STEERING AGAINST THE TIDE? PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY AT AMHERST COLLEGE

Letha Gayle-Brissett

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STEERING AGAINST THE TIDE? PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY AT AMHERST COLLEGE

A Dissertation Presented

by

LETHA D. GAYLE-BRISSETT

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2019

College of Education
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To my loving, caring, patient and supportive family
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to my family and friends, my dissertation committee, my EPRA Cohort colleagues and the research participants.

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ABSTRACT

STEERING AGAINST THE TIDE? PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY AT AMHERST COLLEGE

MAY 2019

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One of the more significant success stories of inclusion in US higher education has been that of Amherst College’s transformation into a highly diverse student body. This research examines the role and effect of presidential leadership in Amherst College’s diversity achievement. Using a case study design, data was collected from interviews with then President Anthony Marx, various members of the College community who were central stakeholders in the diversity initiative, and selected archival original College documents. The research draws on Bolman and Deal’s (2003) organizational leadership framework to analyze how various institutional dimensions of the College were challenged and changed to facilitate greater inclusion of an increasingly diverse student body. The study finds that Amherst College’s successful diversity and inclusion program was largely a function of transformative presidential leadership in significant areas. At the initial level, the president was able to capitalize on the national and global demand for increased access to quality higher education, as well as Amherst
College’s founding principle of inclusion, to sell the vision to Amherst College’s stakeholders. Secondly, successful transformative leadership was based on the president’s ability to develop and implement practical and structural mechanisms in areas of management and financing to recruit and ultimately support a more diverse student body. Finally, the research highlights that transformative presidential leadership is also contextual and must be based on both the educational institution and the environment in which it operates.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Background of Amherst College</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Story of Amherst College and the Formation of its Values and Ethos</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Founding of the College</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifty Years After the College's Opening</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst Becomes a Co-educational Institution</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony W. Marx: A Brief Background</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Argument for Diversifying Higher Education</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A History of Institutional Exclusion</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Factors Restricting Access</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Cost of Higher Education</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Social and Cultural Capital</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of College Preparation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership in Higher Education</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theorizing Leadership</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Theory</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Theory</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional Leadership Theory</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presidential Leadership for Diversity .......................................................... 42
Nature of Institutions .................................................................................. 43
Organizational Leadership .......................................................................... 47
Conceptual Framework ................................................................................ 48

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD ...................................................... 50
   Selection of the Case ................................................................................. 51
   Boundaries of the Study ............................................................................ 52
   Data Collection .......................................................................................... 53
       Document Selection .............................................................................. 54
       Interviews .............................................................................................. 55
       Interview Protocol and Main Questions to Guide the Research ........... 55
   Participant Selection .................................................................................. 56
   Data Coding, Analysis and Interpretation ................................................ 57
       Inductive Approach .............................................................................. 58
       Deductive Data Analysis .................................................................... 59
       Document Analysis .............................................................................. 62
   Making the Research Ethical and Trustworthy ....................................... 63
   Positionality ............................................................................................... 65
   Limitations of the Study ............................................................................ 68

4. RESULTS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ..................................................... 70
   How did the Vision of a More Inclusive Campus Emerged? What are the
       Drivers? ..................................................................................................... 70
       Pressing Social Conditions Aligned with Organizational
           Support Systems .................................................................................. 71
       Leader's Personal Values Intersect with the College's Founding
           Principles .............................................................................................. 79
   Summary of the Findings of the First Sub-question .................................. 84
   What are the Factors that Aided Amherst to Increase its Racial and Socio-
       economic Diversity in the Student Body? ............................................. 85
       Selling the Vision: On and Off Campus Constituencies ....................... 87
       Developing the Administrative and Implementation Infrastructure ....... 93
       Empowering Admission Staff to Develop and Implement Various
Recruitment Strategies ................................................................. 95
Financing the Vision: Recruitment, Students and Fundraising .......... 104
Finance For Diversity Access Initiative................................. 105
Financial Support ........................................................................... 106
Fundraising Initiative - Lives of Consequence Campaign........... 109

Summary of the Findings for the Second Sub-question ................. 114

In What Ways did the President's Management and Leadership Style Influence
Key Stakeholders in the Amherst College Community? .................. 116

Summary of the Findings for the Third Sub-question ................. 125

5. DISCUSSION, RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION ........ 127

Interpretation of the Findings Through Each Component of Bolman and Deal
Organizational Leadership Framework....................................... 128

The Structural Frame ................................................................ 128
The Political Frame .................................................................... 131
The Human Resource Frame ...................................................... 133
The Symbolic Frame .................................................................. 136

An Aggregate Analysis of the Organizational Leadership Frames .... 138
Transformational Leadership ...................................................... 141
Implications of the Research ..................................................... 148
Further Research ....................................................................... 151
Conclusion .................................................................................. 151

APPENDICES .................................................................................. 157
A. INFORMED CONSENT FORM ......................................................... 158
B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS ................................................................. 159
C. SOURCING DOCUMENTS .............................................................. 160
D. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED ............................................................. 161
E. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL/INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .................. 162
F. SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT CODING ............................................ 164
BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................ 165
**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sub-questions for Theme Development</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Features of Bolman and Deal Four-Frame of Organizational Leadership</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Statistics of Students Enrolled in Class of 2019</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Alumni Achievement 50 Years After the College's Opening</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Amherst College Student Body Characteristics Post-1974</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>First-Year Enrollments of Black Students at High-Ranking Liberal</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts Colleges, Fall 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Analytic Framework</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Scholars have emphasized that educational institutions reproduce social divisions based on wealth, privilege, and power through the interaction of three sources of capital—economic, cultural, and social (Bourdieu, 1985). The higher education field is said to be particularly prone to displaying this phenomenon, partly due to its increasingly consequential role in national economic advancement and individual success (Hill, Hoffman & Rex, 2005). With the greater rewards of and demands for higher education, the costs have also increased, making it more difficult for low-income students to access. In some ways, economic costs have also served as a proxy for social and cultural barriers to entry. This is evident in our society, because while more students on aggregate are accessing higher education, minority and low-income students continue to enroll in colleges at much lower rates than other students (Kezar, 2000; Perna, 2006; St. John, Musoba & Simmons, 2003).

Due to the high cost associated with higher education, students with higher income—generally Caucasian—tend to dominate enrollment in many of the top liberal arts colleges and Ivy League universities in the US because they have greater access to economic, cultural and social capital (Hill, Winston & Boyd, 2005). Students from families with higher incomes have the structural advantages of the dominant values and preparation that Ivy League and elite colleges desire, and they are connected with the social networks that give them the access to high quality higher educational institutions (Lareau, 2003). The practice of this structure of education creates an inequitable distribution of resources and consequently lower socio-economic students have less access to higher education,
particularly at historically elite institutions, which normally graduate some of the most influential people in the society.

Thus, the historical reality is that low-income students disproportionately access higher education at much lower rates compared to their more elite counterparts. The rising costs of higher education and the accompanying situation of limited cultural and social capital means that even talented students who are of low-income status face reduced access to higher education. Higher cost requirements and the traditionally culturally exclusive nature of elite institutions put them even further out of reach of the majority of poor students. The limited access of low-income students to selective institutions is denying them the opportunity to obtain what is deemed to be the best education available. This practice in essence is perpetuating a stratified society as even exceptionally brilliant low-income students are effectively relegated to attending institutions that have fewer resources and limited support systems, resulting in issues of higher attrition and lower graduation rates (Giancola & Kahlenberg, 2016).

Increasingly, changing global and domestic demographics, intensification of social justice discourses, political pressures for equality and widening opportunities have challenged higher educational institutions to examine their contributions to a changing society. As a result, elite institutions over the past decade or more have been attempting to implement intentionally designed plans of inclusion that seek to go beyond the traditionally elite groups and be more representative of the societies they serve (La Noue, 2014). However, for many, their attempts at diversifying their campuses have been difficult. Various encumbrances, historical and social, economic and intellectual, have been present and persistent for achieving this goal.
In 2006, Amherst College actively embarked on a new initiative to admit students with exceptional potential from all backgrounds, whatever their financial needs. Consequently, the incoming class in September 2006 set a new record for racial diversity, with 38.6 percent of the admitted students identifying themselves as a member of a racial minority group (Amherst College Website), and 24 percent of undergraduate students receiving Pell Grants (U.S. News and World Report, 2016). The U.S. News and World Report (2016) also points out that Amherst is ranked number one as the most economically and diverse elite liberal arts colleges in the country. Thus, it is shown that the College has gained much success with this initiative, which sets it apart from many of its peer institutions, resulting in the College becoming a leader among elite institutions for successfully diversifying its student body—racially and socio-economically. In fact, Amherst College was the 2016 winner of the $1 million Cooke Prize for Equity in Educational Excellence. This award is given by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which honors an elite college or university working to address the disparity in on-campus representation of wealthy and low-income students (Egner, 2016).

This move toward greater diversity can be considered a defining moment for higher education, as this affluent College has made a conscious decision that low-economic standing should not be a hindrance to academically advanced students’ access to a highly regarded tertiary education (Amherst College website). This conscious decision by Amherst to strategically diversify its student body, along with its success, could be seen as a watershed moment in inclusion planning for educational institutions. It could be argued that this effort was largely due to the fact that Amherst College, with its long tradition of
academic excellence, had become in the last few decades, one of those prestigious institutions with its campus population dominated by the most privileged.

Amherst College is one of the top liberal arts colleges in the country; thus, in making this decision to admit students with exceptional potential from all backgrounds, whatever their financial needs and social standing, it may have paved the way for other highly selective colleges and universities to do the same. The College has become a leader among elite institutions for a diverse student body, and is representative of the multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-socioeconomic global society (Symonds, 2006; Burd, 2013; Quinton, 2014). This transformation is significant given the College’s history.

The institution, though founded primarily on the principle of providing education to the less advantaged, had changed after its early beginnings to evolve into a bastion of privilege like most other elite private colleges. This highly selective College, with its tradition of academic excellence, had become synonymous with educating national and international elites. Now, Amherst College’s student population is among the most diverse of its elite peers. For example, US New and World Report gives the institution 0.67 on its diversity index, representing an overall seventh place among liberal arts colleges, and the highest in the overall ranking of elite liberal arts colleges (Morse, 2015). This fact has not gone unnoticed; The Atlantic notes that “Today, nonwhite students outnumber white students on Amherst's central Massachusetts campus, and 23 percent of students qualify for Federal Pell Grants” (Quinton, 2014, p.1). The following statistics for Amherst College give clear evidence of this increasing diversity, showing that the class of 2019 will be constituted of almost half students of color, almost a quarter of students from low-income families, and more than 10 percent first generation college students.
Still, the current state of the higher education diversity discourse, though increasingly progressive, faces significant resistance to deliberate and planned efforts that take into consideration historical biases against racial minorities and the poor in making admissions decisions. Recent challenges to affirmative action in college admissions, and the success of these challenges in the Supreme Court, suggest that not everyone is supportive of planned diversity initiatives (Gruin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002). Further, even within educational institutions themselves, there continues to be some hostility to students of color, some of which has resulted in mass student protests on campuses across the nation.

It becomes clear that diversification of Amherst College is highly unlikely to have simply been the result of the natural progression in the College’s operation. If not, how can this significant change in the student population at the College be understood, given that the diversification was manifested in a period of less than a decade? In this regard, I share Lowe’s (1999) position that we have to look seriously at the leadership, particularly presidential leadership, to understand successful experiences of diversity transformation. In other words, presidential leadership matters. This research seeks to contribute to the literature on leadership theory by using a case study method and drawing on organizational leadership categories in several important ways. These include examining (1) how socio-
economic discourses and exigencies, global and national, influence systems shaping and implementing a vision of inclusion, (2) how presidential leadership influences higher educational institutional structures and stakeholders to drive the vision of inclusion, and (3) specific ways in which presidential leadership style may facilitate and challenge vision implementation.

Therefore, the main research question that guides this study is: How was Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body influenced by its presidential leadership?

**Definition of Terms**

Throughout this study several key terms are used, some interchangeably: low-income and minority students, liberal arts college, transformational leadership, and higher education, postsecondary education and college. It is important to define these terms and explain how these concepts are used. These include low-income and minority students, liberal arts college, transformational leadership, and higher education, postsecondary education and college.

- I use the terms *minority and low-income students* in this order and interchangeably to denote the groups that are the focus of this research.

When I use the terms *minority and low-income students*, I am primarily referring to poor minority students. “*Minority student* means a student who is Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Black (African-American), Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander” (Cornell University Law School). I must note that, when I discuss minority students, I am not referring to all minority students, since some minorities
also come from economically privileged backgrounds. Students from families with incomes below $44,700 for a family of four; $37,060 for a family of three and $29,420 for a family of two are referred to as low-income (although in actuality, cost of living may vary based on location) (Addy & Wright, Feb. 2012).

- **Socio-economic diversity** is defined by the percentage of minority and low-income students attending the college.

- **Liberal arts colleges** are often small residential undergraduate higher educational institutions that facilitate close interaction between faculty and students. The curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts disciplines of the humanities, the natural sciences, social sciences and the arts (Association of American Colleges & Universities - https://www.aacu.org/).

- **Presidential Leadership**: “The chief executive officer of the university, the president has a range of executive leadership responsibilities, such as supervising the university administration; ensuring the quality and integrity of academic programs; managing human, financial, and capital assets; assets; and being accountable to the governing board (and the public) for the welfare of the university” (Duderstadt, 2007, p. 106).

- **Transformational leadership** occurs when leaders transform and motivate followers to develop new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter their organizational environment for optimal success (Bass, 1985).

- **Higher education, postsecondary education, and college**: I use these terms interchangeably to refer to the same formal educational stage following
high school. I use these terms at different times primarily to avoid monotony and to facilitate a smooth flow of the study.

- **Anthony W. Marx**: Throughout this paper Anthony W. Marx is also referred to as Tony Marx.

**Significance of the Study**

The move to reframe Amherst College’s long practice of primarily admitting the socio-economic elite was a critical moment in American liberal arts higher education. This affluent College made a conscious decision that access to an excellent education should not be based primarily on one’s ability to pay, but should be available to those of academic talent and potential regardless of economic means. This policy decision has broad implications not only for the individual but also for the society. Giroux (2002) explains that the “primacy of higher education [is] an essential sphere for expanding and deepening the processes of democracy and civil society” (p. 432) and by extension the development of the nation economically, socially and politically. Therefore, the policy decision made during President Marx’s tenure—2003-2011, to admit students with exceptional potential from all backgrounds regardless of their ability to pay tuition, potentially extended beyond Amherst College and impacted other elite colleges’ admission policies (Burd, 2013). In 2006, Vassar College made a conscious effort to increase student diversity as well, by reinstituting need-blind admissions and increasing its Pell Grant for the college’s low socio-economic undergraduate students. Yale University, in 2008, also made the decision to waive any parental contribution toward college costs for families making under $60,000 to make Yale more appealing for students of lower socio-economic strata (Zax, 2014).

Many colleges might have been reluctant to make such significant policy decisions, but
once a prominent elite institution such as Amherst College made this bold step, that
measure laid the groundwork for other institutions to follow.

It was during Anthony Marx’s tenure as president that the distinct and verifiable
diversity changes to student demographics were manifested at Amherst College (Symonds,
2006; Burd, 2013; Quinton, 2014). In 2004, Marx argued that diversity in higher education
is essential and explained that in particular if “we do not increase opportunities for lower-
income students, we will neither prepare any of our students for the world, nor will we
serve our role in that world” (quoted in Aries, 2008, p. 4). One can imagine that significant
and fundamental changes had to be made to the institutional operations and value system
that guided the College for decades. Given the nature of higher education institutions
generally and this institution in particular, it is with this background that the importance of
leadership in the context of transforming elite campuses for greater inclusion can be
understood. This research seeks to investigate the role, forms and foundations of
presidential leadership that have pioneered this era of diversifying an elite higher
educational institution, Amherst College. The research goal for this study focuses squarely
on the in-depth investigation of the president’s leadership, given the institution’s
successful restructuring for greater inclusion—especially in the light of the often-
intransigent nature of educational institutions that are primarily influenced by routines,
organizational history, and the socialization factor of the participants (Scott, Coates &
Anderson, 2008).

The research on presidential leadership at Amherst College takes place in the
context of an increasing call for diversity and greater opportunities for historically
marginalized people. With a global economy, aptly referred to as the knowledge economy,
there is a demand for higher levels of skills through higher educational training. Nonetheless, these opportunities, while increasingly important, are often seen as outside the reach of some individuals, particularly education at highly elite institutions. With the unequal distribution of the capitals—that is economic, cultural and social—students who have less typically have similarly limited access to quality higher education. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation recognizes this phenomenon and points out that: American postsecondary education is highly stratified by socio-economic class, with 72 percent of students in the nation’s most competitive institutions coming from families in the wealthiest quartile. High-achieving students from the bottom socio-economic quartile are only one-third as likely to enroll in selective colleges and universities compared to those from the top socio-economic quartile (Giancola & Kahlenberg, 2016, p. 1).

While this phenomenon is representative of elite colleges and Ivy League universities in the US, the element that is specific to this context is that Amherst College led its cohorts in successfully diversifying the racial and socio-economic profile of its student body under the leadership of President Marx. Consequently, this institution is a worthy case to study.

**The Background of Amherst College**

**The Story of Amherst College and the Formation of its Values and Ethos**

In order to address the research question, there needs to be an understanding of the historical context within which Amherst College exists, as well as key concepts of leadership and their relevance to higher educational transformation. It is often suggested that the principles that define any institution are embedded in its founding history, which can reveal nuances beyond what is captured in its deliberately stated motto, vision or
mission statements. Keeping this in mind, an examination of the history of Amherst College’s establishment and its subsequent years can provide us with a unique understanding of its existence.

Amherst College’s history embodies a multiplicity of sometimes-contradictory intentions, actions, and values. This institution in many ways is often represented by the social restrictions of an era but also aspirations to reach beyond them. On one level, the College emerged to provide education to an underserved group, while at the same time perpetuating gendered and racial marginalization in admissions policies in that earlier era. While these forms of discrimination have been institutionally acknowledged, and systems developed to address them, traces of their enduring impact remain, and others have arisen. The result is that we have a profile of an institution that is constantly challenged by its founding principles to adapt to a changing world that periodically redefines the boundaries and terms of political, economic, and cultural fairness. In many ways, Amherst College typifies American higher educational experience as described by Thelin, Edwards and Moyen, (2002) who note that:

The aspiration and ability of the American postsecondary institutions to accommodate some approximation of universal access has been its foremost characteristic. Institutions' shortfalls in completely achieving that aspiration have been the major source of criticism and debate within American higher education. It is the perpetual American dilemma of how to achieve both equality and excellence (p.16).

The following discussion digs deeper into this history and contextualizes Amherst College’s most recent reform initiative.
The Founding of the College

Amherst College is a private liberal arts institution that was founded in 1821 when it opened its doors to 47 young white male students. The College was established on the premise of providing classical education to “indigent young men of promising talents and hopeful piety and talents, for the Christian Ministry” (Le Duc, 1946, p.2) so that they could go forth from Amherst and enlighten the earth (Wilson, 2007). In order to understand the significance of the College’s founding, we also need to understand the circumstances within which it emerged. Amherst College’s predecessor, Amherst Academy, referred to as the mother of Amherst College by William Seymour Tyler, was incorporated in 1816, however it commenced operations in 1814 and was formally dedicated in 1815. During the first 10 to 20 years of the Academy it was open to both males and females. The Board of Trustees of Amherst Academy in November 1817 committed itself to raise funds to extend the role of the Academy (Tyler, 1873). Initially, this plan called for an endowed professorship in languages but soon developed into a broader vision for a more established institution of higher learning. This original idea eventually led to the founding of Amherst College. However, Amherst College almost suffered a stillbirth at its inception and came to be in its present location through a combination of steadfast commitment by its supporters, the falling through of other plans for relocating Williams College to Amherst, and other coincidences (Tyler, 1873; Fuess, 1935).

From the outset, Amherst College, especially through the Charity Fund, which the Amherst Academy Board of Trustees referred to as the basis of the establishment of the College, was built on benevolence (Tyler, 1873). This generosity was to aid in the transformation of society, including immediate communities as well as those far beyond
that were viewed as fractured and scattered, both physically and intellectually, and therefore in need of guidance that could best come through learned young men (Tyler, 1873; Greene, 2007). Keeping this founding agenda in mind as we examine the preamble (to the Charity Fund) below, we learn a number of important details about the founding principles of the College:

Taking into consideration the deplorable condition of a large portion of our race who are enveloped in the most profound ignorance, and superstition and gross idolatry; and many of them in a savage state without a written language; together with vast multitudes in Christian countries of which our own affords a lamentable specimen, who are dispersed over extensive territories, as sheep without a shepherd; impressed with a most fervent commiseration for our destitute brethren, and urged by the command of our Divine Savior to preach the gospel to every creature; we have resolved to consecrate to the author of all good, for the honor of his name and the benefit of our race, a portion of the treasure or inheritance which he has been please to entrust to our stewardship, in the firm belief that ‘it is more blessed to give than to receive’. Under conviction that the education of pious young men of the finest talents in the community is the most sure method of relieving our brethren by civilizing and evangelizing the world, and that a classical institutions judiciously located and richly endowed with a large and increasing charitable fund, in co-operation with theological seminaries and education societies, will be the most eligible way of affecting it … (Tyler, 1873, p. 40)
Several key points about Amherst College are evident from this excerpt. One is the view of the world as one in turmoil and in need of intervention by well-intentioned and learned people—men, to be more precise. Another is the belief that education, as well as those possessing it, plays an important role in transforming societies. And third, that charity is an important principle on which this institution would be largely built due to the fact that the College was geared toward the education of “indigent young men of promising talents and hopeful piety and talents” (Le Duc, 1946, p.2). Thus, from its founding, Amherst College was sensitive to the issue of social justice, though the meaning of this principle had to be re-interpreted over time, and the importance of empowering those who were of talent but lacking in material-economic means to fulfill their potential. However, the limited notion of social justice expressed in this vision cannot be ignored. There is no clear position on racial inequality in educational access, even though abolition of slavery in Massachusetts took place in the 1780s, before the establishment of Amherst College, and many decades ahead of the federal abolition of slavery (The Massachusetts Historical Society). Given the nature of society at that time, it is not unreasonable to believe that “indigent young men of promising talent” (Le Duc, 1946, p.2) may refer primarily or solely to young white men. Based on records, as early as 1822, one year after the official opening of Amherst College, Edward Jones, a black student, was admitted to the institution and went on to graduate in 1826 (Wade, 1976). Jones was said to be the second Black to receive a BA in the USA. Further, Wade (1976) also notes several other African Americans who attended Amherst formally as registered students but also as non-matriculating students, including Robert Purvis who attended at just about the time Edward Jones and William Henry Lewis, an outstanding scholar and athlete who enrolled in 1888,
attended; many others followed in the ensuing years (Wade, 1976). Records also show that over time other students of color attended Amherst College. The College did provide opportunities for men of color from its earliest beginnings but at no time were enrollment numbers ever representative of the general population; students of color have generally been in the extreme minority.

Similarly, in the articulation of the College’s values there was no mention of “indigent young women of promising talent” who would benefit from Amherst College. And it’s not that women were not involved in education at some level in that era and within this geographic location; Amherst College’s predecessor, Amherst Academy, which was viewed as preparatory school for Amherst College by the time of its founding, had a significant enrollment of women. By accounts, “the attendance in 1821 was 169, of whom a hundred were ‘masters’ and sixty-nine ‘misses’” (Feuss, 1935, p. 26). However, it seems higher education, which obviously imbued greater power and influence, was not seen by the founders of Amherst College as a part of their social justice mission. As Wilson (2007) observes, “in 1821, of course, it never occurred to anyone that limiting enrollment to young men (rich or poor) with no provision for young women was in any way discriminatory. That exclusion seemed simply a natural part of the order of things as God had created them” (p. 5). This contradiction in the operationalization of social justice at Amherst College would come to represent part of the Amherst College institutional battle that would take place on different grounds over many decades. The notion of who is deemed talented and worthy of benefitting from an Amherst College education was the beginning of a significant and long-term point of discussion and action that has continued for almost two hundred years.
Significantly, too, represented in the values Amherst espoused in the aforementioned quoted excerpt, are the beliefs of duty and charity on the part of those to be educated as well as the responsibility that people of means have to the broader mission and thus the institution. The literature on the founding of Amherst College reveals an effort in which the community was deeply involved and thus quite organic. The funding of Amherst College was not limited to the one single benefactor but was a result of the far-reaching fundraising effort that involved people of widely varied means committing their money, property, goods, labor and goodwill to the establishment of the College. Feuss (1935) notes stories of selfless and symbolic contributions that characterized the spirit in which the College developed. For example, he notes that one farmer was so committed to the establishment of the College that he made his gift in watermelons and turnips and another citizen in Belchertown subscribed six cents a week to the Academy for life. Other wealthier pledges of higher amounts were also made. As such, over 274 contributors pledged toward the required $50,000 for the establishment of the College (Feuss, 1935). These principles of charity, as we will see much later, became a sustaining feature of Amherst College.

Fifty Years after the College’s Opening

Within its first 50 years, Amherst could claim success by measure of its alumni body and the professions of service they followed. Tyler (1873) notes, for example, the following statistics that summed up alumni achievements:
Figure 2: Alumni Achievement 50 Years After the College’s Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole number of Alumni</td>
<td>1,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordained Ministers</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Missionaries</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors and other Teachers</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others engaged in Literary or Scientific pursuits</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Tyler (1873): History of Amherst College during its first half century 1821-1871.

One significant observation is that a large number of Amherst’s graduates chose the Christian ministry as their profession, which was generally the original purpose of the College. The other professions also represent other forms of public service that were deemed as noble and respectable. Here, it is also noteworthy that, increasingly, Amherst graduates were heading into professions other than the ministry, but this was seen as desirable even “if they only carry their Christian principles with them into the secular professions and the high places of influence in the State as well as the Church” (p. 645). Therefore, 50 years after Amherst’s opening, a tradition of service that was synonymous with the founding principles of the College was being established. In the same time-frame, Amherst College’s view of social justice seemed not to have expanded beyond its original mission of educating young men to change the world--the institution remained an all-male school, a status that continued through 100 years of operation (Bohjalian, 2007).

Amherst Became a Co-educational Institution

In 1871 the subject of education for women arose at Amherst. The question was about whether women should go to college and if so, which environment would be most suitable, a single sex or a co-educational college (Bohjalian, 2007). The president, administrators and some faculty members condemned the idea of co-education and put forward several arguments against the view. The subject of coeducation did not seriously
arise at Amherst again for another 100 years (Wilson, 2007). Even as late as 1972, the Trustees once again decided “not to decide” about the question of co-education (Bohjalian, 2007). While Amherst College was not enrolling female students, there were female faculty members and they were resolute in the admission of female students to the institution. Another attempt at coeducation was made in 1974 in the October 15, 1974 faculty meetings. The motion on co-education was introduced and the women faculty members, who were sitting as a group, rose and revealed t-shirts emblazoned with “Keep Abreast of the Time”—Vote yes.” It was in that meeting the faculty voted 95-29 to reaffirm conviction that Amherst College should become a college for men and women (Wilson, 2007). On November 2, 1974, the Board of Trustees acted on the motion and voted by a margin of 15 to three in favor of coeducation. Aries (2008) also suggested that “The rise of the women’s movement in the wake of the civil rights movement helped impel the admittance of women to formerly all-male institutions” (p. 3) such as Amherst. In 1975, nine women who were already at Amherst as part of the 12-college exchange were admitted as transfer students to become members of the Class of 1976. The first women who were officially admitted under the new admission policy as first-year students arrived at Amherst in the fall of 1976 as members of the Class of 1980 (Bohjalian, 2007; Campbell, 1999). Figure 3 below, illustrates the trajectory of women’s admission to the College since they were first admitted.
* Includes students with two or more races prior to 2010; Amherst College, Office of the Registrar, October 1, 2015

The foregoing discussion highlights much of the internal contradiction about social justice inclusion and exclusion mentioned at the outset. On one hand, the College was built on a particular notion of social justice—to offer education to talented young men regardless of ability to pay. While it is not clear whether men of color were seen as part of this project, the fact that Black men, almost from the College’s inception, were enrolled...
suggests that there was an open mind, though not an apparently deliberate strategy, to accepting men of color. On the other hand, women were not included in this social justice project as further evidenced by the long internal and external battles for white and non-white women to attend the institution. Even through this period, the College was largely regarded as an institution that would facilitate access regardless of wealth. This is not to suggest that wealth did not matter; that is not the case. Rather, the point is that the institution’s values in practice allowed for and expressly called for access to the not so wealthy.

Later, particularly in the latter part of the twentieth century, was when Amherst College seemed to have shifted some of its practices by admitting more wealthy students, which led to the College becoming more selective and elitist in its orientation—a bastion of wealth and white privilege. Austin Sarat, who came to teach at Amherst College in the mid-1970s, paints a vivid picture of the Amherst College scene at the time of his arrival. He states “the thing that struck me was the privilege of the place” (Pekow, September, 2014). He continues, “I remember walking through the student parking lot and seeing the cars that students brought to campus, which were much nicer than anything I was driving or could imagine driving” (Pekow, September 2014).

In more recent times, Amherst College has listed among its graduates, children of royal families, prime ministers, multi-millionaires and billionaires, entertainers, and other powerful and wealthy individuals. Within a highly competitive higher educational landscape, the College self-identified as highly selective and often ranked nationally in the top two of the elite liberal arts colleges (*US. News and World Report*). Its endowment is over US$2 billion. It is not exactly clear how the College’s commitment primarily to the
talented, rather than the privileged, became obscure over time, but this is not the subject of this research. Rather, the main objective of the research is to understand the role of leadership in the College’s path back to its commitment to social justice and talent, regardless of material wealth.

Anthony W. Marx: A Brief Background

There are many events that impacted the trajectory of Anthony W. Marx’s career in the field of social justice. As he stated, “Everything from my background of growing up in New York City, not coming from wealth, going to a public high school—that was certainly part of my understanding, of sort, of the importance of opportunity based on talent as an American [and] the idea of the American dream based on the mobility from talent” (Anthony Marx, interview). Anthony Marx grew up in New York and went to Bronx High School of Science. He then attended Wesleyan University but before completing he transferred to Yale University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree. He continued his education at Princeton, where he obtained his M.P.A from the Woodrow Wilson School, followed by his Ph.D.

Through his life experience, Tony Marx developed a sense of social justice and started devoting himself to the cause beyond the United States. After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree from Yale in 1981, he spent a year in South Africa participating in the Anti-Apartheid Movement. He explained his personal evolution in this way, “For me, the pivotal life lesson was South Africa, where I saw people willing to die for the right to be educated and I saw people who had been purposefully under-educated by the Apartheid regime” (Anthony Marx, interview). He elaborated on his experience in his book Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990:
In 1984 I had my first opportunity to see South Africa. I spent much of that year helping and establishing what was to become Khanya College, a university preparation program for politically active black students...I found myself in the midst of many ideological debates about how educators, black elites, and whites could contribute to the struggle for New South Africa...Abstract debates about how best to confront oppression suddenly took on a more concrete dimension. In white South Africa, I became acutely aware of how much privilege and wealth were taken for granted (Marx, 1992).

These early experiences in social justice education signaled how his professional life would contribute to educational justice. As a faculty member at Columbia University during his 13-year tenure at the university, he worked not only as faculty but also at managing and designing programs to strengthen secondary school education in the United States and abroad. He served as the director of the Gates Foundation—funded Early College High School initiative at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship foundation, which established model public high schools as partnerships between school systems and universities. He also founded the Columbia Urban Educators Program, a public school recruitment and training partnership. Additionally, he served as a consultant to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Africa, and also was a consultant to the Southern Education Foundation’s Comparative Race Relations initiative, which compared educational opportunities in the United States, Africa and Brazil (Amherst College News, April 2003). This trajectory of social justice through education would continue at Amherst College.

In July 2003 The Board of Trustees of Amherst College appointed Anthony Marx
as the college’s eighteenth president. A news release from the institution at the time summed up the College’s assessment of their new president and implicitly pointed to their expectations of him:

Tony’s interest, and the way in which he has engaged them both intellectually and pragmatically are remarkably consistent with Amherst’s ideals of intellectual curiosity and service and with our commitment to inclusion and access. Tony has a tenacious vision of the liberating role that education can have in a turbulent world, and he has worked hard to make that vision a reality (Amherst College News, April 2003).

Higher education presidents are the driving force of transition and change at their institution. Tony Marx had a vision of how higher education when achieved by a wide cross section of the society, no matter their background, could achieve a compelling and vibrant future of what the world could be like if more people are given the opportunity to be a part of it. He continued on that mission when he became the eighteenth president at Amherst College.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Argument for Diversifying Higher Education

Advancing a campus diversity initiative in terms of race, gender and socio-economic status has become an agenda issue for many of America’s renowned colleges and universities. Particularly, arguments are being made for increasing opportunities for lower-income students based on the principles of “promoting social mobility, social justice, and equity” (Aries, 2008, p. 3). One of the driving forces propelling this initiative is that changing global and domestic demographics and political pressures are raising questions about the relevance of higher educational institutions in a new phase of our history. Thus, the question arises—do our colleges and universities reflect the diversity of our population, and if not, are they at least increasingly providing equality of opportunities to the changing society?

With enrollment of low socio-economic students under three percent (NECS, 2016), concern has grown that the lack of diversity in elite schools is “reproducing social advantage instead of serving as an engine of mobility” that serves the entire society (Aries, 2008, p. 3). The U.S. Census Bureau and the Pew Research Center have indicated that the racial makeup of the nation has changed substantially in the last 50 years and the future projection by 2050 is that white Americans will no longer be the majority, and will represent only 43 percent of the population. It has been argued that with rapidly growing diverse communities in the United States, institutions of higher education have not been quite effective in diversifying their campuses in response to the changing times, partly because they are historically conservative about changing their institutional traditions to
implement policies to accommodate diversification (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002).

Higher educational institutions are in a unique position for addressing issues of diversity because from their inception they have been one of the constant and oldest institutions to have the capacity to “respond to the demands of endlessly changing and evolving environmental conditions of society” (Taylor & De Lourdes Machado, 2006, p. 154). They have the ability to change and encourage change and progress in society as they serve a largely impressionable population that is motivated to learn and eager to explore and gather new experiences (Taylor & De Lourdes Machado, 2006). As Brown, (2004) points out, “It is therefore imperative that colleges and universities provide diverse cultural experiences that facilitate cultural learning and understanding” (p. 28). Adopting that philosophy is one of the most effective ways of achieving positive interactions among all persons (Brown, 2004). It has been argued that diversity in higher education is important and there are significant benefits that can be derived from diverse campus communities (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Bennett, 2002; Brown, 2004; Kezar, 2008; Guin, Dey, Hurtado & Guin, 2002). Essentially, it is a social force in higher education that promotes the importance of understanding difference. It is through an education that emphasizes diversity that individuals come to understand the world, recognize inequities, and gain the tools that are necessary to remedy unsavory inequalities that exist in the society and the world and by extension be able to “build a cohesive social fabric in society” (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002, p.54). Page (2003) extends this argument by stating that:

We must recognize that the college or university should be a microcosm of the total society, and in this setting we have the greatest
opportunity to prepare [student’s to become] community leaders to lead
the new majority (p. 85).

Proponents of diversity argue that student populations in higher education show
that both white and minority students value their experiences in a diverse learning
environment and believe that participating in a diverse learning environment better
prepares them to participate in an increasingly diverse society (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002;
Kezar, 2008; Morphew, 2009; Page, 2003).

A History of Institutional Exclusion

Various encumbrances—historical, economic, cultural, social and intellectual—
have been present and persistent when attempting to achieve diversity goals. The system of
higher education in the United States has a history of discrimination and stratification. That
is, there has traditionally been a deeply ingrained institutional tendency, particularly
among elite institutions, to exclude and limit higher educational access to certain groups
and individuals. For instance, during the 1920s to 1930s when there was increased access
to higher education, some of the prestigious traditional four-year colleges and universities
such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Dartmouth objected to enrolling minority—women
and African-American students as they wanted to maintain their student body status quo of
the “protestant upper middle class…young men from socially desirable socio-economic
background” (Levine, 1986, p. 136). As a result, they implemented restrictive admissions
policies that would keep out the racial, ethnic and socially undesirable candidates (Levine,
1986; Brint & Karabel, 1989). The exclusion of minorities instantaneously set class
boundaries, which established a stratified education system.
Another of the barriers as pointed out by Brint and Karabel (1989), is that a conscious effort was made to stratify higher education. In the late nineteenth century, an elite higher education reform movement was formed to restructure the university by establishing two-year Junior Colleges that would prepare students for college as well as offer terminal vocational programs; the “senior college,” in other words, the university, would focus on research and liberal arts education for the elite. The Junior Colleges, which later became community colleges, were inexpensive, and many of the students who attended were from lower middle class and working-class backgrounds. The establishment of the two-year colleges had the intended effect; that is, they increased minority access to higher education while diverting the racial, ethnic minority students from the traditional four-year colleges so they continued to be selective and white (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Thelin, Edwards, Moyen, 2002). One may claim that in significant ways the practice continues today as the community colleges are still the repository for lower-income and minority students (Bailey, Jenkins & Leninebach, 2005).

The stratification of higher education in America was so ingrained that the system led to the establishment of institutions for specific groups of students; for instance, the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that primarily serve African-American students as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and women’s colleges (Young, Dec. 3, 2015). While the first HBCU was founded in 1837, and the official congressional recognition of HSIs took place in the 1990s, their increasing numbers and importance over the years can be partly attributed to institutional limitations placed on students of color to access predominantly white colleges and universities (Coaxum, 2016).

In an attempt to identify students with high academic potential and worth, the
Educational Testing Service's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was developed by Carl Brigham in 1926. This test was administered so it would help make determinations on college admissions and projections on college academic performance. The SAT examination was administered nationwide in both public and private schools to identify academic talent, no matter the students’ socio-economic background (Lemann, 1999). However, despite the promise of standardized exams that would attract the brilliant and the best, for some of the prominent, especially urban private colleges and universities, this system yielded the “wrong” students. The scholastic performance led to an influx of minority students, especially Jewish students (Karabel, 2005). Thus, the four-year institutions resorted to using an exclusionary and selective admission process that would allow them to reject and or accept whomever they so desired, to screen out students who were not socially suited to be in the institution’s perceived interest. The exclusionary selective admissions process did significantly impact minority students as there were more private higher education colleges and universities than public institutions at the time (Lemann, 1999).

To some extent the historical practice in higher education that advantages the upper class “still informs the present social perception of who deserves a [quality] higher education” (Brown, 2004, p. 25). While significant strides have been made since the seventeenth century to achieve greater access and equality in higher education, even today the struggle for equitable higher educational opportunities, especially within traditionally elite institutions, continues.

**Other Factors Restricting Access**

It is often promoted that higher education has the potential to improve one’s
opportunities regardless of gender, race, or social class. In fact, the benefits of higher education are said to be more significant for low-income students as the attainment may help to break the intergenerational poverty cycle for their family (McMahon, 2009). A college degree provides the opportunity for employment, higher paying jobs and improved social status (McMahon, 2009). However, higher education can only realize its liberatory potential if it is achieved. As intimated throughout this study, there are several factors that are impacting access to higher education; a few are the increasing cost of higher education, the lack of capital—economic, cultural and social—and college preparation.

**Increasing Cost of Higher Education**

Reed and Szymanski (2004) suggest that “the crisis of affordability in higher education is intensifying” (p. 1) for students and their families. This is as a result of the high fees, tuitions and interest rates that are attached to student loans. The National Center for Educational Statistics shows that the average annual cost of a public four-year university in 2013-2014 was US$18,110; for a private college in that same period it was US$36,589. Further, statistics from the US News and World Report show that tuition and fees at the top ten selective liberal arts colleges, which includes Amherst College, range from US$47,000 to US$50,000 per year. These figures are outside of the affordability of low-income families. Even where they are willing to take student loans, this avenue has become increasingly burdensome. For example, one recent *Time* Magazine report notes that of the class of 2015 more than two-thirds will graduate with an average US$35,000 in debt (Kantrowitz, Jan. 11, 2016). The magnitude of this problem was featured in a recent issue of *Consumer Reports*, which painted a very grim picture of student loan debt, and how it has “destroyed” the life of many. The implication is that low-income students will
be disenfranchised as they are unable to pay the high cost for education and the assumption is that only those who can afford to pay will be able to obtain a higher education. Thus, higher education is even more stratified and reflects a good that is only for the consumption of a select few (Barr, 2004).

**Limited Social and Cultural Capital**

Bourdieu (1996) explains that the education system uses capital to reproduce intergenerational inequalities, which is one of the major factors impeding access to higher education for racial-minority and low socio-economic students. His argument is that schools reproduce social divisions based on wealth, privilege, and power through the interaction of three sources of capital—economic, cultural, and social. Social capital can be defined as the “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995, p.67). Social capital exists in the relationships between people, and is expressed through changes in these relations that facilitate action. The people you are connected with may shape the opportunities you enjoy because these networks share information about institutions, how they work, and how to manipulate them for individual benefit. As for cultural capital, it is the system of attributes, such as language skills, cultural knowledge, and mannerisms that are derived in part from one’s parents and life experiences that defines an individual’s class status that provides advantages to them in the society (Bourdieu, 1996). Lareau (2003) elaborated that individuals of different social standings are socialized differently. For instance, middleclass parents stimulate their children’s development and nurture cognitive and social behaviors. Those socialization experiences shape the amount and forms of
resources individuals inherit which they draw upon and apply in their everyday activities as they self-actualize (Lareau, 2003).

Access to these resources translates into privileges that often serve as a pipeline to higher educational institutions, especially those with a history of selectivity and class bias, such as some of the highly recognized small liberal arts colleges and Ivy League universities. This phenomenon has created a stratified higher education system, and particularly so at smaller selective liberal arts institutions with a history of elite bias reflected in limited enrollments of students of color. For example, recent research into the enrollment of Black students at leading liberal arts colleges shows that very few institutions have achieved double figure enrollments of Black students as seen in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4: First-Year Enrollments of Black Students at High-Ranking Liberal Arts Colleges, Fall 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>All Applicants</th>
<th>Total Students Accepted</th>
<th>Overall Acceptance Rate</th>
<th>Black Applicants</th>
<th>Blacks Accepted</th>
<th>Black Acceptance Rate</th>
<th>Black Enrollees</th>
<th>Black Student Yield*</th>
<th>Black % of First-Year Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amherst College</td>
<td>8,479</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomona College</td>
<td>7,727</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard College</td>
<td>5,678</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan University</td>
<td>9,477</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams College</td>
<td>6,316</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberlin College</td>
<td>6,038</td>
<td>2,094</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vassar College</td>
<td>7,784</td>
<td>1,832</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith College</td>
<td>4,466</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swarthmore College</td>
<td>5,540</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellesley College</td>
<td>4,710</td>
<td>1,418</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate University</td>
<td>8,717</td>
<td>2,287</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haverford College</td>
<td>3,496</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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</table>

Colleges are ranked by the highest percentage of Black freshmen.

*Yield = percentage of accepted students who enroll

**Declined to provide information to JHE’s research department.

It seems the liberal arts college philosophy and basis for existence require diversity in their community; diversity and inclusion are important to the liberal arts mission. As
Wren, Riggio, and Genovese (2009) observe, a liberal arts education deliberately engages students in the study of our universe—physical, social, and moral—from a multitude of perspectives that produce invaluable and consequential skills. Such an education creates an active and engaged intellect that understands the self individually but also in relation to others, regardless of difference, thus developing keen ability to deal with ambiguity and change. Importantly, as the authors point out, “an individual steeped in the liberal arts develops the capability to think critically and, more importantly, a capacity to engage in ethical reasoning in the face of life’s complex challenges” (Wren, Riggio, & Genovese, 2009, p.1). Therefore, while unequal allocation of financial, social, and cultural capital continues to impede access for low-income and racial-minority students, Amherst through its diversification efforts is addressing this issue.

**Lack of College Preparation**

Lack of college preparation is another major factor that limits access to higher education. McDonough (1997) believes that minority college students often lack appropriate college planning preparation. Several scholars have pointed out various reasons such as: low-income minority students begin planning for college later in their high school career; some do not take college-required classes in high school, which would prepare them adequately for the appropriate higher educational institutional type; lack of awareness and understanding of college costs and financial aid; and lack of some other basic college planning information (Perna, 2006; Noeth & Wimberly, 2002).

Thus, the disadvantages for low-income and racially underrepresented students to access and obtain a quality higher education begin much earlier than at the higher education level. Providing college information to students from as early as middle school
is an important first step in getting students to start thinking about postsecondary education. Students and their parents normally acquire knowledge about college costs and financial aid in the final year of high school (Perna, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2006; Heller 2006). An even earlier introduction of these matters to low-income students would help in the planning process as students can start becoming academically prepared by selecting appropriate classes and earning good grades which can assist in ensuring that they get accepted and with financial assistance. Strong guidance counseling support, as well as knowledge regarding obtaining financial aid, are factors that inspire low-income and minority students to consider postsecondary education.

Given the depth and complexity of disabling factors that affect low-income minority students, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this problem of lack of diversity in higher education, due to limited access, will not naturally resolve itself over time in line with changing demographics; this is an issue that needs direct and sustained leadership for change. Lowe, (1999) posits “that a crucial element in moving diversity beyond the rhetoric to the promise that it holds” (p.24) is the commitment of educators in the educational system. Therefore, college and university presidents play a critical role in this endeavor for setting the tone which will influence others; without their support, the “issue of diversity remains a circular and cyclical intellectual debate” (p. 24).

**Leadership in Higher Education**

It is against this background that leadership in higher education should be analyzed, which though crucially important, may not be easily defined using conventional leadership terms. This is partly because educational institutions have complex and multiple organizational goals, which at many times are ambiguous and contested (Scott et al.,
The traditional virtues of college and university systems lie in the ambiguity of independent thought, creativity, traditional values of academic freedom, the development of informed citizens, autonomy, democratic participation and the variety of academic interests and autonomy of the people who work in them (Scott et al., 2008). At the same time, they must also function as systems and structures requiring predictability, organization and shared vision, while having finite resources. Thus, Cohen and March (1991) refer to higher educational operating policy as an organized anarchy that reflects the garbage can decision process, which means that policy decisions are not made in a set organized rational way, instead there are various decisions that intersect to influence a particular policy outcome which can be impacted by contextual situations, group participation, organizational culture, resources and leader characteristics (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993).

The size and complexity of institutions in the academic environment will shape and influence the leadership approach. For instance, liberal arts colleges traditionally are small residential institutions where there is close interaction in the community, which lends to a participatory decision-making approach in the daily operations of the institution (Bonvillian & Murphy, 1996). It could be argued that their small size and participatory operational style allow for policy decisions to be implemented more quickly than for instance in large universities. It is with this background that one may understand the importance of leadership in the context of transforming elite liberal arts college campuses for greater inclusion.

Theorizing Leadership

Leadership theory contends that those who are charged with the responsibility of
running organizations can change and steer those entities by the way they influence others around them (Northouse, 2010; Bess & Dee, 2008). Leadership is about visions and values, embracing change, ensuring that institutions stay in alignment with a constantly changing environment, establishing directions about doing the right thing, enabling people to adopt and be able to work with change rather than resisting (Scott et al., 2008). That is why Taylor and De Lourdes Machado, (2006) explain that, “Leadership is a complex process consumed by the complications of timing, circumstances and individuals” (p. 140). They further note that “regardless of the circumstances, motivations and origins of the leaders in place, their perceptions and skills will be the primary vehicle that advances or fails to advance the institutions” (p. 140). Thus, studying the dynamic process of leadership warrants a careful understanding of the theoretical assumptions of leadership.

The research on leadership is expansive with multiple theories and definitions used. However, the underlying characteristics of leadership can be classified into two main categories: the traits of a leader and leadership as an entity (Sigford, 2006). Leadership trait studies focus on examining characteristics to identify potentially effective leaders, while leadership as an entity has resulted in the development of models and concepts that explain how leaders use their traits to direct the visions and operations of the organization (Sigford, 2006; Northouse, 2010). Some of the main theories developed are trait and behavioral theories that focus on the leader characteristics and contingency. Transactional and transformational theories are models that are used for directing and creating vision for the organization (Taylor & De Lourdes Machado, 2006).
**Trait Theory**

The Trait theory of leadership evolved from the “Great Men” concept, where it was thought that effective leadership was based on one’s heredity; therefore, great leaders were simply born, not made (Northouse, 2010). The Trait theory sought to explain effective leadership by suggesting that good leaders possess specific personality traits that differentiate them from non-leaders. Throughout the twentieth century, this approach generated much research to determine if these traits could be identified (Stogdill, 1974, Lord, DeVader and Alliger, 1986, Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). Several traits were recognized, but Northouse (2010) condensed this list of traits to include intelligence, self-confidence, determination, strong work ethic, emotional maturity, good communication and technical skills, integrity and sociability. While the trait approach lends important insight into the personality of the leader, critiques of the theory express that no single characteristic of these traits distinguish a leader from the subordinates and can guarantee leader effectiveness. Also, the framework is limited in understanding how the leader actually behaves in the leadership role.

**Behavioral Theory**

The other leadership theory that evolved in the leadership development spectrum is behavioral theory. The premise of this theory is that leadership effectiveness should be measured by the actions of the leader instead of the measurement of traits (Stogdill, 1974). The main assumption of the theory is that leadership capability can be learned, rather than being inherent; in other words, “leaders can be made, rather than being born, and successful leadership is based in definable, learnable behavior” (Hall, 2013, p. 40). Leadership behavior is classified into two categories: task-oriented or person-oriented.
behaviors. The task-oriented approach focuses on the leader’s emphasis on the relationship between the followers and the quantity and quality of the work that needs to be performed. The person-oriented approach is based on the relationship between the parties and the considerations they feel and have toward each other (Stogdill, 1974). Research, however, has suggested that in institutions, situations at times require a mix application of approach of these two dimensions (Bass, 1990). Similar to trait approaches, the limitations of the behavioral theory approach is that it does not take into full account the environment in which behaviors are demonstrated. The premise of the behavioral approach is that it should be able to predict leadership conditions under all circumstances. However, individual leaders are unique and operate using different styles. For instance, some are charismatic, while others are authoritarian so it may be idealistic to expect that a given set of behavioral characteristics would work under all circumstances.

**Contingency Theory**

The contingency leadership theory asserts that there is no one best way of leading, and a leader’s ability to lead is contingent upon various situational factors, including the leader's preferred style, the capabilities and behaviors of followers and various other situational and environmental factors. The theory proposes that an effective leader must be adept at using several decision-making models based on the type of situation that is encountered. That is, their effectiveness is dependent, or contingent, on the fit between the leader’s style and the particular situation. Morgan (1998) concurs and outlines the following underlying assumptions of the theory:

1. Organizations are open systems that need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and adapt to environmental circumstances.
2. There is no “one best way” of organizing – the appropriate form depends on the environment.

3. Management must be concerned with alignment and “good fits.”

4. Different approaches to management may be necessary to perform different tasks within the same organization.

5. Different types or “species” of organizations are needed in different types of environments (p.6).

Therefore, the theory states that the best way to decide how to organize and lead is dependent on the nature of the environment in which it operates. Applying a contingency leadership approach in the educational environment can be a complicated matter, because there are constantly changing scenarios, stemming from political, personal, policy or simple human particular tendencies which make it difficult to apply a set leadership model or approach (Scott et al., 2008). This is particularly important in the new educational context of diverse student bodies, faculty and staff in an educational environment that changes rapidly. The capacity to read a complex environment and respond to it while operating within the founding visions of an educational institution requires skills of contingency leadership.

**Transactional Leadership Theory**

According to Burns, (1978) the transactional leadership theory is based on the idea that the relationship of the leader-subordinate is grounded in transactions and exchange. It is a social exchange of punishment and rewards for followers’ compliance and effort in order to achieve organizational performance. Bass (1989) concurs with this ideology and states, “leadership has generally been conceptualized as a transactional or cost benefit
process” (p. 31). In this regard, leadership may be best understood in light of specific exchange theory, for example the Path Goal theory, which is concerned with how leaders influence subordinates, the perceptions of their work goals, and the process of achieving those goals (House & Mitchell, 1974, p. 81). The path-goal theory hypothesizes that effective leaders must employ behaviors that motivate subordinates to accomplish goals, taking into account both the subordinate’s characteristics and the work setting (Northouse, 2010). The model, created by House and Mitchell (1974), identifies four distinctive leader behaviors (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement oriented) and matches them to the subordinate and task characteristics. The transactional leadership approach tends to be effective reciprocal situations where associates bargain and negotiate using rewards or power in order to influence and create change (Kezar & Eckel, 2008). Once the leader’s desire for change has been accepted as the group’s desire, the leader’s proposed ideas and changes will likely be accomplished. This can be contrasted with the transformational approach that focuses on a seemingly more comprehensive scope of leadership.

**Transformational Leadership**

The transforming leadership concept was introduced by Burns (1978). He believed that transforming leadership “occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). According to Burns (1978), the transforming leadership approach is significant as it transforms both the leader and the follower in organizations by changing their perceptions and values, expectations and aspirations. Burns (1978) further describes transforming leadership as intellectual, reforming, revolutionary, heroic, and ideological.
Bass (1985) expanded Burns’ work of transforming leadership and renamed it transformational leadership. This expanded approach—transformational—claims that leaders have an ideal vision of a situation and enlist the support of others to work towards its accomplishment.

Bass (1985) explains that transformational leadership provides vision, charisma, and empowerment to followers through the use of the elements of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to elevate the followers, and the leader, to higher levels of performance and achievement. An idealized influence leader would be most effective in directing the changes as their character displays conviction, emphasizes trust, takes stands on difficult issues, presents their most important values, and emphasizes the importance of purpose, commitment and the ethical consequences of decisions of their actions to their followers. Bass (1985) talks about an inspirational motivation leader as someone who must articulate an appealing vision for the institution as well as be able to challenge the followers with high standards, talk optimistically and with enthusiasm for motivation, and provide encouragement and meaning for what needs to be done in order to get buy-in, as well as be able to implement the visions. Bass (1985) also describes how the leader must apply critical thinking skills—this is the intellectual stimulation leader who questions old assumptions, traditions, and beliefs about the traditional modes of the institution and stimulates in others new perspectives and ways of doing things. Finally, Bass (1985) highlights the human component that the leader must be able to tap into, which he refers to as individualized consideration skills that involve dealing with employees as individuals and considering
their individual needs, abilities and aspirations, listen attentively, and acknowledge and develop their advice.

Through transformational leadership, leaders can transform and motivate followers to develop new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter their organizational environment for optimal success (Bass, 1985). Consequently, some scholars suggest that in order to move campus diversity agenda forward, transformational forms of leadership are necessary (Aguirre & Martinez 2007). Similarly, Ekman (2003) posits that:

Good leadership fosters change that is both transformative and sustainable. It can be concerned with moral or organizational matters. It can define the college’s role in the world beyond its walls, or it can determine the internal dynamics of the institution. Most importantly, it requires a worthy goal—vision, if you will—but it also requires persistence (p.2).

Although there are numerous leadership theories, there is no consensus in the literature to identify a single approach as the only or the best one to use to understand and make sense of presidential leadership, particularly for effectively diversifying higher educational institutions. Admittedly, the transformation leadership approach seems to have much support, but not all scholars agree on its sole usefulness for understanding leadership in higher education. One inference that can be made and which is supported by Morgan, (1998), is that leadership is context-specific and therefore there is no single globally applicable approach. This is largely why this study seeks a context-specific understanding of a particular college transformation case by drawing on the experiences and insights of the college president and other key college personnel. Such an approach has the best
potential for analyzing the leadership and strategies that were used to successfully advance the college’s diversity initiative.

**Presidential Leadership for Diversity**

Even though there is no single leadership theory that can be used to fully analyze higher education institutions, leadership is arguably one of the most important sources of change. This logic assumes that those charged with the responsibility of running organizations can change and steer those entities by the way they engage with various constituent compositions and the people around them. It is an important issue given the need to transform colleges and universities and allow them to function with greater regard for the more demanding environment. Leadership in higher education in the twenty-first century requires having vision, setting mission and exuding the courage to convince trustees, faculty, staff, and students, as well as external collaborators to do things differently from what has been done before. Therefore, “Leadership is perhaps the most important factor in ensuring institutional transformation and institutionalizing a diversity agenda” (Kezar, 2008, p. 380). University and college presidential leadership is important in advancing such a key institutional priority.

Kezar and Eckel, (2008) point out that presidents play many important roles that can help to advance a diversity agenda that most other “leaders cannot perform because they do not have the authority or leverage that is critical to institutionalization” (p. 380). Presidents can effectively create commitment for diversity initiatives by including diversity in the institution’s strategic planning, in budget processes, in establishing rewards and incentives, hosting campus wide dialogues, establishing commissions and committees, transforming curriculum, measuring progress, evaluating and creating accountability
(Kezar, 2008; Kezar, Eckel, Contreras-McGavin & Quaye, 2008; Taylor & De Lourdes Machado, 2006). However, it is important to note that a diversity initiative is a high stake issue and one that can absorb much of a campus’ attention. In this regard, it is a complex phenomenon for presidents because it is also competing with other key presidential duties such as fundraising, developing external partnerships, and being responsive to critical college needs. Consequently, if the institution does not have an effective leader, diversity plans have the “potential to trouble an otherwise successful presidency” (Kezar & Eckel, 2008, p.380).

**Nature of Institutions**

Given that higher educational institutions are such complex systems, diagnosing their problems and leading them can be a challenging endeavor. Therefore, a sound argument can be made that organizational complexity requires a similarly diverse set of tools to apply to its analysis. It is largely for this reason that breaking organizational analysis down into various concentrated components is advocated. Bolman and Deal (2003) for example, explore four frames for analyzing organizations. These are the structural, political, human resource and symbolic. Each frame serves as a lens through which one can examine an institutional phenomenon – in this case, Amherst College’s fundamental presidential leadership approach in moving the diversity agenda forward.

The *structural frame* views organizations as being rational systems with formally designated roles, governed by rules or policies—all in pursuit of defined goals and objectives. Organizations exist to achieve established goals, and these goals are broken into units that are assigned to various members of the organizations. In this frame, organizational design, assignment of responsibilities, and lines of authority are important.
There is a super structure of procedures that helps to coordinate functions and responsibilities of various members.

Kezar (2008) suggests that politics is the ways in which people assert their particular interests through the use of power and strategies in a social setting to gain status and maintain power or other distinctive interests. Bolman and Deal (2003) have identified and defined different categories of politics, for example, by suggesting that the *political frame* views “organizations as living, screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests” (p.186). Using the *political frame* helps recognize that the interdependence, divergence interests, scarcity, and power relations inevitably spawn political activity within organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Such political activities have implications on the formation of coalitions; intensity of conflict and politics in occasions of scarce resources; distribution and exercise of power; and goal setting decisions, and how they emerged from stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 2003). As a result, Kezar (2008) observed that a complex higher education environment of multiplicity of thoughts can be conducive to conflict and resistance that may impact the capacity for creating change. Therefore, organizational leaders, including those in higher education, need to cultivate and apply skills of persuasion, especially to help people embrace the importance of diversity of views beyond their own (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The *human resource frame* views organizations as existing to serve the needs of humans, rather than the reverse. This frame suggests that there is an inherent interdependence between people and organizations, and that the needs of both parties are achieved when there is an appropriate human/organizational fit (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The human resources frame examines people’s skills, abilities, beliefs, experiences, and
attitudes in organizations as well as how these characteristics impact organizational operations and overall performance. According to Bolman and Deal (2003) “people and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities” (p. 115). They further explain that when people feel the organization is responsive to their needs and supportive of their goals, leaders can count on their followers’ commitment and loyalty. An effective leader seeks to serve both the organization and its people. This poses a significant challenge for institutional management and requires a leader who can manage and address the idiosyncratic tendencies of human beings, because they are fluid, often unpredictable and shifting (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Human tendencies are transferred to the organizations, consequently, making them surprising and deceptive; what is expected is sometimes dramatically different from what occurs (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The **symbolic frame** views organizations as cultures that unite its members around shared values and beliefs. Bolman and Deal (2003), posit that each organization has its unique culture of an “interwoven pattern of belief, values, practices, and artifacts that defines for members who they are and how they are to do things” (p. 243). Culture is essential in an organization as it “is the ‘invisible glue’ that holds institutions together by providing a common foundation and a shared interpretation and understanding of events and actions” (ACE, 2000, p. 22). Like other organizations, the culture of colleges and universities incorporates the values, beliefs, and norms of the institution (Frost & Gillespie, 1998). Tierney (1988) notes that there are three fundamental characteristics that depict the culture of an organization and it is reflected in decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and symbolic level and these are revealed through rituals, ceremonies,
stories, myths, visions and values, metaphor, humor, and play (Tierney, 1988). One central notion is that symbols give meaning to the organization, its workers and its clients, and therefore, meaning is sometimes more important than actuality. The influence of the institution’s culture can explain why presidents of similar institutions using the same leadership style can produce vastly different results. While the various frames—structural, political, human resource and symbolic—have been used to analyze specific organizational strengths and areas requiring improvement, the overall results are best seen as more reflective of integrated and interdependent sets of organizational realities, aspirations and proposals for change.

As the population demographic changes, higher educational institutions are being viewed as important sources that can help create a better balance of socio-economic benefits between the traditionally privileged and the marginalized. However, as we have seen, access to higher educational institutions, especially elite ones, have become functions of social, cultural and economic privilege. In order to lead this change, we expect colleges and universities to be transformed for better representation of the society in which they exist. This change can come largely through presidential leadership, which has been the case with Amherst College, a successful case of campus diversity transformation in the student body. There is much to learn from this case by analyzing presidential leadership. There are many leadership models that we can use to understand institutional change. However, there is no single one by itself that we can assume will provide the optimum answers to the kinds of leadership necessary to transform a small liberal arts college. This is because institutions by nature are so complex, and higher educational institutions even more so, comprising multiple organizational goals which at many times are ambiguous and
contested. Thus, decision-making and leadership encompass elements of multiple approaches, and each model has its own distinct assumptions about decision-making. Applying one model at all times will not yield the expected results. So, even while we refrain from applying one single leadership approach in the analysis, we must conduct our inquiry within certain structures and guidelines.

Organizational Leadership

Leadership theory contends that those who are charged with the responsibility of running organizations can change and steer those entities by the way they influence others around them (Northouse, 2010; Bess & Dee, 2008). While it is difficult to give a set definition of higher education organizational leadership, a helpful approach to capture the term is to suggest what it encompasses, as noted by Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001). “Organizational leadership involves processes and proximal outcomes” (p. 6) such as worker commitment that contribute to the development and achievement of organizational purpose. Second, “Organizational leadership is identified by the application of non-routine influence on organizational life” (p.6). Given the bureaucratic and traditional nature of an educational institution such as Amherst College, the research seeks to find out how the leadership was able to disrupt the College’s organizational operation to drive change. Third, “Leader influence is grounded in cognitive, social, and political processes” (p.6). Fourth, “Organizational leadership is inherently bounded by system characteristics and dynamics, that is, leadership is contextually defined and caused” (p.6). Consequently, this research will examine various contexts in which the campus leadership for diversity took place. These contexts may refer to changing global expectations and demands, social,
economic and political stimuli for change within the College community, institutional support, and challenges to the status quo, among others.

**Conceptual Framework**

In the case of Amherst College, this is an institution founded on the principle of socio-economic inclusion but has struggled with living up to these values in later decades. Being a selective College, it had become defined by elitism and exclusion but in recent years has been transformed into one of the most diverse elite liberal arts colleges in the country. Educational institutions can be described as complex, with multiple organizational goals that are often ambiguous and contested, which makes it difficult to enact major change. Therefore, my conceptual framework is built on Bolman and Deal’s Four-Frame Leadership Theory. Throughout their research Bolman and Deal (1984, 1991 & 2003) provide a theoretical lens for examining and understanding the decision-making process in organizations through four frames, namely, human resource, political, structure and symbolic. This leadership theory believes that four frames can explain how leaders operate in their organizations. Bolman and Deal theorize that successful leaders understand and use these various frames to assess the comprehensive operation of their institution.

An understanding of these frames allows the leader to take effective actions, transform and motivate members of the institution to develop new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and alter their organizational environment for defined optimal success—in this case, campus diversity and inclusion. The research will examine ways in which leadership was able to attain sufficient commitment from various College workforces, that is, its faculty, administrative staff, alumni, Board of Trustees and students.
Higher educational institutions are built on certain intellectual foundations, have particular social structures and expectations, and are highly political with power distributed unevenly across stakeholder groups with varied interests. As such, any change in structure and values, as required for campus diversity, necessitated leadership engagement with these areas. This reality highlights the importance and appropriateness of drawing on the four frames. These frames provide some reference points and structure for analyzing how a leader impacts various aspects of this academic institution at a certain time in its history. In other words, recognizing the complexity of making change in highly complex organizations, it is methodically sound to draw on the Four-Frames of organizational leadership theory espoused by Bolman and Deal (1984, 1991 & 2003) in addressing the research question:

How was Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body influenced by its presidential leadership?
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In order to explore the research of how, why and what led the president to implement the Diversity Initiative to increase enrollment of low-income and minority students at Amherst College, an elite and privileged institution, I used a qualitative case study approach. Given that meaning-making, contextual understanding and interpretation are significant processes for my case study, a qualitative method was most effective in eliciting the necessary data for this research. Creswell (2009) explained that qualitative research is an inquiry process for “exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4) and from the data gathered, the researcher will build a complex, holistic picture, by detailing the views from the participants in the study. In other words, the case study had effectively allowed for confirmatory as well as explanatory findings of a research question by explaining complex causal links in real-life interventions, as well as to describe the real-life context in which the intervention occurred and the description of the intervention itself (Yin, 2003).

The use of the qualitative approach provided a context that allowed for the participants to respond in a way that represented accurately and thoroughly their points of views of the subject that was being studied. This method of research made it effective for the researcher to be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The researcher was instrumentally involved by going into the natural setting of the research to interview participants, and carried out a document analysis to get a better understanding of the social setting. This approach allowed the researcher to capture how people interpret their
experiences and their interactions, as well as the underlined nuances of the nature of the research (Seidman, 2006).

Employing a qualitative case study methodology, therefore, was most appropriate and efficacious for my research as it involved intensive analysis of the institution, which gave a deep holistic view of the research problem as represented by my research focus. The qualitative case study approach allowed me to extract details from the viewpoint of the participants from their own frame of reference of the structural, political, human resource, symbolic organizational leadership frames during the president’s tenure. Marshall and Rossman (1999) articulated that qualitative researchers are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meaning the researchers attribute to these interactions. Consequently, the use of this method allowed me to examine the environment, the factors that influenced the behavior and the circumstances underlining the diversity initiative.

**Selection of the Case**

A case study approach is deemed suitable for research when it seeks to develop an in-depth understanding and analysis of a single bounded system, at a specific period of time and at a particular place (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995). The primary unit of analysis for this case study was Amherst College and the focus was an in-depth investigation of the presidential leadership approach to examine its impact on the access and diversity initiative during the period 2003-2011. The success that this College achieved for diversifying its student body—racially and socio-economically—demonstrated a unique phenomenon in the field of higher education. As someone who identifies with the group being studied, and who has worked professionally in the
environment during the transformation, but was not engaged in the process, I developed a burning desire to explore “why” and “how” this transformation took place. Several departments and actors played an important role in this research. Consequently, I gathered information from admission personnel as their primary responsibilities were recruiting and admissions policies; the Comptroller and Financial Aid Office; the Development Office that rallied the alumni to raise funds to offset the costs; faculty members, trustees and other key actors who were directly involved with the initiative.

**Boundaries of the Study**

Scholars (Yin, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2009) have expressed the importance of creating boundaries for the study. This was important as it set parameters for where the study began and where it ended. Setting the boundaries created parameters for what I have studied; that is, prevented having too many objectives. Several approaches were used to bind the case study. First, was to ensure that the phenomena being researched were clearly linked to the context in which they were being studied (Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995). Secondly, the boundaries of time, place and activity were important to ensure that the study remained reasonable in scope (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 1995) and also to ensure that all areas relevant to the phenomena being studied were completely exhausted. Third, boundaries made it clear that the study would be completed in a timely fashion (Yin, 2009). Like any other institution, Amherst College is complex and multifaceted, therefore, I did not claim that the research would cover every aspect and circumstance that the College embodies. Rather, the research was limited to issues of change in organizational approaches that enhanced access and student diversity at an elite liberal arts college from the period 2003 to 2011. This was largely why the study was built around analyzing the
leadership approach that was able to achieve the goals of the initiative, which was seen as a significant accomplishment given the context.

**Data Collection**

An extensive description of the context was necessary to situate the case in time and space for the reader. As a result, data for this research was gathered through several sources such as interviews and analysis of Amherst College’s internal institutional policy documents, internal reports, memos, letters, archival documents and other relevant printed materials. This comprehensive data collection approach helped to ensure that significant aspects were not missed and allowed for the collection of the most pertinent data, given that the main purpose of this case was to explore the leadership approach that transformed the College during Anthony Marx’s tenure, which was from 2003 to 2011.

Data collection was conducted in three stages. First, I extracted information from news releases, internal documents, emails and committee reports, (see Appendix D). I then collected data through interviews. I conducted interviews with key stakeholders who were instrumental in the policy initiative (see Appendix B). Given the historical nature of the case study, I referenced the documents for clarifications as I conducted the interviews.

While I had a well-designed data collection mechanism, there were some limitations in collecting data from secondary documents. As Amherst is a private institution some of the documentations of this initiative are not made for public viewing. However, I managed to collect documents from the archive and special collection unit, the College news releases, newspaper articles and reports that were not confidential. I have listed a set of data sources (see Appendix D) that I used in this study. I embarked on collecting the data, fully conscious of the limitations. I strategically remained open
minded and vigilant for the emergence of new data collection opportunities, such as emails and other internal documents, to enhance the efficiency of data collection. It is important to note that the increasing public interest in the topic, that is the rapidly changing circumstances around diversity in higher education, and the history that surrounds Amherst College, made this study a seductive one, which could have led to endless data collection and analysis. However, the parameters that I had set up for the research helped me to manage the process and stay on target.

**Documents Selection**

Documents often served as a gateway into a topic. Prior (2003) suggested that they could serve as receptacle of instructions, commands, wishes, reports, etc. (p. 3). I adopted several techniques in the document selection process. The first thing I did was to prepare a guide (see Appendix C) to help focus the collection of data that underlies the nature of the research. The next thing I did was to meet with the head of archives and special collection at Amherst College to discuss the nature of my research and to see if he could provide any other insights on documents that I needed to collect as well as how to obtain those I have on my checklist. Once I started collecting the documents, I noticed that I was able to add others to my list referenced by the documents I was reviewing. The boundaries that encapsulated my research, particularly the time frame, 2003 to 2011, provided useful guidelines for document selection. In collecting the documents, I was particularly careful in paying attention to Yin’s, (2009) warning of how to choose documents, such as checking dates and using reputable sites such as archives to ensure authenticity and credibility. It was difficult to get approval to review some critical documents. See Appendix D for a list of documents that were reviewed.
Interviews

The Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format. This format was chosen to allow the researcher to adjust questions as deemed necessary, whether based on previous interviews, document analysis or in order to increase the depth of the data collected from the interviews by allowing participants to elaborate on the most salient issues. While I used a list of questions to guide the research, I relied on my conceptual framework to guide the data collection process as well as for clarity and structure in collecting information about the phenomena (Yin, 2012).

Interview Protocol and Main Questions to Guide the Research

Given that I conducted intensive interviews with 16 participants to learn about their experience, thoughts on the initiative, the operation, the process and outcome, it was important that I had guidelines for conducting the interviews. This ensured that key information would be captured. First, I introduced myself to the interviewees by telling them a little about my background and the purpose of the study. I also explained some of the traditional and cultural nuances of the operation of institutions of higher education and what knowledge I already had of the access and diversity initiative. This was done to get the participants mentally locked in before I started asking direct questions. This I found to be very helpful. Most importantly too, I explained how the interview would be conducted—including telling them I would like to audio tape the conversation, and that the expected duration would be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The next step was explaining the nature of the informed consent form and getting it signed. I asked if they had any questions and informed them that they had been identified as someone who would have a
great deal of information and insight on the diversity initiative and therefore quite valuable to the research.

The interview questions were designed to elicit information regarding the decision to diversify the College and the role the president’s leadership played in the endeavor. The research was guided by this question: “How was Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body influenced by its presidential leadership?” I also had the following three sub-questions, which are as follows (see Appendix E for interview protocol):

1. How did the vision of a more inclusive campus emerge? What were the drivers?

2. What are the factors that aided Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity of its student body?

3. In what ways did the president’s leadership style influence key stakeholders in the Amherst College community?

**Participant Selection**

As Seidman (2006) argued, interviewing is a powerful way to gain insight into understanding experiences of people. A purposeful selection of the participants is a key decision point in qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, my selection for the participants was purposefully based on their roles in the College’s racial and socio-economic diversity initiatives during the years this case explored. Participants included faculty members and trustees, and administrative staff who were at the College during the president’s tenure. I also interviewed some alumni, who are very active with the College and the diversity initiative. Some of the participants in the research are considered to be “elites” and getting access to them was difficult. Therefore, one of the approaches that I
took to connect with the elite participants was to ask some of the other participants, known
to have access to those individuals, to introduce me to them. This was very successful and
resulted in my obtaining interviews with those elite participants. With the participants’
permission, I recorded the interviews, which I transcribed for data coding, analysis and
interpretation. I conducted semi-structured, open-ended format interviews with these key
stakeholders to gain multiple perspectives regarding the president’s leadership. Essentially
using the semi-structured interview method facilitated data collection from the respondents
in a conversational manner, and according to Seidman (2006) that is one of the most
reliable methods for capturing their experiences.

**Data Coding, Analysis and Interpretation**

A case study facilitates the collection of a significant amount of rich textual data. The
challenge this poses for researchers is how to manage and analyze such data. Creswell
(2009) explained that qualitative data analysis is a spiraling process that goes through the
stages of data management, reading and memorizing, describing, classifying and
interpreting, and representing and visualizing. As a result, I went through several stages for
my data analysis where I used a combination of inductive and deductive approaches for
coding, analysis and interpretation of the data. The first stage of my analysis was to
transcribe the dialogues of the interviews to capture the exact words and verbal nuances or
any implied significant information given by the interviewees. The transcription of the
interviews put the dialogues in workable print data format for the analysis.

The second stage of my analysis involved inductively analyzing the data to develop
themes partly guided by the study’s sub-questions. In the third stage, I used the deductive
frames of structural, political, human resource and symbolic drawn from Bolman and
Deal’s (1991) Four-Frame Organizational Leadership framework. These were used to make sense of the various themes that emerged from the second phase of my analysis. Finally, I developed an aggregate analysis of the lessons learned from analyzing the findings through Bolman and Deal’s (1991) Four-Frame Organizational Leadership framework. This hybrid process of inductive and deductive approach for coding analysis and interpretation of the data is graphically presented below.

**Inductive Approach**

At first, I had designed the study to use only a deductive approach (Bolman and Deal’s four organizational principles) to analyze the raw data. However, while carrying out close examination and coding the data, I realized that patterns of similar comments about specific structures and operations by most of the participants were emerging in ways that would not be sufficiently addressed by Bolman and Deal’s organizational concepts. I also realized that I needed to analyze the raw data in the context of the research sub-questions that I posed. In other words, I discovered that the data needed a more nuanced level of analysis before subjecting the results to Bolman and Deal’s four organizational concepts. This led me to take an inductive analysis approach to the raw data, guided by the three research sub-questions (see Table 1) before subjecting the results to Bolman and Deal’s frameworks.

**Table 1: Sub-questions for Theme Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did the vision of a more inclusive campus emerge? What were the drivers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the factors that aided Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity of its student body?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways did the president’s leadership style influence key stakeholders in the Amherst College community?</td>
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</table>
The inductive analysis allowed for significant themes to emerge from the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This is in line with the explanation offered by Rossman and Rallis (2003) that themes and categories emerge through familiarizing oneself with the data, through deep immersion, analysis, organizing and writing.

In the inductive analysis I organized the participants’ responses to the interview questions by logging concepts that were frequently used and noting any explicit emphasis on statements or key words directly related to the questions. I placed all the notable concepts, keywords, and frequently used statements into respective categories. As a result, I was able to compare interview discussions to identify the patterns or to see if there were convergence and divergence of views. This phase of the analysis involved reading and re-reading the transcripts. I continued this process of constant comparison across all the transcriptions until I exhausted the evidence of emerging themes. Also, in carrying out a close examination of secondary documents, I made comparisons, connections and validations by highlighting patterns of similarities that were reflected in the transcriptions.

**Deductive Data Analysis**

This phase of analysis of the coding is guided by the integrated data-driven codes based on the tenets of the Analytic Framework as seen in Figure 5 and the three sub-questions as outlined in Table 1.
Figure 5: Analytic Framework

Analytic Framework using Bolman and Deal’s (1991) Four-Frame Organizational Leadership Model

Table 2: Features of Bolman and Deal Four-Frame of Organizational Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Structural Frame</th>
<th>The Human Resource Frame</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create organizations goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Design and implement structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Focus on task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management external environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Clarify lines of authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. People as heart of the organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Support and empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Empower through participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources needed to do the job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Political Frame</th>
<th>The Symbolic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understand political reality of organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Importance of interest groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conflict and resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Recognizes major constituencies and develop ties to their leadership.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Build power base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Negotiating differences and developing compromises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Views vision and inspiration as critical.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. People give loyalty to organization with unique identity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Symbolism is important as is ceremony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communicate sense of organization mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Leader visible and energetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Leader relies on organizational traditions and values as a base for building a common vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*adopted from Bolman and Deal, Four Frameworks for Leadership, 1991*
The guiding questions for the interviews focused on several aspects of change by exploring how an institution with deep historical design, traditionally practiced systems, and goals (structures) that had been in place for many decades was influenced by leadership within the time of the defined case study to function in a way different from how it did in the past. This phenomenon brought under scrutiny the specific ways in which the leader was able to affect the structural functioning of the College.

Similarly, because the College is made up of multiple individuals with often different and competing interests, it was unlikely that all their interests would have coalesced around a singular vision without significant skillful and deliberate intervention by the leader. Thus, drawing on the political frame allowed me to dig deeper into the actual actions taken by the president to persuade politically divergent interests to form and support one new vision.

Further, as it relates to the notion that organizations have competing interests, so do the individuals working within them. They have different personal needs for participation, acknowledgement, and motivation in order to perform and support an institutional purpose. This was the case with Amherst College. Therefore, it was critically important to understand how the president was able to satisfy the various human resource requirements in order to develop cooperative and cohesive employees at different levels that would support the diversity vision in principle, but also in an efficient and effective performance of their responsibilities.

Many educational institutions, including Amherst College, are built on historical traditions of what the college means to its various constituents—students, alumni, parents, faculty and staff. These are fundamentally important stakeholders who are often invested
in the meaning of the college and any significant departure from what they see as the institution’s values can shape how they respond to organizational change. Using the *symbolic frame* to analyze the values, meaning and symbols of Amherst College and how the president was able to reshape, reframe and articulate them to various stakeholders was a critical part of understanding presidential leadership. Consequently, using the tenets of the four analytical leadership frames was fundamental for coding, analysis and interpretation.

**Document Analysis**

Given that the data for this study was derived from various sources, such as internal reports, archival records, and other institutional documents, each data source required a careful examination. Therefore, I carried out a document analysis also guided by the analytical framework. This took place at different stages in the study such as before carrying out interviews, to collect information and familiarize myself with the nature of the case and also while I was conducting the interviews. A document analysis significantly enhanced the research in multiple ways such as providing background information in preparation to conduct the interviews, recreate a chronological description of what happened during President Marx’s tenure without “meaning making,” corroborate observational and interview data, provide evidence, clarify or refute what was being told, make connections to discover what transpired during the period, gather information from the documents and provide supplementary data (Bowen, 2009; Yanow, 2007). This process also helped in refining my interview questions. Importantly, Yin (2009) warned that when reviewing documents, researchers should bear in mind that some documents may be out of date. Also, a researcher should be cognizant of the source to ensure
credibility, so it is important to be selective in choosing documents. For instance, the use of archival records was reliable, as they are usually used for record keeping purposes.

Bowen (2009) further explained that, “documents may be the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when informants have forgotten the details” (p. 31). The document analysis was particularly important in the case of Amherst College, given that the actions of the access diversity initiative happened over a decade ago. Like any other institution, Amherst College has transitory staff and to get a full picture of certain circumstances that took place in the past, a consultation with the documents was particularly important. This was where tracking change and development through documents helped me understand how previous change and leadership initiatives emerged and functioned. Further, with the importance of triangulation in research, the documents served an important purpose as sources to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) note, documents often represent the committed positions of groups and individuals on policy issues setting out instructions, and therefore can be analyzed. They note that the review of documents is an “unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 116).

**Making the Research Ethical and Trustworthy**

One of the core principles of qualitative research is to ensure that the research is ethical and trustworthy. Many scholars have identified several forms of credibility strategies that a researcher can use, such as triangulation, critical friend debriefing, and participation validation (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Charmaz, 2006; Seidman, Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009).
Yin (2009) noted that especially for case study research, triangulation is one of its many strengths. It provides the opportunity to use different sources of evidence and functions as a tool to compare data from different types of sources to increase validity and reliability in the study. In essence, triangulation is an effective measure to guard against misrepresentations of several different sources of information used in the development of “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2009, p. 116).

As a result, this study employed the use of multiple sources of data such as the interviews and examining internal documents at different points, to understand the nuances and complexities of the area of research in its entirety as well as to establish the accuracy of the information (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). This characteristic was essential as I was able to compare the independent point of view to the various data sources reflecting the same findings.

The use of critical friend debriefing was also an important technique that helped me to improve the strength of the research. For this research, I used my critical friends who have experience with qualitative research to critique the interview questions to ensure that they were clearly framed and to probe and review my methods as well as my findings and interpretations. Participation validation is another very important strategy I used to enhance the ethical component and integrity of the study. For example, from the outset I informed the participants of the nature of my research and also of their rights of engagement. This was done using informed consent letters as well as personally explaining and reminding participants of how I intended to use the data, and informing them that if they wished to withdraw from the research they were free to do so.
Positionality

I was particularly interested in this research because I have always been concerned about access to higher education for low-income and racial minority groups. This was largely based on my professional and personal experience as well as my commitment to the promotion of social justice. Twenty-two years ago while pursuing my undergraduate studies at the University of the West Indies, I was fortunate to have two assistantships. One was in the Career Services Department and the other in the Business Development Office. These assistantships helped to cover the expenses for my studies but also equally provided critical experiences that would help to shape how I view higher educational systems and access to the marginalized communities.

During my time at the university, the institution was making major financial policy changes because the government significantly reduced much of the subsidy it provided to the institution. This meant that students had to pay significantly more to obtain an education. Disappointedly, some students were asked to leave the university because they could not afford to pay their fees. Unfortunately too, there were changes in students’ loan policies where students had to have a guarantor who could show proof of economic means for loan disbursement. Some of these students did not have someone to act in that capacity for them, resulting in their having to give up their dream of obtaining a university education.

In societies like those of the Caribbean, higher education is one of the most legitimate means of breaking poverty cycles and achieving levels of progress desirable by a large portion of the population. The fact that these students had to abort their education saddened me as I was helping some of them while in the Career Services Department. If
these brilliant students were given the opportunity to continue their education, not only would the education provide success and upward mobility for them, but also they could contribute significantly more to the country than they currently are.

My other student position was in the Development Office. On one occasion, I got excited when I learned that the university, in partnership with a German company through the government, was going to build an electricity plant at the university, and from its operation, the university would generate much needed income. I thought this was a great potential collaboration because some of the income generated could provide the university more opportunity to subsidize low-income students. However, the plan was never realized partly due to a lack of what I perceived as poor entrepreneurial skills and initiative by the university and this disappointed me greatly. It also showed me how important it is for institutional structures to inculcate a sense of justice using entrepreneurial approaches that would help to alleviate issues of injustice and a lack of access.

These two experiences were even more vividly crystallized in my journey to Amherst College where I worked in the Alumni Office. During my time at the College significant efforts were being made to admit brilliant low-income minority students, giving them an opportunity to a quality higher education. This approach included a broad set of activities ranging from need-based assistance based on academic potential and merit regardless of opportunity to pay or not. Initiatives supporting this cause ranged from alumni relations, fundraising, and direct provision to student support services. The opportunity to provide to the low-income students contrasted very differently from my previous institution, the University of the West Indies. So my experience at these two higher educational institutions straddled the opposite ends of the spectrum. One institution
was expelling students who could not afford to pay for their education and the other admitting students and covering their expenses. While I understand that these institutions existed in two different societies with different contexts, these two experiences across these institutions drove my passion to engage more deeply with educational access and to research how institutions can better facilitate and support students through executive leadership.

I am also intrigued with this research because of my personal biography. I have benefitted immensely from obtaining a postsecondary education. Also, as a Black woman who identifies with the group on which the study focuses, and understands the great opportunity for racially-marginalized and lower-socio-economic groups, I believe this was a remarkable decision made by the president of Amherst College, as it promotes social justice. Given the history of people of color and our struggle to gain access and acceptance into the halls of education, gaining a postsecondary education is vitally important. Education helps to ameliorate issues of inequality, promote social mobility, and overall transform the lives of people, especially the poor. It is my opinion that without the change in Amherst College’s diversity strategic plans, the institution would have continued to perpetuate and benefit only the affluent and privileged in society, similar to the University of the West Indies. I have always believed that students should have access to quality higher education opportunities based on academic talent and promise rather than rooted in the means to pay for it. Thus, it is my impression that this was a defining moment for the College as it results in the admission of greater numbers of academically strong low-income and minority students, which not only enriches the academic health and experience
at the College, but leads the way in engendering a broader societal valuing of the potential of the economically less fortunate.

Based on the foregoing, it was likely that I could bring my biases to the research. Being cognizant of this position, one of the main strategies that I used to maintain the integrity of the research was to accurately present rich and thick descriptions extracted from the transcripts by showing linkages in various contexts (Geerts, 1973). This will allow readers to gauge for themselves the contextual relationship presented in the results of the research.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study is about Amherst College and the role of leadership in transforming the campus for greater diversity, inclusion and educational equity within the student body. I drew on my conceptual framework to understand the change phenomenon. Therefore, while this research may provide useful conceptual approaches to understanding organizational change and transformation in other educational institutions, its findings should not be seen as generalizable to changes in other colleges and universities. In other words, this particular research, though it was methodologically robust and credible, must be seen as a particular conversation that is framed and conditioned by a set of interests and methods and conducted within a particular time and space. Therefore, the findings and conclusions must be viewed in these contexts. Given that I am someone who is identified in the racial minority and low socio-economic group, and my impression of the Diversity Initiative is a positive one, the study might also be influenced by my interpretations. This is because the objectivity of the responses to the interview questions may be affected by my personal biases.
The data collected from the study was based on self-reported perception. As a result, this could have created a limitation for the study, because participants were asked to recall and reflect on their experiences, perception and what they remembered about the initiative, which took place more than ten years ago. There was the possibility that some information may not be recalled accurately or participants could forget, causing distortion of information as noted by Schacter (1999).
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of some central themes that have emerged from the data for each of sub-questions. Three sub-questions were used to guide the inquiry as they relate to the vision for a more inclusive campus, the factors that aided the access diversity initiative, and the president’s management and leadership skills in leading this charge. While carrying out a close examination and coding of the data, patterns of similar comments about specific structures and operations by the participants emerged. Therefore, this chapter presents the findings of some central themes that have emerged from the data as it relates to each of the sub-questions.

**How did the Vision of a More Inclusive Campus Emerge? What were the Drivers?**

It is always a difficult task to decipher how exactly a particular vision emerges, especially when there are multiple potential reasons. In the case of the vision of Amherst College as a more diverse and inclusive institution, there are several current, historical, individual and institutional conditions that contributed to the development and implementation of the vision. An analysis of the data suggested that this vision of Amherst College emerged through a combination of urgent calls for a new kind of institution for changing global society, and the existence of a supportive organizational mechanism including the personal and professional convictions of the president. There are other conditions that fit into these broader intersecting themes, such as the personal biographies and professional mission of several key stakeholders, including the president, and the College’s deeply rooted founding DNA of inclusion. The College’s founding principle of inclusion allowed for a point of reference to which proponents of this new vision could
refer. It was these conditions that allowed the leader and the institution to respond to the changing demographics and the call within higher education for more diverse and inclusive opportunities. In combing through the data on how the vision of a more inclusive and diverse Amherst College emerged, two major themes dominated, and these are “Pressing social conditions align with organizational support systems” and “Intersection of leaders’ personal values and the College’s founding principles.”

**Pressing Social Conditions Aligned with Organizational Support Systems**

The new millennium represented an important moment in history generally, and specifically for higher education and its increasing role in social change. At the global level, during the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, students affirmed that:

> The right to education is guaranteed in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (Article 26). The access to higher education is not without barriers. People from a disadvantaged social background, cultural minorities, physically disabled, women and refugees are facing various obstacles, leading to lower representation in higher education (Mr. Benson Obua Ogwal, All Africa Students Union (AASU), (p. 107).

At the same conference, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that:

> Today, citizenship is both national and international in ambit. It requires moral courage and clearly defined values that are lived daily and commitment to an understanding and tolerance of others. Higher education can contribute very significantly to promoting citizenship through ... the facilitation of academic mobility (p. 12).
For the United States, and in the context of higher education, the new millennium was a moment that invited important stocktaking as represented in the words of Turner, Gonzalez and Wood (2008):

The increasing demographic diversity in the U.S. population begun in the past century continues into this century. The new millennium also brings a heightened awareness of the importance of global and national understanding of cross-cultural perspectives. Such trends and transitions contribute to the shaping of American higher education (p. 139).

The processes of globalization at the international level and the changing demographics of American society from a predominantly European-descent majority to a multiracial and multicultural majority have been forcing people from varied backgrounds to interact and work with each other. Putting the American demographic shift in the context of higher education and Amherst College’s role, Administrator 4 maintained, “I truly believe that if this country is going to survive as a viable democracy we have to be comfortable with a very diverse society.” Among a large number of interviewees for this research, social changes were seen as important considerations in evaluating the role of Amherst College in equipping individuals with the capacities to function effectively in a diverse society in order to be good citizens. Administrator 5 expands on this point:

I do think it was kind of a principled belief that Amherst offered an outstanding education and that everyone who is bright deserves the opportunity access to that. [But] it was clearly not manifested in the socio economic background of [then
enrolled students]. So what was needed was to open the gate a little wider to let more people through who had earned that opportunity.”

Administrator 1 recalls that the potential of higher education was being under-realized and this became an important point of reference in thinking about the role of Amherst College and thus states:

There were a number of extremely talented students, academically very able, who were not as well or frequently served by the elite colleges and universities of this country... I would [say as some] who have to work here a long time, this passion of Tony seemed entirely consistent with what we believe about our college. Tony sought to bring us to a new level of access and I think he pushed us to do the research and to understand what the opportunity was, how many students we were helping and I think Tony saw his role as finding ways to distinguish Amherst (Administrator 1).

When Amherst College, in 2003, employed Anthony Marx to lead the institution, there was a sense of an urgent need for change. From the outset, Tony Marx seemed to have been keenly cognizant of these social changes and demands, which informed his determination to pursue the vision of a more accessible Amherst College. One member of the Board of Trustees recalled that “Tony had a personal commitment to making the College reflect what the American society already was, not to mention becoming...Tony without question put Amherst on a path that was more aggressive in terms of diversity” (Trustee 1). Tony Marx came to the position with a passion for social change, belief in the benefits of increased diversity, and with a clear rhetoric that education should be made available to the most talented, and not only those who are able to pay for it. Much of the
change impetus connoted in the above global and national context is evident in his 2003 Inauguration address as he outlined his mission that:

Our responsibility remains to select the best of diverse students, to learn from each other. To ensure that they balance learning and effort of mind, spirit, talent and body. To fire in them a life desire for learning and moral reasoning and action. To inspire to do what the college was founded for – to enlighten, care for and advance society as a whole, and its faith, within and beyond our borders. It remains our students’ responsibility to learn, engage and change the world. It remains the faculty’s to inform teaching with scholarship that is deep but also broad in the way it can be only at a great liberal arts college. And it remains our duty, together, to serve the community, and thereby learn further to work with those less privileged. By serving our core mission of education, we serve beyond it (Anthony W. Marx, Inaugural Address, October 26, 2003).

Also, when Tony Marx entered Amherst College it was notable from his 2003 Convocation speech that he was planning on embarking on building a powerful case for change. In the past few decades the world has become more of a global village than anytime in human history (Dixon, 2009). People of different races, religions, socio-economic means and political beliefs are less isolated from each other than in earlier eras. Therefore, in this global environment people from all different races will need to know how to interact, work in harmony and be good citizens of the society.

Tony Marx adds:

The world is changing in unpredictable and challenging ways, and so must we change. We live in times of new global connections, scientific breakthroughs,
cultural transformations, and ethical challenges—all of which force us to rethink our assumptions.

This recognition of the global and national exigencies and the role that Amherst College should play was not limited to the president within the College community. Faculty 2, for example, pointed out “I think it was the world, and that’s part of it is that we’re not an island in isolation.” This is a recognition from the College that the institution should not be operating as an island of success—a remarkable institution that does not sufficiently engage with some of the most fundamental problems of our time.

Tony Marx seemed to have been deeply cognizant of this need to make Amherst College more relevant to a rapidly changing world. His commitment and understanding of this urgent need for inclusion and diversity was evident throughout his interviews. For example, in conceptualizing his logic of refocusing on the pipeline of admission into the College, he noted, “I needed to take the opportunity to focus on changing who comes in and that would over time create pressure for changing the institution delivery system.” Marx felt that the College had a duty to the broader society for not only graduating high achieving students, but students from all backgrounds who are conscious about racial and social issues and can impact the society in a positive way. The president had a vision of how higher education, when achieved by a wide cross section of society, no matter their background, could achieve a compelling and vibrant future of what the world could be like if more people are given the opportunity to be a part of it.

However, this is not Amherst College’s first attempt at diversifying its student body. For example, Trustee 1 pointed out that “Amherst was becoming more of a diverse place under Tom, [Tom Gerety, former president]” but certainly not with the designed
focus as under Tony Marx. Faculty 2 also expressed a similar sentiment, that “previous presidents and the president before this guy, even Peter Pouncey, you know, tried different sorts of things. Tom Gerety was the president before Tony who was hired to do different kinds of things, but Gerety was kind of at the same place like Tony, but there was not that kind of support from the board and other kinds of places.” It seems that former presidents’ attempts did not enjoy the board’s persistent and intense support. In other words, previous attempts did not represent deliberate and sustained projects captured by a clear vision and prioritized by a leader who was relentless in pursuit of the objectives as his core mandate. As Trustee 1 pointed out, “For Tony [Marx] this was actually a priority, and this is something that he wants—a significant ramping up of the college’s ambition in this area that he wanted to achieve.” Other participants in the study expressed a similar view about Tony Marx’s mission. Faculty 3 added “I think Tony had this vision to be that much further ahead of every other school that was trying to do the same thing, so he was able to frame it and tap into things.” Much of the impetus of this new vision came from Tony Marx after his appointment; he became a driving force behind this mission. This was a common refrain from most of the participants in the study.

However, given the complexity of a mission such as this, which challenged the way in which Amherst College had been recruiting for years, it would be a deeply incomplete picture to suggest that Tony Marx solely shaped and drove this vision into fruition. It is obvious that there were several institutional and historical factors that supported and complemented Tony Marx’s efforts. Marx himself admits, “It happened more organically...I happened to be blessed with an astonishing board. If you look at the Board of Trustees, of the 20 members of the Amherst board when I assumed as president, it is a breathtaking
group of people and they were ready to have serious conversations.” In fact, Marx highlighted the importance of the willingness of the Board to help drive the change by describing how the trustees embraced Marx’s vision, even though he had no historical association with Amherst College before becoming president. This was an important point given Amherst College’s history of preferring “their own” alumni for important institutional positions. Marx recalls:

I did not go to Amherst [as a student], right, so that already tells you that it was a Board that was already, ready to do somewhat unconventional things. In an industry where you have been described in the top institutions, there’s little interest in anything that is innovative that might risk their status. That was not the attitude of that board or they would not have hired me right.

More specifically, Trustee 1 pointed out that when:

Tony came in, he saw as did Jide Zeitlin, the chair [of the Board of Trustees] and as did the board that this was the kind of school that ought to exercise leadership in this particular area. It was just recognized, accepted and pursued....There was never a moment when anyone on the board questioned whether it was the correct path in my recollection. It seems so just self-evidently the correct path.”

Trustee 1 further noted:

The board chair at that time Jide Zeitlin, born in Nigeria... is an American but he shares the same vision as Tony. So you have two people at the top, that is a great combination to have but at the same time you had a board that fully recognized that this is something that a school like Amherst should fully commit itself to for a lot of reasons, but one of them is just the very character of the school.
Administrator 5 expanded further on the importance role that the Board of Trustees played in the access initiative:

I think the Board of Trustees was expressing support for that idea through their choice [of hiring Tony Marx]. So it was just never one person, a *whole series of things has to be aligned in order to create change on that scale* (italics added for emphasis). So the board certainly was aligned around that idea at least.

So the important point here was that other important stakeholders were either naturally amenable to the diversity and inclusion mission, or eventually found the articulation of the vision compelling. Tony Marx noted, for example, that Amherst has “certainly a faculty that leans heavily in the progressive direction,” which was significant given the fact that Amherst College is an institution with strong faculty governance. Therefore, the faculty had the power to shut down any initiative that they deemed unworthy. But another important constituency, especially as it related to the real and practical issue of funding the vision, was the alumni body. As Faculty 2 pointed out:

But I think the other thing too is the fundraising piece, the alumni base is an important player in all of this. But I think the other thing that I noticed too, this is something that I call heroic philanthropy, there are people who will give money, partly it’s self-serving because I want my name on something but they sort of look for unique opportunities to put their name on something.

As will be explored later, without the financial muscle and support that Amherst College has, largely as a result of its alumni giving, the realization of the mission of a more inclusive College would not have happened. In summary, a number of issues contributed to the theme of *pressing social conditions aligned with organizational support systems*
toward the emergence of the vision of a more inclusive Amherst College. The new millennium ushered in a more scrutable focus on a changed global society and the role of higher education in creating a better world. These very concerns were reflected at the national level in the United States and the increasing importance of higher education in fomenting stronger social ties and citizenship between an increasingly multiracial and multicultural society (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). Thus, Amherst College, through its president and supportive important stakeholders, including alumni and faculty, located itself at the center of the impulse for positive social change.

**Leaders’ Personal Values Intersect with the College’s Founding Principles**

Based on the findings discussed so far, Tony Marx was a central driver of the current vision of a more inclusive Amherst College, even while there are acknowledged support systems and mechanisms, including a supportive Board of Trustees, an amenable faculty, and a participatory alumni body. While I have discussed the president’s role in relation to pressing social conditions and their alignment with organizational support systems, his motivation as well as his personal and professional values demand specific discussion. Equally important are the institutional values that he found synergistic with his own principles and motivation. The data show that Tony Marx’s own personal and professional experiences shaped his commitment to Amherst College’s inclusion and diversity vision. As explored in the previous section on Marx’s background, his life experiences as someone from humble beginnings, whose opportunities were in large part shaped by his educational opportunities, have impacted his views on the importance of expanding high quality education beyond the elite. Faculty 2 observes:
I think looking around at other schools and other initiatives, and I think in Tony’s own history in his work as a student in South Africa and the idealism. And you know he and I are pretty much the same age, so the idealism from the 60s and 70s and activism. So, I do think it’s all of these components that he was able to bring his own personal leadership and his own charisma.

Faculty 1 made a similar point, connecting Marx’s passion and drive for positive social change with his years of personal engagement in social justice advocacy and practice:

I think Tony was very aware of not only the strength of Amherst but also I think he wanted to articulate those strengths and offer something that was truly distinctive his early days of being an undergraduate and working in South Africa and helping found a school there. So access has been a theme for his career and I think it’s a real true commitment of his and he brought that with him to Amherst.

Marx’s early experiences seemed to have had an indelible imprint on his career, which also shaped his worldview about social justice and education, as articulated in the context of Amherst College. Marx maintained:

As a social scientist, understanding that if we don’t find a way to lock and unlock the broader talent that is untapped, all of us suffer from that, understanding that when you have a more varied mix of students in a classroom or a campus everyone benefits from that, because the conversation gets a lot more interesting. If everyone comes from the same backgrounds, have the same views it wouldn’t be an interesting conversation and that’s a pity, so all of that together, I think was a driver
for me of what I thought was one of the important things we need to do at Amherst and that I had the unexpected opportunity to help do it.

Importantly, too, the role of biography on shaping people’s attitude toward the vision was not limited to Tony Marx; others were also important. Administrator 4 explained his own passion to be involved in helping to create a more diverse and inclusive environment at the College. With regard to his own approach to the vision, he recalled “for someone who came from humble beginnings and had the opportunity to attend a prominent college and got an excellent education and it was without any question, life changing, so the notion of creating access and making it possible for students of lesser means was something that I embraced wholeheartedly.”

One of the most significant factors in selling and operationalizing the vision of an inclusive Amherst College that provided opportunities for talented people of limited means was that the vision didn’t originate in principle with Tony Marx. If this initiative were the brainchild of one individual, it is not unreasonable to believe that an institution as Amherst College that is steeped in elitism would be heavily resistant to the idea. Inclusion was deep in the College’s DNA, and founding principles provided a fundamental point of reference for proponents to accept this renewed vision and its implementation. As Trustee 1 noted, “It has always been from its founding, it presented itself, written into its mission statement is that in essence it’s not just for the sons much less the daughters of wealthy people, it’s for young men indigent men of piety. So the idea of it being open to people of all backgrounds is built into the College’s DNA.” This fact was not lost on Marx, as he notes that based on the founding principles of Amherst College, the founders “established a private school with a public mission.” Marx was strategic in directly linking his vision of a
more accessible Amherst College with the College’s founding mission with the seemingly intended effect of warding off resistance. From the College’s inception it was known to have enrolled students who may not have had access to higher education otherwise. In 1826 shortly after its opening, the College graduated its first African American student, Edward Jones, and then Joseph Hardy Neesima, its first Japanese student, in 1870 (Wade, 1976). As its charter stated, the College will educate “indigent young men of piety and talents” (Wilson, 2007). Tony Marx was quick to acknowledge that one of the first things he did in his appointment was to read the charter founding the institution in 1821, which clearly stated that the institution was founded to train the indigent. He concluded, “That means if we want to do more of that, that is not a radical move, it is a conservative move. I am trying to further restore the founding traditions of the institution.”

Faculty 3 recalled:

...that [providing education to poor students] was always a thread that was there but Tony was able to coalesce all these different forces and energy. But it really was kind of Tony’s vision, leadership and articulation that brought all these things and these were energies, aspirations that were always part of the place but were dormant or subjugated because of other priorities or other things that were going on. And so I don’t remember the conversations being as revolutionary as the outcome—there was really this more general idea that we’re going to become more accessible and we’re going to reduce barriers to the admission process, racial, ethnic, cultural, geographic, financial.

Administrator 5 goes even further to point out how Tony Marx highlighted
that the core founding principle of Amherst College was inconsistent with prevailing admission practices and recently enrolled student composition:

I think Tony did a lot of research for the speech that he gave at his inauguration. He also looked at the speech that was given by John F. Kennedy at Amherst in 1963, not long before he was assassinated, and found that the data that President Kennedy cited in his speech from 1963 had not changed significantly between 1963 and 2003. When Tony was hired, the proportion of students that were at the top echelons of the top income were the same, and I think he was just surprised by that, and that further motivated him to look at that and to ask what needed to be changed.

Tony Marx himself points out that what the College was able to accomplish in its recent mission to be more inclusive is not a paradigm shift in the College’s values:

The truth is that while the student body [now] looks different, comes from different backgrounds, the basic [founding] model of Amherst College has not changed right? So the idea that it was a revolution seems overheated, but the reason why is simply because it is an industry that does not change much, right? So people sort of get excited or not bothered by change even if it isn’t. You’ll have to make your own judgement as to whether it was fundamental at all.

Marx consistently articulated his belief that as educators and administrators of an esteemed college they needed to be accountable and make a conscious decision to help bridge the racial and other divides that existed in the society. He, and others interviewed, expressed that their attempts to make Amherst College more accountable to this societal
cause was made that much easier because the basic principles were already in existence in the College’s founding DNA.

As articulated by Trustee 1:

Not speaking for other schools [but] what I think you can say about Amherst is that the institution has decided that this is part of our identity. It was part of our identity in an embryonic form for a long, long time and now it is part of our identity that everyone can see and the decision is explicit and irrevocable.

In the operationalization of these principles, of the pressing social conditions, the shared interests of the various stakeholders, the support systems that developed over time, and Amherst College’s founding principles, it was evident that Marx’s leadership was critical in linking these various phenomena together to advance the vision of a more inclusive institution. His skill in linking his own vision of a more inclusive Amherst College with the institution’s founding principles seems to have been key in not just getting the necessary buy-in, but also in limiting sustained resistance. It is identified that the vision emerged largely from a combination of “Pressing social conditions aligned with organizational support systems” and the “Intersection of leaders’ personal values and the College’s founding principles” in significant ways.

**Summary of the Findings of the First Sub-question**

The findings show that the “Pressing social conditions alignment with organizational support system” and “Intersection of leaders’ personal values and the College’s founding principles” were among the most significant factors responsible for the emergence of the vision of a more inclusive Amherst College. These two factors were fundamentally large because presidential leadership operationalized them into drivers of
the vision of diversity. For example, while it was widely recognized that the world had become increasingly more diverse and complex, Marx’s leadership showed the role that Amherst College could and should play in making this demographic reality into opportunities rather than mere threats. From the outset of his presidency, as evident in his inauguration speech, Marx used his platform of leadership to set the tone of the diversity and inclusion vision and made it an institutional commitment.

Also, Marx’s personal biography depicted how someone coming from humble means developed an appreciation of the importance of inclusion for those without means. He was able to elevate his experiences and connect them with Amherst College’s broader institutional values. He strategically reminded the stakeholders of these deep-seated values of inclusion and that the College should feel accountable in contributing to this endeavor.

**What are the Factors that Aided Amherst to Increase its Racial and Socio-economic Diversity in the Student Body?**

Organizational research suggested that there are many requirements to form a vision, develop strategies around that vision, and translate them into implemented plans (Morril, 2010). These approaches involved intangible issues such as selling a vision through moral suasion, institutional restructuring, political maneuvering, and tangible mechanisms including material resources and physical efforts. Ultimately, all of these efforts are aimed at (re)focusing the institution to pull it in a direction that advanced a defined vision. Keeping in mind that organizations are a collection of people, groups, ideas, customs, traditions and values, the process of institutionalizing a newly defined or redefined vision is not an easy task (Bolman & Deal, 2003).
One of the values that Amherst College prides itself on is having a closely knit community of students, parents, faculty, administrators, staff, trustees, and alumni. This community approach was a founding principle that defined Amherst College. With the charge of implementing major change, a new access diversity initiative required getting these groups to coalesce around this new vision and also enlisting others to support the cause. As it relates to goal setting, since this is primarily a strategic function, the president had to develop the formal and informal influence in setting strategic issues. So, one of the essential measures that the president assumed was to garner institutional support from the Amherst College community. Obtaining that support may not necessarily be an easy feat, as Bolman and Deal (2003) observed that “organizations as living, screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests” (p.186). An analysis of any organization according to Bolman and Deal (2003), reveals the presence and nature of the following characteristics and phenomena. These include coalitions; intensity of conflict and politics in occasion of scarce resources; the distribution and exercise of power, with power being defined as capacity to get things done (or prevent things from getting done); and goal setting decisions, and how they emerge from stakeholders (p. 188). In order to have any institutional change effects, a leader must work with and through these institutional characteristics. In this situation, the president was able to bring the various groups around the vision of increased access. One respondent noted:

He [Tony Marx] was here at a moment where he was able to galvanize people around an issue that struck at everybody’s heartstrings, and that is a social justice initiative. But he also did the political work of talking to different constituencies to
see how they could participate and be in support of and even benefit from these initiatives, so he was able to pull those groups together (Faculty 2).

This comment captured the significance of using moral suasion, political maneuvering and application of resources for social change as seen in the data analysis focused on different areas of the change process below.

**Selling the Vision: On and off Campus Constituencies**

The president played an instrumental role by promoting Amherst College’s access diversity initiative and its affordability. “The thing that Tony did which was really great was that he became such a public figure on this issue and that definitely worked to our advantage”, says Administrator 4. Administrator 4 continued, “The other thing that Tony did for us which was very, very good is that he is such a powerful spokesperson for diversity. He is on television, he is on radio, he’s in newspapers, he’s in magazines, and so a lot of people now say, “Oh! Amherst College is so successful and committed to diversity.” This approach of wide dissemination of the vision of an accessible Amherst College was a well-established strategy from the president. A respondent commented that, “Tony always said that not all of our work would be really meaningful unless we spread it to other places. That was one of my motivations to come in here [new workplace], to come to an institution that wanted to do this kind of work and use the lessons I have learned and kind of applied it here” (Administrator 5). Tony Marx himself maintained, “You have to do that [communicate the vision] in lots of ways, even if the *New York Times* runs it as a front page story, which they did, right, I think that was the only time Amherst was on the front page that I can think of…” He goes on to point out the importance of having a multi-pronged public relations approach “to get the message out to communities that we could
not easily reach,” including talented diverse and low-income students whom the College wanted to recruit.

One of the central constituencies to which this vision was communicated was the faculty. It’s important to understand the context of the power structure of Amherst College, a place where faculty governance is powerful in shaping the College’s agenda. As one participant expressed, “Amherst as you know is a very faculty-centered place, and so in most initiatives you would come through the governance, the faculty governance structure—so there’s a Committee of Six” (Faculty 2). He further commented that, “The Committee of Six, which is the Faculty Executive Committee, and so all things come through, all initiatives that have gathered momentum from the College, so if they need more broad community support endorsement and vetting, it would go through the Committee of Six. And so that’s, kind of administratively, the most powerful committee on campus…” (Faculty 2). Similarly, another respondent explained that:

The Committee of Six is a governing committee of the faculty and the president and the Dean of Faculty sits on that. The primary role of that committee is to review all tenure decisions, academic decisions, and operational recommendations by all departments. That is the majority of the work they do and they set the agenda for the faculty meetings and sometimes the president would bring things to the committee just to get their feedback or input if they are making a decision, and that committee is elected by the faculty (Administrator 8).

So, “through the Committee of Six there were certainly conversations and then that gets communicated to the faculty through their minutes and so the more intense conversations would kind of happen at that level and then the Committee of Six would
kind of bring things to the entire faculty, to the floor of the faculty in our monthly faculty meetings” (Faculty 2). Therefore, “if any initiative needs more broad community support, endorsement, they would go through the Committee of Six”... (Faculty 2). Given this reality, it was crucial for the president to get faculty and the Committee of Six buy-in to his vision.

To further highlight the power-context, it is important to note that there has always been some unease between the faculty, a key constituency, and the executive administration. Administrator 2 observed:

... among the faculty there’s always a sort of skepticism of the administrations, and Tony, you know, he was the right person at the right time to bring people together on this particular issue. But even still there was general skepticism. It’s like well it’s not our idea and how do we communicate what is it we’re talking about? And if it’s not my idea, you know with a lot of things, if it’s not my idea, I don’t like it. So Tony had a battle of trying to bring all these coalitions together to say this is all our idea and to really tie it to the history of Amherst that this is an articulation of an Amherst’s value that’s been part of the place since 1821. It’s redefined, we redefined it. It was different in 1821 than it was in 1960 than in 1976 coeducation, and now in the 2000s. So, part of it was not necessarily push back but you know that’s administratively what you have to have for it to be successful so there was that aspect of it.

The president went about selling this vision of inclusion and sought cooperation in some important ways, by laying out his vision, its logic and rationale, as well as showing how the faculty would be active participants in the process rather than mere pawns. This
latter participatory role for faculty was a particularly important feature, given the level of autonomy often associated with faculty at higher educational institutions, and Amherst College in particular. The president brought the vision to the Committee of Six. As Faculty 2 recalls “through the Committee of Six there were certainly conversations” and “there were conversations at the faculty meeting level” as well, “and we were just constantly trying to disseminate information through faculty meetings and other avenues on campus.” Further, “Tony hired a special assistant for diversity and inclusion...who did amazing work, I would say trying to go around the campus and really help explain the value of diversity and help get people on board” (Administrator 7). The president did not only use the existing institutional framework of committees and faculty meetings to sell the vision, he was also strategic in developing the position of a Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion, that would serve as a primary mechanism to engage with on-campus constituencies, particularly the faculty and the executive administrators. The person who held this position was a senior faculty member with institutional tenure. This position gave the individual institutional backing, which provided a sense of empowerment to communicate the vision.

Alumni have been another powerful set of stakeholders at Amherst College. Historically a very active group, alumni carry significant influence in shaping the direction of the College. Amherst College alumni occupy positions of power and influence all over the world, from royalty, to heads of states, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, and high profile professions in politics, media, business, law and entertainment. Additionally, their high degree of dedication to the College is partly evidenced by the level of endowment that such a small liberal arts college enjoys. In September 2008, the College launched the Lives
of Consequence campaign. During the period from 2008 to 2013, 86 percent of alumni engaged with the College and contributed over $500 million (Amherst College Annual Report). Alumni funding and support is therefore vital to the College’s continued success and, as such, alumni have significant influence. A successful vision that departs from the status quo that alumni are accustomed to requires serious buy-in from this group. Thus, the communication and public relations campaign was also directed at this important constituency. There were extensive and specific strategies aimed at alumni. For example, in terms of communication, one respondent recalled, “We worked a long time on [a] letter and it went to alumni and there was more than one and we were just constantly trying to disseminate information…” (Administrator 5). And it was clear that alumni initially harbored doubts about this initiative. Tony Marx notes:

Alumni had to be convinced legitimately, that we were not lowering standards, we were not hurting them, that we were not going to hurt our fundraising capacity which they understood was part of the strength of the place.

For the most part, efforts to sell the vision to alumni were successful, and had important effects on this stakeholder group. Tony Marx says:

We certainly saw alumni coming back to the fold saying oh, we have never read anything about Amherst in this way, we are proud of what Amherst is doing and the leadership role it’s taking in higher education and we want to support that. And alumni literally would say to me, I would have given to the college anyway because it’s my college or maybe I could have given additionally because I felt I had a debt given the fellowships I got when I was there. But the third ingredient became, and I can justify giving more, because it’s now my college doing something for a larger
social impact...actually [it] went more smoothly than I would’ve predicted, meaning that I would have expected more resistance than I think we got. This is not to suggest that there was unanimity among alumni about the potential positive effects of this new focus on diversity on inclusion. As Administrator 7 pointed out,

I think the staff were understanding where they were going. I think the alumni were not brought along maybe as much as they should have been because I think they are the ones that are having the hardest time understanding why. And it’s very different; Amherst is very different now from when they were here. It looks very different—I actually think it’s pretty similar the school, but the alumni don’t understand where they fit in anymore, because you just come here and it looks so different than it used to be when they were here.

Some of this ambivalence may have been due to the fact that alumni are from different eras and may have different expectations of the College. As Faculty 2 suggested, “I think frankly around the 70s with the co-education, you know, I think those alums that were here during the co-education years feel more supportive of the campus today than those who were more from the all-male years... they realized, my daughters can benefit from this.”

Efforts were also made to sell the vision to future alumni, that is, currently enrolled students on campus, and to garner their understanding of the new approaches, as well as use their feedback to inform program design for incoming students who would benefit from this new, more inclusive strategy. Administrator 5 said:
We have hired a wonderful person a young alum. We hired her for three years after she graduated to almost be like a secret shopper for many programs to find out what students thought of the work that we were doing in our financial aid and all sorts of things that we could improve and make it better for students from low-income backgrounds. And there was a real sincerity to all the work and desire for it to serve students well, but then at the same time you have to put that in a conceptual framework, and hope that everybody understands it and they are not just following a narrative that is happening in their heads.

**Developing the Administrative and Implementation Infrastructure**

While it was crucial from a political and cooperative standpoint to sell the vision to the faculty, alumni and students, it was also important to develop administrative backing and an infrastructure for administrators to implement the ideas emanating from the vision. Otherwise, the vision would have been meaningless (Morrill, 2010). This constructive approach came in the form of the sense of empowerment that the staff felt, and the resources and mechanisms dedicated to implementing the vision of a more inclusive Amherst College. In significant ways, it seems that much of the successful implementation of the vision rested on the Admission Office. Additionally, the success of the admission mechanisms was heavily predicated on the financial muscle made available to support both the various admission initiatives as well as the recruited students’ enrollment in an expensive institution such as Amherst College.

From the perspective of Administrator 7, the president was dedicated to assembling an administrative team and providing the support they needed to implement the vision of a more diverse institution.
I think he was very consistent in trying to figure out what things he needed to be doing to keep it on track, working with his team, like working with admission to get on the track that they wanted to be on. He worked with the trustees to keep their support on track, working with Development Office to get the fundraising, and working with the treasurer to do the funding.

Administrator 6 made similar observations and points out that “it [implementing the vision] had to be a shared responsibility not just for one person ...everyone in the office had to believe in what we were doing so they would visit the schools maintain relationships and they would review the application using that holistic lens.” In this regard, Administrator 6 further added that:

Tony Marx provided the resources and talked about it at the national level that placed value on it, and got the alums on board, got faculty on board, and I think having the right people develop in the culture of the Admission Office to see the value, made the college what it is right now in terms of the number of underrepresented students that they have on campus.

It seems that the administrators implementing the vision felt a sense of support and empowerment based on the broad-based institutional backing the president provided, both rhetorically and through his own active dedication. The administrators did not feel that they were merely left with the difficult task of implementing the vision while the leader stayed on the sidelines. Administrator 7 suggested that:

I think that he did a really commendable job at steering the Admission Office and identifying those students and in raising money to help the Admission Office find those students and they're still very sort of focused on that in their work and have
now created these pipelines. I think of students that wouldn’t normally think about coming to Amherst and then there was financial aid available, so Amherst is one of the most generous if not the most generous school in the country.

Administrator 7 further commented on the administrative structure supporting the diversity process, particularly the Admission Office:

I think they hired in the right people and I think it was a culture of the Admission Office. It was like I find this amazing student—what are we going to do to yield the student? And it wasn’t just a couple people operating in silos and saying ok and having to fight to get the kids through committee. We received some momentum—Tony Marx talking about this at the national level.

Administrator 6 added a similar sentiment, noting that “it took a whole group of individuals and I think the leadership at Amherst was good because they were able to hire admission counselors who shared that vision.” It seems that there was a consensus in the Admission Office that the access diversity initiative was an important cause and there was noticeable action to support its success.

**Empowering Admission Staff and Developing and Implementing Various Recruitment Strategies**

This sheer amount of effort and number of innovative approaches devised and employed by the Admission Office in their recruitment drive showed how deeply consequential the role that the Admission Office and officers played in implementing the diversity initiative. A major part of operationalizing the vision of a more diverse student body involved developing recruitment strategies that would attract students who would not traditionally be attracted to Amherst College. The process of admission, especially for such
a selective institution as Amherst College, is highly systematized to gain particular types of students. It is apparent from the research that over time, the institution had attracted a very racially and socio-economically privileged class of students. Further, based on the College’s location and its selective nature, it is difficult to readily attract a highly diverse pool of minority and low-income prospective students within the region. The admission network infrastructure over time has morphed into strengthening the pipeline for certain types of students. Thus, the new vision of attracting and enrolling a more diverse set of students, both racially and socio-economically, required not just a change in thinking, but a significant change in strategy and a widening of its admission network and infrastructure.

Admittedly, some efforts were made in the past to diversify the College. In the 1960s, as a result of the civil rights movement, the College started to receive a small number of African American students, “10 per entry class” (Administrator 4), but the impact was still minimal. As Administrator 4 expressed, “the real explosion in diversity at Amherst began just over a decade ago” during Tony Marx’s tenure. The College embarked on a campaign that intensified efforts from some of the key departments such as the Admission and Financial Aid Office, the Development Office and the Office of the President to broaden access. It seemed clear from the outset that the president saw the importance of developing both a new recruitment and retention vision but also ensuring that the Admission and Financial Aid Office was redesigned to effectively pursue the new mandate. As Administrator 1 pointed out:

I think Tony was upfront in terms of his goals and I think part of the evidence of that is there were some concerns. It’s true that a governance process in building a sense of support really does occur at many levels. Tony was upfront with his senior
administrators so we were certainly aware of the goals. The Dean of Admission was crucial to the success, so we were clear about that.

Administrator 1 continued:

Tony came and gave a detailed analysis of college-age students and talked about the demographics of potential students to the college and presented this to the board. There were discussions and faculty meetings and certainly many discussions in the Committee of Six. The Committee of Six functions among many things to set the agenda for faculty meetings and they review all the work of the other faculty committees.

The Office of Admission became central to the new recruitment efforts and developed and employed a wide range of recruitment strategies. Such approaches included working with approximately 150 community organizers, Diversity Recruitment Membership Organizations, implementing in-house programs, Diversity Open House Program/Fly In-Program, setting up Phone-A-Thon and Chat Room, Travel Grants, Group Visitations.

Amherst’s rural location and its selective nature made it difficult to attract minority and low-income students. The Admission Office, being aware of the challenges to readily attract a high potential diverse pool of prospective students, decided to make connections and establish membership in approximately 150 community organizations and other established recruiting agencies. These diversity recruitment programs maintain membership in several professional and outreach organizations focused on serving the needs of students of color as well as low-income students. Some of these organizations are the New England Counselors of Color Bridging Access to College (NECBAC), the
National Hispanic Institute (NHI), the Venture Scholars Program, A Better Chance for College (ABC) and the QuestBridge program. QuestBridge, a non-profit Scholars Program, is designed to match bright, motivated low-income students with select private educational institutions that offer scholarship opportunities through an application process.

Administrator 6 notes:

Our partnership with QuestBridge allowed us to recruit kids from outside of New England region that fit the profile of underrepresented students across all racial lines without having to travel there. But this is an expensive partnership, it’s $25,000 annually that you pay to participate, to work with QuestBridge, and if you yield a student through processes for early decision we are paying $3,500. If we accept a student for regular decision, we are paying an additional $500... We average between 35 to 45 students per year with the QuestBridge program so we spend easily over $80,000 with the annual membership and the fees associated with capturing those students and bringing those students to campus. But this expands our pool like we’re getting some of the top kids in the country. QuestBridge is vetting them, so we’re getting the cream of the crop that fits the profile that we’re looking.

Administrator 1 explained that initiating on-campus support mechanisms for the students recruited from the partnership programs was a consequential approach employed by the College. This involved finding different ways to immerse the students into campus life and help them overcome potential psychological barriers they may have about attending a school such as Amherst College. The campus community immersion strategies involved making students spend several days on campus as they attended classes and
workshops to see what their daily life would be like and getting them to understand the admission and financial aid processes. There were also initiatives to support these students as they completed their application packages, and early orientation even after they were admitted but before they officially started their studies. There was consistent support throughout the recruitment life cycle. A participant from the Financial Aid Office explained the recruitment process:

I take the lead in terms of pre-freshman and first year student if they are actually admitted. So in that regard in the recruiting tool, I participate fully in helping to recruit low-income students to campus. I do presentations at each of the diversity open house programs and I run the prospective candidate through the entire financial aid process, how to apply, how we determine eligibility, how we make awards, what they actually mean relative to the cost of attendance. I think the Financial Aid Office plays a critical role in that you can admit all the students that you want, but if the resources are not there to help support the students then I think we are going to come up short in terms of trying to have students show up on campus (Administrator 9).

Thus, bringing the prospective minority and low-income students to the College for a campus visit became an important strategy deployed by Admission and Financial Aid Office. Also, for a highly selective liberal arts college, which is historically considered to be elitist, serving mostly Caucasian and wealthy students, the prospect of admitting racial minorities and socio-economically challenged students raised a lot of difficult questions about cultural fit for many of these students. Therefore, bringing these students to the campus was seen as a way to help diminish this potential problem. Because recruitment of
such talented students is competitive among highly selective colleges and universities, one of the strategies is to introduce them to the campus and hope that it forms an impression that would later allow them to choose Amherst over others. This strategy of taking these potential students on campus was well supported, not just directly by the College, but by the broader Amherst College community. Administrator 4 concurred with this narrative and showed the Amherst community involvement:

Two gifts were anonymously given [to the college] to bring low-income students to campus during the fall to visit classes and have a presentation on financial aid. The opportunity has enabled us in every fall to bring about 190 low-income students to campus, primarily students of color but also some white students of low-income and they spend three days and two nights here each fall during two different periods and that’s the real key to our success.

A large number of the students that visited the campus on this program were eventually admitted. According to Administrator 6 the campus visits provided opportunities that help the students with the college decision and application:

The campus visit is an exposure to the Amherst College community than anything else. I think the Diversity Open House makes a big difference in getting students to enroll and attend the college. We pay for their trips and all the cost involved so there is a lot of work that is involved... Financial aid is jargon heavy, so when the students attend the Diversity Open House, the workshop provides that initial introduction which does help them with their application later.

Enabling the students to visit the campus was very important because it provided an indication to the deans and faculty members of how the students would likely fit in the
campus environment. During the Diversity Open House weekend, the students were evaluated, for example, to see if they attended all the classes and workshop sessions and for their participation in classes. In the student-interviews, the interviewers stressed that Amherst needed students who wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of an excellent education and to live a principled life of consequence. In other words, talent was not enough; students must also display a level of desire, commitment and discipline. As students visited various classes and workshops while on campus, they learned about different forms of support mechanisms in place to help them, once admitted, transition and integrate into the college community. These opportunities were also geared toward helping them experience diverse peers, and develop meaningful relationships. The expectation was that the students would develop an appreciation of diverse points of view and value different perspectives. Sharing perspectives is the kind of discussion that is generated in a diverse classroom, which enriches students’ learning.

Administrator 6 also explained that the classroom at Amherst College is one that facilitates everyone’s point of view, which is an important selling point to students on their campus visits:

One of the main things we want to highlight is our small classroom size—about 15 students and the give-and-take that takes place in the classes. It’s not lecturing or having grad students teaching the classes. There are discussions in the classroom—everyone sharing their perspective and not just faculty spitting out information and you have to recite it back to them. This is how learning happens in the community. However, campus visits were not restricted to potential students visiting Amherst College’s campus. Amherst admission staff also visited schools to engage with prospective
students. Everyone supported and took responsibility for the diversity initiative. The Dean of Admission and Financial Aid still takes an active role in visiting schools and community colleges. The Admission Deans also take an active role visiting schools and community colleges. Diversity interns are hired to do outreach to potential students and their families as well.

It is important to the College that students learn how to relate to and communicate with people who are different from themselves. Irrespective of where the students are from, the College is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment that not only provides an academic education, but one which is significantly broad-based and incorporates social justice, supporting sensitivity to differences such as culture, race, and other diversity endeavors. Consequently, community support is highly valued on the campus. The level of importance attached to this concept is evident by the fact that community building support for low-income and minority students started even before the students were formally admitted. For many of these students the Amherst College community would be vastly different from their own. Therefore, rather than having a sudden immersion of students into the College, Amherst College provided a progressive and phased introduction to the campus community through the Diversity Open House.

Further along in the process, as potential students of diverse backgrounds went through the application process, the College also provided support. The “Phone-a-thon and chat room” are good examples.

The college also developed a telementoring program where they would work with current Amherst students who would reach out to students who need some help completing the application process. So whether they had questions about essays or
how do I fill out the form or plan for the financial aid, you could directly communicate with the current students who went through the process to help you navigate and complete that so there was a lot of work involved (Administrator 4). Even after students applied, there were great efforts to keep in contact with them and encourage them to come to Amherst College. For example, Administrator 6 noted:

And then after they apply we still have chat rooms if they have labored questions, and after they are admitted there is also an additional chat room where they could talk to deans. They could field questions from interns; faculty will call these students, send them emails, reach out to them and let them know that if they have questions they are a resource for them.

Still, even where students had not availed themselves of the previously discussed opportunities to come on campus before applying, once admitted, they were given further opportunities to come on campus before the official start of their studies. For example, every April, the Office of Admission would email 335 admitted students of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds who did not attend the Diversity Open House program in the fall and offer to fund their airline travel to campus to attend the Admitted Student Open House. For students living in close proximity, the Admission Office chartered a bus to pick up students from select locations such as New York City so they could attend the Admitted Student Open House.

The important aspects of implementing the vision entailed not just selling the idea of a more inclusive Amherst College; it also involved operationalizing this vision through planning, strategy development and practical application. Given the recent history of Amherst College as a bastion of privilege, particularly racial economic advantage, its
institutional mechanisms have been developed to recruit these types of students. The vision of recruiting talented students from racially- and economically-diverse communities could only be achieved through fundamental change to its recruitment vision and infrastructure. The Admission Department became a linchpin in these processes, but based on the history of Amherst College’s governance being heavily faculty driven, this significant administrative empowerment could only take place with unwavering support from the president. Without being empowered and supported by the president, the Admission and Financial Aid Office would not have been able to implement the wide diversity of recruitment strategies it employed, which included working with community organizers, media marketing, implementing in-house programs, extensive travel of the admission deans to schools, line of direct contact via phone-a-thon and chat room, travel grants, and group visitations.

Financing the Vision: Recruitment, Students and Fundraising

“It takes cash to care” is an old adage often used in Jamaica, and it seems nowhere is this sentiment more profoundly applicable than in the case of Amherst College’s attempts to diversify its enrollment when the cost of attending is way out of reach of most low-income families. The strategies to recruit talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as employed by the Admission Office, carried significant economic costs. It is therefore important to consider the ways in which financial components played a significant role in aiding Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity in the student body. One important quotation captures the financial capacity necessary for a vision such as this to come to fruition; Trustee 1 noted, “First of all, the brutal reality is
that only a handful of schools have the resources to be able to do what we are doing, maybe there are 30 I think.”

Below, I examined the financial implication on three levels. The first is, financing the administrative components of the recruitment drive, especially the recruitment activities of the Admissions Office. Secondly, providing financial support to students who needed financial assistance through scholarships and grants; and third, the various ways in which the College sought to financially support its vision through various fundraising initiatives. An examination of all three reveals the implications for presidential leadership.

**Finance for Diversity Access Initiative**

The newly implemented recruitment strategies, explored above, were more expansive and sustained than they previously were anytime in the college’s recent history. The vision of a more inclusive student body required that Amherst College go well beyond the status quo to revolutionize how it searched for and reached out to students. The various components of this new vision carried significant cost implications, but there was an expressed commitment to the new recruitment strategies. As Administrator 6 explained, “we have an open budget to facilitate the success of this cause.” Administrator 6 elaborated on the point to show the extent of the president’s commitment:

Tony Marx, in his role as president of the college pushed it [the vision of inclusion] forward by supporting this initiative financially. So in order for us to recruit the way we did, you needed it to invest financially and you also had to invest in outreach recruitment. One of the amazing things about Amherst is that, at the time, it was do whatever it takes. And that meant whatever resources you need, so we had a budget to recruit underrepresented students that had no bottom which is
unheard of for places, right! So whatever it took meant, OK we are not capping your budget, if it’s $400,000 you need, go ahead and spend it; if it’s $600,000 go ahead and spend it. And we are going to recruit the students and we’re going to support them while they are on campus.

**Financial Support**

This conviction of not only recruiting students, but also supporting them consistently while enrolled was an important consideration from the outset. One respondent recalled:

> To expand the range of backgrounds you’re going to recruit aggressively…you are going to encounter a lot of people who are going to have financial needs and so that is another issue and you have to make a decision. Alright, do we put our money where our mouth is, and that was a very explicit decision that was presented by Tony… and to the board, board chair. (Administrator 6)

Amherst College is committed to making financial aid available to all students with financial need so that cost does not become the determining factor in making a decision about the College. Administrator 9 pointed out,

> The group that gets admitted we meet the full demonstrated financial needs…100 percent of everybody that got admitted to the college regardless whether it is a small or large number so we meet everybody’s full need 100 percent.

In addition to being need-blind for domestic students, Amherst is one of only four or five colleges nationwide that is also need-blind to international students (Administrator 4). This idea of accessibility is a return to the institution’s founding roots. At the College’s inception, it maintained a need-blind admission policy for all domestic students. The need-
blind program makes admission decisions without considering whether applicants are applying for aid or to what degree applicants have financial need. Over the years, small incremental changes have been made to broaden financial aid. Two of the more prominent efforts were in 1999 when Amherst became the first college in the nation to eliminate loans for low-income students, and in 2007 the Board of Trustees voted to replace all loans with scholarships in their financial aid package for all students with loans (Hanna, 2008). The full-need financial aid is where the College meets the full demonstrated need of every admitted student. If a family shows that it can pay only a small portion of tuition and costs—or maybe none at all—the school absorbs the rest. The open house, discussed earlier, also provides the opportunity to explain to the students that through the College’s need-blind application process, as well as its financial aid package and no-loan policy, low-income and minority students may find that this private college will be more affordable than even a public in-state university.

The College provides support by customizing the financial aid package to reflect students’ individual circumstances. A funding decision is made based on the students’ demonstrated needs. There are also no conditions, such as maintaining a set grade to continue their financial aid support (Administrator 9). The College also made provisions for diversity interns to help the students navigate their way in the community. The interns are their peers, so they may feel more comfortable relating to each other. If they know of students who are having problems, for example financial, they will communicate it to the Dean of Students Office and those students are given first priority for campus jobs, should they apply. Administrator 4 said the “Dean of Students’ Office likes to help with
adjustments whether it is social or academic adjustment.” These commitments were part and parcel of the new inclusive vision. As Administrator 8 noted:

There was money for scholarships, for tuition and then there were initiatives centered around opportunities once the students were here. So the Center of Community Engagement for instance was another new endeavor that Tony wanted to be sure that students who came to Amherst regardless of their ability to pay and their resources had the opportunity to have real life experiences and internships in the area.

This pipeline approach to thinking about inclusion and opportunities seems to have had important effects on students’ choice to enroll in Amherst College. One respondent recalled an encounter with some of these students in discussions about why they chose Amherst College:

Why did you come here? Like, why not go somewhere else? And they say ‘because I got the most aid here.’ So Amherst really is very, very generous in that regard, and that creates this incredibly diverse student body. So anyways, Tony was really good at focusing on that front-end and getting that pipeline in place, getting the students here really, opening Amherst up to the world, which Amherst in the past was very kind of closeted (Administrator 7).

The vision of inclusive education did not end with consideration of getting the students enrolled and graduated. It seems some thought was given to how prohibitive it would be for students without financial aid. There was the fear that students would be restricted by the prospect of indebtedness in coming to Amherst if they took loans. On this point, Trustee 1 recalls:
I asked the question—are we comfortable committing the amount of money to financial aid that is going to be required, and we did. And furthermore, an additional step was, what about getting rid of loans because you can give someone, anyone, a great education but leaving college with $150,000 worth of loans, their options you may be dictating having them going to a career that they do not want to go into. So the question was, do we get rid of loans? Every time we would have given someone say $10,000 a year in a loan package, replace that with actual cash, should we do that? And we decided we should do that, so we just replaced all of our loans with actual cash.

**Fundraising Initiative – Lives of Consequence Campaign**

Although Amherst College had a healthy endowment at the time, the idea to drive the vision of an inclusive campus did not rest on merely using existing funds to finance this major initiative. Thus, possibly one of the most significant aspects of this vision of inclusion was that it was also framed as and coupled with a fundraising vision. It seems there was such belief in the inherent “goodness” and appeal of inclusion and diversity that this initiative could “fund itself.” One respondent proudly declared, “first of all I said the vast majority of alumni are not just supportive but proud of the fact that this is the kind of school we have” (Alumnus 1). Another notes:

Definitely a big focus of the campaign was trying to raise financial aid dollars towards helping fund scholarships and things which we were I would say wildly successful at. We raised a lot of money; there were some giant gifts, the two anonymous gifts that were the biggest gifts ever to a small liberal arts college came in during that campaign. And I’m sure Tony, I know Tony had a giant role in
securing those, and those were unrestricted, which means they could go to whatever we wanted them to go to, so that really helped fuel a lot of what’s going on at Amherst right now (Administrator 7).

There is always the temptation to focus on the access and enrollment campaign as a stand-alone initiative, which is not the full story. As Administrator 8 opined, “It was a comprehensive campaign so there were a lot of different priorities. And the access initiative was one among many but it was the most prominent.” This campaign included the fundraising component in which the Development Office played a significant role. The Development Office was heavily involved with appealing to the philanthropic sensibilities of the alumni. By establishing and maintaining good relations with them, in return they provided funding for the institution. The Lives of Consequence Campaign was also an important initiative that went to the very heart of the mission of Amherst College: to educate “men and women of exceptional potential from all backgrounds so that they may seek, value, and advance knowledge, engage the world around them, and lead principled lives of consequence” (Amherst College website). The campaign was launched in October 2008 with a goal to raise $425 million. This fund would go toward scholarships, curriculum and faculty support.

Any interpretation of a smooth, totally confident process in which there was very little disagreement about issues of financing would be incomplete and misleading. Straddling this successful enrollment and fundraising drive were also periods of doubt and ambivalence from various stakeholders and interests at various times, sometimes due to changing and seemingly precarious economic conditions. These situations served as barometers of presidential leadership and the capacity to sustain a vision, which was
starting to become a fundamental part of the institution. Trustee 1 points out for example, that:

You know there were moments when for reflection point, like the financial crisis, where if you wanted to step back from what we were doing. We could have but we didn’t want to, we don’t want to, we want to be the place that liberal arts is a fabulous form of education. It’s needed now more than ever, people of every background being represented properly in terms of the numbers makes that education better for everybody as well as being a matter of equity. It is pure and simple, and by the way, the world that we are all moving into is a world where effective human beings need to be able to work with everybody.

The national economic crisis of 2008 had many adverse effects on American colleges and universities. It was reported that the wealthiest institutions were most affected and suffered significant financial damage due to falling endowments. Private institutions are dependent on returns from the endowment as well as gift income to cover operating expenses and support future capital costs (Geiger, 2015). This decline forced many institutions to make very hard decisions, such as laying off employees, eliminating hiring, freezing salaries, implementing across-the-board budget reduction and reevaluating or deferring capital projects as they grappled with budget shortfalls Geiger, 2015).

Even though Amherst College had an endowment almost reaching two billion dollars, it was not immune from the effects. Amherst College lost 30 percent of its endowment, which directly threatened its operating financial model, as the endowment provides 35 percent of its annual operating budget (Amherst College Annual Report). In this crisis, presidential leadership would be critical to help address and cope with the
economic problems facing the institution. Given the economic realities, the president directed a plan of action. An Advisory Budget Committee (ABC) was initiated, comprised of members across the community including alumni, trustees, faculty, administrators, staff and students, to undertake a comprehensive review of the situation and come up with a set of recommendations for the president and the trustees to consider. In doing this work, the ABC also consulted with other committees at the College such as the Priorities and Resources (CPR), the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Faculty Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (FCAFA) and the Advisory Committee for Personnel Policies (ACPP) to ensure that every area of the College’s operation was covered. The committee had three months to file a report. Also this approach was taken so that the process would be inclusive, deliberate and transparent. The ABC was asked to keep the following questions in mind as they deliberated:

- Will this change clearly help to preserve what is critical to the College’s mission?
- Will the change help to sustain the quality of the Amherst education for students today and for future generations of students?
- Is the change, understood in the context of a broader set of actions, fair and equitable?
- Will the change help control the College’s spending as quickly as seems reasonable, knowing that the sooner spending is reduced, the fewer painful choices will have to be made in future years?

An analysis of these guidelines showed that not only was there an effort to stabilize the institution in the turbulent economic period, but this stabilization effort was being
conducted in the context of protecting and validating the diversity and inclusion initiative. To arrive at an appropriate response to the complicated matter points out the need to strive for an appropriate balance between principle, on one hand, and tradition or institutional need, on the other. The committee made the recommendation that the College continue to be need-blind in order to acquire the strongest applicant pool, comprised of a diverse population — racially, socio-economically and internationally. This decision was made to avoid endangering the college’s commitments.

Additionally, Tony Marx appointed a cost containment administrative working group comprised of the Dean of Faculty, the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Chief Advancement Officer, Legal Administrative Council, and the Executive Assistant to the President. The group was charged with reviewing cost-cutting recommendations from managers by examining the structures and looking for synergies and efficiencies that could be made across all units and departments while ensuring that essential work was accomplished. Some departments felt extremely pressured to significantly reduce their budget as no decision was being made to reduce financial aid, which accounts for almost 25 percentage of the College’s budget (Amherst College Annual Report). Administrator 1 recalls:

The Treasurer basically came up with some goals for budgetary adjustments that provided the guidelines that allowed us to figure out how to walk that narrow line and there were moments from the board in particular that we were getting push to cut more again. I think the board was probably more than the community, the faculty, the campus community, more committed to the financial aid policies. In part, again, Tony was speaking to a group of more than 2,000 people and some of
whom had hired him so they share that vision and commitment and they were not directly feeling the pain on campus.

As evidenced in the above excerpt, Marx’s leadership was crucial in shaping the parameters of the Amherst College response to the financial crisis. This sentiment of Marx’s presidential leadership is further highlighted:

The ABC and the Committee on Priorities and Resources and the Budget Committee up until that point had never done anything that significant, was asked to come up with a plan, …the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid also had a role to play because they are a big part of the budget as well as all the managers from the different departments everybody was given certain roles and said we needed you to do at least this (Administrator 1).

This leadership in a time of economic turbulence was a serious test of the president’s capacity to sustain the vision during a period in which many harbored doubts about whether Amherst College could afford such commitments. The interviews conducted in the research showed, in significant ways, how the mechanisms and compromises reached during this period required cooperation by a wide cross-section of stakeholders. The process was made manageable by the strong determined leadership of the president, who seemed unwavering in his commitment to diversity and access.

**Summary of the Findings of the Second Sub-question**

These findings show that several factors aided the Amherst College racial and socio-economic diversity initiative. These included mass promotion and sharing the vision with various stakeholders and constituencies on and off campus, as well as institutional restructuring and empowerment, particularly in the Admission Office. The office was able
to revise and expand its recruitment approaches to develop networks for students in places the College had not explored previously. For instance, the mechanisms of providing financial support goes towards implementing the vision of recruiting more diverse students and supporting them financially in ways that were structurally impactful on increasing access. In these areas there were significant ways in which presidential leadership was heavily consequential. The president was the face of the vision, selling these ideas with unwavering conviction using every medium available, making connections with the on-campus power structure represented largely by the faculty. Similarly, he reached out to alumni, another powerful set of stakeholders deeply involved with the financial health of the institution. Realizing this vision entailed more than just rhetorical gestures; given the then modus operandi of the institution and propensity for elitism in its recruitment process, there was urgent need for a radical revision of its recruitment strategies to go well beyond those pipelines to the privileged. This broadened focus by the Admission Office to recruit a more diverse student body, by-all-means-necessary, could only have been accomplished with the expressed and tangible support of the president, especially by the way he empowered employees to be innovative and creative in their approaches, and the budgetary support he provided. Such a major vision, backed by the dedication of resources to a high degree, necessarily required fundraising mechanisms, which he led through the Lives of Consequence Campaign. One of the most remarkable features of the diversity initiative was how the president presented the vision of diversity not as a cost, but as an asset that could be used to attract funding rather than serve as a drain to the traditionally elite Amherst College. This approach was evident in how the president led the College during the financial downturn starting in 2008. Faced with
economic constraint precipitated by loss in value of its endowment, rather than cull its ambition to be a more accessible Amherst College, the president made cost-cutting arrangements that did not compromise the vision of inclusion.

In What Ways did the President’s Management and Leadership Style Influence Key Stakeholders in the Amherst College Community?

To fully understand the impact of Tony Marx’s leadership on the successful diversity and inclusion program at Amherst College, we need to comprehend his leadership style and how it impacted various stakeholders. The vast literature on management and leadership maintains that leadership and management styles are largely idiosyncratic, meaning that each leader will develop his or her own style based on many factors, including personality, training, and experience, among others. While there may be “best practices” and paradigms that are touted in the literature on management and leadership, fundamentally their application is shaped by the individual leader. Understanding Tony Marx’s leadership and management styles requires examination of his policies, plan of action and practices. Also, while conducting the analysis of his leadership, the context of the environment must be taken into account. My discussion in the preceding sections has acknowledged: the social exigencies for increased access to higher education, which helped create an impetus for change at Amherst College; the support of the Board of Trustees for this vision; and the existence of inclusion in the founding DNA of the College. Therefore, I have established that there were particular conditions that supported the vision of a more inclusive Amherst College. However, this is not to suggest that there were not conditions that were challenging to the implementation of this vision. This was quite to the contrary, as there were also detractors to this vision and we must consider them to fully
understand the context within which Tony Marx’s leadership style was evident.  

Administrator 5 vividly described some of the challenges that I intimated in earlier discussions of Amherst College at the time of Marx’s hire:

I think that in any institution there is always that sense of inertia. So I think in the Inertia it’s a challenge everywhere, and trying to get people to be in a change mindset or problem-solving mindset, instead of let’s do everything the same way we have always done it mindset. That is a challenge and that is the work you just have to do—person by person, conversation by conversation. Probably some of the hardest things [at Amherst College] were dealing with the internal dynamics of keeping the faculty support, trying not to let individual negative narratives overwhelm the whole thing. There were annoying things such as, you know, parents and alums who wrote negative letters and they stood out in your mind because they were just so ugly--what people would write and think.

Administrator 7 also pointed out that even though “I think people were pretty much on board with the idea [of expanded access to Amherst College regardless of need], you know there was a lot of pushback from the faculty as I can recall [with regard to] the quality of the students.” Faculty 2 extends this point, noting that “there were a couple of things and the first is that among the faculty there’s always a sort of skepticism of the administration.” Administrator 8 further highlighted this mix of attitudes, pointing out that “in general terms, I mean there were plenty of people who were behind him 100 percent, but then there were others who were more skeptical.” The point is that although there was broad support for the vision among the wide range of stakeholders, including trustees, faculty, administrators and alumni, this vision and its implementation did not enjoy
unanimity. There were powerful pockets of resistance that the president had to contend with. This is where it proved very useful to assess Tony Marx’s leadership style in working with these different levels and types of support in implementing the vision of a more accessible Amherst College.

Among the themes that emerged from an analysis of the data on Tony Marx’s leadership style in the way he led the vision and confronted the various obstacles, is the belief held by the participants that he was visionary and determined in his pursuit of a more accessible Amherst College. He was able to implement this vision in part because he was charismatic and persuasive. Some people also believed that Tony Marx exhibited leadership traits that were maverick in nature, and some believed these traits were counterproductive to the implementation of his vision and disconcerting to some whom he led. Administrator 5 expressed:

I do not want to criticize a lot of the work that Tony and everyone did because it was very important and a lot of it was hard work you know of persuading the board to go need-blind International and other things. Years of work go into those kinds of things to sort of shift to resources around and in the financial aid pool, to prioritize things and to find programs, to start new programs…but we could improve and make it better, you have to put that in a conceptual framework, and hope that everybody understands it and not just hoping others will just follow a narrative that is happening in your head. I think Tony did learn that but slightly too late. He trusted his own judgment a lot. He did not feel the need to persuade others always of what he was doing. I think he wasn't always an easy personality and
developed a little bit of reputation of being difficult... and I think sometimes his style did not help him win everyone over.

Additionally, Administrator 8 added:

I think you could argue that maybe he should have slowed down. He was an inexperienced leader and not knowing how to empower and believe in his team so he just questioned everybody and his style was a way that was very distrusting. He did not know how to convene a team of senior members that were together in this and let us all just roll up over sleeves and do this. He was a maverick and a stand-alone and kind of like follow me and not walk with me and he could have done that differently.

These claims and findings must be analyzed in the context of Marx’s effectiveness in implementing the vision of a more accessible Amherst College. Human resource is complex and individuals will have different work styles and modes of operation.

Being a visionary and determined leader with charismatic and persuasive skills, was the style that was consistently cited by most of the participants to describe Marx’s leadership, and this style was seen as important in bringing the vision to fruition. In fact, it seems this steadfast leadership style was the very reason Tony Marx was hired for the position to take the vision forward. Administrator 8 said:

I think it’s the leader they chose, and you know it was really what resonated with him, [Marx] and he really took stock of what is Amherst and what does it need to be. And my gosh, you know this is the one thing that’s missing here, and this does not look at all like our country or our world and we need to catch up on that. And so that’s what I’m going to make my thing—and he did it.
Administrator 5 spoke more broadly about Marx’s visionary style combined with skills of persuasion and how it impacted the progress of the inclusion agenda.

Administrator 5 suggested that Marx’s vision was augmented by a type of infectious conviction that keeps a goal alive that otherwise might have been diminished through internal and external resistance. Administrator 5 continued:

I think a lot of it was campaigning around a principle for an idea. I think Tony is very much an ideas person and he believed that it was right and he wanted to convince as many people as possible, but if they gonna believe that it’s not right, that did not worry him undoing it, he knew and believe that it was the right thing to do so he just lead from that front. Sometimes I think that his confident leadership can help you gather support around an idea and not let you get swayed by some of the bumps in the road. So I think that was very important.

The above also pointed to Marx’s capacity to inspire and persuade others within the Amherst College community. Faculty 2 highlighted this point further, and maintained that “Charisma is the first word that comes to mind. And he has the presence that people really resonated with that he connected with, he connected with students.” Administrator 1 added:

I think he had the vision and the charisma that many people felt motivated to work with him and as I said to you, I felt it was also very consistent with what I hope and we and the college wanted to achieve. So he was very persuasive and at individual gatherings he was very good and in small group meetings and really help in the group to come around to some of the goals he had.
Marx’s capacity to deepen others’ resolve and commitment to the cause is further exemplified through Administrator 7’s words, “I think he was pretty confident in what he wanted to have happen and sort of took the team that way...he was sort of bringing it to the campus and bringing those senior staff along and they in turn were bringing along their staff.” Administrator 2 expands even further on this point, noting that:

There was always a thread there [in the College’s DNA] but Tony was able to coalesce all these different forces and energy. But it really was kind of Tony’s vision, leadership and articulation that brought all these things and these were energies, aspirations that were always part of the place but were dormant or subjugated because of other priorities or other things that were going on.

Administrator 7 picked up on this point, but also added that Marx’s ability to persuade and his capacity to communicate the vision with clarity, keeping the core ideas very focused, limited the distractions of those opposing voices and potential obstacles. Specifically, Administrator 7 observed, “I do think Tony was a very good leader in that way and in the messaging, I mean he was very clear he got the message out a lot about what was happening so these people knew what was happening...he’s a pretty confident leader.” Administrator 3 also had a similar view:

People were on board with the idea and he was very consistent in his messaging about what we’re doing, why we’re doing it. If you read his speeches they have a very consistent messaging about Amherst history and how this ties to it and why this is important and how we need to educate leaders in the world.

Marx’s vision and ambition to have an impact was not limited to Amherst College; instead it seemed he saw the implementation of the vision of accessibility at Amherst
College as a bigger mission that could influence other similarly elite institutions. In Administrator 1’s words:

I felt, and I think Tony said this, and a logical one, so one of the things that Amherst can do by virtue of our position in higher education ...we can spur our peers and even nudge those who sit above us in higher education in the Ivy's, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford. We have a prominent enough position, so that if we set out these goals and these values which we believe are sufficiently compelling that other institutions will say yes we believe that too. That they will try to emulate what we are doing. To some extent all these institutions try to emulate each other. We all remain very similar and we’re all conservatives in changes because it’s working, don’t mess it up too much. So I think Tony really felt that there was an opportunity to spur other schools and I think history indicates that this happens. I think that is something that many of us are very proud of and the financial aid scheme that Harvard, Yale, Princeton that some of the other Ivy's tried to follow.

On this point, Administrator 7 added, “he was very focused on Amherst becoming a leader in the world and so while we can’t educate that many kids we can be a model for other schools.” Continuing on this point Administrator 1 discussed further how Tony Marx’s work at Amherst College has influenced other institutions:

So the history is that, first the recognition that there is talent in the lower-economic areas of the economy that is not being adequately served, so the shift of resources there, and of course that builds financial aid budgets greatly. And then there is the move to no loan because you end up with the barbell, and so various institutions moved to that policy because they do not want to be under-represented in that pool
of students, so the extension of the same argument. And also the broadening of it is that politically is very wise.

Marx’s mission-driven style seemed to have been partly caused or complemented by his non-conforming approach, which was viewed by some as problematic. In many ways, interviewees noted that he often acted singularly and outside a collective team; sometimes his followers knew of initiatives only after he had publicly voiced them. His leadership and management often seemed personal and not dependent on or subject to team coordination. He often appeared top down in his approach to decision making.

Administrator 8 captured many of these sentiments when pointing out that:

Tony was who he was, and I think he was an excellent fundraiser, he was a very externally focused person both from the media perspective and the alumni. Alumni really liked him I think because he liked that work uhm?. I think maybe you could argue that maybe he should have slowed down. He was an inexperienced leader and knowing how to empower and believe in his team so he just questioned everybody and his style was a way that was very distrusting. He did not know how to convene a team of senior members that were together in this just roll up our sleeves and do this, he was a maverick and a stand-alone and kind of like follow me and not walk with me and that is what he could have done differently.

Administrator 1 made a similar point, noting how Marx seemed less adept at consistently engaging with potential detractors in a more bureaucratic structure.

Administrator 1 opined, “So Tony, as I say, was very effective I thought with senior administrators, so that was leading a smaller group.” Faculty 1 also made a similar comment that “He [Tony Marx] was effective in conversation with various small groups of
faculty [but] I think he found faculty meetings at times challenging.” Administrator 1 elaborated on this notion:

I think that part because of his passion he was at times, particularly earlier on, get frustrated with the pace. And patience is always an issue and it’s not just with Tony, I have noticed that with other presidents as well and these are institutions that require a great deal of patience because there are so many who feel invested and feel the need to be consulted. So there is a process I think earlier on where each new president come into the college I suspect from what I have observed needs to come to understand the pace at which this community will accept leadership and new ideas and I think that can be frustrating.

Administrator 8 made a similar point about Marx’s supposed tendency to work at a difference pace and often outside the typical way of making change in the Amherst College system:

It [access initiative] probably could’ve been more incremental than it was instead of just, whoosh…but he was focused on this. But that’s probably when you have leaders like this you know that’s their way, it's his way of doing...it’s his way of doing it the way that he did it.

Administrator 1 suggested that Marx’s leadership style was due to inexperience, and that there were even efforts to support him in this regard. Administrator 1 pointed out, “It was a senior faculty group and there was a lot of support trying to help the young president. Tony had many talents but was not experienced as a college administrator really which is something he has taken some criticism for.”
Marx’s supposed maverick approach seems to have caused some resentment within the community as suggested by Administrator 8:

I always say that as a president there were people who just couldn’t stand him just because of his ways. How he is, his style and sometimes from time to time you just need those leaders. In every organization sometimes you need nurturers and sometimes you need real change agents.

As if responding to and affirming this point made by Administrator 8, Tony Marx himself commented, “I understood better that you know if change can only happened when everybody is fully on board, every aspect of what’s going to happen is been considered and planned for, everything is sort of smooth as silk that’s a receipt for no change and I can’t accept that.” Marx’s position that his style may not have made everyone feel comfortable, and that he could not wait for the perfect moment to make change at Amherst College, can be seen in the level of support he received during the process, and ultimately, the continued validation of the results. In this regard, Administrator 8 concluded “....the board was behind him, the board remained behind this notion of this access to all at Amherst today.”

**Summary of the Findings of the Third Sub-question**

Based on the data analyzed, Tony Marx’s leadership style showed him as visionary and determined in his pursuit of a more accessible Amherst College, and he was able to implement this vision because he was charismatic, persuasive and determined. These approaches allowed him to stimulate others to buy into and pursue this vision relentlessly at multiple levels. However, Tony Marx exhibited leadership traits that some thought were counterproductive to the implementation of his vision and restricted further success. As others, including Marx, have pointed out, a vision of a more accessible Amherst College is
not one that could have been implemented if he waited for conditions to be perfect, or if he worked at a pace that the institution was accustomed to, especially when there were strong pockets of resistance. The fact that Tony Marx, throughout his tenure, enjoyed the support of his Board of Trustees, and that the Board of Trustees continued to support the model of much of the work that he started, suggested that Tony Marx’s leadership style was crucial to the vision and implementation of a more accessible Amherst College, regardless of capacity to pay.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides the interpretation of the findings that emerged from the inductive analysis of the data presented in the previous section. As a reminder, this inductive approach was used to analyze themes emerging from data organized around each sub-question, which allowed more refined results of analysis of the raw data. In this section I use a more deductive approach by drawing on Bolman and Deal’s organizational leadership frames, and discuss how these findings help us understand the transformational leadership in the context of Amherst College’s process of improving access and diversity of its student body. Included too, are the discussion of the findings and the implications of the research, as well as limitations of the research.

In analyzing the key research question of “How was Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body influenced by its presidential leadership?” I posed three sub-questions:

1. How did the vision of a more inclusive campus emerge? What were the drivers?
2. What are the factors that aided Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity of its student body?
3. In what ways did the president’s leadership style influence key stakeholders in the Amherst College community?

In the previous section, I presented the findings of the central themes from the data as it related to each of the sub-questions. In this section, I will develop a more holistic response to the larger research question by discussing these findings in the context of my analytical framework, drawn from Bolman and Deal’s Four-frame Organizational
Leadership framework. These frames are structural, political, human resource and symbolic, and they served as conceptual frames that guide the research and define the nature of organizations. At the outset of this study, I acknowledge that organizations are complex, with higher educational institutions even more so. Therefore, any substantive analysis and discussion of higher educational organization and leadership require a diverse set of tools that can unpack such complexities, thus the use of these analytical organizational categories.

This discussion is operationalized by using each organizational frame to interpret the findings of each of the research sub-questions. Then, I further conduct an analysis to show how viewing the same findings from multiple organizational lens may produce more comprehensive examination and ultimately a more complete answer to the main question: “How was Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body influenced by its presidential leadership?

Interpretation of the Findings Through Each Component of Bolman and Deal Organizational Leadership Framework

The Structural Frame

The structural frame views organizations as rational systems imbued with officially designated roles and responsibility, as well as rules and policies which aim to give the organization purpose centered around core goals and objectives. These systems and rules give the organization structure by designating particular responsibilities within units and assigning power and lines of authority across different levels of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Using the structural frame to analyze the role of presidential leadership in the emergence of the vision of a more inclusive campus (sub-question 1 findings: Pressing
social conditions aligned with organizational support systems and Intersection of leaders’ personal values and the College’s founding principles) reveals an important lesson. It is the notion that while there were clear societal exigencies and the leader’s personal motivation to change, these elements existed within the context of Amherst College, an institution with its own traditional design of operation, levels of power, and personnel designated with certain responsibilities. The success of presidential leadership in developing this vision of a more inclusive campus must be seen within the context of mechanisms such as faculty and faculty governance, which are important structural mechanisms built into the governance structure of the institution. The issue of faculty governance is particularly important, given how the institution is designated as a faculty driven organization. The Board of Trustees also represents a structural mechanism that dictates what values are operationalized and how. Significantly, too, the Board of Trustees is the guardian of authority in the sense that the president is appointed by this body, and in significant ways it facilitates the power that the president wields. The historical influence of alumni, while not a part of the internal structure of Amherst College, also bring pressure to bear on the structure of the institutions through their financial muscle and participatory work. Applying the structural frame to these findings highlights contextually the president’s leadership role in crystallizing the vision of an accessible Amherst College.

Using the structural frame to analyze the factors that aided Amherst College to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity (sub-question 2) findings (selling of the vision--on and off campus, developing the administrative and implementation infrastructure, empowering admissions and developing/implementing various recruitment strategies, and financing the vision) highlights the degree to which the president worked
within but also reached beyond the limitations of the existing structures of the College as an organization with its rules and policies, roles and responsibilities, to ensure the success of his initiative. As indicated, there were some struggles over these structures and how to reimagine and widen them. As the emergent findings suggest, the president’s selling of the vision on and off campus to various constituencies was crucial to gain buy-in to make some of the more structural changes to aid the implementation of the vision. Such changes included significantly developing the administrative and implementation infrastructure, empowering the Admission staff, developing and implementing various recruitments strategies. Institutions such as Amherst College need resources to sustain them and a keen understanding that implementing a vision of this nature has major cost implications for increasing responsibilities for various units. Therefore, developing revenue strategies to finance the vision was an important component of creating a structural support system to increase Amherst College’s racial and socio-economic diversity.

Thematic analysis through the structural frame also highlights the role of presidential leadership and invites an examination into and an appreciation of how the president did this. This question about how, leads to an analysis of the president’s leadership style (sub-question 3), and how it influenced key stakeholders in the Amherst College community. While Tony Marx’s leadership style shows him as visionary and determined with charismatic and persuasive skills, such a conclusion brings into focus how he engaged with those within the structure of the organization. It also shows ways that he challenged institutional boundaries to buy into and pursue this vision at multiple levels. My analysis has revealed how at various levels, on campus and off, the president communicated the vision and inspired various structures within the broader organization.
—faculty, alumni, administrators—to embrace new and redefined roles in how they recruited and supported students.

The Political Frame

The Political frame views organizations as “living, screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 186). This frame presents the organizational spaces and the people occupying them as representing multiple interests, having different levels of power and competing for positions of advantage that represent their various interests. This means that there are always alliances and networks to control agendas and meaning, and to gain personal power. As a result, to enact change there is need for and occasions of interdependence among stakeholders within organizations. Educational institutions, as intimated by Bolman and Deal (2003), need to cultivate and apply skills of persuasion to encourage people to embrace and appreciate the need for diversity in such institutions. Ultimately, the political frame focuses on the use of power by individuals and within organizations.

Analyzing how the vision of a more inclusive campus emerged and the drivers (Sub-question 1), relates to issues of power and ownership. How these ideas are managed is crucial in examining and understanding the phenomena. The research has shown how the different types of power with which the president as leader was endowed provided the basis for transforming Amherst College into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body. Here, I identify enabling power (the power to act and empower others), to resist and overcome resistance that may come from individuals and coalitions that do not share the vision. The Pressing social conditions aligned with organizational support systems and Intersection of leaders’ personal values and the College’s founding
principles provided an apparent system of power that strengthened the president’s own vision of a more accessible Amherst College. In other words, there was external pressure for change from the social environment combined with a Board of Trustees that was not merely amenable to these progressive ideas, but was actually proactive in promoting these ideas. This gave the president a degree of power coming into this position that from the outset would have limited the level of internal resistance to the implementation of the vision. The fact that much of this vision was aligned with the College’s founding principles reduced the strength of potential alternative ideas about what the College should represent.

Further, using the political frame to examine the factors that aided Amherst College to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity (sub-question 2), shows how the president was empowered to sell the vision on and off campus and to develop and empower the administrative and implementation infrastructure to support the implementation of the vision. Similarly, the president’s capacity was exhibited by empowering admissions and developing and implementing various recruitment strategies (which carried significant costs) and financing the vision. The significant funding that the initiative required is a particularly important barometer of the level of power that the vision and the president enjoyed. Even in the face of a debilitating economic crisis, rather than abandoning or slowing the implementation of a more accessible Amherst College, this goal was further crystallized via strategies of cost cutting and institutional restructuring to preserve and advance the vision of inclusion and diversity.

While the political frame shows that there are various forms of power within organizations, it also indicates that they do not always pull in the same direction given that people and coalitions have different interests (Bolman & Deal, 2008). This means that
even while the president may have had institutional power through the support of the Board of Trustees and the social justice call from the society, there were still pockets of resistance that could hamper the implementation of the vision. As I have explored, such resistance may have been based on differences in vision, procedure, use of resources, and even the new profile of students who were proposed to benefit from a more open access to Amherst College. As shown, these coalitions and individuals may have been faculty or faculty governance groups, alumni or parents, all of whom had different forms and levels of power. Therefore, the power of the president, in an organization such as Amherst College, was not unchallenged. As such, the political frame allows examination of how presidential management and leadership style influenced key stakeholders in the Amherst College community. For (sub-question 3), Tony Marx’s leadership style shows him as visionary and determined in his pursuit of a more accessible Amherst College, and he was able to sell and implement this vision because, among other traits, he was charismatic and persuasive. The findings reveal how the president served as the face of the vision, selling it in multiple different forums including print and electronic media, to alumni and faculty, to administrators and students. These approaches allowed him to stimulate others to buy into and pursue this vision relentlessly at multiple levels. Although Tony Marx occasionally exhibited leadership traits that some thought were counterproductive to the implementation of his vision and restricted further success, the fact that the vision enjoyed unparalleled success among its peer institutions and is still the fundamental work of Amherst College, shows that his leadership within the political frame style was highly effective.

**The Human Resources Frame**

The Human Resources frame views organizations as existing to serve human needs
instead of the reverse. This means that there is an inherent interdependence between people
and organizations, and that the needs of both individuals and organizations are met when
there is an appropriate human/organizational fit (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The human
resource frame sees the importance of motivation, enthusiasm and cooperation among
people connected to the organization as important in fulfilling the needs of humans. In
looking at how the vision of a more inclusive campus emerged (sub-question 1), *Pressing
social conditions aligned with organizational support systems and Intersection of leaders’
personal values and the College’s founding principles* show the multiple ways in which
Tony Marx’s leadership had to engage with how people, including himself, saw the
institution’s primary purpose. The pressing need for social change in the broader society
but also within the field of higher education showed a renewed focus to challenge
educational institutions to advance the interests of a wider group of people as the primary
purpose of Amherst College. This societal challenge is quite visible, for example, in the
support of the Board of Trustees, the willingness and eagerness of administrators,
including those of the admission department, and even faculty and alumni to align
themselves with the new vision of accessibility. This broad institutional support was
complemented by the president’s own individual journey and the value he found in the
vision of accessibility. From a personal perspective, Marx did not see his position as a
leader as merely serving as guardian of Amherst College’s then current status quo; rather,
his view of personal commitment to change for a more social progressive Amherst College
shaped his own work and choices. It is understandable that he made connections between
his own personal interests in social change and the principles of inclusion within the
College’s founding DNA.
As I examine the factors that aided Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity (sub-question 2) in the student body, using the analytical lens of human resources, the resulting themes give some insight of how human interests intersect with organizational change. As a reminder, the themes are: *Selling the vision: On and off campus constituencies; Developing the administrative and implementation infrastructure; Empowering admissions and developing and implementing various recruitment strategies; and financing the vision: recruitment, students and fundraising.* Applying the human resource frame highlights the significant ways in which calling on people’s interests helped advance the vision. For example, as the president sold the vision to faculty and alumni, who were key stakeholders in the operation of the College, there were important ways in which these changes were presented as inclusive or significant to these groups. For faculty, their role in realizing a more inclusive campus was presented as fundamentally important in the context of their power within the institution. For alumni, the prominence of the College in seeming to do something that was nationally remarkable to which they are contributing clearly had an impact in both reducing resistance and raising tangible support through monetary contributions. Internally, empowering staff to make important decisions around student recruitment was important in that these personnel could professionally and personally connect with the vision and implement it.

As I draw on the human resource frame to examine how the president’s leadership style influenced key stakeholders (sub-question 3) in the Amherst College community, this analysis shows how the personal components of organizations can shape different interests and reactions to different forms of leadership. There is a general agreement that Tony Marx was seen as a visionary, charismatic and determined leader by most, which allowed
him to be persuasive in selling and implementing the diversity access initiative in his pursuit of a more accessible Amherst College. He was able to implement this vision because of his determination, charisma and persuasiveness. These are not just leadership frames, they are also personal traits. However, his style seemed to irk some stakeholders, not necessarily because the technical elements of his decisions were incorrect; rather, it was more so because his leadership approach did not always seem to prize the interests and values of these stakeholders as people, as a human resources frame would suggest.

The Symbolic Frame

Bolman and Deal (2003) hold that the symbolic frame sees organizations as cultures, ways of being, and the invisible glue that unites their members around shared values and beliefs. They suggest that organizations have a unique culture of, “interwoven patterns of belief, values, practices and artifacts that defines for members who they are and how they do things” (p. 243). Symbols give meaning to the organization, its employees and other core constituents. Meanings are therefore attached to particular events, which are viewed in the context of the values and beliefs of the organization. Educational institutions such as colleges and universities are steeped in traditions. Thus, the symbolic frame is a particularly useful analytical tool to examine change, especially one in the form of that which occurred at Amherst College.

Using the symbolic frame to analyze how the vision of a more inclusive campus emerged (sub-question 1) shows results that highlight the nature of leadership and change around diversity at Amherst College. While the Pressing social conditions aligned with organizational support systems and the president’s personal values proved significant in the emergence of the vision, there was strong evidence that the significant value of the
College’s founding principles of inclusion gave the vision wider access and acceptance within the Amherst College community and among its stakeholders. Keeping in mind that in recent times Amherst College was viewed as steeped in elitism, which had become a contemporary symbol of selectivity, it is not unreasonable to claim that without having the ability to reference inclusion as a founding symbol of the College, the resistance to this access diversity vision would not have come to fruition.

It is for this reason that the symbolic frame is such an important analytical tool when examining the factors that aided Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity in the student body (sub-question 2). Reference to inclusion as a symbol and value of Amherst College’s founding principles was an important presidential strategy in selling the new vision on and off campus. The reference to these values as historically part of the College was also crucial in developing the Lives of Consequence campaign to finance the vision, even under the impact of the 2008 economic downturn. Without the ability to use inclusion as a fundamental founding principle and symbolic point of the College, other strategies such as developing the administrative and implementation infrastructure, empowering the Admission Office and developing and implementing various recruitment strategies would not have been so successful.

In looking at how the president’s leadership style influenced key stakeholders in the Amherst College community (sub-question 3), the symbolic frame reveals how the president, while not having an Amherst College background (for example, not an alumnus or former faculty), was strategic in identifying and drawing on the College’s symbols and values of accessibility. The themes emerging from an analysis of the data show Marx as a visionary and determined leader, yet part of his success in selling the vision was due to his
ability to make connections between Amherst College founding values and the new vision of accessibility. This was seen as a conscious effort, as he himself articulated, to show that the access initiative was nothing radical, but rather a conservative return to the College’s founding principles. Given the traditional nature of Amherst College and the pride it takes in its history, reference to past glories and this access initiative does not appear as a radical departure from its core mission or the adoption of a diversity fad. Instead, the connection made with values of inclusion helped to encourage and stimulate others in the Amherst College community to buy into and pursue this vision at multiple levels. There is the need to be nuanced in this analysis of the president’s leadership style using the symbolic frame, keeping in mind that there was also resistance to Marx’s leadership style. As expressed earlier, such resistance appeared to focus less on the particularities of the access diversity vision and its symbolism, and more on the president’s execution and approach to implementing the vision.

**An Aggregate Analysis of the Leadership Frames**

Using each organizational frame to interpret the findings of each of the research sub-questions asked produced some instructive results above. An aggregate analysis can further show how viewing the same findings from multiple organizational lenses may produce broader interpretation and ultimately a more complete answer to the main question: “How was Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse student body influenced by its presidential leadership?” For example, my analysis of the nature of institutions, especially educational organizations, shows that they are complex systems with structures that give them meaning and purpose but also where issues of power become significant. Additionally, human beings are fundamental
components of organizations and therefore the structure of institutions must often be seen from a human-need perspective. While humans will want organizations to serve them in significant ways, organizations themselves take on meanings and have rituals and values (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Amherst College, as I have shown through my analysis, is characterized by all of the above organizational frames. It is in this context that presidential leadership takes place and where Marx sought to implement the vision of change to a more accessible institution for a wider range of racial and economic groups.

Amherst College had a set of defined goals and methods of operating that gave the College its purpose. This is what Bolman and Deal (2003) referred to as structural. In more recent times, such structures had developed to facilitate a type of elite admission. Marx attempted to work with and change such structures to widen admission and treatment of a more diverse student body, such as by reconstituting the Admission Office and support processes for students. Changing the structures entailed dealing with what Amherst College as an institution has come to represent to many of its stakeholders, including faculty, administrators, staff, students and alumni. This aspect represents symbolism. This meant that the renewed vision of the College had to be constructed, which involved identifying the symbols of the College that people recognized, and linking them to the College’s founding vision, but also showing how this original vision was aligned with the new access initiative. This called for ensuring that people could recognize the values they were accustomed to in the newly developed vision of a more accessible Amherst College. One vivid example was the way in which the president assured faculty and alumni that expanding access would not lower the quality and reputation of the College but on the
contrary would in fact enhance the legacy of the institution. This process entailed putting in structures of recruitment and support systems for such prospective students.

The president was able to highlight to various stakeholders their own stake and purpose in the College and the importance of their own contributions to the effort, making sure that the cause-effect relations were understood, and that represented the structural frame. Through this strategy, the president was able to reframe the institution through the human resource frame to serve a wider set of humans, that is the students from diverse backgrounds, but also enhance the sense of value for current stakeholders—faculty, staff, alumni. The success of these approaches was partly evident in the success of the *Lives of Consequence* campaign, especially during a period where the institution, like many others, experienced losses to its endowment. The ability to keep to the mission of accessibility shows that the institution was not merely focused on its own survival at the expense of its people, but instead was refocused on serving the fundamental interest of its core constituents—human resource. As Bolman and Deal (2003) express, the human resource frame views people as the heart of an organization that responds to their needs to gain their commitment and loyalty in accomplishing the organizational goals.

One of the most significant components of the intersectional nature of presidential leadership through the lens of all the organizational frames, is the way in which the issue of power cuts across all strategies of presidential leadership in the context of the other frames. This is where the political frame becomes important, because the leader needs to understand how important interest groups are and be able to manage all their various agendas. Therefore, as Marx engaged with people, structures and resources, there were always elements of balancing power—the ways in which he exercised power to persuade
and compel, but also to inspire and encourage as well to ward off resistance from those who did not share the vision. This is where his capacity as a charismatic leader defined by conviction and determination was highlighted. While there were flaws in his style, his ability to refocus an institution such as Amherst College that was steeped in its elitist ways, highlights his capacity to understand and work with various group interests and motivation in the context of an organization with well-defined rules and values that give meaning and purpose.

**Transformational Leadership**

One of the underpinning components of this research is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership as a concept was developed by Burns (1978) who posited that *transforming leadership*, takes place when people engage with each other in a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of achievement and morality. Burns further sees this form of leadership as reforming, revolutionary, heroic, and ideological. Bass (1985) expanded on Burns’ ideas, which he calls *transformational leadership*, noting that this is where a leader has a vision of a situation and enlists others to work toward it. This leadership, in Bass’s view, provides vision, charisma and empowerment to elevate followers and leader to higher levels of performance and achievement. Further, such leadership engenders conviction, takes stands on difficult issues, presents its most important values and emphasizes the importance of trust.

Institutionally, Bass (1985) notes, a transformational leader articulates an appealing vision for the institution, challenges followers with high standards, and inspires buy-in through positive presentation of the purpose. The leader should also transform and motivate followers to develop new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and alter
organization environment for optimal success. Overall, transformational leadership must be able to tap into the human component and work with employees as individuals, considering their individual needs and aspirations, and acknowledging their advice. As seen from these characteristics of transformational leadership, there are implications for the leadership frames explored in this research—structural, political, human resource and symbolic.

The structural frame views organizations as rational systems which carry out designated roles and responsibility, as well as rules and policies which aim to give the organization purpose centered around core goals and objectives. These systems and rules give the organization structure by designating particular responsibilities within units, assigning power and lines of authority across different levels of the organization. Therefore, a transformational leadership analysis will assess whether various components of Amherst College’s organizational structure were transformed to pursue and achieve the diversity and inclusion goal.

At the faculty and faculty governance level there was not a radical transformation of the body itself. The transformation seen in this case was an important shift from fear of lowering the standards of the institution to understanding that a more diversified student body was an increasingly important opportunity to realize an institutional vision with broader social implications. The transformation at the faculty level can be seen as the ability to create, within the faculty governance mechanism, an impulse to support the vision and practices of diversity and inclusion that were being shaped by the administrative component of Amherst College that is the Board of Trustees, the president and other senior administrators.
As it relates to the administrative staff, especially in the Admission Office, this constituency was organizationally restructured and transformed in how it recruited students, the financial support it received for its redefined role, and the autonomy given to admission officers, who were also recruited with transformational expectations. Given that Amherst College’s recruiting system had evolved over the years to mainly admitting the elite and the privileged class, especially its recruitment structures, which were largely designed for this, this was a core change. The ensuing changes to the College at multiple levels, including as vividly seen at the admission level, were transformed to recruit, by any means necessary, the most talented, regardless of racial or socio-economic status. This is a fundamental act of transformation that goes to the soul of the institution.

The alumni, though not a unitary whole, were for the most part transformed by the new leadership to see this inclusion and diversity drive as not merely a threat to Amherst College’s standing and reputation; rather, this new vision became a source of national pride and a goal with which they could associate themselves. In many ways, this represented a significant transformation from their valuing Amherst College for its elitism and separateness to valuing the institution or its boldness in challenging one of the world's most consequential issues—limited access to high quality education. A material evidence of this transformation among alumni is vividly seen in the significant donations to the *Lives of Consequence Campaign*, a large portion of which was organizationally developed to fund the diversity and inclusion mission.

It would be overstated to suggest that Tony Marx by himself persuaded the Board of Trustees to develop and support the inclusion and diversity vision, as it is the Board that employed him for this very purpose in the first place, as well as the fact that there were
attempts at diversity prior to Marx. However, based on my findings, it is accurate to say that Marx further crystallized the idea of diversity and inclusion and gave it greater currency, clarity and urgency. He also provided the Board with confidence in the vision, one could say, transforming an idea into a full-fledged and operationalized set of structural organizational actions. In many ways, then, he did transform the Board of Trustees’ goals and ideas and implanted them within the College itself, affecting the structural systems.

Transformational leadership through the political frame is also apparent at the College. As Bolman and Deal (2003) explain, organizations are seen as having multiple interests, with different levels of power and employees competing for positions of advantage that represent their various interests. While there are various forms of power within organizations, they do not always pull in the same direction given that people and coalitions have different interests.

The results of this study hold that, while Tony Marx’s leadership did not change the fact that there were multiple and competing interests in Amherst College, he was able to leverage the vision of a more inclusive and diverse campus to derive support from the various stakeholders. From the start it was clear that there was not insignificant suspicion of the beginnings of a radical departure from the way Amherst College operated, that is providing top quality education to an elite set of students, mostly from very privileged backgrounds. The fact that Marx could get various constituencies with great power and influence, for example, alumni, faculty and administrators, to feel invested in and supportive of this vision was a remarkable feat. His leadership from wealthy and otherwise powerful alumni; got faculty, through their governance structures, to support the vision; and also empowered administrators, especially those in admissions, to provide
direct and consequently, active support to operationalize the vision of a more inclusive and diverse campus. This is not to suggest that all contending and oppositional powers were subsumed; there was some resistance. However, this vision of diversity and inclusion still defines Amherst College, which shows that there has been a sustained support for diversity and inclusion. This was not a main focus before Marx assumed the presidency. It is therefore reasonable to suggest this leadership as politically transformative.

Based on the findings, the argument can be made that transformative leadership in the human resource frame is potentially the weakest area of Tony Marx’s leadership in his presidency. The Human Resources frame views organizations as existing to serve human needs instead of the opposite, which means there is an inherent interdependence between people and organizations, and that the needs of both individuals and organizations are met when there is an appropriate human/organizational fit (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The human resource frame sees the importance of motivation, enthusiasm and cooperation among people connected to the organization as important in fulfilling the needs of humans. This means that the leader must expend much effort to make followers feel wanted, supported and desired personally and professionally.

The research findings reveal that while Marx’s leadership style did not deliberately attempt to diminish the sense of importance of individuals within the institution, it seems he did not spend a lot of time and effort attempting to endear himself to different stakeholders. He seemed singularly focused on how faculty, staff and administrators could be managed to extract support for this broader vision. Internally, there is a general sense that people within the organization were valuable to Marx largely to the extent that they could advance his vision of a more diverse and inclusive Amherst College. There are also
findings that suggest that he was more popular outside of the institution, for example among the alumni body, than within Amherst College. Even, now there seems to be some chafing among some internal stakeholders with regard to Tony Marx’s leadership, even while they accept that his leadership was very successful in achieving a previously unimaginable level of inclusion and diversity at the College.

However, the findings reveal that there was a sizeable mass of people within and outside Amherst College who believe that Marx’s leadership must be viewed beyond the contained and somewhat limited focus on those employed with and existing within the institution. Therefore, if I were to take a more liberal interpretation of the human resources frame and extend it beyond the organization, it could be argued that Marx’s leadership in this frame was highly transformational because it transformed the institution to serve a very large and disenfranchised group of students who may never have otherwise felt a sense of belonging in such an elite and exclusionary institution such as Amherst College. In other words, in this context, Amherst College as an organization came to serve people rather than the reverse. Therefore, the issue whether Marx’s leadership was transformative in the context of the human resource frame is a more complicated one. For instance, within the human resources frame a major aspect of this component must be viewed in the context of the extent to which the leader provides the structural and empowerment tools to followers/employees to effectively undertake their responsibilities to fulfill the vision of the institution. Using this perspective, it is not unreasonable to argue that Marx’s leadership was transformative because he did provide the tools of empowerment, resources and mandate to employees to undertake their work effectively. This is largely why the vision was successfully implemented. In other words, if we were to remove the employees’
personal desire to feel cosseted by the leader, and focus on those actions that allowed them to do their jobs effectively, then it could be claimed that Marx’s leadership was highly successful within the human resource component.

Under the *symbolic frame*, organizations are cultures, ways of being, which have shared values and beliefs around which individuals unite. Institutional traditions serve as symbols that give meaning to the organization, its employees and other core constituents. Educational institutions like colleges and universities are steeped in traditions. Looking at transformational leadership using the symbolic frame shows that what Marx’s leadership achieved was transformational in the sense that, while he did not develop a new and unique vision of inclusion, he was able to revive the College’s founding vision in a new era of national and global diversity. In this context, keeping in mind that Amherst College was founded on the principle of providing educational opportunities to the indigent (though only men at the time). However, over the years, the College had come to represent anything but equitable access to various racial and socio-economic minorities, and instead served a narrow and privileged class. Tony Marx was able to transform the institution from one that seemed increasingly comfortable with defining itself as elitist and catering to the national and global privileged, to an institution that had duties and responsibilities toward making the world a more just place. In this sense of symbolism, Marx’s leadership can be said to be transformational.

Higher education presidents are the driving force of transition and change at their institution. Reflecting on the definitions of transformational leadership at Amherst College and analyzing it through the four frames, the research findings and analyses affirm that Tony Marx’s presidential leadership was transformational as it provided vision, charisma
and empowerment to elevate followers and leader, and ultimately, Amherst College, to a higher level of performance and achievement. His leadership provided conviction on an important issue in some difficult periods, including a major financial crisis. Marx’s leadership, even with its fallibilities of the human resources component, challenged followers with high standards, and inspired buy-in through positive presentation of the purpose. His leadership transformed and motivated people within Amherst College to develop new and unique ways to challenge the status quo of elitism and alter the organization environment for success of a more inclusive and diverse campus.

**Implications of the Research**

Some may look at Amherst College’s transformation with great admiration and ask the question of why other institutions cannot and have not done the same. And this is a reasonable question in the context of social justice in educational opportunities. But it must be understood that a lot happened between 2003 and 2011, which is the timeframe of this research. Therefore, these research findings have important implications for institutional planning, practice and policy around diversity and inclusion at the higher educational level. This era was dominated by a vision of transformation with many different aspects that led to its success. Chief among them, as this study has shown, was the critical importance of presidential leadership. The implications are best expressed within the context of my analysis of presidential leadership. Given that each institution is unique, the lessons drawn from this research can be useful only when adapted contextually. Therefore, colleges attempting to combat the reproduction of inequalities, which are common in the American higher education system, can draw reference from the following implications.
The main implication of this research is that presidential leadership matters. Educational institutions do not easily change culture and operations, especially if they have institutionalized historical reference points. Therefore, for colleges attempting to adopt a similar approach for their success, the initiative has to be put forward with a pervasive institutional commitment, being purposeful and well-supported and championed by the leader, that is, the president.

As other institutions contemplate such a transformational program, they must understand that fundamentally they are trying to change operational structures of their educational institutions. Without a deep understanding of such structures, change may not necessarily be directed in the most critical parts of the system to develop, drive and sustain this vision. They must also understand what can stimulate changes to existing structures, and how to go about facilitating the measures. One of the major changes was to overhaul the recruitment system and empower the administrators and faculty to operate differently, which meant focusing on its roots and mission to reduce resistance. A deep understanding of the institutional structure led to other important decisions by the president, including some related to faculty participation, fundraising, and alumni buy-in. As other institutions consider diversity transformation programs, it is important to pay attention to the fundamental structure of the institution in context.

Another implication is that a multiplicity of efforts is needed for a successful inclusion and diversity campaign both internally and externally. Great thoughts must be given to the various stakeholders in their institution, where different forms of power lie, and how to harness that power to support the overall vision. Context is important, and each educational institution will have its unique power structures defined by various levels of
interest. For example, Amherst College is a wealthy liberal arts institution with a strong Board of Trustees and an active and influential alumni body. As acknowledged earlier, part of the reason for Tony Marx’s success in pursuing the vision of diversity and inclusion was the unwavering support received from the Board of Trustees. This allowed the president a certain amount of legitimacy within the institution and gave him more authority to manage the other levels of power and interest within and outside the College. Without this support from the Board the initiative would not have been realized. Therefore, understanding how power and interests are distributed within and outside an institution is important in pursuing a transformational vision.

A critical question that institutions interested in diversity transformation must ask to have any chance at success is, what gives institution meaning, and how can we harness such symbols and connect them with an inclusion and diversity vision? The rituals, stories, and values that have been used to give meaning to an institution cannot be ignored, because otherwise the transformation vision may seem alien to institutional stakeholders, thus raising resistance and reducing the chances of success. Amherst College, in its own context, could call on its founding principles of equity of access (though somewhat flawed) to give meaning to the new vision, which became linked to those historical founding principles. In this way, this diversity and inclusion vision did not seem alien to the majority of Amherst College’s stakeholders; rather, it mostly appeared as a reaffirmation of principles deeply rooted in the College’s founding. Similarly, being at the forefront of elite liberal arts education has become a symbol of Amherst College. The president was able to call on this as part of the symbolism of Amherst College in taking on such a grand task of diversity transformation, which did not seem to depart from the College’s historical
stature. Because each educational institution is different, any college or university interested in such a transformational vision must be able to effectively locate its vision within the values that the institution represents and which will be recognizable by its stakeholders.

Finally, there is the implication of the nature of the presidential leader itself. The environment for change in higher education is very difficult. At times taking on an initiative of this magnitude can mean sacrificing one’s career in the process.

**Further Research**

As discussed above, one of the significant implications of this research for other institutions wishing to embark on similar diversity initiatives is the need to consider the context of the institutions and how this may impact leadership. Amherst College is a wealthy private institution that is accountable to a particular set of stakeholders with certain set of expectations. What would be interesting and would complement this research, would be an examination of how one or a set of institutions in significantly different contexts have become successful in widening student access. So perhaps, studies geared at looking at whether presidential leadership in public institutions with limited budgets and with accountability to taxpayers have managed to achieve results that are relatively comparative to the achievements of Amherst College. Studies such as these would contribute to developing broad set examples of leadership in different contexts that was successful in actualizing a socially just vision.

**Conclusion**

I started this study by highlighting Amherst College’s remarkable success in diversity and inclusion as evidenced by statistical representation of its student body in
recent years. First year students in the Class of 2012 show men and women at 50 percent each. Twenty percent of the class came from low-income families and 38 percent indicated that they were students of color. (Amherst College Sixty-Second Annual Report to Secondary Schools). I noted the context in which these achievements are taking place. This is a society in which a lot of broader societal inequities have been perpetuated by a higher education system that privileges wealthy white students in an era of the knowledge economy. In this environment, education is said to be the most valuable form of resources, which can ultimately determine the fate of individuals and societies. Scholars have emphasized that educational institutions reproduce social divisions based on wealth, privilege, and power. They argue that higher education access, especially to an elite liberal arts education, is increasingly defined by access to the capitals—economic, cultural and social capital, all significant in very consequential ways in shaping higher educational opportunities (Lareau, 2003; Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Taylor & De Lourdes Machado, 2006; McMahon, 2009 ). Amherst College, though founded on principles of serving the indigent, became synonymous with this type of elitism, exclusion and privilege. Over the last few decades, especially due to changing global and domestic demographics, intensification of social justice discourses have challenged higher educational institutions to examine their contributions to a changing society. Many institutions have attempted to diversify their campuses but the process has been difficult and fraught with visioning and implementation problems (Quinton, 2014; Kezar, 2008).

Amherst College’s recent achievement as one of the nation’s most diverse institutions represents a remarkable transformation. This transformation could not be achieved merely by the normal functioning of institutional change, but must have been a
deliberate and planned vision. The literature on higher educational change suggests that because of the traditional and robust nature of colleges and universities, significant change such as this is largely through focused leadership, particularly presidential leadership. This idea that presidential leadership is fundamentally consequential is a foundational assumption underpinning the research question that guides this study. This research, therefore, contributes to the literature on leadership theory by looking at a concrete example, using a case study method and drawing on organizational categories, in several important ways. These include looking at (1) how socio-economic discourses and exigencies, global and national, influence systems shaping and implementing a vision of inclusion, (2) how presidential leadership influences higher educational institutional structures and stakeholders to drive the vision of inclusion, and (3) specific ways in which presidential leadership style may facilitate and challenge vision implementation.

Bolman and Deal’s (1991) four organizational frames represent a conceptually significant part of any organization, which makes them significant in examining this case study of Amherst College. The structural frame views organizations as being rational systems with formally designated roles, governed by rules or policies—all in pursuit of defined goals and objectives. For Bolman and Deal (2003), the political frame views “organizations as living, screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests” (p.186). This highlights the view that within organizations, there are the interdependence, divergence interests, scarcity, and power relations, which inevitably spawn political activity within. The human resource frame views organizations as existing to serve the needs of humans, rather than the reverse, and therefore, there is an inherent
interdependence between people and organizations. The *symbolic frame* views organizations as cultures that unite its members around shared values and beliefs.

The findings reveal that the vision of a more diverse and inclusive Amherst College, while not totally new, emerged through a combination of several phenomena, including the national and global demand for greater opportunities of all kinds, all of which depend on education, especially higher education, as a push factor. Amherst College’s founding principles as a place that was developed to educate the indigent also served a foundational factor that helped to drive the vision of inclusion. However, as highlighted throughout, such moral and philosophical factors were only realizable due to practical and structural support, such as the development of an administrative and management infrastructure that provided the framework to recruit and ultimately support a more diverse student body. This infrastructure served to empower, for example, the Admission Office that was a key player in operationalizing the vision of recruiting and retaining talented and diverse students regardless of capacity to pay. However, such structural changes could only be sustained by adequate funding and financial support. All of these moral and structural facilitators of the vision of a diverse and inclusive Amherst College fundamentally point to the role of presidential leadership, in the case of Amherst College, Anthony Marx.

Under all the above phenomena that aided this transformation, the driving factor was the capacity of Marx to display various aspects of transformative leadership. He had a strong conviction and the ability to sell the vision with clarity and purpose, being charismatic and driven to a higher purpose. Drawing on the structural frame, I have shown how he was able to work the various systems of the institution to garner support for the vision. This ranged from gaining support of the faculty governance body to selling the
vision to alumni and working with them to generate support, as well as translating that moral support into greater financial contributions to support the diversity program and other college operations. Marx’s ability to clearly articulate the vision and seek wide ranging support, as well as being able to translate that support into actionable plans that transformed the very nature of how the College conducted its affairs, is important.

Presidential leadership must also be seen as transformational in how it was able to come to terms with the fact that, like many organizations, Amherst College is also defined by multiple stakeholders with different and sometimes competing interests that must be coalesced in order to successfully accomplish its vision. Marx’s capacity to exert his own power was largely facilitated by the support he received from the Board of Trustees. This allowed the president to sell the vision, generate financing through the *Lives of Consequence* capital campaign even in a debilitating economic crisis, and change old systems of recruitment; all while reducing resistance to the vision that existed.

While Marx displayed a positive leadership, defined as that which moved people and organization to achieve higher levels of performance, it was also found that his leadership style often irked some within the College community. As some of the participants in the research opine, if his leadership were more attentive to the needs of followers, the vision may have been even more far reaching. This interpretation could be countered because his capacity to sell the vision to various stakeholders in such a way as to make them feel connected with it and work in greater unison is a great indicator of his capacity to inspire his followers to the broader vision. Further, his capacity opens up Amherst College to previously underserved students, suggesting that this institution now exists more to serve people than the other way around.
Marx’s leadership was able to transform Amherst College through his ability create a vision of the College that retained a resonance with the people associated with the institution. As discussed, educational institutions are traditional and have various values, rituals and symbols that give meaning to many within its community. The fundamental ways in which the diversity and inclusion vision changes Amherst College could have been disconcerting to many who may not have recognized the new version of the institution. This could have potentially made this vision in diversity unsuccessful given the historical importance of the communal nature of Amherst College and the degree to which the institution depended on its core stakeholders. While it is a fact that there were some who felt that the College did not represent their values any longer, it is also clear that this was a minority; the majority was able to see Amherst College’s more inclusive vision as representing the best of the founding principles of the institution. In many ways, they connected with this progressive vision as part the values they themselves held true. Presidential leadership was significant in accomplishing this.

As I return to the notion of transformational leadership, I can also return to the origins of this concept and how it was articulated and used to define Marx’s presidential leadership. As Burns (1978) noted, this type of leadership “occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). Based on findings and analyses of this study, Amherst College’s transformation into a more racially and socio-economically diverse institution can largely be credited to presidential leadership. He was able to move beyond diversity rhetoric discourse and implement the initiative, which may be appropriately defined as transformational.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear _________________________

Thank you for accepting my request to participate in my dissertation research project—Steering Against The Tide? Presidential Leadership and Diversity at Amherst College. The following information outlines the protocol regarding your participation.

Consent for Voluntary Participation

1. I will be interviewed by Letha Gayle-Brissett
2. I will be asking questions related to the Diversity Initiative during the tenure of President Anthony Marx (2003-2011)
3. The interviews will be digitally recorded for an accurate record and to facilitate analysis of the data.
4. A copy of the transcript will be provided to you to verify the accuracy as well as your views.
5. The College will be identified by its formal name (Amherst College) in the research. Therefore, you have the option of selecting how you would like to be identified/represented in the study. Please select one that applies:
   I will allow the use of my name and job title
   I will allow the use of a descriptive title, for example, Upper-level administrator, professor, faculty, trustee.
   I prefer to remain anonymous, use a pseudonym and disguise my position
6. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw from part or all of the research at any time if you desire.

Your participation in this research is deeply appreciated. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

__________________________________  __________________________
Researcher’s Signature                Participant’s Signature

__________________________________  __________________________
Date                                  Date
APPENDIX B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Former President Amherst College, Anthony W. Marx

One trustee

Three faculty members

Nine administrators/staff

Two alumni
## APPENDIX C

### SOURCING DOCUMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using Research Questions as a guide</th>
<th>What documents are needed</th>
<th>Guiding questions to collect information from documents for all questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How did the vision of a more inclusive campus emerge? What were the drivers?</td>
<td>Written reports, proposal, letters, policy letter sent to college community, speeches, website information</td>
<td>1. What documents are available that can provide answers to the questions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are the central and peripheral factors that allowed Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity?</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Who created the documents and what were the intensions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In what way does a president’s managerial style and leadership influence the faculty, staff and students?</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Do other sources exist that can be used to confirm the information in the document?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Has the documents been changed in anyway?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. What are the sources of the information – original or secondary?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Letter to the alumni explaining the diversity plan and curriculum development.
- Letter from some faculty members to the president addressing the diversity initiative and curriculum change and development.
- Diversity Recruitment Reports
- Reports from Diversity Task Force
- Status Diversity Report from the Admission Office
- Report from the Financial Aid Office on status of low-income income
- Diversity recruitment annual reports
- 10-year student of color statistics report
- The QuestBridge Scholars Program
- Reports on the college demographic status
- Reports to secondary schools from 2000 – 2015
- Diversity and inclusion report to the president
- Amherst College need-blind admission policy to international students
- Amherst annual admission report
- Financial aid report and PowerPoint presentation
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewee (Name & Title): _______________________________________

Pseudonym: ______________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________

Introduction:
   Introduce myself
   Discuss the purpose of the study
   Discuss and provide Informed Consent Form
   Ask if they have any questions
   Obtained signature of Informed Consent Form

The purpose of these questions is to get at the following issues:

1. How did the vision of a more inclusive campus emerge? What were the drivers?

   Sub questions:

2. What are the central and peripheral factors that allowed Amherst to increase its racial and socio-economic diversity?

3. In what way does a president’s managerial style and leadership influence the:

   (a) faculty

   (b) staff

   (c) students

4. The emerging sub-questions are:

   o How was his leadership vision translated and shared across the major institutional stakeholders?

   o How would you describe effective/exemplary college presidential leadership?
o What do you remember most about President Marx’s administrative style?

o What are some examples in the president’s work that show good leadership?

o What have been your experiences regarding the president’s leadership?

**Probing Question:** How were decisions made?

o What were the points of concurrence, tension and resistance to his leadership approach and how were they negotiated?

How was this vision implemented practically at various levels of the institution?

Alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents, departmentally: admissions, students support,

**Probing Questions:** How were policy changes made?

Who was part of the decision-making process?

**Probing Questions:**

Who else should I talk to?
APPENDIX F
SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT CODING

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT CODING

Tony without question put Amherst on a path that was more aggressive in terms of diversity but it was not like a U-turn or a right angle. The college has been building in that direction under previous times and if you look at this statistics you will see that this is the case. It was nothing like what happened under Tony. Tony had a personal commitment to making the college reflect what the American society already was not to mention becoming and you can talk to him about this or perhaps you've already have. There are many formative experiences including his time in South Africa that would contribute to that. Uhmm also the board chair at that time Jide Zeitlin Born in Nigeria is an American but he share the same vision as Tony, so you have two people at the top that is a great combination to have but at the same time you had a board that fully recognized that this is something that a school like Amherst should fully committed itself to for a lot of reasons but one of them is just the very character of the school. It has always been from its founding, it presented itself, written into its mission statement is that in essence it's not just for the sons much less the daughters of wealthy people. It's for young man indigent man of piety. So the idea of it being open to people of all backgrounds is built into the colleges DNA. I think our first African American graduate was in 1826 and people who graduated in the 20s and 30s, were instrumental in the civil rights movement, medical education, moved on to universities, medical school and so on and so forth so that's the background. There is when Tony came in he saw as did Jide Zeitlin the chair and as did the board that this was the kind of school that ought to exercise leadership in this particular area. It was just recognized accepted and pursued. There was never a moment when anyone on the Board questioned whether it was the correct path in my recollection. It seems so Just self-evidently the correct path and now taking that path has many dimensions to it and they are not, I mean we are still on that path and that path stands a long way into the future. The first steps on the path are in some ways the easiest ones you can simple decide we are going to make more of an effort to find more people from more backgrounds ok, there is the decision but how do you go about that and one thing that, that requires is making more of an effort to reach out to many different kinds of communities and establishing relationships with more and more schools and more and more programs, QuestBridge and others. So there is an entire infrastructure that has to become involved, which at the time, now this type of infrastructure is becoming more and more common, than it was. So figuring out where will we find more of the kind of students that succeeds here that's an interesting issue in its own right and
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