teacher effectiveness
Improvement	Improvement
Institutional comparisons	Goals
Communication	Communication
Curriculum	Curriculum

Summary of findings for research question 2. Student learning assessment

requirements has faculty thinking about assessment in a myriad of ways. Before asking

faculty their perception on the requirements, I wanted to gauge their impression of the

purpose of assessment. The majority of faculty agreed that the purpose is to improve

learning or to help students achieve competency, contrary however, a few faculty

indicated that the purpose was to evaluate teaching. This exact themeology was seen

when asking the faculty and accountability specialists through the interviews to share

their perception of the benefits to student learning assessment. Further supporting the purpose and benefit, was the commitment question. Survey respondents indicated that student learning assessment at UK reflects a commitment to competency, improvement, and quality education. Faculty acknowledge the importance and meaning behind assessment, they felt that the institutions requirements were just adequate at best. The majority of responses to this particular questions had a negative connotation such as burdensome, don't know, negative, ineffective, and disconnected. The reason for such undesirable implication could be due to the fact that only 27% indicated there were shared principles governing student learning assessment across the department, college, or institution.

The next section discusses the results for research question three. It explores the perceptions of the Universities' student learning accountability system, including challenges and strategies.

Research Question 3. How do faculty perceive their institutional accountability system?

Communication, Transparency and Professional Development. There were seven questions that aligned to an institutional accountability system. Respondents from the survey were asked perceptions of their institutional accountability system, how that system monitored, and suggestions to improve their accountability system. Further through interviews, faculty and accountability specialist were asked what constitutes an accountability system, challenges within such system, and the communication between occurring at the institution. There were two overarching themes related to assessment

requirements: (a) increased communication and transparency and (b) professional development.

   Student Learning Accountability. When faculty were asked their perceptions regarding UK's student learning accountability system, the coded responses were varied. Twenty-seven (25%) of faculty indicated they did not know. Twenty-three faculty (21%) indicated the institutions accountability system was ineffective, for example survey respondent 146 stated, "does not seem to be assessing anything useful for actually improving the most important outcomes in my opinion." Further, survey respondent 41 stated, "It is poorly designed, often by people with no experience in outcome evaluation."

   Some faculty however did indicate that the institutions accountability system was fair/adequate, 17% of faculty. "It has improved the rigor by which our department tracks the progress of its students (survey respondent 69)." Similarly, survey respondent 177 stated, "very good but tends to be different across colleges."

   Supplementary, when faculty were asked how student learning accountability is monitored, 31 (30%) of faculty indicated they did not know. Nearly the same percentage of faculty 27% indicated through the assessment process. For example, accountability is monitored through the "Evaluation of whether "artifacts" submitted for particular courses meet criteria in rubrics developed for various goals (survey respondent 53)" and "supposedly through assessment of student learning products, but it's unclear whether the products collected are ever reviewed (survey respondent 135)."

   Thirteen faculty (12%) indicated grades. Comments such as, "student DEW rates are monitored. Advisers receive names of students who have a D, an E or a W at midterm

and are encouraged to help the student find help (survey respondent 167)" and "through

"student alerts" and mid-term grades (survey respondent 181)." Table 33 and 35 provides

the categorical aggregation related to UK's student learning accountability system.

Tables 34 and 36 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 33

Describe your Perceptions Regarding UK's Student Learning Accountability System.

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Don't Know	27	25%
Ineffective/Useless	23	21%
Fair/Adequate/Helpful	18	17%
No Perception	13	12%
Other	5	5%
Faculty Driven	4	4%
Teacher Effectiveness	4	4%
Faculty Training	4	4%
Grades/Retention	3	3%
No System	3	3%
Student Accountability	3	3%
Under Resourced	3	3%
Administration Driven	2	2%
Total Coded Responses	112	104%
		0%
Total Respondents	108	100%
No Responses	32	30%

Table 34

Instructional Faculty Rank: Describe your Perceptions Regarding UK's Student Learning Accountability System.

Rank	Don't know	Ineffective/ useless	Fair/adequate/ helpful
Tenured	19	18	13
Non-tenured; tenure track	4	2	4
Non-tenured	0	1	1
Endowed professor	1	1	0
Emeritus professor	0	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	1	0	0
Research professor	1	0	0
Other	1	0	0
Total	27	23	18

Table 35

How is Student Learning Accountability Monitored?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Don't know	31	30%
Assessment process	28	27%
Grades/retention	13	12%
Assessment office/coordinators /administrators/team	9	9%
Course evaluations	7	7%
Departments	6	
No monitoring	4	4%
Alerts	3	3%
Varies	3	3%
Poorly	2	2%
Other	1	1%
No system	1	1%
Blank	1	1%
Total coded responses	109	101%
Total respondents	105	97%
No responses	35	32%
Total	140	130%

Table 36

Instructional Faculty Rank: How is Student Learning Accountability Monitored?

Rank	Don't know	Assessment process	Grades/retention
Tenured	24	20	6
Non-tenured; tenure track	3	4	0
Non-tenured		2	3
Endowed professor	2	0	1
Emeritus professor	0	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	1	0	0
Research professor	0	1	0
Other	1	0	2
Total	31	28	12

Improving UK's Student Learning Accountability. When faculty were asked if

they had any suggestions to improve student learning accountability and monitoring at

UK, 14 themes emerged. When removing 'other', 'don't know', and 'none', the top

themes for suggestions then became communication/transparency (22%), student

accountability (19%), and get rid of it (9%).

Comments related to communication/transparency include "Communication,

communication and more communication. Make sure the learning outcomes and their

importance is communicated. Make sure when assessments are done, results are

communicated (survey respondent 150)". Similarly, survey respondent 156 stated,

"market it more; talk about it more; demonstrate why it is important to have a

coordinated accountability system across the colleges and units." In regards to

transparency, survey respondent 116 stated, "more transparency and inclusion with

faculty make it relevant and practical. Avoid including small select groups of people, often the same people, over and over. Make sure successes are communicated."

Comments related to student accountability as a suggestion to improve the current accountability system include, "It starts with students. Make them accountable for their actions and preparedness (survey respondent 194)", and "students do not understand their role for self-learning. We cannot teach them everything they need to know. They need to develop self-study concepts to obtain knowledge and to apply for problem solving (survey respondent 68)." Further, "the whole concept seems based on the notion that students have no accountability (survey respondent 97)."

Finally there are some faculty that prefer to just get rid of assessment altogether. Comments such as ditch it, scrap it, get rid of it and dump it are included in this theme.

Table 37 provides the categorical aggregation related to suggestions for improving and monitoring UKs student learning accountability system. Some comments that were of interest are highlighted below. Table 38 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 37

What Suggestions do you Have to Improve Student Learning Accountability and Monitoring at the University of Kentucky?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Transparency/communication	17	22%
Student accountability	15	19%
Get rid of it	7	9%
Faculty driven	6	8%
Teacher effectiveness	6	8%
Simplify	5	6%
Faculty education/training	5	6%
Curriculum	4	5%
Validity	4	5%
External input	3	4%
Less of it	3	4%
Common assessments	2	3%
Resources	1	1%
Trust	1	1%
Total	79	40%

Table 38

Instructional Faculty Rank: What Suggestions do you Have to Improve Student Learning Accountability and Monitoring at the University of Kentucky?

Rank	Transparency/ communication	Student accountability	Get rid of it
Tenured	10	9	6
Non-tenured; tenure track	3	2	0
Non-tenured	1	1	0
Endowed professor	1	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	0	0	1
Research professor	1	0	0
Administrator with instructional assignment	1	0	0
Other		2	0
Total	17	15	7

Student Learning Accountability. The themes that became apparent by interviewing both the faculty members and the assessment specialist, shown in Table 39, indicated a solid accountability system needed to be faculty driven, transparent, integrated, and with that came professional development or education to all. While students are central to any higher education institution, faculty provide the substance needed to make it cultivate. Faculty input should be a driving factor in the creation and implementation of any accountability system. Without it, the buy-in to such a system will not be successful. Interview respondent 2 stated, "must allow for academic freedom of the faculty member within the classroom." Further, "faculty need to be on board…they aren't going to do it unless they understand its valuable to them…you need a president and provost saying this is important (interview respondent 10)."

A system should also be transparent in the sense that roles and responsibilities, expectations, outcomes, measures and institutional vision need to be clearly articulated and transparent to all. Interview respondent 1 stated, "how to do it in an effective and fair way…the balance is not static but dynamic." Similarly, interview respondent 5 stated, "democratic component…fully transparent…free information exchange."

Professional development and education was consistently brought up by all interviewees at some point during the interviews. Faculty indicated the need for professional development, workshops, training, and even certification. Faculty are experts in their particular field or discipline; they are not certified teachers. They do not have all the answers when it comes to student learning accountability. What they do know is that they love what they do; sharing what they know with students in order to advance scholarship in their discipline.

Finally, an accountability system needs be integrated with the institutional mission and strategic plan and have an upper administrative leadership that supports it. Human conversation is a very important aspect of integration; you cannot integrate something that is never discussed. Interview respondent 14 stated that accountability is "dependent on leadership that have the ability to hold people accountable…if you do not have leadership that will hold people accountable…then it's not going to happen."

Table 39

In your Opinion, What Constitutes a Solid Accountability system? Please Think About the Values and Principles of an Accountability System in Your Response.

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Allows academic freedom	Dependent on Leadership
Difficult to Achieve	Professional development
Faculty driven	Faculty driven
Faculty engagement	Integration
Integration	Shared accountability
Professional development	Transparency
Shared partnership	Trust
Transparency	Value

Challenges in an Accountability System. When asking faculty and accountability specialists what challenges exist in a student learning accountability system, the common themes between both groups were assessment culture, communication, and professional development (Table 40).

Respondents felt a challenge in the student learning accountability system was related to assessment culture and change. Interview respondent 12 stated, "we have been successful for many years and all of a sudden we have to assess our students…some people complain that we are changing targets all the time." Similarly, interview respondent 14, "helping faculty to understand that we have to change with the times." In terms of a challenge related to assessment culture, interview respondent 19 stated,

culture…there has to be a cultural bridge between compliance and that

reinvigorating what education should be. Back to that inspiration of why

do you go to school? You go to school because they feel like they have to

go to school…to me that's a challenge in terms of promoting

accountability for that matter because it is back to a compliance

perspective instead of I'm going to school because I want to learn.

Communication was a large theme throughout the responses to this question.

Communication is simply not occurring. Some respondents indicated that faculty are not

engaged in assessment because they do not want to be, rather it is the lack of

communication and training. Interview respondent 2 stated,

a huge challenge is communication, communication of what the learning

outcomes are, a communication of the buy-in that respected faculty have

for the process, communication of the process to follow and meet these

learning outcomes, communication of how to go about getting your

classes assessed properly, communication of how the university, colleges

and departments are progressing to the goals.

Similarly, interview respondent 4 stated,

I don't believe this lack of compliance is due to recalcitrance on the part of

the educators, but rather a lack of inclusion in the process (we all need the

same goals and vision to achieve a unified outcome), a lack of clear

instruction (we get SO many different messages, deadlines, etc.), a lack of

completing the loop (so many times we've completed assessment or

performed accountability measures, to never again hear what happened to

that data or report…radio silence; the feedback part has to happen to be successful and bring about continuous improvement).

The need for faculty to be trained and educated was apparent. Faculty are not trained in assessment of student learning, they are trained to be experts in their discipline. Therefore a challenge in student learning accountability is the lack of properly trained faculty. "Faculty aren't provided with proper training in education…they become content experts in their field but aren't ever taught how to properly teach or assess content (Interview respondent 3)." Likewise, interview respondent 15 stated, "faculty are not educators by trade…and they'll tell you that."

While the question was posed to the interviewees to think about rewards, incentives, and sanctions within the system as part of their response, many did not seem to think there was a connection. Those that did simply stated there was no reward, incentive, or sanction structure in place; with one interviewee indicating including such a structure sounded like law enforcement, which should not be allowed in higher education.

Table 40

What Challenges Exist in a Student Learning Accountability System? Please Think About Rewards, Incentives, and Sanctions Within the System as Part of Your Response.

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Assessment culture/change	Assessment culture/change
Communication	Communication
Professional development	Professional development
Faculty engagement	Lack of rewards, incentives, sanctions
Student readiness	Value of accountability

Strategies to Address Challenges. The themes that emerged when interviewing both the faculty members and the assessment specialist indicated the strategies to address the challenges to the student learning accountability system deals with budget, professional development and rewards and incentives (Table 41). When speaking with the interviewees one strategy needed to address the challenges was money. Units need funding to do what is asked of them. Interview respondent 2 stated, "the university cannot …institute an accountability system of assessment and sustain improvement without it costing money. There must be a budget put into place to pay for this." Similarly, interview respondent 19 stated an accountability system should be, "linked to performance…it's actually providing reward and incentives that mean something…and I realize that requires a budget." Further, interview respondent 11 stated formative assessment is needed, "the challenge with that is money."

Another strategy to address the challenge is professional development. Many of the respondents felt professional development or some sort of training was needed. For example, "requiring faculty or faculty who plan to teach in higher education to obtain a teaching certificate that requires course sin sound pedagogy, assessment, before stepping in the classroom (interview respondent 3)." Likewise, interview respondent 6 stated, "provide professional development, support faculty in designing good assessment systems, and provide institutional support to develop and maintain a university-wide accountability system." Additional comments related to professional development and the need for training include comments such as, "there has been some training and education, but I don't know that it's been explicitly to remedy a situation that we see needing

fixing…we see some professional development but it's a little more one-on-one (interview respondent 18)" and "university should be provided opportunities to attend workshops (interview respondent 3)" while interview respondent 13 stated, "I found myself wishing that some sessions were offered for professional development purposes for faculty and staff throughout the year…I don't think we do enough here at UK generally with professional development with faculty and staff (interview respondent 13)." Supplemental to the comments above, Interview respondent 15 indicated a strategy to address the challenges of a student learning accountability system is training. "A lot of our faculty when we ask what kinds of things, they want to know how to write better questions, they want to know how to assess critical thinking or multiple choice questions interview respondent 15)."

Another topic that was brought up was related to faculty distribution of effort and rewards and incentives. Interview respondent 4 stated, "another solution is to approach the accountability system from the perspective of the person needing to comply and putting incentives in place for follow through." Similarly, interview respondent 7 stated, "I think we need a little more reward and incentive just for learning some teaching strategies so we can improve the classroom learning experience." Further, "It needs to be in their DOE…could we put in a metric or something…add student-learning assessment as a performance indicator for colleges in the budget model…the provost may be willing to consider this (Interview respondent 12)." In support of rewards and incentives, Interview respondent 19 stated, "linked to performance…it has to be in their DOE. Dean's need to hold their chairs accountable and chairs need to hold their faculty

accountable", while interview respondent 12 stated, "incentivize behavior…add student

learning assessment as a performance indicator for colleges in the budget model."

Table 41

Based on the Challenges Described, What Strategies Might you Offer to Address the Challenges?

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Budget	Budget
Professional development	Distribution of effort
Get rid of assessment	Professional development
Rewards and incentives	Rewards & incentives
Shared partnership	

Communication and Transparency. When asking faculty and accountability

specialists to describe the communication and transparency between faculty,

administrators, and the institution on the topic of student learning accountability both

groups indicated communication was at best minimal (Table 42). They further indicated

the need to be more transparent, lack of leadership, and having actual conversations.

Communication at the university either occurs at a minimal level or not at all.

Interview respondent 4 stated,

> it often feels like administrators are doling out rules and regulations and
>
> forms, with no clear discussions with faculty as to the reasons for each
>
> initiative…communication is difficult…message must be clear, repeated,
>
> and there must be easy access to assistance.

Interview respondent 7 spoke of communication occurring in relation to attrition rates

freshman to sophomore year, but after that, communication doesn't occur and the middle

part of a student college career is where student learning occurs. Similarly, interview respondent 17 stated, "there is none, it's so meaningless. We get reports back on critical thinking, random tests…no one can interpret or knows what it actually means or where it came from." Interview respondent 15 stated, "I would say minimal from us to the faculty", while interview respondent 14 stated, "I don't know that communication really exists between faculty and the institution."

The need for transparency in relation to communication was also mentioned throughout the interviews. Interview respondent 14 stated, "student learning in general seems to be better with administrators and not so good, or transparent, with faculty." Then interview respondent 1 stated,

> it ought to be transparent and everybody out to own up to their own
>
> attitudes, their own perceptions or views. And in the dialogue there should
>
> be a kind of give and take of at least acknowledging that you are trying to
>
> understand somebody else's perspective…doesn't guarantee I agree with
>
> it…this is a part of transparency, and not a threat.

Additionally, interview respondent 18 stated, "in theory…we have demonstrated that its disseminated but we haven't assessed that is be disseminated…it's been disseminated but faculty are not absorbing the information."

Lack of leadership and the need for assessment to be valued by upper administration was discussed a few times throughout the interviews. "I don't think a real case had been made for the value of it. By real value I mean what it can do to improve the

learning that goes on in the classroom. That's the disconnect (Interview respondent 13)."

Similarly, interview respondent 10 stated,

> assessment has to be…determined from the bottom up, the important of it
>
> has to be led from the top down. The Dean isn't going to emphasize it to
>
> the chairs unless he gets the message from the Provost Office that it's
>
> important…not a subunit of the Provost Office.

Interview respondent 12 stated, "communication issues are there…I really don't know, Provost is all about the strategic plan and budget, which is where he should be right now, but sometime soon I'd like to hear, hey, I endorse this assessment." Interview respondent 8 stated, "knowledge is important, so I guess it just depends on the administration. What is the administration willing to back?"

> Lastly, the notion of having actual and conversations was mentioned. Interview respondent 1 stated,

> having an open discussion and getting at least a good idea or better idea of
>
> what people are committing themselves to, here what they want to
>
> accountable for and getting a good picture of it…you might have to train
>
> people on how to listen to other people in an open manner.

Further, interview respondent 16 stated, "a healthy dialogue…if trust exists it makes the conversation much easier." Interview respondent 9 stated communication occurs in pockets, "it may be more of a polite listening versus a true ownership." The lack of opportunity to have open conversations was brought up by interview respondent 17, "there is not enough conversations, we are humans, we need to have conversations. And

in higher education we are humans that like to think and we do not give an opportunity to think because we don't share things."

Table 42

Describe the Communication and Transparency Between Faculty, Administrators, and the Institution Regarding the Topic of Student Learning Accountability.

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Minimal	Minimal
Not enough conversations	Not enough conversations
Transparency	Transparency
Lack of leadership	Lack of leadership

Faculty and Accountability. When interviewing both the faculty and assessment specialists regarding what faculty should be held accountable for in terms of student learning, the common themes that surfaced included: ownership of the process, the learning environment, and teamwork (Table 43).

Faculty should be not only be responsible for the process, but own the process. Interview respondent 11 stated, "faculty are to own the process…they own the process in that they have the power and authority to implement changes." Another respondent stated agreed by stating faculty should be a part of the process, "their courses do what the program designed them to do…also needs to be a part of their DOE (interview respondent 17)." Similarly, interview respondent 1 stated that faculty should also be responsible for the process, "I should be responsible for a fair and productive learning process…my belief would be that if we engage in an honest, mutual process that we probably will get as close to learning outcomes that is required as promised."

The learning environment is also a responsibility by faculty noted by the interviewees. It is "expected that faculty…will create a learning activities in and outside of the classroom to help students achieve the goals (interview respondent 2)." Interview respondent 8 stated, "creating an environment conducive to learning for the student…you have to creative a positive learning environment for them." Similarly, interview respondent 18 stated, "learning environment…the environment should be conducive to you wanting to learn."

Further, the need for teamwork was referenced in the interview process. Interview respondent 5 stated, "faculty should be held accountable to each other, and should refuse to work under the current conditions of speedup and faculty loss." Interview respondent 10 stated, "faculty should as a group, feel that combined team spirit in a department." Likewise, interview respondent 9 stated, "there has to be a certain amount of recognition that you are a team and you have an agreement among the faculty that this is what we will do."

Table 43

Describe What you Think the Faculty Should be Held Accountable for in Terms of Student Learning.

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Process	Process
Learning environment	Learning environment
Teamwork	Teamwork
Modeling	Course-level assessment
Their students	Program-level assessment

Administration and Accountability. Table 44 below shows the themes that became apparent by interviewing both the faculty members and the assessment specialist regarding what the administration should be held accountable for in terms of student learning included: process, supporting faculty and the process via resources, and creating a rewards system/DOE.

Just as faculty should be accountable for the process in terms of student learning, interviewees indicated the need for the administration to facilitate and support the process. "The question is whether they have identified coherent processes for learning, what assistance students should be entitled to, and have they done their best to give each student the best chance for success (Interview respondent 5)." Further, Interview respondent 4 stated, "putting in place effective, clear and simplified systems to report student progress, working with faculty…providing clear communication and regular feedback…we all want the same thing…student success" is important when looking at administration accountability. Interview respondent 2 stated, "obtaining a method for assessment and communication of how well the process is working. Administration should facilitate a means by which the process can be modified and improved over time." Finally, "being able to support the process, and by communicating to the faculty…communicating to them the importance of participation in the process and a timely participation in the process (interview respondent 11)."

Administration should also be accountable for supporting faculty and supporting the process via resources. Interview respondent 10 stated, "resources…Provost should make it clear that resources are going to be distributed based on demonstrated areas of

need." Further, administration should be responsible for supporting the process and the faculty, "support…a clear, passionate, articulation of the case is crucial from the administration…more resources (interview respondent 13)." Interview respondent 6 stated, "providing sufficient support to develop and maintain quality accountability systems, to review and recognize when changes needs to occur." Similarly, interview respondent 1 stated, "they should be supportive of the student/faculty interaction as the primary goal of the university…there has to be some trust…you hired me, you interviewed me, give me a shot…trust the process."

Comments related to the distribution of effort were acknowledged by the accountability specialists, whereas the faculty mentioned comments regarding rewards and incentives. Interview respondent 9 stated, "recognition on the DOEs for this responsibility. Is it an overload it should be recognized as that…shows that the University and college count this to be as important as other activities expected of faculty." Similarly, interview respondent 12 stated, "creating an environment in which those involved in student learning assessment can be successful…adjustment of DOE…conversation in figuring out ways to help people to see its value." On the faculty side, interview respondent 7 stated, "I wanted the administrators to actually execute behavior, consequences, goals, challenges, and more towards learning instead of always being concerned with numbers." Similarly, interview respondent 3 stated, "to reward faculty who are good teachers and hold accountable those who aren't. Teaching should be valued in the same way research is."

Table 44

Describe What you Think the Administration Should be Held Accountable for in Terms of Student Learning.

Conversation topics by faculty	Conversation topics by assessment specialists
Facilitating the process	Facilitating the process
Support faculty	Support via resources
Set up reward/consequences system	Add to distribution of effort
Ensuring the right fit	Provost value

Summary of Findings for Research Question 3. In order to get faculty thinking about accountability, I sought their perception of the institutions accountability system and how such a system is monitored at UK. Sixty-one percent of the faculty survey respondents indicated they did not know of such system, had no perception of the system, indicated the system was ineffective, or there was simply no system in place. What's even more troubling is that 30% also do not know how this said system is being monitored. Some findings that were promising is the fact that 17% indicated the institutions accountability system was adequate, regardless of what accountability meant to them, however there still remains challenges. The interviews suggest that communication, professional development, and assessment culture/change seem to be challenges that exist in the institutions accountability system. Increasing communication and transparency was one way to improve such a system along with trying hold students accountable for the learning that takes place. Further discussions through the interview process suggested that transparency and including faculty in the process, constitutes a solid accountability system. It is clear through the interviews that there is simply not

enough communication or transparency occurring between faculty, administrators, and the institution. The need for faculty to be a part of the process and the need for administrators to facilitate the process along with supporting the process vocally and financially was vital.

The next section discusses the results for research question four. It explores the perceptions of faculty regarding academic freedom and faculty engagement as components in an accountability system.

Research Question 4. Do faculty perceive academic freedom and faculty engagement as critical components in an accountability system?

Role with Uncertainty. There were two questions that aligned to faculty engagement and academic freedom. Respondents from the survey were specifically asked what role does each have in a student learning accountability system. The majority of faculty simply did not know the answer to this question.

Faculty Engagement. When faculty were asked what role does faculty engagement have in an accountability system, 11 themes were identified with 105 coded references. Three themes were apparent. Twenty faculty (19%) stated they did not know. Aside from the short responses such as 'don't know' or 'unsure', other responses in this coded reference included , "not sure because the system disengages faculty (survey respondent 28)" and "nobody asked me about this, I think (survey respondent 17)."

Another 20 faculty (19%) indicated that faculty engagement played a large role. Reponses such as "a major role because faculty have to understand why accountability is important (survey respondent 140)" and "faculty should and must be centrally involved in

and even leaders in development of any and all institutional accountability systems for

both student learning and teaching quality (survey respondent 191)" are some examples

of how the role of faculty engagement should have in an accountability system.

Thirteen faculty (12%) indicated the assessment process. Examples in this theme

included short responses such as 'assessment process', 'reporting', and 'data collection'.

Table 45 provides the categorical aggregation related to faculty engagement. Table

46presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 45

What Role Does Faculty Engagement Have in an Accountability System?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Don't know	20	19%
Large role	20	19%
Assessment process	13	12%
Design and Oversight	12	11%
Other	11	10%
Not engaged	10	10%
Little role	9	9%
No role	7	7%
Faculty-student relationship	3	3%
Learning environment	2	2%
Teacher effectiveness	2	2%
Total coded responses	105	100%
Total respondents	105	100%
No responses	35	33%
Total	140	133%

Table 46

Instructional Faculty Rank: What Role Does Faculty Engagement Have in an Accountability System?

Rank	Don't know	Large role	Assessment process
Tenured	15	13	7
Non-tenured; tenure track	2	2	3
Non-tenured	1	1	1
Endowed professor	0	1	0
Emeritus professor	0	0	1
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	0	1	0
Research professor	0	1	0
Administrator with instructional assignment	1	1	0
Other	1	0	1
Total	20	20	13

Aca*demic Freedom.* When faculty were asked what role does academic freedom have in an accountability system, nine themes were identified with 107 coded references. Twenty-four faculty (22%) indicated they did not know. Seventeen faculty (16%) indicated there was little to no connection between academic freedom and an accountability system. For example, "not much, if it conflicts with program outcomes, educational objectives (survey respondent 88)" and "very little in my department and college and is not really an issue as far as I am concerned (survey respondent 98)."

Faculty should be able to 'teach/assess/determine what they want to' was mentioned by 16 faculty (15%). Faculty were much more vocal with their perceptions regarding academic freedom. Survey respondent 173 stated,

academic freedom is a fundamental of higher education. If you want faculty to be involved in accountability, and you should want that, then the faculty's' academic

freedom must be a "participant" in any process that is developed. Faculty cannot

be ordered to sacrifice their academic freedom in order to conform to somebody

else's notion about how classes should be taught, or what should be taught.

Similarly, survey respondent 35 stated, "Self-governance and "Academic freedom"

means that qualified faculty determine the measures and methods of assessment." A few

faculty indicated the need to preserve academic freedom however there should be a

balance. Survey respondent 129 stated, "students can learn from a variety of styles and

profs, academic freedom needs to be preserved. But feedback should be provided--

everyone can improve." Table 47 provides the categorical aggregation related to

academic freedom. Tables 48 presents the top three themes by instructor rank.

Table 47

What Role Does Academic Freedom Have in an Accountability System?

Theme	Respondents	Percentage
Don't know	24	22%
No role	17	16%
Free to assess, teach, and determine the Outcomes what they want	16	15%
Other	15	14%
Related / coexist / balance	12	11%
Large / essential	8	7%
Little to no connection	6	6%
Negative connotation	4	4%
Punish faculty / restrict teaching	3	3%
A right	2	2%
Total coded responses	107	100%
Total respondents	107	100%
No responses	33	31%
Total	140	131%

Table 48

Instructional Faculty Rank: What Role Does Academic Freedom Have in an Accountability System?

Rank	Don't know	No role	Free to assess, teach, and determine the outcomes what they want
Tenured	17	13	11
Non-tenured; tenure track	5	1	1
Non-tenured	1	2	1
Endowed professor	1	0	1
Emeritus professor	0	1	0
Adjunct instructor/lecturer	0	0	1
Total	24	17	15

Summary of Findings for Research Question 4. When thinking about accountability, I wanted to investigate if faculty engagement or academic freedom played a role in an accountability system. Sixty-eight percent of the faculty survey respondents indicated there was some role, even if little. As for academic freedom, thirty-two percent indicated some role, while many of the comments were territorial in implication. Although the responses were somewhat varied in the extent to the role of faculty engagement and academic freedom in an accountability system, both should be taken into consideration when considering a solid system.

The next section discusses the results for research question five. It explores the conversations at the state level after sharing the findings of the study with the KY-CPE office which is the coordinating board for the state of Kentucky.

Research Question 5. How could a faculty-driven accountability system, described by the only land-grant research university in the state, be adopted as best practice and impact state policy?

Informal interviews were conducted with two representatives from the KY-CPE. Both representatives indicated although a faculty-driven could be used as best practice and a model for institutions across the state, the direct impact on state policy would be more indirect than direct. One specific recommendation from the interviews was to have programs be accountable to institutional-level student learning outcomes, by including this in the accountability system, there would be a direct impact to state policy.

Kentucky has been known to be an innovative State. Dating back to 1997, in tandem with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, KY House Bill 1 created the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), a coordinating board that would oversee higher education in the state. Further, CPE was one of the first coordinating boards to institutive a Statewide Strategic Agenda. Not only was this groundbreaking but also provided a model and best practice for other states. Since Kentucky continues to search for initiatives that would bring national visibility to the state, other states tend to reach out to KY for guidance and direction. Just as states learn from one another, institutions should learn from one another as well. "Kentucky is the 'go to state' for certain national initiatives, what if there were a higher education institution recognized as the 'go to institution' for accountability best practices? (J. Compton, Personal Communication, October 13, 2015)". Institutions should be learning from one another; the ability to share challenges and how such challenges were overcome is key to a successful and

collaborative relationship. If such a system were to be integrated into the fabric of an institution, as large as UK is, it could certainly be a model for other institutions. Both institutions and states have priorities and there has to be some form of practical reality. While there is not a direct impact to state policy by creating a faculty-driven accountability system at the only research I institution in the state, there could be a trickle-up effect. Accountability refers to a way of monitoring both inputs and outputs to gauge health of higher educational institutions (Brenneman et al., 2010, p. 34). Learning from sharing can only help institutions improve, allowing them to become healthy and productive institutions. State policy is affected by the inputs and outputs of institutions in their state, the more healthy and productive their institutions are the more stable state policy becomes.

The next section discusses additional insights faculty had indicated on the survey, as well as the results from the document gathering process.

Additional insights. The last survey question asked if the respondents had any additional comments regarding their institutions accountability system. Sixty-four faculty responded to this question. The comments indicated by faculty ranged from accountability being challenging, they were not aware of such system, communication remains an issue, faculty engagement is critical, and lack of campus buy-in.

Document gathering. Document gathering was not central to this research study; rather it was an additional method to help support the findings. The validity of documents or archival records should be reviewed conscientiously and only used to support evidence already gathered (Tellis, 1997). Documents pertaining to governing and administrative

regulations were pulled from researching the Universities Regulations Library. Key

words were entered into the search function and included 'academic freedom',

'accountability', 'assessment', 'compliance', 'workload', and 'distribution of effort'.

Thirty-two out of 99 administrative regulations and nine of 14 governing regulations

were pulled that had some connection to the words above, whether directly or indirectly.

For example, Assessment was apparent in *AR1:4 The Planning, Assessment, and*

Budgeting Cycle, but then under AR1:4 related materials, there were three additional

regulations tied to AR1:4, therefore all four regulations were pulled. All documents were

uploaded into NVivo 10 for analysis. A word frequency query was ran on the key words

noted above. References were removed if the key word was listed as a section header or

office name. Table 49 provides a breakdown of the key words, the number of sources the

key word was found, and the number of times the key word was referenced. A list of all

Adminsitrative and governing regulations pulled for this study can be found in Appendix

A.

Table 49

Regulations with Key Words

	Governing regulations		Administrative regulations	
Academic freedom				
Total sources/ Total pulled	4/9	GR1,GR2, GR10	3/32	AR2-1-1, AR2-9, AR6-3
References	10		4	
Accountability				
Total sources/ Total pulled	3/9	GR1,GR2, GR14	5/32	AR1-1, AR1-4, AR1-6, AR3-14, AR3-16
References	4		5	
Assessment				
Total sources/ Total pulled	0/9	None Referenced	10/32	AR1-1, AR1-4, AR3-10, AR3-16, AR4-9, AR5-1, AR6-8, AR8-8, AR10-3, AR10-5
References	0		53	
Compliance				
Total sources/ Total pulled	3/9	GR2,GR10, GR14	10/32	AR1-1, AR1-5, AR1-6, AR2-1-1, AR3-14, AR3-16, AR6-3, AR6-7, AR8-8, AR10-3
References	19		34	
Distribution of Effort				
Total sources/ Total pulled	2/9	GR7, G14	5/32	AR2-2-1, AR2-4, AR3-8, AR3-10, AR3-11
References	2		19	
Workload				
Total sources/ total pulled	0/9	None Referenced	2/32	AR2-6, AR3-8
References	0		38	

Governing regulations. In reviewing the regulations and the key words above, the

term *academic freedom* was listed as one of the guiding values of the University (GR1;

GR14), when discussing employment of faculty, particularly the violation of academic

freedom (GR10), and under the responsibilities of the board of trustees (GR2). The term

accountability does not seem to be referenced very many times throughout the

regulations, used only three times. As the term relates to the governing regulations,

accountability was listed as one of the guiding values of the University (GR1; GR14),

when discussing fiscal responsibility (GR14), and under the responsibilities of the board

of trustees (GR2). *Compliance* was referenced more than any other word when it came to

the governing regulations with18 times, 11 of those were specifically referenced in,

'Governing Regulation 14: Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct'. "The University of

Kentucky Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct document the University's

expectations of responsibility and integrity by its members" (UK, GR14, p. 2). The other

sources that included the term compliance were related to the board of trustees (GR 2)

and the appointment of faculty (GR10). *Distribution of effort* was referenced once in

relation to conflict of interest for faculty appointment and outside activities (GR 14) and

again as it relates Department Chair's responsibility (GR7). The terms *assessment* and

workload were not referenced in any of the nine governing regulations that were pulled.

     Administrative regulations. The term *academic freedom* was referenced a total of

four times in 3 different sources; twice under faculty appointment and granting of tenure

(AR2-1-1), once in the regulation for lecturer series faculty (AR2-9), and once when

discussing the preservation of research under the regulation related to environmental

health and safety (AR6-3). The term *accountability* was referenced in the administrative

regulations in five different areas: (a) responsibility of positions within the Office of the

President - specifically the Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning, and

Effectiveness (AR1-1), (b) budgeting practices (AR1-4), (c) upholding the governing and

administrative regulations (AR1-6), (d) practice plans for the health colleges (AR3-14),

and (e) in the reviews of the Chief Academic Officers (AR3-16). *Assessment* was

referenced more than any other word when it came to the governing regulations with 53

times, 34 of those were specifically referenced in, 'Administrative Regulation 1-4:

Institutional Effectiveness: The Planning, Assessment, and Budgeting Cycle'. "This Administrative Regulation establishes the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for institutional effectiveness activities at the University. Decisions regarding institutional effectiveness activities are a collaborative and consultative process among University stakeholders" (UK, AR 1:4, p. 1). The other sources that included the term assessment were related to: (a) finance, the position of the Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration (AR10-3) and e-signature transactions (AR10-5), (b) the position responsibilities of the Vice President for Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (AR1-1), (c) faculty performance reviews, specifically assessment of teaching (AR3-10) and (d) in the reviews of the Chief Academic Officers (AR3-16). *Compliance* was referenced 34 times and was constant throughout the 10 sources. Compliance was referenced in relation to the below:

- Institutional data and Kentucky Revised Statutes (AR10-3),

- UK administrative organization and job responsibilities (AR1-1),

- Substantive change related to SACSCOC (AR1-5),

- Upholding university regulations (AR1-6),

- Faculty Appointment, specifically Dossier (AR2-1-1),

- Practice plans for health colleges (AR3-14),

- Review of Chief Academic Officers (AR3-16),

- Environmental Health and Safety (AR6-3),

- Campus Security (AR 6-7), and

- Identify theft protection (AR8-8)

Distribution of Effort was referenced 19 times in five different sources relating to faculty appointment in tenure positions (AR2-2-1), faculty appointment in special title series positions (AR2-4), faculty workload policy statement (AR3-8), faculty performance reviews (AR3-10), and tenured faculty review (AR3-11). *Workload* was referenced 38 times in only two sources. Thirty-seven of those references resided in 'AR 3-8: Faculty Workload Policy Statement'. "Workload may be defined as all faculty activities related to essential professional activities and responsibilities: teaching, research and creative activity, interacting with students, clinical care, institutional and professional service, service to the community, and professional development" (UK, AR3-8, p. 1). The other source where workload was referenced was in AR 2-6 which discussed the areas of activity for clinical title series faculty.

  Job descriptions. Just as with the university regulations, job description collection was not central to this research study, rather it was an additional method to help support the findings. Before July 1, 2015 job descriptions for faculty related academic and administrative positions were not publicly available online through the university employment portal. Six job descriptions were collected before July 1 by searching the internet. Positions included one of each of the following: dean, associate dean, department chair, director of undergraduate studies, faculty position, and lecturer position. After July 1, another search was conducted through the university employment portal and 19 faculty positions were located. The faculty positions ranged from research faculty to associate, assistant, part-time and lecturer positions. Of all 25 job descriptions

collected, only three of those included the terms assessment or accountability. The three

positions were Dean, Associate Dean, and Director of Undergraduate Studies. The

department chair or any faculty position had no mention of assessment or accountability

activities in the position description.

Findings

Institutional policy largely impacts student learning, state policy impacts funding

related to student learning, and federal policy has very little impact, if any, on student

learning. It is evident from the results that faculty do see some purpose for assessing

student learning, with the majority indicating the purpose is for students to achieve

competency. They came to understand this purpose through experience. Eighty-five

percent of respondents to the survey had been employed for at least six years. It is still of

concern that 20% of faculty indicated the primary purpose was to satisfy accreditors, state

or federal requirements. Further when asked what student learning assessment at UK is

committed to, 13% indicated accreditation and/or stakeholder requirements. This

indicates there is still a need to educate faculty on the importance of assessing student

learning for commitment purposes rather than compliance purposes. Of even greater

concern is when asked about UK's student learning requirements, the responses received

was of wide variance. Many indicated the requirements were fine, others indicated they

were burdensome or time consuming, and some faculty indicated they didn't even know

there were any student learning requirements. Further, 48% of faculty indicated their

institution did not have shared principles governing student learning assessment. A

connection can be made from the findings of the survey to the findings from the

interviews that indicate communication and transparency between faculty, administrators, and the institution was, at best, minimal. When asked about an accountability system, the responses were scattered with no clear or articulated themes. The majority of the responses tended to reside on the negative side, with responses such as: don't know, no perception, ineffective, better than nothing, or useless. If faculty truly have no perception of UKs accountability system, then asking them how it is monitored is unfair. We can see that in their response to the monitoring question, where 30% of faculty indicated, don't know. According to the interviews, an accountability system should be faculty driven, transparent, integrated, and professional development (educate campus-wide). If faculty where unable to provide their perceptions of UK's accountability system, it is fair to say that UK does not have a solid system as described by the interviewees. Based on the responses, instructional faculty saw a connection between faculty engagement in an accountability system more so than academic freedom. Communication and transparency was cited by 22% of faculty when asked how to improve student learning accountability at UK, 19% addressed the issue of student accountability, and 9% indicated to get rid of it.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The researcher took steps to ensure goodness of quality criteria. In a constructivism paradigm the focus on quality is through trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Triangulation can be used to achieve trustworthiness, credibility, and conformability. Triangulation was sought through multiple methods including a qualitative survey, interviews with faculty, interviews with accountability

specialist, and document gathering. The interviews with the accountability specialists and the document gathering provided informational support to the study and helped validate faculty perceptions. Throughout the analysis, NVivo was used to help store and organize all data in a central location. Writing pads were retained to keep notes, thoughts, and questions throughout the analysis stage. Dependability was achieved through the code and re-code method described by Krefting (1991).

Summary

Chapter 4 detailed the data collection, analysis, and findings produced as a result of the 140 returned surveys from the instructional faculty, the eight interviews with faculty, and the 11 interviews with assessment specialists all from UK. By using a case study approach to examining the raw data produced from the surveys, interviews, and data gathering; the researcher was able to gain insight through the faculty lens on the student learning accountability movement which can lead to best practices in student learning and a faculty driven accountability model for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Chapter 5 provides the interpretation of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I bring together issues raised in the literature review and the results of the study. I start by providing an overview of the study. I then provide an interpretation of the key findings as they are related to each research question, along with a summary of my discussion. Additionally, I share a proposed model for a faculty-driven accountability system, one that I hope can be used across the state of Kentucky. Next, I describe the implications for social change, as well as recommendations for action and further research, and end with a conclusion.

Overview of the Study

Faculty continue to see the added accountability responsibilities placed upon them by the changing nature of higher education. Further a threat of stability for faculty, such as disengagement in the classroom or the institution or becoming less inclined to provide a quality education, was of concern due to lack of true support from faculty, or what I would call deep engagement in accountability type initiatives. Little research has addressed the components of academic freedom and faculty engagement as key to an accountability system, and no literature exists on faculty perceptions regarding the accountability movement as a whole (taking into account federal, state, and institutional policy) or their views on their own institution's accountability system.

The purpose of this qualitative single-design case study was to explore faculty perceptions on the student learning accountability movement. Supporting information was also collected, such as interviews with accountability specialists, institutional

regulations, and job descriptions. The implication for social change is a direct result of understanding faculty perspectives and providing a proposed faculty-driven accountability system at UK, one that might be seen as a model for best practice across the Commonwealth.

The central research question for this study was: How can understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement help to promote policy within the institution such as a faculty-driven accountability system? Specific sub-questions for this study include:

RQ1. How has the student learning accountability movement impacted faculty perceptions?

RQ2: How do faculty perceive their insitutions student learning assessment requirements?

RQ3: How do faculty perceive their institutional accountability system?

RQ4: Do faculty perceive academic freedom and faculty engagement as critical components in an accountability system?

RQ5: How could a faculty-driven accountability system, described by the only land-grant research university in the state, be adopted as best practice and impact state policy?

Levin's system of acountabtility was used as the conceptual framework for this study, with constructivim as the qualitative approach. Ontology (reality) allows for full undertstanding of faculty perceptions, giving faculty the chance to descirbe their views. I wanted to give faculty the opportunity to desribe, in realtion to the student learning

accountability movement, "how things really are" and "how things really work" at the Univesity of Kentucky. The ability to reform reality on a specfic topic is possible through constructivism. The environment in which faculty work is their reality, and by gaining an undertstanding of their perceptions on the student learning accountbaility movement, the insitution can begin reconsideration of an accountabilty system, one that is based on faculty reality. A concentrated effort was made while examining the data to ensure the themes that developed were conceived as a result of survey and interview responses. While I have personal experience in assessment and student learning in higher education, this experience only served to assist in recognizing patterns that emerged in the data as a result of coding procedures. Content analysis using NVivo 10 and categorical aggregation (Stake, 2010), resulted in common themes among participants. The results of the study were detailed in Chapter 4 with the key findings discussed below:

Interpretation of Findings

While Chapter 4 provided specific results for each survey and interview question asked of participants, Chapter 5 discusses the meaning behind the findings in relation to the literature from Chapter 2.

Discussion of Findings to the Central Research Question

The central research question for this study was: How can understanding faculty perspectives on the student learning accountability movement help to promote policy within the institution such as a faculty-driven accountability system? Themes from all sub-questions provided insight into how one might create policies and procedures to address accountability activities in an institution of higher education.

Providing a model for institutions across the state of Kentucky on what a faculty-driven accountability system could possibly look like will at the least provide a starting place for conversations on the subject.

Discussion of Findings to the Impact of Student Learning

Research question 1 asked: How has the student learning accountability movement impacted faculty perceptions? The impact of the student learning accountability movement varied depending on level. Accountability at the institutional level had the most direct impact on student learning, while the state and federal levels were more related to funding. According to Harvey and Knight (1996), the accountability movement encourages compliance, which can have a negative impact on teaching and learning (p. 95). The findings of this study do not support Harvey and Knight, however. Only 7% of respondents indicated a negative impact connected to compliance. Furthermore, only 19% indicated that the movement (federal, state, and institutional policies) had a negative impact. Even the negative impact comments were not directly related to teaching and learning; rather, the focus was on funding, standardizations across states, and politics. Faculty and accountability specialists alike indicated that the accountability movement had made them more aware of the discussions taking place in and out of the classroom. Sixty-one percent of faculty indicated the accountability movement as a whole (federal, state, and institutional policies) had a large impact on student learning, with 34% indicating the impact was performance based. While this is not a large percentage, it's clear that the movement impacted student learning to some degree.

Discussion of Findings to Institutional Assessment Requirements

Research question 2 asked: How do faculty perceive their insitutions student learning assessment requirements? I wouldn't go as far as author Shray and say that faculty are proponents of assessment, however they do agree that an important factor, or purpose of assessment, is to provide a quality education and to ensure students achieve student learning outcomes (Shray, 2006, p. 6). Do some faculty still perceive that assessment is for compliance reasons? Yes, of course. Forty-seven percent of faculty agree the purpose of assessing student learning is for students to achieve competency and improve their overall learning experience. Similarly, faculty indicated that student learning assessment at UK reflects a commitment to ensuring student competency, quality education and improvement. While the faculty understand the purpose of assessment, nearly half indicated they did not have shared principles governing student learning assessment. For this reason, it makes sense that again, nearly half of faculty responded with negative comments regarding the institutions student learning assessment requirements. Further, a small portion (20%) indicate the primary purpose of assessment is to satisfy accreditors or federal and state requirements, while 23% describing how student learning at UK is a commitment to accreditors or federal and state requirements. The findings from this study align closely to those from the Welsh & Metcalf study on accreditation-driven activities (2003, pp. 40-41). In supporting the institutions student learning assessment requirements, faculty should focus on: (a) institutional commitment rather than compliance, (b) be involved in the design and implementation of a solid

accountability system, (c) provided the opportunities for continuous professional development, and (d) promote quality rather than quantity.

Discussion of Findings to an Accountability System

Research question 3 asked: How do faculty perceive their institutional accountability system? As CHEA indicates, there is little consensus about what constitutes successful accountability for all higher education institutions, (2011, p. 19); but what is important is to begin the conversation with faculty perceptions at the forefront, which is the focus of this study. As shared in chapter 2, there is difficulty to obtain any clear understanding on the true nature of accountability when so many are redefining it in their own terms (Bovens, 2010, p. 946). This was clearly evident in reviewing faculty responses to questions related to their institutions accountability system. Information collected indicated faculty's reality regarding an accountability system was scattered at best with majority responses being negative in connotation. Only 17% signified the accountability system was fair or adequate, with the majority of faculty simply not knowing how to answer this question. According to Romanelli, accountability can also be seen as a threat, encouraging process without purpose, (2013, p. 2). This study discloses that faculty understand that the purpose of assessment is to improve, providing a quality education and ensuring student learning outcomes are met, what they haven't done is embrace accountability and balance the relationship between the two. Accountability, if truly genuine, should raise the bar of expectations for learning while triggering intelligent investments and change strategies relating to policy that make it possible to actually achieve such high level expectations (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2014,

p. 5). The interviews findings suggested that an accountability system should be faculty driven, transparent, and integrated. Challenges of an accountability system revealed through this study include communication, professional development, and assessment culture/change. Increasing communication and transparency can help to improve such a system. As the call for accountability increases, the growing demand for openness and transparency in higher education institutions also amplifies.

Discussion of Findings to Academic Freedom and Faculty Engagement

Research question 4 asked: Do faculty perceive academic freedom and faculty engagement as critical components in an accountability system? Andrade (2011) indicated that with of fear of budget cuts, loss of positions, and program discontinuation, many argue that the assessment process restricts academic freedom (p. 218). I did not see this come out in the responses from faculty. In fact no one mentioned fear of budget cuts, loss of positions, or program discontinuation. Rather, faculty indicated they didn't know of a connection, there wasn't a connection, or simply reiterated the importance of having the freedom to teach, assess, and determine the outcomes they want. According to Chen, Lattuca, & Hamilton (2008) faculty should be well concerned in creating an environment that promotes a student's engagement in learning (p. 339). This study showed faculty are truly well concerned in promoting a strong learning environment. Whether directly or indirectly, experience and engagement guided faculty in answering the questions the way they did, with 68% of faculty indicating faculty engagement played a role.

Discussion of Findings to a Faculty-Driven Accountability System and the Impact

on State Policy

Research question 5 asked: How could a faculty-driven accountability system, described by the only land-grant research university in the state, be adopted as best practice and impact state policy? As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, Ball indicated transparency could be defined as a complex tool of good governance in programs, policies, organizations, and privacy (2009, p. 293). Further, the definition calls for policymakers to look at transparency in conjunction with accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness (Ball, 2009, p. 293). This study provides a great deal of faculty perceptions as they relate to the accountability movement. One challenge that is evident is the issue of transparency and communication. Although it is critical that faculty embrace the accountability movement, HEIs cannot expect such embrace to occur without being transparent and open. This begins at the upper administration level; supporting the process and supporting the faculty. It is my hope that the findings of this research can be shared with all HEIs in the Commonwealth to aid their institutions in creating a faculty-driven accountability system.

As Kentucky's higher education coordinating board approaches it next strategic plan, 2016-2020, one specific area is focused on success. Success is defined in the draft version of their plan as, "ensure more people complete college with the skills and abilities to be productive, engaged citizens" (CPE, 2015, p. 3). Promoting excellence through teaching and learning is one objective to gauge the level of success institutions have. While a one-size fits all model for an accountability system is impracticable, exploring

faculty perceptions on the accountability movement as a whole can assist HEIs to design and implement a faculty-driven accountability system on their campus. One that not only addresses the needs of their individual campus, but also addresses the objectives and metrics set forth in the KY statewide strategic plan. Since there is currently no state policy on student learning or performance of student learning in Kentucky, in order to directly impact state policy, the campuses would need to create institutional-level student learning outcomes. Achieving this would be a complete paradigm shift, but one that would directly impact state policy through the general education and program review student learning policies currently in place (M. Bell, Personal Communication, October 20, 2015).

Interpretation of Findings Summary

While the focus of this study was on faculty perceptions of the student learning accountability movement, and incorporating faculty engagement and academic freedom as key components to such system, it is clear that is not where the issues rest within a solid accountability system. Faculty do perceive faculty engagement and academic freedom as fundamental components, however how those components are actually connected to accountability was uncertain. What appears to be missing is the transparency component, described by Ewell and Jones (2006), which is one of the concepts for institutional and faculty accountability. I proposed combining Ewell & Jones concepts of institutional and faculty accountability with Levin's system of accountability, the conceptual framework, which guided this study.

The process of Levin's system of accountability begins with the polity, in this case the institution, addressing its educational outcomes for the university. The next step is for those outcomes to be communicated and transparent to college/department/unit leads. All institutions have sets of constituencies with each having their own set of goals. Because the constituencies have different views and beliefs, create coalitions, and hold their own individual power; conflict can arise between the constituencies. A political process is needed to focus on what's important. The political process is naturally driven by educational demands such as federal, state, and institutional policies. Once the political process is drafted and conflict has been reconciled, an institution can achieve the outcome set forth. This entire process is what Levin suggests as the system of accountability. Below represents a proposed model of a faculty-driven accountability system, with specific necessities from the institutional, faculty, and the process occurring between the phenomena – the feedback loop.
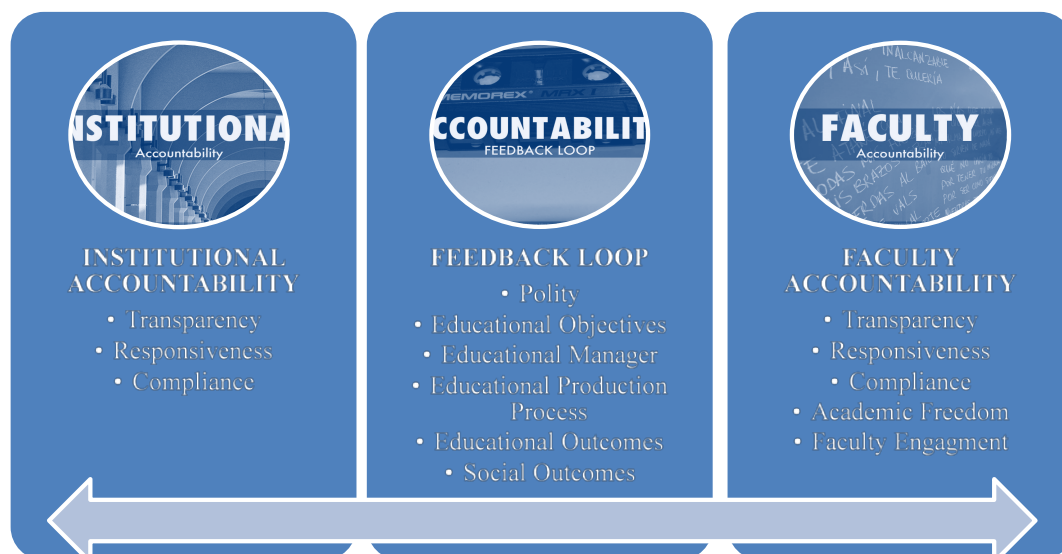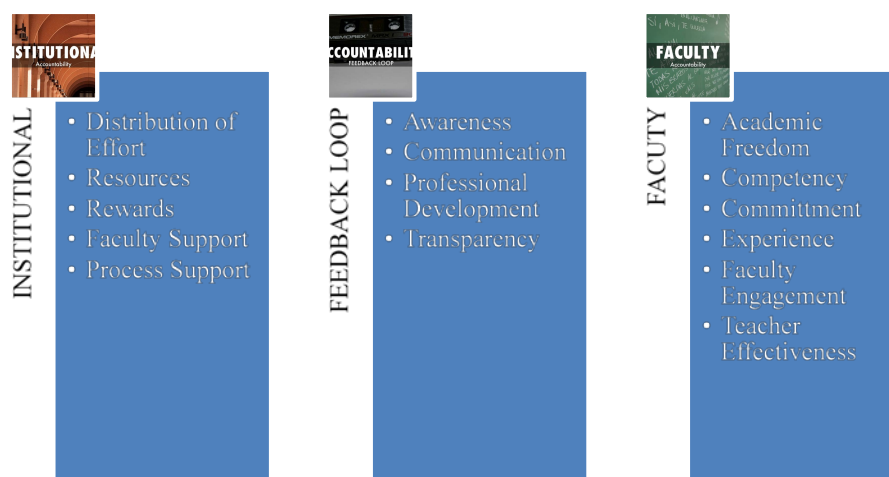
Faculty-Driven System of Accountability

Figure 5. **Proposed model of a faculty-driven accountability system**

Implications for Social Change

This study explored the perceptions of faculty on student learning accountability movement. It was not my intention to prove anything, but rather focus on discovering. I did this by gathering information on how the accountability movement has shaped faculty

perceptions, information can then be shared to faculty, administrators, and higher education policymakers which can lead to improving student learning at the institutional level. Implications for social change related to this study revolved around: (a) allowing faculty to share their perspectives on the student learning accountability movement, (b) allowing HEIs to make informed decisions concerning student learning, (c) creating best practice policies that take into account faculty perceptions, and (d) providing a faculty-driven accountability system that could be used as a model for HEIs in the state of Kentucky. The accountability landscape in higher education has been a gradual shift beginning in the 1960s through today due to economic changes and concerns with performance and efficiency measures (Zumeta, 2011). This study provides HEIs with practical recommendations that might be implemented at their institution to address accountability pressures and provides a faculty-driven accountability model that can guide institutions towards thinking about the accountability system currently in place on their campuses.

Recommendations for Action

While the case study research were low in numbers and not all faculty participated, those involved provided important perceptions one should consider when developing an accountability system. There are several recommendations that I believe if acted up, would further support the literature and advance HEIs in the accountability arena. I am calling these recommendations for action.

Recommendation 1: Develop a Faculty-Driven Accountability Plan

Just as strategic plans are drafted for HEIs, so should accountability plans. Daigle and Cucocco (2002) indicated public accountability in higher education is needed in order to be effective. In reviewing the results of the study, the majority of faculty indicate there is no such system at UK. It is recommended that HEIs establish an accountability plan, one that is faculty-driven. Shadowing the proposed model, as shown in Figure 5 above, can provide structure needed to embrace the accountability movement while continuing to be successful in academic excellence through teaching and learning activities.

Recommendation 2: Implement an Assessment Faculty Fellow Program

Institutions are encouraged to develop an assessment faculty fellow program, one that is fully supported by upper administration. Andrade discusses the need for faculty buy-in; strategies are needed to aid in managing and encouraging faculty involvement (Andrade, 2011, p. 218). Creating such a program would address the lack of faculty training occurring in the discipline of assessment and provide strategies to increase faculty engagement. It was clear throughout the study that faculty are experts in their particular area, but not in assessment or even in teaching for that matter. A program focused on recruiting cohorts of faculty each year and working on deep engagement in assessment provides another means to embrace accountability. Further, with upper administrative support, faculty will incontestably realize that assessment is to be valued and is fully supported by upper administration, and remains an educational outcome for the institution.

Recommendation 3: Include Accountability Activities in the Faculty Distribution of Effort and/or Create a Reward Structure As it Relates to Funding.

The need for faculty to truly know that there work is not going unnoticed and to place value on accountability type activities, such activities should be included in faculty DOE. This percentage should be consistent across the institution. Furthermore, creating a reward structure as it relates to funding would also recognize the value the institution places on student learning accountability. For example, bonus funding (not base funding) could be given to those colleges that see deep engagement by faculty. Welsh & Metcalf's observation that "attention to such things as clearly defining roles of participants, providing resources to learn and implement…activities and rewards and recognition are critical in generating faculty support" (2003, p. 41). Husiman and Currie stated, "If institutional leaders do not translate the policies into institutional mechanisms, then nothing changes" (2004, p. 549). Including accountability activities in the faculty distribution of effort and/or creating some form of reward structure as it relates to funding is one way to show faculty that institutional leaders support the process and support faculty.

Recommendations for Further Research

Exploring faculty perceptions on the accountability is just the beginning. It was hopeful that once I conducted this study, the findings can be shared with faculty and administration to increase their knowledge and become more educated on the topic. Constructivism's relativism can be multifaceted with conflicting realities amongst colleagues but also has the ability to reform as said colleagues acquire further knowledge

and become more educated on the topic (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). Continuation research should share the findings of this study with faculty in their institutions in a focus group type setting to further examine if these results are generalizable to the larger population.

A change in methodology might also be appropriate. Using a case study methodology, the results could be seen as narrow-minded. One may choose to complete a quantitative study utilizing a statistical survey. For this, however, one would need to use existing literature to draft such instrument. Further, based on the results from this study, one could create a quantitative study by surveying faculty. A quantitative survey may allow for increased respondents participating rather than the few that would contribute in a focus group type setting. Further, the results from the qualitative study could be ranked in order of importance for the quantitative study.

Conclusion

The issue with faculty is not that they are not willing to embrace the accountability movement or that they will be less included to provide a quality education and become disengaged in the classroom due to accountability, but more related to the feeling of being left out of the loop, not supported, and not trained appropriately.

At the most recent Kentucky Governors Conference on Higher Education, Dr. Kirwan indicated the need for Higher Education Boards of Trustees to implement an accountability plan in conjunction with the institutions strategic plan (2015). This one comment has resonated with me. Accountability is the new paradigm for higher education, not only for faculty, but also for Presidents and Board of Trustees. Rather than

fight a battle that cannot be one, embrace accountability and become better - better Institutions, better presidents, better administrators, better faculty - so that we can ensure we are graduating better students who can get better jobs. Higher education Institutions need to understand the importance of having an accountability system, but one that is truly driven by faculty.

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Appendix A: Document Gathering

Administrative Regulations and Governing Regulations

GR 1	The University of Kentucky (Definition)
GR 2	Governance of the University of Kentucky
GR 10	Regulations Affecting Employment
GR 14	Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct
GR 7	University Organization
AR 1-1	University of Kentucky Administrative Organization
AR 1-4	The Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Cycle
AR 1-5	Substantive Change Policy
AR 1-6	Formulation and Issuance of University Governing Regulations and Administrative Regulations
AR 2-1-1	Procedures for Faculty Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and the Granting of Tenure – 7/01/2011
AR 2-4	Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, and the Granting of Tenure in the Special Title Series
AR 2-6	Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion in the Clinical Title Series
AR 2-9	Lecturer Series Faculty
AR 3-8	Faculty Workload Policy Statement
AR 3-10	Policies for Faculty Performance Review
AR 3-11	Tenured Faculty Review and Development Policy
AR 3-14	Practice Plans for Health Sciences Colleges and University Health Services
AR 3-16	Review of Chief Administrative Officers of the University
AR 4-9	International Education Travel
AR 5-1	Policies and Procedures on Postdoctoral Scholars, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Visiting Scholars
AR 6-3	Environmental Health and Safety
AR 6-7	Policy on Disclosure of Campus Security and Crime Statistics
AR 6-8	Sustainability Advisory Committee
AR 8-8	Identity Theft Prevention Program
AR 10-3	Institutional Data Management and Systems Acquisition
AR 10-5	Electronic Signatures Policies and Procedures