NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI®

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION IN QUÉBEC: AN INTERPRETATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE TO POLICY APPROACHES IN THE CONTEXT OF MARIANOPOLIS COLLEGE

STANLEY BROOKS
DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATED STUDIES IN EDUCATION
McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL

SEPTEMBER 2006

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

© 2006, STANLEY BROOKS

Library and Archives Canada

Published Heritage Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-32157-7
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-32157-7

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Institutional Evaluation in Québec: An Interpretation of Organizational Response to Policy Approaches in the Context of Marianopolis College

ABSTRACT

In the past two to three decades there has been tremendously increased interest from various sectors of society in the performance, effectiveness and social responsibility of higher education. As a result, an audit culture has evolved within which quality assurance has become an integral part of the politics of governance which assumes external regulation of academic activity to be the natural state of affairs. In Quebec, the Commission d'Évaluation de L'enseignement Collègial (CEEC) serves government instrumentally by institutionalizing accountability mechanisms, evaluation, and other quality assurance practices as technologies that transmit, as well as shape, particular values within the college-level sector. The underlying rationale for this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the institutional evaluation process. In order to attain this study's research objectives, a multidimensional theoretical framework is employed to analyze and interpret the ways by which the college of interest relates and responds to the institutional environment within which it is embedded. This framework draws upon neo-institutionalism theory in sociology and the emerging body of discourse literature within organizational studies. In answering the research question, a constructivist, qualitative interpretive case study of the college's self-evaluative experience is developed to clarify three specific aspects of the dynamics of quality assurance and the institutional evaluation process: how national policy regimes and organizations within their fields envision and approach quality assurance; which particular organizational strategies and procedures are adopted to achieve specific quality objectives in response to the organization's mission, vision and the institutional environment; and, how organizational interests are served in the process of implementing and complying with regulatory quality assurance procedures.

Three substantive findings emerge from this study. Firstly, quality assurance policy in Quebec focuses on strengthening and sustaining the quality and integrity of academic programs and institutional management, and on encouraging and enabling

colleges to develop a culture of evaluation. Québec's quality assurance agency has placed improvement, the enhancement of relevance, effectiveness, quality and accountability in the forefront. Secondly, the College's evaluative discourse claims alignment with institutional and social expectations and the attainment of organizational mission and goals, the primary goal being the successful preparation of students for university studies. In fact, the overarching thesis which emerges from the data is that Marianopolis is characterized by superior institutional and student success. The competencies and capabilities of the College may be attributed to its commitment to academic excellence, as well as to specific strategic decisions and organizational processes that manipulate and convert resources and assets into new value-creating services. Thirdly, the College uses discourse to solidify its identity, and to be self-defined and identified in relation to specific standards and practices in conformity to institutional norms, policy, and social expectations, and to claim legitimacy in light of such alignment.

The propositions that link the patterns, unifying themes and concepts within the data embody a coherent explanation of the organization's response to the management of the educational process in the context of accountability. These propositions have the potential to serve as a basis for transferability from the case of interest to the wider population of colleges. They also suggest avenues for future process-based research on the management and functioning of the colleges, and should inform models for holistic quality development in this regard.

Institutional Evaluation in Québec: An Interpretation of Organizational Response to Policy Approaches in the Context of Marianopolis College

ABSTRACT

Depuis vingt ou trente ans, on observe dans divers secteurs de la société une augmentation marquée de l'intérêt pour la performance, l'efficacité et la responsabilité sociale de l'enseignement supérieur. Cet intérêt a conduit au développement d'une véritable culture de l'audit, qui a fait de la vérification de la qualité une partie intégrante des politiques de gouvernance. On considère maintenant la vérification des activités académiques par un organisme autonome comme l'état normal des choses. Au Québec, le mandat confié à la Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial (CEEC) institutionnalise les mécanismes de responsabilisation, l'évaluation et les autres pratiques de vérification de la qualité. Ces pratiques développent et transmettent des valeurs particulières au sein du niveau collégial du système d'éducation. Le but de la présente étude est de développer une meilleure compréhension de ce processus institutionnel d'évaluation. Afin d'atteindre ces objectifs de recherche, on utilise un cadre théorique multidimentionel pour analyser et interpréter les manières dont le collège est en rapport avec l'environnement institutionnel auquel il est intégré. Ce cadre théorique emprunte à la sociologie la théorie de la néo-institutionalisation; il s'inspire également des recherches récentes sur le discours effectuées dans le cadre de l'étude des organisations. Pour répondre aux questions qui orientent cette étude, on propose une étude de cas qualitative, de type constructiviste et interprétative, portant sur l'expérience d'auto-évaluation d'un collège, afin de clarifier trois aspects des dynamiques de la vérification de la qualité et du processus institutionnel d'évaluation : la façon dont les organismes nationaux et les organisations perçoivent et abordent la vérification de la qualité; les statégies et les procédures adoptées pour atteindre des objectifs de qualité associés à la vision, à la mission et à l'environnement institutionnel d'une organisation; la façon dont les intérêts des organisations sont servis par l'application des procédures régissant la vérification de la qualité.

Trois découvertes substantielles émergent de cette étude. Premièrement, la politique québécoise de vérification de la qualité met l'accent sur le maintien et le renforcement de la qualité et de l'intégrité des programmes scolaires et de la gestion des établissements d'enseignement. Elle incite aussi les collèges à développer une tradition d'évaluation et d'amélioration de la performance. La Commission d'évaluation a comme objectif principal l'amélioration de la pertinence, de l'efficacité, de la qualité et de la responsabilité. Deuxièmement, le Collège affirme que sa politique d'évaluation correspond aux critères et objectifs établis par le gouvernement et également aux attentes sociales. Son but principal demeure la préparation réussie des étudiants aux études universitaires. En effet, l'étude des données tend à démontrer que le Collège Marianopolis est caractérisé par le succès tant au niveau de l'institution qu'au niveau des étudiants. On pourrait attribuer les compétences et les capacités du Collège à son engagement à bien réussir en activités académiques aussi bien qu'aux décisions stratégiques et organizationnelles pour mieux utilizer ses ressources pour créer de nouveaux services. Troisièmement, le Collège utilise ce discours pour raffermir son identité et se définir par rapport à des critères et des pratiques précis conformes aux normes institutionnelles et aux attentes de la société, ce qui lui permet de revendiquer sa légitimité.

Les propositions comportant les modèles, les thèmes unificateurs et les concepts font partie intégrante d'une explication cohérente de la réponse organizationnelle de la gestion de l'établissement d'enseignement dans un contexte de la vérification de la qualité. Ces propositions pourraient se servir de base de transfers au niveau collégial. Elle pourraient être utilisées aussi comme futures piste de recherche sur la gestion et le fonctionnement des Collèges.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page i
Abstract (English) ..... ii-iii
Abstract (French) ..... iv-v
Table of Contents ..... vi-x
List of Abbreviations xi
Acknowledgement ..... xii-xiii

CHAPTER 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION: COMPONENTS IN THE RATIONALIZATION OF A STUDY 1

Introduction and Rationale 1

Research Motivations 6

Research Objectives 8

Importance of Study 10

Research Contribution 12

Organization of Chapters 14

CHAPTER 2: NEO-INSTITUTIONALISM, INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION AND THE MEDIUM OF DISCOURSE: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 16

Approaches to the General Problem 16

Conceptualizing the Institutional Environment 17
The Evolution of the Organization, Institutional Environmental Nexus 17
Neo-Institutionalism 23
Rational Institutionalism 24
Sociological Institutionalism 27

The Discourse of Power and Legitimacy 32
Public Centralized Power and Agency Theory 32
Neo-Institutionalism and the Discourse of Legitimacy 35

Evaluation: Nature, Process and Implications 39
Evaluation, Practice and Levels of Operation 39
Evaluation: Stakes, Interests, Political and Strategic Implications 43

Evaluation, Management and Governmentality 46
Corporate Management and the Politics of Institutional Evaluation 46
Higher Education and the New Public Management 48

Quality Management and Accreditation 50

Controversies Surrounding Quality in Higher Education 59

Quality Assurance, Accountability, Resistance, and the Notion of "Good Work" 63

Linking Institution to Discourse 68

Summary, Research Objectives, and Questions 74

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES **79**

Introduction: Basic Objectives 79

Philosophical and Methodological Approaches to Research 79

The Appropriateness of Case Study Research 83

Strategy for Site Selection, Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation 84
Site Selection Factors 84
Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation 87
The Issue of Bias, Validity, Generalizability and the Single Case 93
Issues of Reliability and Dependability 97

Managing Challenges and Limitations 100

CHAPTER 4: THE COLLEGE SECTOR AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN QUÉBEC **105**

Introduction and Objectives 105

The College-Level Sector in Québec 106
General Orientation 106
Initial Objectives of College Studies 108

The Regulatory Policy Framework 110

The Emergence of Quality Assurance in Québec 112
The Role of the Conseil des Collèges 112
The CEEC: Mission, Quality Assurance, and Relationship to Program Reform 114

The CEEC: Bureaucratic Approaches 121

Serving Interests in the Context of the Québec Model 125

Social and Institutional Expectations 131

Summary 136

CHAPTER 5: MISSION, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGING CHANGE **138**

Introduction and Objectives 138

Knowhow and Commitment to Improve 140

Direction and Clear Purposes 145
Creating and Communicating a Shared Vision 145
Educational Mission and Priorities 146

Managing Change for Strategic Development 152
Organizational Development and Viability 152
Organizational Reinvention for Improved Governance 155
Shouldering Responsibility for Effective Management and Organizational Improvement 161
Administrative action and leadership 161
Enhancing coordination, performance, and accountability 170

Summary 179

CHAPTER 6: RESPONSIVENESS TO INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS AND SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS **181**

Issues and Objectives 181

Orientation to Effective Program Delivery 181

Tying Student-Centeredness to Mission 186
Achieving Equity and Fairness in the Evaluation of Student Achievement 189
Mobilizing Capabilities for Student Progress 192

Student-Teacher Interaction and Faculty Support 197
Superior Teaching Performance within an Enabling Environment 199
Instituting a Plan for Success 202
Comprehensive and Effective Student Services 204
Student Initiatives, Growth, and Development 207

Enhancing Effectiveness within a Framework of a Human Organizational Face 211
Fair and Equitable Recruitment 211
Teaching Evaluation for Performance Improvement 213
Teaching Improvement through Professional Development 215
Building Good Employee–Management Relations and Organizational Climate 217

Enabling Student Progress Through Material Resources Support 219

Achieving Institutional and Student Success 227
Key Performance Indicators 227

Summary 232

CHAPTER 7: THE ISSUE OF ORGANIZATIONAL INTERESTS **233**

Introduction and Objectives 233

Organizational Interests 233
Identity, Image, and Reputation 234
Identity, Image, Reputation, and Legitimacy 243

Summary 252

CHAPTER 8: AN INTEGRATIVE ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS **254**

Context of the Study 254

Findings Relative to Quality Assurance and the CEEC 256

Findings Relative to the Images Projected within Evaluative Discourse 258

Grounded Theoretical Findings 265

Findings Relative to Interests, Identity, Image, and Legitimacy 269

Directions for Future Research 277

REFERENCES **280**

NOTES **317**

APPENDICES **319**

A. Comprehensive List of Documents 319

B. Outcome of Analyzing Accumulative Assessment Date 320

C. Key Performance Indicators: Graphic Presentation 321

Indicator A	**First Semester Success Rate**
TABLE 6A	Success Rate in First Term (Percentage of Students Passing Courses) 321
CHART 6A-1	Percentage of Students Passing all Courses in First Term 322
CHART 6A-2	First Term Success Rate in the Science Program 323
CHART 6A-3	First Term Pass Rates in the Social Science and Commerce Program 324
CHART 6A-4	Science Discipline Success Rate (Term 1) 325
CHART 6A-5	Social Science and Commerce Discipline Pass Rates (Term 1) 325
Indicator B	**Perseverance: (Program Retention)**
TABLE 6B-1	Third Semester Registration at the same College 326
CHART 6B-1	Third Term Re-registration Rate in same Program 327
TABLE 6B-2	Third Semester Registration Rates of Students in Acceuil (081.01) 327
Indicator C	**Graduation Rates**
TABLE 6C-1	Graduation Rate within Two Years in the same Program 328
CHART 6C-1	Graduation Rates in Same Program 329
CHART 6C-2	Total Percentage Graduating within 2 years in the Initial Program (Science) 329
CHART 6C-3	Total Percentage Graduating within 2 years in the Initial program (Social Science and Commerce) 330
Indicator D	**Enrolment Stability**
TABLE 6D-1	Enrolment Patterns in the Various Science Programs 331
TABLE 6D-2	Enrolment Patterns in the Various Social Science and Commerce Programs 331

D. The Twelve Attributes of Organizational Effectiveness 332

List of Abbreviations

CICIC: The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials acts as a national clearing house and referral service to support the recognition and portability of Canadian and international educational and occupational qualifications.

CHEA: The Council on Higher Education Accreditation is a United States national advocate and institutional voice for voluntary self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation. CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.

CIHE: The Centre for International Higher Education, Boston College, sees as its mission advancing knowledge about the complex realities of higher education in the contemporary world.

CMEC: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. CMEC is the mechanism through which ministers consult and act on matters of mutual interest, and the instrument through which they consult and cooperate with national education organizations and the federal government.

CSTE: Centre for the Study of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. This centre has been in existence for over 20 years promoting the systematic study of issues and practices in the field of teacher education.

MEQ: Ministry of Education Québec (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport).

MESS: Ministry of Higher Education (l'enseignement supérieur) and Science.

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. This is a Paris based international organization with a membership of 30 countries, sharing a commitment to democratic government and the market economy. Its work covers economic and social development issues, education, science and innovation.

PERC: The Planning and Evaluation Resource Center is a project of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University. Its website is part of an evolving process to continually share great resources and ideas to strengthen program planning and evaluation.

SCOEA: The Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability was a committee reporting jointly to the Minister responsible for post-secondary education in British Columbia and to the public colleges, university colleges, institutes and agencies. It functioned from June 1997 to March 2003. SCOEA had responsibility for system accountability and the institutional sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to many individuals for their contribution directly or indirectly to the success with which this dissertation project was carried out. First, I must express my appreciation to Sr. François Boisvert, the Director General of Marianopolis College, for permitting me to focus my research on the organization. Special thanks also go to Tamara Zakon, the coordinator of College's Academic Information System Project, for supplying updated data related to key performance indicators and giving valuable pointers about institutional and student success. I am also most grateful to one of the commissioners from the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial, and eight members of the Marianopolis community for generously participating in interviews and sharing experiences with me. My daughter Deidre transcribed the audio-taped interviews. Thanks too for the insightful comments of those individuals involved in examining my work as part of the member-check process. Yves Favreau of the College's Modern Languages Department very graciously consented to translating the pre-defense abstract in French. Post-defense additions to the abstract were generously translated into French by my friend and French Language specialist, Richard (Vere) Graham. While not directly involved in this study, Sr. Susan Cleevely, the Academic Dean of Marianopolis College, played a vital role in the College's institutional self-evaluation, and as a result, a rich textual database was created from which I was able to subsequently draw. This contribution must not go unrecognized.

I want to thank the members of my doctoral committee, namely, Dr. Steven Jordan, Dr. Lynn Butler-Kisber, Dr. Jan Jorgensen, and Dr Charles Lusthaus, for the support and guidance provided throughout the crucial stages of the research. The abounding patience, and the encouragement, mentoring, and stimulation provided by my supervisor, Dr. Charles Lusthaus, will be remembered with deep appreciation.

Charlene Milne patiently retyped and formatted the document during the various stages of its refinement. It was her tireless and measureless assistance and pleasant personality which made life easier for me, and I will be always indebted to her for the commitment to ensuring that I presented a work of quality.

Most of all, I wish to publicly record my sincere appreciation for the encouragement my children Deidre, Randall, and Russell gave me, and the love and understanding of my wife Cynthia, which sustained me during the course of this study.

Finally this thesis is dedicated to my mother, Elmont Clarissa Brooks, whose dream of being able to touch the finished dissertation since her sight was lost never came to pass.

CHAPTER ONE

Quality Assurance, Accountability and Institutional Evaluation: Components in the Rationalization of a Study

Introduction and Rationale

In the past two to three decades there has been increased interest from various sectors of society in the performance, effectiveness and social responsibility of higher education (Geva-May, 2001; Salter & Tapper, 2000; Alexander, 2000; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003b). In the words of Meyer and Evans (2003, p. 153), "The academy and the professoriate have come under increasing scrutiny and [have] been confronted with demands for relevance, accountability and productivity in a language often foreign to the world of traditional scholarship". Alexander (2000), taking a global perspective on accountability, contends that there is a deep rooted commitment by quality assurance agencies to use public policy tools to bring the performance of higher education into line with stakeholder expectations. Unquestionably, higher education has featured prominently within the global, social policy agenda, and there is "... a continuing struggle for the control of high status knowledge through the functions of standard setting, evaluation and intervention" (Salter & Tapper, 2000, p. 66).

Ewell (1990; 1999) argues that institutionalization of the "new accountability" or "culture of accountability" is virtually complete within the global higher education landscape. Globalization has been instrumental for embedding standard-setting and related procedures solidly within the academic, administrative and political culture of the major Western nations of the world, and, at the international level, these procedures have shown remarkable convergence around issues and definitions of management, performance, and quality (Room 2000). In fact, globalization has broken down national educational divides (Dale, 2000; Porter & Vidovich, 2000; Singh, 2004), and, as Ball (1997) contends, the new "national/global relationship is another point of mediation of the policy process; an interface where pressures and constraints are mediated by 'local' concerns and preferences" (p. 267). Since globalization has reduced national policy options

and led to policy borrowing, policy convergence, and the internationalization of ideas, logic dictates that several core, stable commonalities are entrenched within the diversity of national educational policy.

Internationally, quality assurance has become the touchstone of policy, and an integral steering mechanism within higher education systems. The general quality discourse indicates that a fundamental goal of the quality assurance movement is the systematic and ongoing measurement of educational effectiveness by examining organizational capacity to sustain and enhance quality. Welsh and Metrcalf (2003a) for example, point out that because of the emphasis within public policy on effectiveness, higher educational organizations are increasingly being called upon to demonstrate, through evaluation, the implementation of strategies to achieve the objectives of their mission and the standards for the outcomes of student learning, to measure the impact of instruction on the outcomes of student learning, and to use the results to improve instruction. The growth of institutional accountability systems (Walleri, 1997; Harbour, 2002, 2003; Lingenfelter, 2003), and the increased development and implementation of performance measurement systems (Kanji & Maura E SÁ, 2003; McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006) are indicative of these trends within the policy arena.

The "new accountability" within higher education became an inescapable feature in the life of the college sector of Québec with the creation in 1993 by an act of the Québec legislature of an independent, quality assurance agency called the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collègial (CEEC). The CEEC's mandate is directly focused on four responsibilities: monitor the fulfillment of the colleges' institutional mission, help the colleges improve the quality and relevance of the education they offer, assure the overall quality of the management and operation of the colleges, and report on the value of the instruction college students receive and on the effectiveness with which these organizations function (MESS, 1993). In practical, social and political terms, a regulatory structure has been created to represent society's intents and priorities, and is constituted with the authority to coerce higher educational organizations in its domain to evaluate the ways by which, within their respective socio-cultural contexts and

organizational missions, they integrate resources and skills through structured roles, rules, relationships and services to achieve institutional goals.

At the college-level in Québec, the CEEC dominates what Salter and Tapper (2000) refer to as the "discourse of quality assurance which assumes the external regulation of academic activity to be the natural state of affairs" (p. 66). Through this agency, government institutionalizes accountability mechanisms, evaluation, and other quality assurance practices as technologies that transmit, as well as shape, particular values. The creation and mandate of the CEEC explicitly represents the emergence of an "audit culture" (Power, 1994) or "audit society" (Power, 1997). Audit, like any form of institutional evaluation, involves "practices of observation, surveillance and examination" (Leach, Neutze and Zepke, 2001, p. 295). However, neo-institutionalist (Meyer & Rowan 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Hall & Taylor, 1998) would argue that the CEEC serves a symbolic and ritualistic purpose as well, and has been created not simply for efficiency in terms of its defined tasks, but rather for its legitimizing value to the Québec government within a broader, global, institutional context.

The educational system over which the CEEC has jurisdiction is part of a network of college-level organizations that evolved during the late 1950s and 1960s across Canada to provide education for academically and technically oriented students. In Québec, government policy led in 1968 to the creation of publicly funded organizations called CEGEPs (Collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel), intermediate between secondary school and the higher education university sector. Under the Private Education Act, government also permitted the establishment of private colleges whose purpose is to offer approved ministerial programs at the CEGEP level. CEGEPs and private colleges constitute the network of college-level organizations in Québec, and represent the first stage of higher education. The term "colleges" or "college-level sector" consistently refers to this network.

CEGEPs were created to achieve three specific educational missions within the same educational facility, namely:

1. to provide a common, basic education permitting the student in all programs to acquire general knowledge to deal with a variety of roles;

2. to provide a general 2-year pre-university education that enables the student access to university studies upon receipt of the college diploma;

3. to provide a 3-year technical and vocational programs that enables the student to acquire the knowledge and skills leading primarily to the workforce upon the completion of college studies (OECD, 1975; MESS, 1993; CICIC, 2004).

The College Educational Regulations (Régime Pédagogique) which governed the programs, curriculum, academic organization and management of the colleges remained virtually untouched until the early 1990s when policy makers introduced comprehensive reforms to elevate the standards, quality and coherence of the curricula, and the organization and management of the colleges. These reforms were designed to raise students' expectations of the colleges; lead to the development by teachers and management of a consciousness that performance is a serious matter, typically defined in relation to organizational effectiveness, quality in the delivery of programs, student achievement and success; and underscore government's intent to force colleges to increasingly face the challenges of taking more responsibility and accountability for designing programs and creating pedagogical and managerial conditions capable of leading to continuously higher levels of student achievement. In fact, the glare of public scrutiny on the functioning and performance of colleges have in large measure initiated and fueled the reform and evaluation movement.

Sequentially, college reform was followed by an evaluation of specific programs and full-scale institutional evaluation. The objectives of program evaluation were to evaluate the content and implementation of institutional policies with respect to both student achievement and programs of study, and to evaluate policies and procedures concerning the operation, organization and academic management of the colleges. The implementation of institutional evaluation in 2000 aimed to enable the CEEC to determine how the colleges performed and how effectively they were organized and managed (CEEC, 2000). Program and institutional evaluation introduced the college sector to the invasive and political realities of quality assurance and external monitoring.

How the meaning of quality assurance is interpreted depends upon one's understanding of quality. As Baker (2002) observes:

> Quality is one of higher education's most deeply held values, yet the characteristics of quality and measures of effectiveness for higher education are neither easily identified, clearly understood, nor universally accepted. Therefore it is difficult to delineate a common set of appropriate and universally applicable criteria that enable authentic evaluation of all institutions of higher education (p. 3).

Quality assurance covers a wide territory in the literature. For the purposes of introducing a discussion on quality assurance, this study draws upon three closely related definitions which regard the construct as: (1) those "processes which are adopted to ensure and to continuously improve the quality of the educational provision which is offered" (Hartley and Virkus, 2003, p. 33); (2) the "systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of maintenance and quality improvement" (Vroeijenstijn, 1995, qtd. by Hodson & Thomas, 2001, p. 104); (3) "systematic management procedures adopted to ensure achievement of specified quality or improvements in quality and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of quality and the outcomes achieved" (Harman, 1998, p. 331). These definitions express a set of common ideals that go beyond the traditional notion of quality as *fitness for purpose* (Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey, 1995a) to embrace the commitment to high standards or excellence in education.

Program and institutional evaluation are seen as major quality assurance processes by the CEEC. Consequently the CEEC defines its mission in relation to assessing program and organizational effectiveness and quality; measuring performance in relation to goals, questions and outcomes that matter to the institutions in which the colleges are embedded, and to their various constituencies and stakeholders; fostering a culture of self-accountability and public accountability; and collecting information for improved decision making, leadership, management, performance and for renewal.

This approach focuses predominantly on generating and sustaining continuous improvement, effective performance and quality, accountability, enhancing the process of organizational renewal and viability, serving decision-making goals, and, leadership.

Research Motivations

Research approaches are inevitably influenced by ontological and epistemological positions. In order to provide a context for the interpretivist approach being adopted, an overview of the research motivations underpinning the study follows. The evolution of my thinking regarding this study's research problem may be traced directly to events that are connected to the emergence of quality assurance practices in Québec, and the move toward the development of a culture of accountability within the college-sector. A number of specific events are part of this chronology. In 1994, the year after the creation of the Commission (CEEC), guidelines were published regarding the evaluation of programs of study, and the development by individual colleges of an Institutional Policy on Program Evaluation or IPEP. In 1995 the CEEC implemented the evaluation of the Social Sciences program, and followed up this in 1997-1998 with the evaluation of the general education component of programs of study. In 1999, each College was required to test its IPEP by applying it to a program of choice. Finally, in 2001, the CEEC launched very comprehensive institutional evaluations across the entire college network.

As project coordinator of both the Social Sciences program self-evaluation and the more comprehensive institutional self-evaluation of Marianopolis College, I was able to use my insider status to great advantage, and also draw strength from my social science background and long history of organizational involvement as a faculty member and educator, department chairperson, and member of various college committees. Upon being appointed as coordinator of the institutional evaluation project I registered as a post-graduate "Special Student" at McGill University in the Department of Integrated Studies, Faculty of Education, primarily to take a course that would educate me about organizational evaluation, and equip me with a way of thinking and skills to approach more confidently and efficiently the evaluation project. This course stimulated me so much that I completed the four courses permitted.

The knowledge and competencies gained from these studies and in areas such as school effectiveness and school improvement, the nature of institutions, institutional and organizational behaviour, organizational competencies as well as qualitative research methodology, has provided valuable insights about evaluative research in general, and the

processes and issues involved in undertaking context-relevant analysis of the functioning of educational organizations. These studies have been particularly helpful in developing critically balanced interpretations of the diverse data encountered in this research.

In October, 2004, the CEEC requested the evaluation of the College's Science program. The responsibilities involved with coordinating this evaluation project again provided an opportunity for self-reflection regarding how colleges operate within a framework of locally designed mission and vision to fulfill their legal mandate as pre-university institutions. What was learned from being in these various roles has gradually heightened my interest in the internal operations of Marianopolis College, the object of analysis, and in how this pre-university college organizes itself in response to the institutional environment to create conditions for the effective delivery of education.

In brief, my background, experiences, and interests have provided the motivation for seeking to better understand the dynamic forces and control mechanisms at work within the institutional environment as well as the practical responses of college-level organizations to such forces and controls. They have also helped to shape the positions and values being brought to this study. These positions and values are tightly meshed to the process of "reality construction" (McPhee & Bronstein, 2002, p. 652) which is integral to the search for meaning within the phenomenon this study has undertaken to analyze. The admonition to be "clear headed and focused with respect to [ones] own belief systems" (Gross, qtd. by McPhee et al., 2002, p. 652), and to be aware of one's own biases is well taken, and informs this research. To be specific, my view is that:

1. the colleges' mission is fundamentally about educational effectiveness, institutional improvement, and adding value in the process of delivering services;

2. colleges need to demonstrate that they fully understand the institutions within which they are embedded, and align their operations with the goals and purposes of these institutions in the interest of being socially relevant and of gaining organizational legitimacy;

3. colleges have an obligation to deliver satisfactory or even superior educational experiences that make a positive difference to the immediate educational out-comes of students, and to the quality of their future lives;

4. colleges are accountable or answerable for the manner in which they discharge their responsibilities.

In other words, colleges, as fully or partially funded public sector organizations, are expected to operate as social agents with institutional mandates, and as such, must be responsive to the institutional environment and pursue policies and activities which serve public purposes. Economic, political, and social objectives are entrenched within public purposes which express values that come into play to arbitrate and rank bureaucratic choices, plans and priorities (Hale-Haniff & Pasztor, 1999). In responding to their institutional mandates, higher education organizations seek to focus on quality and excellence through the development of capabilities which "effect its students and faculty favourably, to enhance their intellectual and scholarly development, [and] to make a positive difference in their lives" (Austin, qtd. in Denison, 1998, pp. 13-14).

The pressure on higher educational organizations to be responsive to social expectations and objectives as defined by public institutions is increasingly noticeable because of the state's capacity to mobilize technical, bureaucratic, evaluative, and politically charged quality assurance processes within a framework of social technologies like program evaluation, institutional evaluation, and various forms of audit.

Research Objectives

Since the aim of institutional evaluation is the analysis of how organizations operate internally, respond to, and interact with the institutional environment, it may be argued that particular government agencies purposively seek to determine the extent to which colleges are engaged in critical self-examination, monitoring, and reflection upon the means whereby their operation and management ensure achievement of the objectives of their socio-legal mandates and organizational missions. Defining, measuring, evaluating, and enhancing quality are critical tasks for all higher education organizations, and a legitimate concern of quality assurance agencies. Because of the policy role of government, and in recognition of its coercive power and the stakes involved, it is proposed that colleges seek to project the most positive image in the interest of demonstrating that they fulfill their institutional mandate and meet social expectations.

This study contends that a powerful rationale exists for research which seeks:

(a) to deepen the understanding of the policy approaches framing quality assurance and particularly institutional evaluation as an instrument of accountability in Québec; and

(b) to analyze, in the context of this framework, the strategies adopted during the evaluation process to demonstrate effectiveness and quality to the policy regime in alignment with the institutional environment, and with social expectations.

This rationale derives particularly from the growth and global diffusion of an evaluation culture; the increased emphasis within various sectors of society on the performance, effectiveness, quality, accountability and social responsibility of higher education; the social and political implication of the establishment of the CEEC, the agency responsible for external quality assurance; and the lack of empirical studies on institutional evaluation and the resulting relationship between colleges and government in Québec.

This study therefore undertakes an in-depth and systematic case study of the phenomenon of institutional self-evaluation and its ramifications on organizational decision-making, text construction and self-presentation. The question analyzed is the following:

In the context of institutional self-evaluation as a crucial quality assurance mechanism in higher education and an instrument of accountability, how, and with what underlying purposes, do colleges in Québec respond to the obligation to demonstrate fulfilment of responsibilities in relation to alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations?

This study's focuses on the self-evaluational experiences of Marianopolis College is significant for several reasons. This small, co-educational private college currently offering nine university preparatory programs to students of all ethnic and religious backgrounds began in 1908 as a bilingual, undergraduate college offering degree programs for women. In fact, it was the first institution of higher learning for English Catholic women in Québec. Degrees were conferred initially through an affiliation with Université Laval, and subsequently in 1922 through affiliation with the Université de Montréal. The College therefore has an educational heritage that predates the creation of

the CEGEP system, as well as a very a long-standing commitment to academic excellence and to the fostering of individual and social values.

An integrative, multidisciplinary theoretical framework is developed which draws on the literature of the new institutionalism in sociology, organizational effectiveness, quality assurance and accreditation in higher education as well as studies focused on how discourse mediates and shapes the relationship between organizations and the institutional environment within which they are embedded. In answering this question, the findings of a constructivist grounded case study of the case explicate the evaluative experiences and the organizational discourses constructed to demonstrate institutional effectiveness and quality.

Importance of Study

This study is important because it is intended to fill two gaps. There is a dearth of neo-institutional research on the college-level sector generally, and in Québec more specifically. This study seeks to provide valuable insights into the ways by which college-level organizations and institutions relate to each other, and how organizational activity is framed within institutional contexts (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; North, 1990; Scott, 1995; Nee, 1998; Nee & Ingram, 1998). Neo-institutional theorists have tended to explain the internal operation, behavior, and dynamics of organizations from a perspective of constraints imposed by forces emanating from the institutional environment in which the organization is embedded. In this line of thinking, organizations are constrained by institutions which North (1997, p. 6) defines as "the rules of the game of a society and in consequence provide the framework of incentives that shape economic, political and social life". Another way of expressing the organizational/institutional nexus is through the conceptualization that organizations, as social systems, structure themselves in ways to meet societal expectations which operate through regulative, normative and cognitive frameworks (Scott, 1995).

The point being made is that organizations, in general, and more specifically public-service institutions like colleges, are enveloped by policy and other institutional contraints. Thus, despite significant degrees of managerial leeway and flexibility for

operations, organizations must adjust to external pressure, and to some extent, their missions, governance, and activities are constituted by "an evolving set of rationalized patterns, models and cultural schemes (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, p. 343). This study is important from another perspective. A strong argument may be made that institutional theory alone cannot provide precise and detailed explanation of how control mechanisms operate to mediate the organizational/institutional nexus because it pays little attention to the very mechanisms that are supposed to facilitate the spread of the tools of control. To fill this gap, this study therefore adopts the conceptual framework within an emerging and critical field of management research which posits that the relationship between the organization and the institutions within which they are constituted is structured and mediated by discourse, and that discourse contextualizes the experiences of policy makers and organizational actors (Smith, 1984; O'Neill, 1998).

This study looks at discourse from two perspectives, the institutional, policy or governmental, and the organizational. The former views discourse as the socio-cognitive process whereby groups construct pools of social ideas into representations of *reality* such as policy orientations, frameworks and programs to serve institutional or governmental interests (Foucault, 1980; Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000). The latter, drawn from Oswick, Anthony, Keenoy, Mangham and Grant (2000), posits that "organizational discourse [is] the dynamic and interactive process through which the dominant 'organizational reality' is socially mediated" (p. 888). It is the key to understanding the organization's *felt identity* or the subjective sense of its own situation, continuity and character that have crystallized as a result of various organizational experiences (see Milligan, 2003, pp. 382-383).

To unravel the discursive, policy/practice relationship between government and its social agencies this study also draws insights from Biesecker's (1997) elaboration of the notion of "cooperative achievement among participants" (Habermas, qtd. by Biesecker, 1997, p. 4), which is linked to the theoretical principles of communicative action and rationality (Habermas, 1984; 1987).

This research is also important for another reason. As a case study, it provides a unique opportunity to document and interpret, from a close-up, insider vantage point,

what is happening in a particular pre-university college in Québec. This project may be regarded as an exercise in "critical, contextualist social research" (Newton, 2002, p. 48) for two reasons. First, a powerful socio-cultural and institutional context circumscribes and permeates the colleges. Second, as Grace (1995) points out, critical and reflexive approaches to the explication of social problems must be developed within the "relational settings" of the problems themselves, and "can only be understood in the complexity of those relations" (p. 3). Thus, gaining insights into the intricacies of social reality requires insistence upon a full appreciation of the complexity of the problem, situational factors, and context (Grace, 1995; Newton, 2002; Johns, 2006).

Research Contribution

Several contributions emerge from this study. In fact, this study may be among the pioneers in addressing the dearth in research on neo-institutionalism, quality assurance, and institutional evaluation in higher education in Canada. This study therefore offers an opportunity to place college-level institutional evaluation within an appropriate theoretical context. Because it aims at finding ways of understanding the policy approaches framing quality assurance and particularly institutional self-evaluation as an instrument of accountability, it provides a conceptual framework within which college-level teachers and administrators can better appreciate the institutional environment within which college-level organizations are embedded. This is the study's first contribution.

In a newly emerging climate of institutional evaluation, the tendency of those affected by the process is to view it as a simple technical affair. In reality, however, institutional evaluation is a value-laden, politically charged process that is governed by discourse. Therefore, the study's second contribution is its analysis of how the context in which particular organizations operate is framed by the policies and procedures embedded in the discourses that regulate the organizational field. By recognizing that a discursive relationship exists between government and the colleges, this study goes beyond the traditional institutional conceptualization of the principal/agent nexus, and allows for an examination of the particular discourses that are integral to the value preferences of government. This particular contribution derives from the study's articulation and inter-

pretation of the salient discourses which structure the policy environment within which the colleges are expected to operate and which serve as a framework for their evaluation. In this regard, the study permits us to focus on the expected function/role of college-level organizations, societal needs and expectations, as well as the norms, organizational processes and activities that matter to government, and to analyze the coherence of government policy and the degree to which such policy has contributed to an understanding of how government defines institutional quality, and effective performance.

This contribution helps to clarify how control mechanisms operate through discourse to mediate the relationship between colleges and policy institutions. It thereby fills a gap in traditional organizational research which pays inadequate attention to the very mechanisms that are supposed to facilitate the spread of the tools of institutional control.

The study's analysis and insider interpretation of the College's response to the CEEC is its third contribution. As a case analysis of a particular evaluation experience, this study enables the examination of how organizational politics, mission, values and culture in a specific setting mediate the process of policy interpretation and implementation of social objectives and expectations. To be specific, this study's third contribution is empirically grounded in the understandings it provides regarding the use of the self-evaluation process by a particular college to construct and project images of how mission, vision, and insight into the ways needed to achieve particular sets of institutional goals intersect with higher educational discourses, and translate into specific patterns of college policy, actions, activities, and operations to demonstrate organizational effectiveness and quality. By focusing on a particular organization, the study makes it possible to demonstrate that organizational self-evaluation is shaped by organizational context, and that this context influences policy interpretation, implementation and outcomes. The overall effect is to bridge a gap between the abstract concepts that are employed to understand organizational performance and effectiveness, and the practical context-dependent realities facing colleges in Québec.

In pursuing this line of research, the study examines the degree to which the process of institutional self-evaluation has been discursively organized and orchestrated to serve organizational interests. Since institutional evaluation underscores the power of

government to render judgments on collegiate organizational practice and its effectiveness, the third contribution this study makes is its conceptual and practical examination of how the politics of organizational self-interests infiltrate the self-evaluation process to create discourse that constructs a positive self-image internally and within the institutional environment.

The fourth contribution of this study is its conceptual approach to the legitimation of organizational processes. This study contends that legitimacy is gained through processes that use skills, abilities, knowledge, knowledge management, learning capabilities and the energy of human beings to create quality. The study's conceptualization of organizational legitimacy incorporates elements of the capability-based theory of competitive advantage which places particular emphasis on relationships between the organizational environment, managerial, technological, financial, human capital and knowledge assets.

Organization of Chapters

Subsequent chapters in this study address systematically and comprehensively the issues which are raised by the specific objectives that guide the research. Chapter 2 develops an integrative theoretical framework that focuses on the new institutionalism in sociology, the increased emphasis within various sectors of society on the performance, effectiveness, quality, accountability and social responsibility of higher education, as well as the medium of discourse to provide a conceptual foundation for the relationship between the organization and the institutional environment.

Chapter 3 is divided into two sections. First, it presents an overview of constructivist methodology together with a critical analysis of qualitative interpretive research. The rationale for the choice of case study method is presented. This is followed by an explanation of grounded theory which employs a qualitative analytical approach termed the constant comparison method.

Chapter 4 situates institutional and policy change affecting the college sector within its historical and cultural context, and analyzes: (a) the educational policy framework which prescribes the role, activities and operation of the colleges; (b) policy changes

affecting college-level pre-university programs and academic management; (c) the mechanisms for, and intent of, ministerial supervision and quality assurance.

Building upon theoretical positions within discourse studies, both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 start with the premise that the opportunity for self-evaluation will be used by the organization to demonstrate alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations. Subsequent analysis focuses critically upon how text construction is used by the College to present discourses regarding effectiveness and quality on a widely diversified set of criteria within the framework of evaluation as an instrument of accountability. These two chapters interpret the ways by which the evaluative text is constructed to give meaning to particular aspects of the organization's life. This interpretation derives directly from the deduction of eight specific concept categories that encapsulate the discursive positions embedded within the evaluative narrative, and which form interdependent and mutually reinforcing "realities" of the College's image.

Given the political context of institutional self-evaluation, Chapter 7 takes the position that there are organizational interests to be served in implementing and complying with regulatory prescribed quality assurance procedures like institutional evaluation. This chapter therefore addresses the issue of the interests served by specific organizational discourses and self-presentation strategies, and the need for them to be served. In this regard, Chapter 7 elucidates how discourse has allowed Marianopolis not only to be self-defined and identified in relation to specific values, standards and practices, but also to present an image or portrait that influences how others think about the organization. In effect, this chapter links the constructs of organizational discourse, identity, image, and reputation together as a vehicle used by the College for staking claims to organizational legitimacy.

Chapter 8 concludes the study and is an integrative analysis of findings as well as concluding remarks regarding the directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Neo-Institutionalism, Institutional Evaluation and the Medium of Discourse: The Conceptual Framework

Approaches to the General Problem

Growing demands for higher quality in the college and university sector have raised serious issues regarding the capacity to design, improve and maintain effective educational organizations. External and internal forces unleashed in response to these demand have brought significant pressure to bear on organizations within higher education to implement systems for monitoring and evaluating quality. As Arnold (2004) asserts, "evaluation is expected to provide accountability, learning, policy guidance ... and hence process improvement" (pp. 4-5). Because of the emerging paradigm that higher education is an enterprise that is "both a commodity and a public good" (Gumport, 2001, p. 28), colleges and universities now need to pay greater attention to advancing academic and organizational quality, and demonstrate that they are meeting stakeholder expectations of effectiveness in the outcomes they produce.

The overarching goal of this chapter is to undertake a comprehensive review of the interrelated literature of neo-institutionalism, the theory and practice of evaluation, the machinery of governmentality, quality assurance, and the discursive relationship between organizations and the institutional environment. The intent is twofold: (1) to develop a substantive conceptual framework within which to situate the research objectives and the specific research sub-questions that structure the study; and (2) to provide a basis for advancing integrated explanations to the dynamic mechanisms through which the institutional environment structures and governs its relationship with the organizations in its domain, and the resulting complex behaviors, structures, and processes that characterize the nature and internal environments of the colleges.

Conceptualizing the Institutional Environment

Institutional evaluation and accreditation are institutionalized processes within the academic, administrative, and political culture of the major western nations of the world (Ewell, 1999; Room, 2000; Eaton, 2003). Together with performance measurement and quality audit, these social technologies are devised and manipulated primarily by state political agencies and private higher education quality monitoring organizations whose intrusion into the area of determining institutional policy, activity, and educational outcomes has greatly increased in recent years (Alexander, 2000). Consequently, there is little doubt about who controls how education should be organized and run. Higher education is externally regulated. By taking an institutional approach to evaluation of the college sector in Québec, this study focuses "on the larger cultural and societal environments in which groups of similar organizations exist" (Spicer, 1997, p. 168). It also recognizes the tightly coupled nature of the interrelationship between the organization and institutions, and acknowledges that the construct *institution* connotes power to "specify rules, procedures, and structures for organizations as a condition of giving legitimacy and support" (Greening & Grey, 1994, pp. 470-471).

The Evolution of the Organization, Institutional Environmental Nexus

Colleges in Québec are highly complex educational organizations that constitute a vital component within the wider, provincial, Canadian, and global system of higher educational organizations. In the highly simplified but attractive formulation of Robbins, Coulter and Stuart-Kotze (1999, p. 2), "an organization is a group of people, systematically arranged, working to accomplish some specific purpose." Early conceptions of organizations tend to present them as goal-seeking, rationalistic entities with remarkable capabilities of combining and coordinating activities, forms of authority, responsibilities, and relationships, in the interest of achieving explicit purposes and objectives (Blau and Scott, 1962; Etzioni, 1964; Schein, 1970). Organizations are also regarded as the manifestations of the people who inhabit and manage them (Deetz, 1992), as well as "instruments for representing interests" (Abrahamson, 1993, p. 29). Gillespie (2000) elegantly and succinctly captures these concepts:

> An organization is the creation by human beings of a collective structure – a collaborative act, a necessary response to the existence and phenomenon of society. Any organization exists because we will it to exist. It is a societal structure which we design to serve our purposes (p. 28).

In these sense-making approaches, the emphasis upon common purposes and objectives reflect the sense of vision and mission that organizations must have, as well as the importance of the strategic role of management in the facilitation and efficient coordination of organizational processes to achieve institutional goals. By implication, members of a college should have some image in their minds about the direction in which they wish to take the organization, about how the organization should work, and how it should appear when things are going well. This is vision. The operation of college-level organizations according to an overall purpose or mission is equally important. As Berg, Csikszentmihalyi, and Nakamura (2003) observe, "Each institution is distinguished by its own definition of excellence and of the social needs it aspires to meet" (p. 2). Goals are attached to mission. Scott (1998) suggests that goals are the "ends that participants attempt to achieve through their performance of task activities" (p. 21). Thus, goals underpin decisions for action; they are accomplishments to be achieved or destinations to be reached as organizational members work toward their mission.

Early rationalistic approaches seriously underplayed the influences of external environmental forces. As Warrimer (1984) explains, the critical problems with these approaches to organization derived from their underlying assumptions that organizational activity was "a function of the explicit creation" and control of managers; that "intentionality" and "directionality" are intrinsic organizational attributes and, that organizations are operationally "self-contained" (p. 6).

Within organizational and sociological analysis, a number of specific developments contributed to the ultimate ascendancy of the environmental paradigm which implies that "environments are consequential for organizational characteristics" (Warrimer, 1984, p. 21). Dill's (1958) notion of the *task environment*, that is, the environment which comprises the sources of inputs, markets for output, regulators, and competitors became integrated into the conceptual map of organizational theorists (Harrison & Shirom, 1998; Scott, 1998). However, and more significant, the resource-base

view of the firm was introduced in the work of Penrose (1959), who "provides a comprehensive explanation of the link between resource-based relatedness and firm-level performance" (Kor & Mahoney, 2004, p. 185). As currently developed, this approach posits that firms purposively interact with environments for resources and manage them in ways designed to achieve sustained, competitive advantage over rivals (Rugman & Verbeke, 2002). While the idea of interacting with the environment for resources was not new, the idea of organizational competition based on the manipulation of resources certainly was. The direct implication of this view for firms was the strategic necessity to be continuously attuned to the competitive environment of organizations, particularly with regard to how resources were being used to gain advantages.

Arguably the most important theoretical development contributing to debunking of the notion of organizational autonomy is systems thinking expressed coherently in the work of Katz and Kahn (1966). Their model argues that organizations are neither self-contained nor self-sufficient. Systems theory posits, among other things, that organizations form communicative relations with their environments. Thus, the open systems perspective focuses attention on the organization's operation within its environment, and the way this affects many administrative decisions and processes.

To Katz and Kahn, open social systems nest within larger social systems, and have complex feedback and regulatory mechanisms that enable adaptive responses to changes in the internal and external environment. The open systems model emphasizes mutually influential information and communication between an organization and other systems in its environment. It is primarily concerned with the ways in which organizations intrude into, adapt to, shape, and generally interact with the task environment, and, the dynamical feedback mechanisms that must be interpreted by management to ensure that the organization is continuously aligned with elements of the environment in order to achieve its purposes (Harrison & Shiron, 1998). Spicer (1997) stresses that the focus upon organizational environmental alignment implies an obligation to ensure that the organizational system and its subsystems have the capacity to operate in such a way that they attain congruence or compatibility between their differing demands and needs, and the dynamical environment with which they interact.

The idea that the environment is consequential to organization also emerged within sociology, but from the perspective of the function and constraints of the institutional structures which the environment contains. Within early sociological thought, institution emerged as a construct to embody the idea that the social environment was relevant to the understanding of human action. Scott (1995), in reflecting on institutional approaches in the works of Durkheim, Veblen and Weber notes that institutions were regarded as sets of objective political, social, economic and cultural conditions surrounding social entities that "mediate social action" (p. 11). As sociological thought evolved, an institution was visualized as "a comparatively enduring configuration of prescriptions which, through the general consensus of the society, is regarded as essential for the maintenance of its structure and basic values" (Lindberg, Scharg and Larson, 1963, p. 425). Social systems or organizations were thought to consist of individuals bound together by certain acknowledged patterns of interdependent relationships and certain regular, rule-governed ways of behaving and interacting to meet institutional needs (Levy, 1952).

Within more recent functionalist sociological thought, organizations are regarded as "the social structures or systems deliberately formed to embody institutions, serve institutional needs, and provide long-term stable patterns of social relationships that give social interaction regularity and predictability" (Warme, Malus, & Lundy, 1994, p. 460). This conceptualization is useful for two reasons: it stresses that organizations internalize institutions, and it specifies some of the major consequences of the organizational/ institutional nexus.

The conceptual evolution and development of the link between organization and the environment owes the greatest debt to the ideas of Selznick (1949, 1957) who describes an institution as "more nearly a natural product of social need and pressures – a responsive and adaptive organism" to distinguish it from an organization which he refers to as "a technical instrument for mobilizing human energies and directing them towards set aims" (1957, p. 5). Selznick's (1949) embracement of an institution as a framework of environmental pressures, constraints, influences, symbols and values to which members of an organization must adjust and be committed emotionally, not just rationally, stems

from his famous study of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). This study also alerted Selznick to the way institutions allow the aspirations, motivations and self-interests of organizational actors to play out. In the TVA study, Selznick treated the TVA bureaucracy as an organizational actor and focused on the critical decisions that led to changes in its internal structure, and the processes by which the TVA became institutionalized, that is, developed distinctive *value-infused* structural characteristics.

The TVA study underscored "the relevance of 'need' and the process of adaptation to the external environment in the interest of survival" (Burell and Morgan, 1979, p. 187). By formally coopting and absorbing certain elements from the external environment into the decision-making structure, decision makers in the TVA sought to create a buffer that enabled a reduction of their dependence on those elements. The process of cooptation was a fundamental strategy of power balancing whereby the complex, dynamic environment was reduced to a more stable entity through manipulation (Scholl, 1981). Corwin's (1987) pointed critique underscores Selznick's insightful analysis of the process by which the TVA became institutionalized through the pursuit of operative goals that eventually "became transformed into something sacred, that is, a tradition infused with value" (p. 122). In Selznick's (1957) own words, the institutionalism process:

> is something that happens to an organization over time, reflecting the organization's own distinctive history, the people who have been in it, the groups it embodies and the vested interests they have created, and the way it has adapted to its environment (p. 16).

As stated by Morgan (1990), these value-laden practices and means to specific ends were the ingredients necessary to ensure organizational adaptation, or more significantly, "the means through which ... the organization developed new goals to serve the interests of the bureaucrats rather than its original objectives" (p. 65). Selznick's (1949) emphasis on the emotional attachment of the organization to the institutional framework of symbols and values is a clear indication that he regarded institutions as being endogenous, rather than exogenous to the domain of organizational action. To prior organizational theorists, political, legal and cultural forces were completely external to

the organization, and had a peripheral role in the strategic calculus of the organization. The idea that institutions are internalized is currently a powerful theme in neo-institutional thought. For example, McCann (2001), in reviewing Supreme Court decision-making in the United States, observes that interpretive institutional approaches emphasize the constitutive power of institutional norms and practices that enable and authorize as well as constrain justices. Thus, "institutional rules and norms are not external to actors; they are internalized and expressive of judicial actors' very understanding, aspirations, and choices" (p. 2).

Parsons (1969, p. 199) added to Selznick's idea of institutionalism by contending that institutions govern or constrain social action, give meaning and higher-level support and legitimacy, as well as mediate the implementation of organizational goals. He conceptualized the formal organization as a:

> mechanism by which goals somehow important to the society, or to various subsystems of it are implemented and to some degree defined. But not only does such an organization have to operate in a social environment which imposes the conditions governing the process of disposal and procurement, it is also part of a wider social system which is the source of the ... legitimation of higher-level support which makes the implementation of the organization's goals possible (p. 199).

Previous to the 1970s, however, institutionalism failed to become a driving theoretical concept within sociology. This failing may be attributed to its narrow focus upon, and overemphasis of formal political and legal systems and dominant social structures, its conservatism in positing the permanence and maintenance of conditions, and its non-theoretical approach (Bill and Hardgrave, cited by Scott 1995, p. 6).

Selznick's work constitutes the foundation upon which neo-institutional organizational studies are built. Within these studies the concept of organization/ environmental relationship focuses upon how political, legal, cultural, normative and other forces take on a powerful life of their own, and ultimately infuse, through various processes, the systems of beliefs or concerns involving expectations, purposes and activities within organizations.

The idea that "systems adapt to wider values and norms" (Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000, p. 698), was a central insight in the evolution of institutional theory. Hence, current institutional perspectives conceptualize the organization as a social system that structures itself in ways to meet societal expectations by responding to institutional constraints which Scott (1995) categorizes as normative, cognitive and regulative. This conceptualization is in keeping with the current view that organizations treat institutions as endogenous to their domain (Aoki, 2001) and engage in processes of interpreting and acting upon societal or institutional expectations. Hira and Hira (2000) express these institutional understandings remarkably in the idea that:

> Organizations are groups of individuals bound by a common purpose to achieve objectives, and are formed within an existing institutional framework ... Organizations have different objectives, in line with their different "mental models," but the most important cue for their behaviour is the incentive structure set up by institutions (p. 269).

Regardless of the subtle differences currently found in approaches to organization, a dominant theme around which institutional thinking converges is that organizations are "social entities, embedded in complex networks of belief, cultural schemes and conventions that shape their goals and practices" (Hasselbladh et al., 2000, p. 698). To understand these *goals* and *practices*, this study closely examines current thinking about the construct institution, and explores specific aspects of the salient discourses in institutional theory that have influenced modern organizational analysis.

Neo-Institutionalism

Since the 1970's a large body of literature has emerged in the fields of economics, sociology, history, political science and organizational studies called the new institutionalism or neo-institutionalism. This body of scholarship focuses on the ability of the institutional environment to influence the functioning of the organization, but there is wide diversity of thought regarding how this happens, and wide variety of meanings ascribed to the construct institution.

Within the field of organizational analysis, there are two main schools of thought that are commonly referred to as neo-institutionalism, the rationalist and the sociological

school (Welch, 2001; Hall & Taylor, 1996; Gooderham, Nordhaug, & Ringdal, 1999). The former school is most associated with Oliver Williamson and Douglas North, and is referred to as the new institutionalism in economics. Sociological institutionalism, on the other hand, while developed within the discipline of sociology, has influenced theoretical approaches within political science and organizational studies. Each school of thought provides explanation for organizational action, but operates from some very different assumptions. However, neither school of thought is a single, monolithic tradition; rather, alternative and closely related theoretical approaches exist.

Rationalist institutionalism. The meanings ascribed within economics to institution demonstrate high degrees of convergence and also provide appropriate background and context for discussion. Bromley (1989) views institutions as the "rules and conventions that define choice sets from which individuals, firms, households, and other decision-making units choose courses of action" (p. 39), as well as "sets of ordered relationships among people which define their rights, exposure to the rights of others, privileges, and responsibilities" (Schmid, qtd. in Bromley, p. 43). Ruttan and Hayami (1984) suggest that these societal rules:

(a) facilitate coordination among people by helping them form expectations which each person can reasonably hold in dealing with others;

(b) reflect the conventions that have evolved in different societies regarding the behaviour of individuals and groups relative to their own behaviour and the behaviour of others;

(c) provide *assurance* respecting the actions of others, and give order and stability to expectations in the complex and uncertain world of economic relations.

Abrahamsson (1993, quoting Hernes), regards an institution as "a set of conditions and rules for transactions ... a rationality context [which] provides frames for behaviour by creating or rejecting alternatives, by increasing or decreasing uncertainty and by giving objectives for, and meaning to, individual actions (p. 70). However, the ultimate definition comes from Douglas North (1997) who argues that:

> In a world of uncertainty they [institutions] have been used by human beings in an attempt to structure human interaction. They are the rules of

> the game of a society and in consequence provide the framework of incentives that shape economic, political and social organization. Institutions are composed of formal rules (laws, constitutions, rules), informal constraints (conventions, codes of conduct, norms of behaviour), and the effectiveness of their enforcement (p. 6).

Fogel (1997) aptly states that North's distinction between institutions (*the rules of the game*) and organizations (*the players*) was an important contribution to the theory of institutionalism. Summarizing the range of definitions, it has been suggested that institutions are either: (1) conventions that arise to solve "social coordination problems ... and may require some external authority, such as a state, to enforce them" (Schotter, 1981, p. 11); or (2) rules or entitlements that are "socially recognized and sanctioned set(s) of expectations on the part of everyone in a society ... that arise to regularize behaviours in the face of discordant preferences over either social ends or means" (Bromley, 1989, p. 43).

Rules or entitlements specify the legal relations which enable the establishment of social order within and between organizations, and between organizations and their environments. Thus, rules embrace not only the basic legal regulations that govern economic activity, but such aspects as institutional arrangements that govern the ways in which organizations can cooperate or compete, and the institutional transactions which regularize market processes (Davis & North, 1970; Williamson, 1975; 1985). No normative value is attached to these *rules of the game*; rather, they are conceived as regulative, environmental forces which must therefore be taken into account in the economic decision making process since they embody rewards and sanctions.

Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) typifies the rationalist theoretical approach of new institutional economics to understanding organizational action within an institutional context. According to Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) as developed by Williamson (1975; 1979; 1985; 1989), on the assumption of fixed preference structures and bounded rationality, institutions develop within the contractual framework of transactions to produce what Ouchi (1980) refers to as stable patterns of arrangements for producing the most efficient outcome for organizations in the market place. Rational choice theorists suggest that institutions minimize the transaction costs accruing to governance structures owing to

the necessity of exchange, the uncertainty surrounding the specifics of the transaction relationship between principals and agents, opportunism and risks in exchange, the costs of information associated with monitoring the behaviour of agents involved in economic exchange, and the degree to which transaction-specific assets are required in order for one or both of the parties to fulfill their contractual obligations (Hira & Hira; 2000; Ingram & Clay, 2000; Martinez & Dacin, 1999). Ingram and Clay (2000) strongly suggest that rules, enforcement mechanisms, and selective incentives emerge from within the exogenous institutional, that is the socio-political, environment, to "structure the interactions of actors such that costs of acquiring and processing information are less debilitating and the opportunities for malfeasance are reduced" (p. 530).

It is beyond the scope of this study to fully analyze this model. Among others, the TCE model has been criticized for its under-socialized view of organizational and market activity (Granovetter, 1985), its assumptions of rational, maximizing, equilibrium, efficiency, and opportunistic behaviour, the marginalization of human traits, and the underdevelopment of the operation and effects of the institutional environment (Hira & Hira, 2000; Welch, 2001). Hira & Hira make a number of critical observations which further expose weaknesses in the assumptions of new institutional economics. For example, institutions not only shape the maximizing preferences of organizations, they in turn are shaped by organizational behaviour. Decision making and events are path dependent, given the assumption that "History, or the rules of experience, affect "the duty" of political intercourse" (Hira & Hira, 2000, p 271). They also insist that decision making is based not solely on preferences but on institutionalized rules since reputations and organizational identities are at stake.

Despite North's (1990) attempt to address such limitations by giving consideration to the range of human motivation, ideology and altruism, as well as to self-imposed standards of conduct and the influence of culture in models of individual behaviour, arguably, the enduring theoretical position within new institutional economics is that the state, through its capacity to legislate formal rules and enforcement mechanisms to facilitate the attainment of collective organizational goals, becomes a key mediator of intra-organizational and inter-organizational transactions and interrelationships. Hall and

Taylor (1996) suggest that this role is fulfilled by framing "the expectations an actor has about the actions that others are likely to take in response to or simultaneously with his own action" (p. 939). In other words, institutions allow actors to strategically interact with an enhanced degree of certainty regarding the behavioural options of other actors, since such options are constrained by "rules of ... political and economic interactions and contracts and by developing reputations for power" (Hira & Hira, 2000, p. 271).

New-institutionalism emerged within the discipline of economics but currently exists as a pan-disciplinary approach to the analysis of the question regarding how institutions affect social actors, whether they are individuals or organizations (Scott, 1995; Strinchcombe, 1997; Nee, 1998; Nee and Ingram, 1998). The new institutional economics presents one major view of organizational action in relation to the institutional environment, but it has limitations in terms of its applicability to public-sector higher education organizations, despite offering some valuable insights.

Sociological institutionalism. Hall & Taylor (1996) stress that the sociological institutionalism approach developed within the subfield of organizational analysis to provide other than rationality and efficiency arguments for the manner in which social actors organize themselves, and attend to the demands of the institutional environment which rationalists regard as constraints to organizational activity. Consequently, institutional explanations explicitly focus on cultural and social behavioural influences whereby rules and norms provide common-sense templates for understanding organizational action (Barley & Tolbert, 1997).

One of the corner stones of the new institutionalism in sociology is the idea that organizations embrace specific institutional forms or practices not simply because they are most efficient for the task at hand but rather for their legitimating value within a broader institutional environment (Hall & Taylor, 1998). Institutionalism, as a concept, "refers to the process by which societal expectations of appropriate organizational form and behaviour come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action" (Martinez & Dacin, 1999, p. 77). This emerging body of scholarship views institutional influences on organizational behaviour not just through the lens of formal rules or norms, but also through the lens of systems of cultural symbols, cognitive scripts and moral templates

without which behaviour cannot be interpreted (Scott, 1992; Powell, 1991). Indeed, a central tenet of this approach is that "environments ... are cultural systems, defining and legitimating organizational structures, and thus aiding in their creation and maintenance" (Meyer & Scott, 1992, p. 1).

Seippel (2001, p. 125) elegantly summarizes the sociological view of institutionalism in his statement that it:

> hints at how something - a "carrier" (Scott 1995) or a "mechanism of reproduction" (Nedelman 1955) - provides stability to processes of social interaction, how various social elements are internally integrated, and how diverse arenas of social interaction are made distinct from each other. This stability is supplied by various enabling and constraining carriers which motivate, give direction to and co-ordinate social interaction.

Seippel's view is congruent with Jepperson's (1991) and Friedland's & Alford's (1991) definitions of institution. To Jepperson (1991), institutions "are often represented as the constituent rules of society ..." [they] "are variously "production systems" or "enabling structures" or social "programs" or performance scripts. Each of these metaphors connotes stable designs for chronically repeated activity sequences" (pp. 143-145).

Note that Jepperson acknowledges the rules of the game or the regulatory structures that are able to exert pressure on organizations and their members (North, 1990; Oliver, 1991), but emphasizes the broader socio-cultural frame that is indispensable to an interpretation of organizational activity. Friedland & Alford (1991) focus entirely on institutions as "patterns of activity," namely, rules, routines, scripts, and the like which provide a medium for the behaviour of organizational actors, and "symbolic" or interpretive systems such as beliefs, values, paradigms, ideologies and mental frameworks through which meaning of the total environment is acquired. Berger and Luckman (1967), in their assessment of institutions, go so far as to attribute them deterministic powers by suggesting that they "control human conduct ... prior to or apart from any mechanisms or sanctions set up support them" (p. 55). Consequently, it may be concluded that the sociological understanding of the institutional environment is far more complex than that held by economic rationalists. This complexity derives from what Powell & DiMaggio

(1991a, p. 13) regard as "subtle" "influences" that "create the lenses through which actors view the world and the very categories of structure, action and thought".

Scott (1995) has provided an elegant integrative framework for understanding the different but simultaneous institutional pressures or influences that organizations can experience. Scott asserts that "Institutions consists of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transplanted by various carriers – cultures, structures and routines – and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction" (1995, p. 33). As noted by Wicks (2001, p. 572), "the regulative pillar represents a rational actor model of behaviour, based on conformity and sanctions." In Scott's (1995) own words, "... regulative processes involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect or review others' conformity to them, and as necessary, manipulate sanctions ... in an attempt to influence future behaviour" (p. 35). Rules and sanctions are necessary because social actors pursue their own self-interests to achieve as much power as possible as they respond to, and make strategic decisions regarding the task and institutional environment. Spicer (1997) argues that the focus of this interaction is self-centred, which implies that to management, the needs of the organization are seen to supersede the needs of other actors within the organizational field. Consequently, institutions circumscribe the range of possible interactions.

The second set of influences rests upon the "normative pillar" (Scott, 1995), which, from a functionalist perspective, is concerned with "obligatory dimensions of social interaction" (Wicks, 2001, p. 572). To Scott (1995, p. 139), "Social norms and values are essential ingredients of any social situation; behaviour is guided not only by natural endowments and interests but by moral beliefs and normative obligations". Normative influences comprise the values and moral commitments that social actors internalize and are subsequently applied to interpret what is proper and preferred in any given context (Bruner, 1990; Tsoukas, 1994). Norms and values are deeply ingrained within an organization's culture and identity and, as such, help to define the basic goals and purposes of the organization. Norms and values are templates that incorporate what March and Olsen (1989, p. 161) call a "logic of appropriateness." This logic intrinsically encapsulates the view "of a

subjective social reality in which expectations are perceived or enacted, [and] often incorporated into daily routines" (Wicks, 2001, p. 572).

The third institutional pillar (Scott, 1995, p. 40) "stresses the centrality of cognitive elements ... the rules that constitute the nature of reality and the frames through which meaning is made." To DiMaggio and Powell (1991) these elements are the subjective scripts and models through which the world is objectified. The cognitive perspective, by emphasizing the subjectivity of action, incorporates a constructivist view of how reality is constituted by social actors (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Bruner, 1990).

Hall and Taylor (1996) in their reflection upon the constructivist view within institutionalism remark that:

> In many cases, institutions are said to provide the very terms through which meaning is assigned to social life. It follows that institutions do not simply affect the strategic calculations of individuals, as rational choice institutionalists contend, but also their most basic preferences and very identity. The self-images and identities of social actors are said to be constituted from the institutional forms, images and signs provided by social life (p. 948).

Cognitive approaches to institutions give consideration to identity as it defines the social actor, as well as to identity as a vehicle for perceiving and responding to social situations. Aoki (2001) provides a succinct model of how cognitive mechanisms become "an orthodoxy that comes to define what is acceptable and what is not" (Wicks, 2001, p. 573). To Aoki (p. 131-133), the process involves several interdependent and interlocking strands:

1. as an organization (agent) engages in activity, "information processing" is required;

2. the organization (agent) runs its own "mental program or cognition mechanism in order to recognize and interpret the state of relevant environments, [and] predict the consequences of various alternative actions on the state (including other agents' reactions)";

3. the organization (agent) makes "an action choice from among them" [various alternatives] "to solve relevant problems";

4. mental programs or cognitive mechanisms "are composed of a bundle of "rules" that are stored, revised and organized in the mind of the agent in a certain way, and "triggered" by a perceived situation";

5. the mental program of the organization (agent) therefore comprises "cognitive rules" and "decision rules." Inputs to cognitive rules are the messages or information processed from the environment;

6. information processing leads to an interpretation of "relevant environmental situations";

7. inputs to decision rules are the "interpretive representations of relevant situations" upon which "choices from a set of feasible actions are based";

8. organizations (agents) may "polish, add; and reorganize [the] store of cognitive and decision rules based on ... experiences and learning";

9. "The accumulated store may remain valuable in any functional hierarchy" and may be used "if the agent faces the same (or a similar) task ... in terms of the range and object of information processing required".

Aoki's (2001) cognitive model implies that when faced with a social situation, the organization (agent) draws upon stored scripts and templates or "capital-human assets" (p. 132) to simultaneously situate itself within the social situation and devise strategic responses in its own interests. Similar ideas are found in the work of Zucker, (1987; 1988), Jepperson, (1991) and DiMaggio and Powell (1991a; 1991b).

Given the strong normative and cognitive emphasis within sociological institutionalism, Hall and Taylor (1996) contend that "rational action" is "socially constituted" action, and that while rational choice advocates regard the rationality of social actors as utility-maximizing, sociologists view the rationality of social actors in terms of being constructed and "seeking to define and express their identity in socially appropriate ways" (p. 949). March and Olsen (1996) conceptualize the former account of social action as a "logic of consequences," and the latter as a "logic of appropriateness." To sociological institutionalists, social action is not governed fundamentally by formal and informal rules and sanctions, but is "regularized through internalization of norms and the social construction of meaning" (Welch, 2001, p. 12).

From this overall discussion it may be concluded that both new institutional economics and sociological institutionalism focus on the ability of the institutional environment to influence organizational functioning, and make important contributions in their own right to the explanation of how this happens. In an attempt to bridge the rationalist and sociological perspectives, Ingram and Clay (2000) proposed the "choice-within-constraints-approach" to institutionalism. This approach first holds:

> that actors are boundedly rational in the sense that they pursue a broad set of self interests, but with limited knowledge and cognitive capacity. Second, institutions are defined as the rules, combined with their enforcement mechanisms that constrain the choices of actors. These rules include the laws of states, the policies of organizations, and the norms of social groups. Third, institutions ideally constrain actors such that their best choices are consistent with the collective good, enabling, for example, mutually profitable exchange between actors (p. 526).

The Discourse of Power and Legitimacy

The marriage of the constructs institution and power emerge from North's (1997) fundamental argument that institutions are the rules of the game of a society that constrain and shape human interaction. To North, institutions comprise "formal rules ... informal constraints ... and the effectiveness of their enforcement" (p. 6). Ingram's and Clay's (2000) notion of public-centralized power is germane to this study because it symbolizes coercive state power.

Public-Centralized Power and Agency Theory

Public-centralized power is state-centred power which operates through legislative, judicial and planning functions to determine and enforce the rules which govern the behaviour of organizations. State-centred power is legitimate, constitutional authority. Consequently, states are "invested with the authority to make binding decisions for people and organizations juridically located in a particular territory and to implement these decisions using, if necessary, force" (Reuschemeyer & Evans, qtd. in Ingram & Clay, 2000, p. 527). As Moore (2003, p. 1220) cogently argues:

> In an important sense, our legislative, executive and judicial branches set out what could be described as "public purposes" ... when they pass a law,

> issue an administrative ruling, or make a precedent-setting judicial decision. At each of these moments, a representative government institution makes a choice on behalf of a collective about an important public value that is to be protected or advanced through the use of the power, the assets and the capacities of the state.

It follows, therefore, that regulative and coercive state-centred power operates to accomplish a number of ends. Without prioritizing, state-centred *rules* "ideally constrain actors such that their best choices are consistent with the collective good, enabling, for example, mutually profitable exchange between actors" (Ingram & Clay, 2000, p. 526). Rules, by specifying what is, and what is not appropriate internal organizational practise and external social or economic interaction, serve to enhance ordered and discipline relationships across organizational fields. Hira & Hira (2000) suggests that institutions exercise power through their ability to "shape decisions by presenting a restricted set of policy alternatives to leaders, affecting the rules of the political and economic interactions and contracts" (p. 271).

This is an important point because it goes to the heart of the capacity of "institutions for enabling credible commitments" (Ingram & Clay, 2000, p. 531). The fact is that in exchange relationships between organizations, there are no guarantees that contracts will be honoured when the time to do so eventually comes except through a legal state apparatus to enforce contracts and protect property rights. Ingram and Clay (2000) draw from numerous studies to demonstrate the power of institutions to enable credible commitments and the growth of organizations "by increasing government involvement in monitoring, certifying, authorizing and endorsing their activities" (p. 531).

Public centralized power is well illustrated within principal-agency theory (Ross 1973; Jensen & Meckling, 1976) which is a particularly promising theoretical frame-work to underpin the new public management assumptions regarding control mechanisms on the performance of the public agencies. This theory addresses the social relations between parties contingent upon the delegation of authority and the problems of motivating and controlling cooperative action as a result of information asymmetries (Kiser, 1999). Its primary focus is the situation where one party, the principal, seeks some outcome but requires the assistance of an agent to carry out the necessary

activities. It is assumed that both parties are motivated by self interest, and that activities may diverge from what is contracted. Agency relationship, as defined by Jensen and Meckling (1976) is "a contract under which one or more persons (the principal(s)) engage another person (the agent) to perform some service on their behalf which involves delegating some decision making authority to the agent" (p. 308). Contracting is a way in which organizations seek to reduce uncertainty by coordinating future behavior with other organizations. While some inherent uncertainty exists in any contract, they help define obligations between partners.

Under agency theory it is assumed that goal incongruence between principal and agent can create a situation in which performed activities may diverge from expected activities as the agent act to maximize his own interests rather than the best interests of the principal (Nilakant & Rao, 1994; Mason & Slack, 2003). Agents usually know more about the tasks than principals. In fact, the problem of information asymmetry is central to principal/agent relationship (Shaw, Gupta & Delery 2000; Baiman, 1990). Consequently, principals seek to gain information by monitoring, inspection, and evaluation to curtail the opportunistic behavior that emerges, and realign the activity of agent with the goals, expected outcomes, and welfare of the principal (Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). As explained by Mason and Slack (2003, p. 38), "The idea here is that the agent is less likely to act opportunistically when the principal knows more about what the agent is doing, and the chances of the agent being detected and punished are greater".

In the arena of public service provision, government, as principal, may at its own discretion exercise its legitimate power to enhance credible commitment and accomplish the outcomes it expects. Verhoest, (2005, p. 237) suggests that the principal may use three control devices to motivate the agent to perform well by reducing problems of information asymmetry and goal conflict between itself and the agent, namely:

1. monitoring systems to measure and evaluate the performance of the agent, skills of the agent, and interfering environmental conditions;

2. bonding arrangements by which the agent can provide guarantees that he will act in accordance with the principal's interests or by which "contractual

limitations on the manager's decision making power" are set (Jensen & Meckling, 1976, 325);

3. systems of financial incentives that link reward to the performance of the agent, resulting in risk-turnover from the principal to the agent.

In essence, the construct institution embodies the notion of power and its exercise in the multidimensional sense of the capacity to enforce, constrain, regulate, sanction, enable, and frame. However, with only a superficial grasp of institutional theory it is relatively easy to get the impression that institutions have an omni-presence and an ominous overpowering effect upon organizations. If this indeed were the case, little latitude for discretionary action would be available to managers and administrators. The fact is that there is ample room for choice and discretionary action despite the apparent stringency and coerciveness of institutions (Oliver, 1991; Greening & Grey, 1994). Thus, standardization is not a goal of institutional power. To sociological institutionalists, social action is not governed by all-powerful formal and informal rules and sanctions, but is "regularized through internalization of norms and the social construction of meaning" (Welch, 2001, p. 12). Organizational action is individualistic and takes place within these boundaries.

Neo-Institutionalism and the Discourse of Legitimacy

Standard dictionary definitions of legitimacy include the state or condition of being legitimate or lawful, authentic or valid. The concept of legitimacy evolved within political philosophy and social theory initially to rationalize the power of the state (Beetham, 1991). Weber (1947) regarded state power as legitimate constitutional authority, rooted in widespread public acceptance of the state's right to establish laws and do so in an equitable fashion.

To Moore (2003), the moral basis of legitimacy derives from the state's right to be:

> the arbiter of value ... [in that] some things can best be valued by a collective determining what it thinks is just and fair or attractive and desirable for the society at large, and that social welfare is defined at least in part by the goals that the collective (imperfectly and inconsistently) embraces" (p. 1217).

The discourse of legitimacy and legitimation that is associated with the construct institution places emphasis upon "the pressures for acquiring and maintaining legitimacy in relation to the environment" (Gooderham et al., 1999, p. 384). Meyer and Rowan (1977; 1991), the pioneers in seeking to explain how organizational institutionalization and the process of legitimation are associated, suggest that the sources of value or legitimacy reside externally of the organization within the "rationalized" institutional environment of rules, complex beliefs, cultural schemes, models, conventions and patterns of action that frame and give meaning to their goals and practices.

Consequently, organizational structure and action derive their legitimacy by incorporating prevailing rationalized ideas or being infused with the values of this environment. Thus, "Environments are more than stocks of resources and energy flows; they are cultural systems, defining and legitimating organizational structures and thus aiding in their creation and legitimacy" (Meyer and Scott, 1992, p.1). Greening and Grey (1994) add that institutions "specify rules, procedures, and structures for organizations as a condition of giving legitimacy and support" (p. 470-471).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) view the powerful rules, conventions, schemes, belief systems and other cultural and social influences of the institutional environment as "... highly rationalized myths" (p. 343) because they express social purposes and expectations concerning what is "considered proper, adequate, rational and necessary" (p. 345) for organizations to achieve by means of the blueprints of formal structural elements including specific programs, procedures or mechanisms, without providing actual empirical verification of the efficacy of their appropriateness. The blueprints of formalized structure become deeply ingrained within organizations because they reflect widespread understanding and norms of rationality and legitimacy. In effect, Meyer and Rowan suggest that organizations tend to become isomorphic with the institutionalized phenomena within their environments, and structurally reflect socially constructed reality.

Meyer and Rowan (1977; 1991) argue that three processes generate rationalized myths of organizational structure: (1) the elaboration and interconnection of complex relational networks which make demands for generalized principles and effective practices; (2) the degree of collective social organization and rational-legal arrangements;

(3) leadership efforts of local organizations to manage and shape the context of organizational fields and the rules of institutional environments. The organization's pre-occupation with legitimacy, self maintenance, survival and stability leads to its eventual incorporation of "elements that are legitimated externally, rather than in terms of efficiency;" [and to its employment of] "external or ceremonial assessment criteria to define the value of structural elements" (1977, p. 349).

In very simple terms, organizations incorporate *myths* in order to gain stability, confidence, respectability, legitimacy, and resources for achieving their purposes. The view espoused by Meyer and Rowan implies that organizations engage in impression management (Tedeschi & Riess, 1981; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992) to attain legitimacy through consistency between goals and value systems and their constituents' expectations. Hence, favourable stories are constructed about organizational activity, and are "used as forms of symbolic reassurance to mollify potentially influential publics" (Mizurchi & Fein, 1999, p. 655). The notion that organizations prevalently manipulate appearances for the sake of public acceptance was also voiced by Parsons (1956), who argued that legitimacy accrues through organizational conformity to rules, practices and wider social values (Parsons, 1960). In fact, Weber (1947) suggested that legitimacy is a function of the organization's ability to adapt to changing social norms, and is a means to gain acceptance by instilling widespread beliefs in the organization's absolute value. While Corwin (1987) agrees that there is a ritualistic component to institutional legitimization, his fundamental position, like Weber's (1947), is that the process is invariably associated with efficiency, and the enhancement of the power base of individuals in the organization, and of their ability to manipulate the environment.

Despite Corwin's criticism of the notion of symbolic legitimacy for what he regards as a constrictive dimensional vision, the fundamental corner stone of sociological institutionalism is still the idea that organizations embrace specific institutional forms or practices not simply because they are most efficient for the task at hand, but rather for their legitimating value within a broader institutional context (Hall & Taylor, 1998). Consequently, conformity, or the appearance of conformity, confers legitimacy and all its attendant benefits. Thus, it must be acknowledged that acceptance of the idea that

legitimacy exists to the extent that organizations incorporate specific elements from the institutional environment. This point is integral to explaining the deeply rooted regulatory and normative institutionalism of the higher education sector.

DiMaggio's and Powell (1983) introduced the theoretical notion institutional isomorphism to explain the propensity of organizational form and action to converge. Their central idea is that there is a process of institutional isomorphism occurring in modern societies that lead organizations in the same line of activity "to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (p. 143). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) also state that "organizational change(s) occur as the result of processes that make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient" (p. 147). Isomorphism, they suggest, might be either competitive or institutional. The former develops as organizations seek to get the best alignment between themselves and the operations of the market, and is not of concern to this study. The latter has direct bearing to this study since it deals with organizational competition "for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness" (p.150).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983; 1991a; 1991b) classify the mechanisms instrumental to isomorphism as coercive, mimetic and normative. Coercive power works through the cultural expectations of society, political and legal power, as well as general resource dependency. They argue that coercive forces are exerted on organizations by other organizations and state agencies within common organization fields, to create structures that are culturally perceived to symbolize managerial control over work performance and organizational efficiency, thereby conferring legitimacy. Further, to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity, and enhance legitimacy within common organizational fields, organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that are perceived to epitomize success. This type of isomorphic pressure they called mimetic. Lodge and Wegrich (2005) assert that "emulation takes place according to standards of perceived legitimacy and success rather than any full evaluation of all options and their potential impact" (pp. 216-217).[1]

The third type of isomorphism is said to operate through the colonization of organizations by professionals "who occupy similar positions across a range of

organizations" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p.152), and share similar training, education, experiences, outlook and worldview. This convergence "allows for the emergence of a consensus ... as to the appropriate way to "organize" or "control" particular policy activities" (Lodge & Wegrich, 2005, p. 217). Socialization on the job reinforces conformity and convergence. Thus, normative institutionalization progressively subjects organizations to scientific management techniques and bureaucratization which in the words of Morgan (1990, p. 94) "...constitute part of the frameworks of rules about how organizations should operate."

Evaluation: Nature, Process and Implications

One of the rights exercised by bureaucratic and policy authorities is to define the social expectations and objectives that are relevant to the raison d'etre of higher education. Increased interest in the performance, effectiveness, social responsibility and accountability of higher education has reinforced the mandate of public quality assurance agencies to use policy tools to specify how higher education organizations should operate and bring their performance into line with social expectations (Alexander, 2000).

Evaluation: Practice and Levels of Operation

The modern, social practice of evaluation evolved within the positivist epistemology as a rational, scientific, institutionalized activity and process (Henkel, 1998) to measure performance in relation to interventions implemented to solve problems within organizations and society in general (Arnold, 2004). Taking a broad market oriented view, Arnold further asserts that such interventions are justified whenever "market failure [and] failure in capabilities, behaviour, institutions and framework condition damage system performance" (p. 3). Evaluation, though mostly associated with the American experience, springs from the same sources in other countries, that is, "in reformism, social engineering, and the faith in rational policy processes" (Åberg, 1997, p. 2). Its roots, as a systematic and concerted practice and as an academic study in the North American experience, are traceable to the conjunction of three trends, namely, social and economic modernization in the 1950s and 1960s, the attendant rationalization of society and social policy as the public sector rapidly expanded, and the growing contribution of

the social sciences to knowledge within the sphere of policy making and social reform (Henkel, 1998).

Increased monitoring and review developed and grew as required activities associated with the expansion of government programs. Henkel (1998) attributes this scrutiny and pressure to the need to justify the allocation of funds. Smith (2001; 2006) notes that such activities focused on increasing effectiveness and efficiency of performance, but bore implicit overtones of micro-management and control of the agencies and groups involved. Arnold (2004) contends that evaluation is vitally tied to the policy making process within *the new public* management.

One of the dominant forces underpinning the evaluation movement is the complexity of the modern day organization which makes day-to-day operation and strategic decision-making very dependent upon a stream of evaluative information. Like other research processes, evaluation involves the gathering, ordering, and analysis of data. However, evaluation requires making judgments about the worth, significance, and meaning of phenomena, based on measuring variables according to specific criteria or standards. Smith (2001; 2006) has made the poignant observation that "much of evaluation is imposed or required by [agencies] external to the situation [which makes] the nature of the relationship between those requiring evaluation and those being evaluated ... of fundamental importance".

Evaluation operates at several levels, including the program and project level, the practice level, and the organizational/institutional level. While only the latter is of major concern to this study, brief comments on the others are in order. Following Shadish (1998), Alkin &.Christie (2004), and Smith (2001; 2006), program or project evaluation is essentially a management tool directed toward the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the program or project. At the practice level, evaluation is directed toward enhancing work being undertaken with particular groups, and toward the development of participants. In this context, evaluation is an integral part of the working process, and seeks to foster learning that is oriented toward future or further action. The practice level has a decidedly pedagogical element.

Organizational evaluation is a diagnostic process that involves the systematic collection, synthesis, and analysis of various types of data for the measurement of variables related to patterns of organizational, performance, effectiveness, and quality (Harrison and Shirom, 1998). Institutional evaluation has the same aims but is subject to the regulative, normative, and agency forces that emanate from the institutional environment. It is a major technology of quality assurance that has become the holy grail of governmental policies, and perhaps the most integral steering mechanism within higher education systems. The prevailing *quality* discourse argues that a fundamental goal of the quality assurance movement is the systematic and ongoing measurement of educational effectiveness by examining organizational capacity to sustain and enhance quality.

In this study, institutional evaluation encapsulates those procedures involved in the evaluation of service-providing public organizations to determine their worth or value. Institutional evaluation has tended to focus on *processes* to identify organizational strengths and weaknesses and on measuring the outcomes of inputs and processes based on "substantive data-driven evidence of quality and effectiveness in achieving missions and goals" (Baker, 2002, p. 5). Outcomes are expected to enhance understanding of the multiple facets of the organization so that appropriate interventions may be planned and action can be taken to solve problems, carry out necessary change, and improve effectiveness (Craig, 1999). Institutional evaluation requires making judgments about the multiple contexts of academic life, and is a fundamental policy instrument and social technology in the systematic examination and governance of higher educational organizations with respect to their capacity to translate public policy decisions and social objectives into effective educational outcomes, and sustain and enhance performance, improvement, and quality.

Institutional evaluation represents a crucial medium in the interaction between institutional policy regimes and organizations. It is an instrument of scrutiny and a veritable symbol of institutional coercive power. To be specific, institutional evaluation enables bureaucratic policy regimes and organizations to obtain pertinent information on how activities are performed, the effectiveness of resource allocation, structures, programs, services and overall management, and the quality of institutional outcomes. Evaluation

tends to be driven by demands for external accountability whenever external funding is involved (Patton, 1998). Social expectations, norms, values, programs, and regulations which govern the delivery of higher education and the means for its organization and provision are tightly coupled. For these reasons, the process of institutional evaluation is usually orchestrated and controlled by external agencies to maximize credibility and objectivity of the process, and inform decision-making regarding the allocation of resources. As Neave (1998) points out, "Where one has public control over public institutions, there one has evaluation in some form or another" (p. 265). However, local initiatives may be undertaken to support development and planning to deal with perceived problems.

An intrinsic aim of institutional evaluation is to enable management to retrospectively and systematically make judgements of worth and merit regarding what is being evaluated. Institutional evaluation serves both formative and summative managerial purposes (Scriven, 1967; Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Black & Wiliam, 1998), and strategic decision-making is subsequently based on the intended purposes of the process. Formative evaluation involves measuring performance with a view to feeding information back into the development and improvement of the system. Consequently, it is an ongoing process whose outcomes can be used "to ameliorate problems or bypass potential pitfalls" (Wilde & Sockey, 1995, p. 6). With its embedded goal of feed-back, formative evaluation has a learning dimension to it, and serves the purpose of improving the process of intervention or the overall organization system operation.

Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is a process that allows management to measure performance for the purpose of assessing whether an intervention, treatment or experiment worked, and serves the purpose of rendering an overall judgment on the performance and effectiveness of a program, unit, or organization. Because summative evaluations are end-point procedures, they may be used by decision makers to make choices among alternative or competing programs and interventions, to implement strategic change and reallocate resources, or to decide on the specific form or terms whereby what is being evaluated may continue to exist. Thus, as indicated by McDavid and Hawthorn (2006) summative evaluations "typically raise questions about the ...

future" (p. 375), and may serve an accountability function (Wilde & Sockey, 1995). For this reason the possibility exists for the relay of only positive and highly selective information to evaluators to increase the likelihood of satisfactory evaluation. Saksvik, Nytrø, Dahl-Jørgensen, & Mikkelsen (2002) suggest that the outcomes of summative evaluation may also be used for the purpose of generalizing to other situations.

Evaluation: Stakes, Interests, Political and Strategic Implications

The process of evaluating worth or merit to make decisions regarding effectiveness, while based on *evidence*, can become a highly subjective activity. Institutional evaluation is not a technical, neutral activity. Rather, it carries much weight because of the significance of what is at stake for the various individuals, interest groups, and constituencies both inside and outside the organization (Bates, 1988; Hodson &.Thomas, 2001). Heck, Johnsrud & Rosser (2000) observe that evaluation has been "rooted in politics" especially since the coming of "reform-related public educational policies" (p. 664) in the 1980. There are obvious political implications to the process since transparency is required, and administrators must face up to their responsibilities and expose multiple aspects of organizational life and activity to detailed scrutiny. Politics are also implicated in issues such as: how the decisions to conduct the evaluation is made, why it should be done, by whom it is to be conducted, with what purposes, with what focus, standards and scope, who will use the findings, and whose interests are involved in the possible outcomes (Bates, 1988; Hech et al., 2000).

The political underpinnings of evaluation are well exposited by Sanderson (2003) in the assertion that:

> Evaluation is, by nature, part of a policy process conditioned by interests located in social and political processes operating in particular organizational contexts. Thus, as an exercise in 'practical-moral reasoning', evaluation takes place within an institutional framework, which differs in significant ways from that which is applicable to the pursuit of 'pure' social scientific knowledge (p. 342).

Neave's (1998) position is that evaluation by legally prescribed instruments "has been the very essence of what might be called the 'historic mode' in which administrative verification and control [take] place" (p. 266).

Bates' (1988) argument that evaluation is situated in a cultural as well as an institutional context, is shaped by the values of these contexts, and also transmits value through evaluative preferences or criteria and through the judgments made about the items being evaluated, is well taken. From a discursive perspective, language is the carrier of cues to the values that infuses evaluation, and the interests represented therein and in control of the process (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Discourse enhances the management of social relations, process and events (Smith, 1984). The presumption of managing social relations is implicit in institutional evaluation within higher education, and consequently, the process is undergirded with power.

In the words of Henkel (1998), there is a "relationship between values, theories of knowledge and power in evaluation" (p. 285). Since evaluation is a value-laden, ideological construct, it stands to reason that evaluative criteria cannot be divorced from the goals, values, standards, preferences, and power base of those making the hard choices (Van de Ven, 1980; Nord, 1983; Legge, 1984; Harrison & Shirom, 1998). Evaluative criteria derive from an ideological context which shapes the activity of evaluation and the judgments that steer the evaluation process, and are designed to give information to policy makers on specific aspects of the organization (Hodson & Thomas, 2001). Bates (1988) also draws attention to the fact that values become institutionalized and are taken for granted and serve to define appropriate behavior. From a discursive point of view, values are encoded in language, rendering them stable, communicable and durable (Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000).

The growing centrality of evaluation to organizational culture and decision making has been underscored by Patton's (1998) vision which includes focusing on the effectiveness of entire organizations, shifting from episodic to ongoing evaluation, and viewing evaluation as organizational learning about meaningful, ongoing improving.

From the perspective of the *new public management*, institutional evaluation has specific organizational/ strategic implications based on the many functions it serves,

including the demonstration of achievement, and the provision of information for strategic decision making, managerial planning and policy formulation (Lawler, Nadler and Cammann, 1980; Carnal, 1982; Wholey, Abramson & Bellavita, 1986; Barbarie, 1986; Baguley, 1994; Hale, 1998). These functions are inextricably linked to the goal of improving performance, the assessment of the need for change, the determination of the viability of particular forms of change, and the stimulation of change (Breakwell and Millward, 1995). However, Barbarie (1986) suggests that the capacity to demonstrate the validity of policy goals and the like goes to the heart of examining issues of legitimacy and relevance of activities within organizations, and of the reallocation of human and financial resources.

An elegant summary of the key functions of institutional evaluation is provided by Tesoro, (2000, pp. 7-9), who posits that the association between institutional evaluation and the management leadership-function hinges on the capacity of the former to:

1. *Gauge success in achieving goals* – management is in need of appropriate measures that can provide data on the health and efficiency of an organization and data which can be used to develop remedial strategies.

2. *Provide recommendation for organizational change* – this involves measuring actual achievement against established operating goals and strategies and re-examining them in light of the result. Organizational evaluation thus contributes to guiding organizational change and development, providing factual data to make more informed day-to-day decisions in running an organization.

3. *Give feedback to management* – the intrinsic value of this function is most apparent when business decisions have to be made in a hurry. When management information systems exist for communicating performance feedback, managers can make business decisions quickly and more objectively, take corrective action in a timely fashion, and enhance satisfaction.

4. *Assess internal inputs and outcomes* – organizational evaluation enables management to get an objective view of the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization as a system, i.e. how the component parts are relating to each other (Tesoro, 2000, pp. 7-9).

These key ideas stand beside Baguley's (1994) claim that institutional evaluation has utility to internal decision makers through its contribution to performance improvement, the decision-making process involved in choosing between alternative courses of action, the empowerment of organizational members (see Fetterman, Kaftarian & Wandersman, 1996; Fetterman, 2001), and the provision of opportunities for personal and organizational growth, development and change. From a very practical point of view, decision makers implement change to translate the knowledge of organizational functioning provided by evaluation data into strategies to improve performance and effectiveness. These strategies may include a shift in focus, a modification of goals, a restructuring of roles and responsibilities, different patterns of resource-allocation, the development of new forms of organizational configuration or the introduction of new technologies (Druckman, Singer, & Van Cott, 1997).

Evaluation, Management, and Governmentality

Corporate Management and the Politics of Institutional Evaluation

Henkel's (1998) analysis of the growth movement and dominance of evaluation within higher education underscores government's imperative to (a) manage all resources as efficiently as possible, including higher education resources; (b) incorporate higher education more fully into the polity as a key instrument for national economic prosperity; (c) apply the management-based paradigm of quality to higher education; and (d) require higher education to demonstrate its value on a widely diversified set of criteria within the framework of an emerging public theory of evaluation as an instrument of accountability, and in some cases, resource allocation.

Henkel's position that institutional evaluation has become a political instrument for control and improvement as part of a rational, bureaucratic policy approach to social restructuring and management based on political priorities, reinforces Barnett's (1992) contention that, "With greater expectations being on it, higher education is being obliged to examine itself or be examined by others. 'Permeability', 'responsiveness', and 'accountability' are just some key words of the age" (p. 216). Ball (1997) has summarized the thrust of these policy priorities in this manner: "The key points of

linkage between the restructuring and revaluing (or ethical retooling) of the public sector are the discourses of excellence, effectiveness and quality and the logics and culture of new managerialism in which they are embedded" (p. 259). Such links have become necessary because of the government's preoccupation with accountability and effective performance (Ball, 2000), and the increasing orientation of quality assurance to concerns about maintaining standards as part of the global transition toward mass higher education (Vidovich , 2002).

The corporate enterprise model of quality assurance currently operating through the agency of institutional evaluation and accreditation regulates the operations of higher education. Neyland and Woolgar (2002), drawing on the work of Power, Rose and Strathern contend that acceptance of the corporate enterprise model for higher education and participation within the project of rationalization helps to foster an audit culture. In this regard, access to, openness, and arranged production of information, responsibility, accountability, and managed outcomes have become routine and institutionalized within a framework of the machinery of governmentality or "the complex assemblage of diverse forces... techniques... devices that promise to regulate decisions and actions of individuals, groups and organizations in relation to authoritative criteria" (Rose, qtd. by Neyland & Woolgar, 2002, p. 261).

The growth of quality management systems within the sphere of higher education as part of the machinery of "governmentality" (Foucault, 1991; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2002) has been addressed within the debates generated by higher education reforms in westernized countries in the past two decades. For example, Barrow (1999) explains that "in Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality, power is an everyday action with the practices of institutions and the application of a range of expert knowledge leading to the structuring of the possible fields of actions by others, enabling some actions and precluding others" (p. 31). Barrow emphasizes that in the system of governmentality "individuals are subject to the normative gaze of others, constraining their actions and behaviours in a range of activities related to their daily activities as academics in tertiary institutions" (p. 32). However, it must be pointed out that governmentality works through "active consent and subjugation of subjects [owing to] reflexive self-control, a situation

in which external sources of surveillance becomes unnecessary" (Clegg, Pitsis, Rura-Polley, & Marosszeky, 2002, p. 318). In effect, "the personal projects and ambitions of individual actors become enmeshed with, and form alliances with, those of organization authorities and dominant organizations" (Clegg et al., p. 318).

The debates alluded to have centralized around the redefinition of the purposes, functions, and governance of higher education, and the redefinition of the function of the state in relation to higher education (Bleiklie, 1998; Harman, 1998; Salter & Tapper, 2000). Barnett (1992) poignantly asserts that the long era of "privileges, rights ... social independence and social esteem" which universities enjoyed is over. His position is that no longer does the activity of higher education carry "its own social legitimacy", nor is this activity "seen by the host society as being self-justifying" (pp. 215-216). Trow (1996) attributes this emerging phenomenon in part to government's denial of higher education's claim to trust.

Higher Education and the New Public Management

Neave (1998) has coined the term "evaluative state" to describe the new public management process of restructuring and revaluing higher education. The rise of the evaluative state represents a shift toward national priorities and more intensive intervention in the realm of its "institutional and human resources" (p. 267). As conceptualized, the evaluative state comprises the overwhelmingly complex, penetrating, and inescapable:

> technical dimension of institutional systems of management, their repercussions upon academic productivity ... in the area of power, influence and status... instruments of a new surveillance [that] dwell obsessively upon the best levers to induce academia to fulfil [specific] objectives, goals and targets [through] a veritable orgy of procedures, audits [and] instruments of administrative intelligence ...(Neave, 1998, p. 266).

The new public management has transformed evaluation from what has been described as the "'routine verification and maintenance mode'" to a more intensive and strategic "'exploratory mode'" (Neave, 1998, p. 267). Neave suggests that the former mode was deemed adequate for administrative accountability until the higher education system was called upon to be a prime "instrument of social and economic mobilization,

irrespective of whether ... driven by social demand or forwarded by public authorities ..." (p. 269). Consequently, the evaluative state represents an ideological and paradigm shift in policy from "a tradition of state monitoring and control of inputs ... to state monitoring and attempts to control outputs ... and the centrality of performance measurement" (Dill, 1998, p. 371). Gumport (2000) contends that the corporate enterprise model is tied to institutional imperatives of quality, efficiency, and support of national economic strategies.

Bleiklie (1998) suggests that the rationalization underpinning the evaluative state serves to promote the corporate enterprise's form of governance and organization as the normative ideal for the university, and for all public-sector agencies and organizations in general. The factors driving this rationalization include the growth of the knowledge based economy, the enormity of student growth and mass higher education, financial constraints, the assessment and rationalization of research needs, concerns about academic standards, the quality of teaching, the levels of achievement of graduates, graduate employment, and the ensuing tasks involved in solving the problems related to these events and to issues of institutional efficiency, quality and accountability (Bleiklie, 1998; Harman, 1998; Trinczek & West, 1999). Hodson and Thomas (2001) add the diversification of student profiles to this list since more part-time students and those with non-traditional entry qualifications are seeking access to higher education.

Neave (1998) argues that the evaluative state emerged from two discourses: one being a discourse of political modernization "in which the university mirrored the broader democratic issues of political renewal in society at large", and the other "economic and technical ... in which the university was conceived as one element in a global strategy of social engineering" (p. 272). This argument evokes greater reflection upon the prevailing discourses regarding social expectations of higher education.

Bleiklie (1998) subsumes the social expectations in question under three different substantive discourses: (1) the university as a cultural institution with a degree of autonomy and professional freedom to guarantee culture-supporting, scholarly and scientific work, and satisfactory levels of academic competence and quality; (2) the university as a public agency, implementing state policies in an integrated and standardized way, and making knowledge available to higher political administrative

units, society in general, and preparing students for learned professions; (3) the university as a corporate enterprise producing educational and research services within a framework of competent and efficient governance, and of effective performance in relation to deliberately formulated policy goals (pp. 304-308).

These discourses arise from different ideological interpretations of the broad mission discharged by the university, and influence public policy very differently. Bleiklie (1998) claims that the more utilitarian and rationalist models, namely, the public agency, and, particularly, the corporate enterprise model, have gradually superimposed themselves upon the more idealist, cultural institution model, and that the corporate enterprise model has become the organizational ideal and bedrock of the *evaluative state*. Consequently, in keeping with the ideals of the evaluative state, public policy approaches are directed increasingly to achieving greater efficiency by focusing on performance in relation to deliberately formulated policy goals, the use of performance indicators to measure quality, standardized and controllable treatment of teaching and research, performance control, incentives, sanctions, and self-regulation and evaluation as core organizational activities (pp. 306-307).

In effect, in contrast to "academic cloisterism" which Harvey (1995c) describes as "inward looking, individualistic, self-serving and self-regulating," (p. 35), a "new collegialism" has been promoted through public policy. This emerging policy is described by Harvey as:

> Outward looking and responsive; emphasizes continuous improvement; professional accountability; encourages team-working; focused on the total student experience; views students as participants in the process of learning rather than as a customer or as an end-product; and focuses on the outcomes of higher education as well as the process (p. 35).

Quality Management and Accreditation

Evidently, the "new collegialism' described by Harvey is part of the broader quality policy movement that has become "an important steering mechanism in higher education systems worldwide" (Van Damme, 2000, p. 7), and an instrument in setting the parameters for educational responses to the demands for quality. The global proliferation

of assurance agencies, councils, committees, regulatory boards, regional accreditation bodies and the like indicate that higher education has become subject to some form of quality management policy. Barrow (1999, p 31) notes that "Where quality is difficult to define, or even controversial as is the case with education, a quality management system can provide the basis for a systematic, seemingly dispassionate and 'scientific' audit of an institution's performance."

The management of a social institution like higher education involves measurement of performance and the use of models for generating, at a theoretical level, insights about organizational phenomena and their effective functioning. In fact, the quality assurance movement fuelled by managerism in higher education derives from the mantra of organizational effectiveness. The theory and practice of organizational effectiveness has furnished a body of useful concepts that have been integrated into the discourse of quality assurance in higher education. Such discourses focus upon getting activities completed, achieving goals and service targets, meeting organizational standards, having trustworthy quality control mechanisms in operation, and maintaining organizational relevance. Since effectiveness is critical to the long term development and survival of an organization, it is an important challenge to management's performance.

Traditionally, the criteria of effectiveness found within the general discourse on organizational effectiveness have tended to be goal-based (Campbell, 1977; Carnal, 1982; Zammuto, 1982), and heavily influenced by the interests implicit in satisfying the goal preferences and expectations of the most powerful constituencies internal as well as external to the organization (Pennings & Goodman, 1977; Connolly, Conlon, & Deutch, 1980; Pfeffer, 1982; Scholl, 1981; Seashore, 1983). Within higher education, these criteria tend to be associated with methods to attain specific standards of quality in keeping with meeting various social objectives, and building trust within stakeholders about the quality of governance and operations at the level of the organization.

Welsh and Metcalf (2003a) suggest that the management procedures which underpin what is regard as 'quality assurance', 'quality enhancement' and 'institutional effectiveness' (p. 34) tend to "encompass activities such as student outcomes learning assessment, academic program review, strategic planning, performance scorecards,

performance benchmarking, and quality measurement" (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003b, p. 184). Harman (1998) argues that by implementing systematic management procedures to bring about 'specified quality or improvements in quality and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of quality and the outcomes achieved", quality assurance systems enable government 'to secure important levers to help achieve a variety of policy objectives" (p. 331).

Two very closely related management technologies, namely, institutional evaluation and accreditation, are used to scrutinize higher education organizations and assess their quality. According to Rhoades and Sporn (2002), the private sector in the United States, and to a lesser extent state governments, influenced the development of quality assurance in higher education through mimetic and coercive processes. Quoting the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education in the U.S., Bullough, Clarke and Patterson (2003) state that "The aim of accreditation, as a form of accountability, is to provide 'assurance to the public that the graduates of accredited institutions have acquired the knowledge, skills and disposition necessary to help all students learn" (pp. 35-36).

Accreditation, with a history of over 100 years (Eaton, 2003), has deep roots in the United States. It may be regarded as "a status granted to an educational institution or a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality" (CIHE - Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, 2004, p.1). Accreditation seeks to certify to the general public that an effective institution is one that has appropriate purposes, has the resources needed to accomplish its purposes, can demonstrate that it is accomplishing its purposes, and gives reason to believe that it will continue to accomplish its purposes (CIHE, 2004, p. 2).

To Hartley and Virkus (2003, p. 32), "Accreditation is a process of recognizing education institutions or programs for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public". Since the assessment of educational quality is at the heart of the accreditation process (Baker, 2002), accreditation is "a means of self-regulation through quality assurance and improvement ... intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher

education, making it worthy of public confidence and minimizing the scope or exercise of external control" (Bober, 2004, p. 50).

Institutional self-evaluation is a fundamental component of the accreditation process. It is part of a larger political process whereby policy-makers, through the "social technology" (Schwandt, 1997; Nelson & Sampat, 1999) of external quality monitoring force organizations to justify themselves, thereby exercising authority within their institutional fields. Various forms of educational quality assurance frameworks exist to measure performance for accreditation purposes in higher education. In the United States, for example, state accountability systems form an integral part of government's technical apparatus for evaluating publicly funded higher education institutions (Zumeta, 1998; Walleri, 1997; Harbour, 2002). These systems are specifically designed "to provide an empirical accounting of institutional performance for three purposes: to motivate internal improvement, to encourage institutions to address state goals, and to deregulate higher education by strengthening consumer information about institutional performance" (Wellman (2001, p. 47). Harbour (2003) notes that state accountability policy requires "uniform assessment of performance on system-wide measures and standards" (p. 299).

McLendon, Heller, and Young (2005) stress that performance funding, performance budgeting, and undergraduate assessment policies now constitute what may be regarded as "state-level ... post-secondary accountability innovation" (pp. 365-366). They also contend that state policy of tying funding to demonstrated outcomes at the level of the organization has enabled performance funding and performance budgeting to become a means to greater public accountability within public colleges and universities.

Increased conditionality of government support for universities is part of the accountability systems that universities in Canada face. Three factors may be listed: (1) the provision of institutional strategic plans that are publicly accessible, (2) the assessment of performance against government approved indicators, and (3) comprehensive and explicit expectations of managing research in the public interest and with public scrutiny of means and results (Gauthier 2004, p. 101).

Accreditation review systems in the U.S. operate on the same principles as state accountability systems, but differ from the latter in that the report card on institutional

performance is a private report devoid of comparisons to other institutions in the field. In the United Sates, accreditation status is the seal of quality in higher education (Bogue, 1998), as well as "a lightning rod for any public disaffection with higher education" (Wergin, 2005, p. 35). Recognized associations, both regional/institutional and specialized/professional, grant accreditation on the basis of evaluations of institutions and programs. Thus, the regulatory powers of regional and specialized accreditation bodies do not derive from the state, but are conferred by the institutions being evaluated. Institutional or program *review* is another quality assurance mechanism. However, this type of mechanism is internally generated and responds to the call for periodic monitoring (Harvey, 2002).

Welsh and Metrcalf (2003b) assert that institutional accreditation agencies in the U.S. have been a bridge between higher educational institutions and the policy making community, thereby helping to "institutionalize and operationalize the 'new accountability' in higher education through accreditation criteria and review processes that require institutions to collect, format, report and use information to improve the quality of their programmes and services" (p. 184). Eaton also (2001) raises the very pertinent issue that accreditation is answerable to three major constituencies, students, the higher educational community, and government. Eaton stresses three points in particular:

1. Students are regarded as a major constituency because a college education is currently the major pathway to social and economic advancement, and given its burgeoning costs, accreditation is called upon to guarantee its value. In the interest of maintaining this trust, Eaton views the imposition of quality monitoring upon the expanding international transfer of students and the emerging new educational providers such as those in the on-line and virtual educational business as a necessity.

2. From a very practical standpoint accreditation has fostered reciprocal trust among institutions, and facilitated credit transfers and admission to graduate programs. Eaton also submits that elements of the higher educational community regard accreditation as a means of legitimating practices they would like to implement.

3. Government is a major constituent of the process since it depends upon the value judgments of accreditation to inform their policy decisions regarding certain forms of funding and other aspects of higher education.

In a penetrating analysis of accreditation reform in the United States, Eaton (2001) directs attention to the growing use of accreditation to effect strategic improvement primarily in the area of student learning outcomes. Wergin (2005) contends that the now nearly universal focus on student learning is indeed central to the assessment of academic quality by accreditation bodies in the United States:

> These new standards constitute nothing less than a massive revolution in the way the quality of academic institutions and their programs should be judged. Whereas "quality" was once defined in terms of inputs and resources–what the institution has–it's now defined in terms of processes and outcomes–what the institution does with what it has (p. 36).

CHEA, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation appears to fully endorse the policy of making student learning-outcomes the central element in the determination of effectiveness and quality. In its Statement of Mutual Responsibilities for Student Learning Outcomes: Accreditation, Institutions, and Programs CHEA (2003) has enunciated what institutions and their accrediting bodies should expect from each other. Accordingly, accreditation bodies should expect institutions and programs to routinely define, collect, interpret, and use evidence of student learning outcomes, and establish clear standards of student learning outcomes, and statements for collecting, interpreting, and using evidence of student achievement. Accrediting organizations should be responsible for using evidence of student learning outcomes in making judgments about academic quality and accredited status. However, institutions and programs share joint responsibility with accrediting organizations for providing clear and credible information to constituents about what students learn.

In the past two to three decades, quality assurance systems have gradually implanted themselves within European states and other Western democracies as well. Rhoades and Sporn (2002) suggest that policy borrowing and normative isomorphism are at the heart of the transfer of quality assurance from the US to Europe. Commenting on the European experience, Laughton (2003) observes that the evolution of quality management systems has taken place within a discourse "concerning the role and nature of higher education and associated government policy ... has focused upon the implications of changing social conditions for HE, and has been contextualized within a

growing recognition of emergent globalization and its effects on key institutions in society" (p. 310). Undoubtedly, the political landscape of higher education in Britain changed dramatically with the publication of the 1991 White Paper, Higher Education: a New Framework, which focused predominantly on the assurance of the quality of educational provision for students. Salter and Tapper (2000, p. 75) assert that the dominant critical policy orientations within this evaluative framework are:

(a) quality control – 'mechanisms within institutions for maintaining and enhancing the quality of their provision';

(b) quality audit – 'external scrutiny aimed at providing guarantees that institutions have suitable quality control mechanisms in place';

(c) quality assessment – 'external review of, and judgments about, the quality of teaching and learning in institutions;'

(d) provision of information for Funding Councils whose decisions would be informed by assessment of quality through performance indicators, and 'through external judgments on the basis of direct observation of what is provided'.

The major external validator of quality within the United Kingdom is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The QAA was established in 1997 as an independent body funded by subscriptions from UK universities and colleges of higher education, and through contracts with the main UK higher education funding bodies. This agency purports to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. These goals are achieved by working with higher education institutions to define academic standards and quality. The QAA carries out both institutional and subject reviews, and publishes its reviews against these standards.

Interest in the convergence of quality assurance and accreditation systems has been increasing within Europe since the signing of the Bologna Declaration in June 1999 (Eaton, 2005), which has committed European governments to the creation of the European Higher Education Area by 2010. One of the fundamental goals to which European states commit themselves is the promotion of cooperation in quality assurance by working toward the development of a European dimension in quality assurance, with

comparable criteria and methods. The Prague Communiqué calls for the implementation of policies to evaluate quality in each country to secure the mutual trust which is indispensable to the validation of studies provided in another country.

The evolving institutional evaluation model in Europe reflect strong US influences in the form of "self-evaluation, external quality review teams, new assessment methods and performance indicators for government policy makers and institutional managers" (Rhoades and Sporn, 2002, p. 373). Compared to the U.S., higher education systems in Europe are relatively late comers to quality assurance, and the prevailing reaction among academics on this emerging state policy tends to be more critical than the reaction among academics in the United States regarding accreditation (Salter & Tapper, 2000; Newton, 2002). Typically, quality assurance is viewed as part of "an emergent form of regulation apparently capable of combining the main tenets of the economic ideology of education with a comprehensive bureaucracy of state control" (Salter & Tapper, 2000, p.79). This implies an administrative or managed model of quality, whereby "principles, rules, expectations and conditions which underpin the regulatory framework" (p. 81) are determined predominantly by an external agency to the detriment of the service provider.

Despite the commitment of European states to convergence of higher education systems, progress toward convergence in the field of quality assurance and accreditation is slow. Van Damme (2002) attributes the lack of substantial progress to a highly diversified system of quality assurance agencies, "strong national sensitivities and a general denunciation of a uniform European approach ... [and] an underlying disagreement on the question whether accreditation is an appropriate or desirable system" (p. 12).

There is no Canada-wide formal, national system of accreditation for post-secondary education. As in Europe, highly complex, fragmented arrays of quality assurance mechanisms exist. How quality is assured at both the institutional and program levels is a result of the historical and divergent evolution of autonomous provincial systems. In Canada, postsecondary education is the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments, and in each province and territory there are laws, policies, and procedures that govern the operation of postsecondary institutions. Each jurisdiction has

its own quality assurance mechanisms that are used in combination to ensure quality in the country's wide range of postsecondary institutions.

The use of legislation is the primary mechanism adopted to establish, govern, recognize, and ensure quality assurance in higher education provision (CICIC, 2004). To be more precise, CICIC states that:

(a) programs and their standards may be established by government or require government approval;

(b) government may be given the authority to investigate or take over any aspect of institutional operations;

(c) legislation may require the establishment of committees or boards to assist in the setting of program standards or accountability procedures. For example, in Québec, program quality control is performed via the Conférence des Recteures et principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ), a voluntary university coordinating body.

In addition, mechanisms for quality assurance include principally policies respecting credit transfer and program equivalences, external and internal review, and accreditation of professional programs.

External review procedures are neither standardized nor universal across Canada. Where they exist, they usually follow the model of self-evaluation followed by visits conducted by external committees of quality assessors, usually composed of academic peers from outside institutions or representatives from relevant professions or industry. This process is illustrated in Ontario where many public universities undergo accreditation at the program level by various international program accreditation agencies. Most universities conduct cyclical academic reviews of each department and program based on institutional policies and procedures for the assessment of quality. The results of both external review and cyclical internal reviews are often provided to government and may be considered in determining eligibility for direct (e.g., grants) or indirect (e.g., government-based student loan revenues) public funding.

At the provincial/territorial and national levels, Canadian professional regulatory bodies (for example, in the fields of nursing, architecture, and engineering) participate in the establishment and review of postsecondary curriculum standards and consult on other

professional issues governing students' preparations for entry into professions. This type of review leads to professional accreditation of specific programs. Unlike the European policy orientation, no initiatives are underway to create more coordinated, compatible, systematic mechanism for ensuring postsecondary program quality, or national and provincial accreditation agencies.

Controversies Surrounding Quality in Higher Education

In the quality assurance literature, the focus of quality assurance and institutional evaluation is on quality and standards. Standards refer to authoritatively established benchmarks for measurement, or to levels of satisfaction, competence or excellence based on specific criteria or stated institutional mission. The construct quality, on the other hand, connotes meanings such as: exceptional or excellence, perfection or consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money, transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993; Harvey, 1995a; 1995b), customer satisfaction, and management commitment (Newton, 2002). These varied interpretations clearly indicate that quality is a dynamic, multifaceted, contested concept that embodies different and competing perspectives and discourses (Newton, 2002; Hernon, 2002), and are amenable and adaptable to particular organizational contexts (see Deming, 1986; 1994; Juran & Gryna, 1988; ISO, 1994).

Interpretations of quality within educational circles derive from the cult of efficiency and managerialism. The literature reinforces the observation that "quality has become a powerful metaphor for new forms of managerial control" (Codd, 1999, p. 47). For example, Thune and Welle-Strand (2002) claim that "Quality is a rhetorical construct, meaning to hide more potentially controversial issues, such as efficiency and accountability" (p. 82). These controversies are well reflected by the definition of quality assurance as "an uncomfortable mixture of attention to accountability and improvement, innovation and change, assurance and control" (Woodhouse, qtd. in Olmesdahl, 1999, p. 1). In effect, the quality discourse is fraught with unresolved tensions between what may be regarded as "the dual purposes of control and improvement and learning" (Houston & Foote, 2001, p. 405).

The contemporary preoccupation with quality may be linked to the total quality management (TQM) paradigm, and the many variants it has spawned. Total quality management represents a systematic approach to the continuous improvement of a product, service or organization. Rinehart (1997) suggests that "The basic tenet is that no product, no service, no system, and no organization is so perfect that it cannot be improved in some way, and only by continuously improving the things for which we are responsible can we better our chances of success" (p. 8). Another key principle is the recognition that quality itself exists in the experience of the user of the product or service.

In effect, TQM posits that quality is what the user or client says it is, not what the producer or supplier want to believe it is. Taking this perspective on quality, Billing (1998) draws from the literature and suggests that the user/client conceptualization of quality incorporates notions of continuous improvement, adding value, meeting customer expectations, transformation, and delighting the customer. Focusing on libraries, Hernon (2002) states that service quality and satisfaction, the established pillars of effective library services management, is being debated to resolve "disagreement regarding the antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction in meeting customer expectations" (p. 2). The apparent disagreement among researchers is whether satisfaction or service quality is the superordinate construct, and whether they can be treated interchangeably.

The tracking of quality appears to be a means to ensure that "a university's internal processes for quality assurance, assessment, and improvement are focused and evidence-based" (Scott & Hawke, 2003, p. 328). However, the application of TQM to higher education is unlikely to prove successful except under conditions of identifying students as the primary clients of education, and recognizing the central importance of service provision to the organization and to students as well as the necessity of understanding that quality is in the management and delivery process (Dill, 1995; Whittaker, 1993; Rinehart, 1997). Thus, Donald and Denison (2001) deem it highly appropriate to place greater emphasis on the capacity of the quality assessment process to "meet the needs of the people whom it is intended to benefit and aid the evaluated institution [or organization] to make improvements" (p. 478).

To a major degree, policy developments in several political arenas treat quality in terms of measurable performance on predetermined criteria, and the quality agenda within higher education is being driven by this ideology. It is for this reason that an outcomes-based definition of quality has prevailed within the higher education assessment sphere since the mid 1980s (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003b). The unfortunate implication, as pointed out by Thune and Welle-Strand (2002), and Drakich, Grant, and Stewart (2002), is that narrow conceptions of "performativity" as an input-output function have elevated the use of performance indicators, where measures on certain criteria are taken as signs as productivity and efficiency in higher education.

Arguments in favor of performance indicators are based on: (1) their ability to express the achievement of the organization's goals in a convenient measure; (2) their convenience in objectifying academic benchmarks to industry, society and university managers; (3) their capacity to serve as tools by government for enhancing the transparency of their policy implementation; (4) their potential to stimulate increased effectiveness by being linked to the allocation of funding (Yonezawa & Kaiser, 2003). In fact, there is a growing policy orientation toward the implementation of performance-based funding formulas for accountability purposes by tightly coupling outcomes to funding and budget allocation. Linking funding to performance is a growing feature within the public management of universities in the various Canadian provinces. In Québec, for example, universities must negotiate and sign performance contracts with government. Such contracts establish a number of indicators against which improvements in the university's performance is measured. Fulfillment of the performance contract becomes a precondition to any future increase in the university's operating funding (MEQ, 2000).

As stated by McLendon, Heller & Young (2005, p. 366), "Performance funding policies directly link state dollars to campus performance on individual indicators. Performance budgeting policies are designed to allow budget allocators to consider reports on performance indicators as a factor in the allocation process". Barnetson (1999) argues that Alberta's performance-based funding mechanism (PBFM) "clearly assesses

quality from a value for money perspective resulting in the exclusion of input and process indicators in favor of output and outcome measures" (p. 42).

One very incisive comment on the trend toward the acceptance of performance indicators is that "Performance indicators open up the routine evaluation of academic activities to other than academic considerations, and they make it possible to replace substantive judgments with formulaic and algorithmic representations" (Polster & Newson, qtd. by Drakich et al. 2002). Yonezawa et al. (2003) contend that there is ample evidence to suggest that the imposition of performance indicators has led to "meaningless institutional efforts to increase "scores" rather than real performance" (p. 19). In reviewing practices in Alberta, Canada, Conlon (2004, p. 43) raises four vexing issues regarding key performance indicators (KPIs): (1) there are set by governments and reflect politically sensitive benchmarks; (2) they raise expectations and demands on higher educational institutions in an environment of reduced public funding; (3) represent a politically motivated attempt to implant a private sector management mentality about efficiency and economy within public colleges and universities; (4) the expense involved in measuring KPIs is not justified given the low public priority attached to these measures.

Arguments exist to the effect that performance indicators have caused organizational quality to suffer, suggesting that professional action and growth are stultified when the energy and resources of higher education are directed toward compliance with outcomes-based formulations of quality in the interest of meeting the criteria of evaluation (Bullough, Clark & Patterson, 2003). Consequently, the public is advised to contest outcomes since they "are expressions of political understanding", and is urged to search instead for outcomes that are grounded in the organization's desires for improvement and "what matters most to individuals in their professional lives and practice" (Bullough et al., 2003, p. 41).

Quality Assurance, Accountability, Resistance, and the Notion of "Good Work"

Accountability is at the heart of quality assurance in higher education. Codd (1999) attributes this feature to the preoccupation if not obsession by contemporary managerialism with the notion of quality. However, Lamertz and Baum (1998), citing Semin and Manstead, assert that "the accountability of conduct" is a means whereby social systems are regulated to produce behaviors corresponding to what is viewed as expected and appropriate for that social situation. In the context of higher education, the general overarching purposes of accountability are regarded as the assurance of well performing institutions, and the promotion of learning in pursuit of continuous improvement. The Auditor General (1998), in the University of PEI Audit Report, defines accountability "as an obligation to answer for a responsibility conferred. It is much more than acting responsibly for the administration of funds, it is providing the necessary information to demonstrate good stewardship" (p. 17). This definition is comprehensive in scope since it marries concepts such as answerability, responsibility, and social contract. It therefore specifies, in Biesta's (2004) words, 'the duty to present auditable accounts of all ... activities" (p. 215).

As previously discussed, the discourse of quality assurance in higher education has been progressively influenced by a number of quality management theories and concepts of service quality drawn from private sector management of organizations. Quality assurance has become an accountability process that is highly affected by the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the effectiveness and efficiency of process management, the quality of pedagogical activities, the outcomes of schooling, and the system's capacity to innovate and improve. A prevailing view is that evaluation is a certification of the "value of the investment in schooling in the form of clear social and economic dividends" (Bullough et al., 2003, p. 36), and that "To call for accountability is to assert a political right to demand that a particular individual or institution assume some responsibility and demonstrate it in a certain form" (Fey & Smith, qtd. by Bullough et al., 2003, p. 36).

Patton (1998) holds that "the highest form of accountability is self-accountability, which entails an internal process of seriously, honestly and collaboratively addressing the question of how well is the organization doing to attain its mission" (p. xiii). Likewise, Wellman (2001) is a strong supporter of the case made by advocates of evaluation and accountability for "preserving the compact between higher education and society" (p. 48) on the basis that:

> higher education must improve its capacity to demonstrate how it serves societal expectations; higher education serves broad societal purposes, it is heavily subsidized with public funds...and it is increasingly the gateway to social opportunity and economic productivity in the larger society. The academy cannot survive if it is perceived as serving institutional (i.e. organizational) rather than social purposes (p. 48).

Wellman argues that faced with ever increasing demand for higher education paralleled by relatively stable or even diminishing state resources, "there is a need for public clarity about institutional performance in teaching and learning" (p. 52).

A discourse of accountability permeates higher education at the international level. In British Columbia, for example, SCOEA (2003), the Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability suggests that post-secondary education is being required to demonstrate public accountability because of an environment created by:

1. the activity of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which has established a series of international quality standards dealing with quality management and quality assurance;

2. the increased visibility and activity of the office of the Auditor General of Canada;

3. the development of comprehensive auditing processes by the accounting profession;

4. the development of the Twelve Attributes of Effectiveness in the mid-1980s by the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation (see Appendix D, p. 331).

Several academics have criticized the emphasis on outcomes and accountability. For example, Newton's (2002) British study of the way academics respond to *quality* suggests that academics regard quality assurance measures as being accountability driven

as opposed to being motivated by improvement. Newton contends that quality is regarded by most in the U.K. academic community as: 'bureaucracy', 'burden' and 'accountability'; 'a cumbersome quality assessment methodology'; 'alien to core values of academic culture'; 'creeping and encroaching managerialism'; 'a constraint against academic autonomy' (p. 45). To Dill, Massey, William, and Cook (1996), current evaluation policies in higher education lead to a reduction of social capital. Eaton (2001) argues that quality assurance is intrusive, costly and ineffective, and that external accountability, not internal improvement appears to be the primary motivation for the implementation of institutional effectiveness activities (p. 36). In like vein Tapper and Salter (2002) categorize quality assurance as "a political weapon" (p. 249). Bullough et al. (2003) bring a balanced perspective to the discussion:

> Outcomes are expressions of political understandings and as such must be publicly contested. The irony is that the shift toward outcome measures, with outcomes taken as given, without recognition that improvement of progress and persons comes only when outcomes (aims) are grounded in the desires of a specific group of people bound together in a common cause is likely to produce only the appearance of compliance without its substance (p. 41).

Harvey's (2002) sums up much of this frustration in the terse statement that "external quality monitoring is primarily to ensure accountability and conformity. Improvement is an 'add-on' that is presumed to result from compliance with the method" (p. 260). However, Olmesdahl (1999) has made one of the most controversial comments within this discourse by asserting that while quality assurance by any name and procedure are necessary and valid "processes in institutional management, growth and wellbeing ... We fool ourselves, ... if we believe they directly affect the learner" (p. 422). This comment begs the question what is the procedure of quality assurance necessary and valid for?

Despite the arguable merits of some aspects of these viewpoints (see Gumport, 2000), such criticisms are fundamentally part of the discourse of resistance. Because quality assurance and external evaluation demand accountability, they tend to bring to the fore the uncomfortable task of soul searching about quality in education. This phenomenon may help to explain the use by some organizational actors and university

academics of misgivings about the true motivation of government as a basis for defending the status quo.

An incisive reflection on the discourse of resistance is that:

> Academics defended their status and positions through reference to the undesirable elements and outcomes of the teaching quality assessment methodology. They were engaged in a power game, where they attempted to reject the view of the academic world as constructed by the language and ideology of quality management, given that this was threatening to undermine their privileged position through a new form of regulation (Clark & Moreland, qtd by Laughton, 2003, p. 317).

This power-game poignantly illustrates a crucial aspect of the relationship between institutions (in the neo-institutional sense) and individual/organizational behavior, namely, the outcome of the asymmetries of power associated with the operation of, and substantive change within institutions, whereby there are always winners and losers (Hall & Taylor, 1996).

This study adopts the position advocated by Lingenfelter's (2003), and Berg, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura (2003) because it acknowledges that the deeper purpose of educational accountability is to improve performance and enhance quality. Hence, "thinking about educational accountability requires serious attention to the substance of performance" (Lingenfelter, p. 2), and good personal and professional practice. The imperative to pay attention to the *substance of performance* is encapsulated in the notion of "good work", an ethical concept which depends "on the criteria for and standards of excellence that the domain imparts to its members ..." [and] "on the intended impact of the work on those to whom the profession holds itself responsible and how it aims to contribute to a larger good" (Berg et al., 2003, p. 2).

Berg et al. add that enabling good work within higher education requires ethical commitment to mission-defined goals of educational excellence and social relevance "that express[es] the spirit of a community and constitute[s] an implicit contract between the institution and the wider society" (p. 2). They further insist that the project of good work involves other crucial strategies such as:

1. aligning the energies of the multiple internal stakeholders and the current student body;

2. aligning the organization with the major forces within its domain; these forces comprise:

   (a) multiple models of education and the curricula, pedagogies, and knowledge base on which the colleges draw; as well as the standards of educational excellence and means of assessing performance that they adopt;

   (b) accrediting agencies within the social field who judge performance and evaluate the organizational, curricular, pedagogical, and other developments introduced into the domain; alignment exists when the version of higher education that a school embodies possesses legitimacy by the lights of the domain and field;

   (c) external stakeholders – individuals and groups (like alumni, governmental and business sources of funding, prospective students, employees, the local community,) who have an interest in the direction and functioning of the school, present it with needs, expectations, and demands; and confer legitimacy and resources on it; alignment exists when the institution provides what external stakeholders expect, need and value;

   (d) the set of more general social and cultural forces - the economy, politics and demographics – that present constraints on, and opportunities for action, supply social and cultural resources, and advance particular priorities; alignment exists when the school's mission puts it in harmony with what the society and culture deem necessary or valuable.

Berg et al. (2003) are not under the illusion that alignment is easily attained. On the contrary, they see it as an ongoing process based on mobilizing and channeling the energy of the whole organization toward the common goal of substantive performance. Consequently, it is crucial for academics to realize that this is the organizational imperative within higher education if ever there was one, and to concentrate on the attainment of good work. Given this understanding, quality assurance, regardless of its perceived policy aims and its bureaucratic burden and other real or imagined negative implications and baggage, may then also be seen as a major force for certifying acceptable levels of institutional quality and for improving performance.

Linking Institution to Discourse

Pre-university colleges in Québec, like other organizations of higher learning, embody structured forms of human associations working together to combine resources and talents into roles and relationships to achieve an educational mission which derives, first and foremost, from the legal policy domain within which the colleges have been constituted and are externally supervised, and secondly, from the educational missions that the colleges have framed for themselves. These missions are grounded within a particular vision, culture and worldview which specify the objectives pursued at the local level to achieve the institutional goals outlined in public policy.

As indicated in previous discussion, neo-institutional theorists have tended to explain the internal operation, behavior, and dynamics of organizations from a perspective of constraints imposed by forces emanating from the institutional environment in which the organization is embedded. While the neo-institutional approach offers valuable insights into the ways by which organizations and institutions relate to each other, and how organizational activity is framed and legitimated within the institutional context, institutional theory alone cannot fully explain this relationship because it fails to make explicit how rules, norms, and cognitive scripts, interpenetrate organizations and constrain their action.

As Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000) observe, main stream neo-institutional theorists have given little attention to "the way in which the pool of social ideas, instrumental orientations and schemes ... is translated into the specific administrative patterns encountered in particular organizations or population of organizations"(p. 699). They contend that the process of translation involves the use of discourses or "distinctive ways of constructing reality", together with their sustaining sets of "essential operations and techniques" (p. 702). Drawing concepts from several sources within an emerging and critical field of management research, Hasselbladh and Kallinikos develop a conceptual framework "for decomposing the carriers of rationalized patterns, models and techniques ... showing the distinctive ways in which they implicate the building blocks of formal organizing" (p. 697).

In borrowing this framework, the theoretical argument being advanced here is that the process of institutionalization works by its capacity to objectify, stabilize and embed distinctive roles, behaviours, relationships and instrumental schemes related to work and performance within the social contexts of organizations through language, texts and the formal codification of rules of conduct and procedure. The key to this process is discourse, the conveyor of ideals or "valorized ideas that delineate social expectations ... [and] ... thus help to provide a sense of orientation in the complexity of social relations" (Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000, p. 705). Discourse, in a Foucaultian sense (Foucault, 1980), also embodies what may be regarded as "devices of control" which render "various facets of the principal-agent relation ... the target of calculation, reflection, comparison [and] manipulation" (Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000, p. 705).

Through the production of policy documents, ideology and dominant institutional discourses become embedded and codified within texts. Policy texts may be thought of as codified ideology and discourse purposively designed for intervention into organizational practices to bring about a changed relationship within the framework of ongoing "interactive and sustainable practices of some sort ..." (Ball, 1994, p.19). Policy texts embody message, ideology, political action, and political meaning. The political meaning or sense-content of policy is conveyed through discourse, which, to Ball, goes to the heart of "what can be said, and thought, but also ... who can speak, when, where, and with what authority" (p. 21). This theme is trenchantly restated by Kincheloe, Steinberg and Gresson (1996) in their definition of discourse as "a set of tacit rules that regulate linguistic practices such as what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessing of authority and who must listen, and whose educational perspectives are scientific and valid, and whose are unlearned and unimportant – in short, it defines what is thinkable" (p. 30).

Ideology is articulated in discourse and is "a system of interests that creates dispositions and is organized into agendas" (Leonardo, 2003, p. 208). Thus, in a very practical sense, discourses very selectively and systematically elaborate and construct knowledge from ideals: "they single out a domain of application, define the relevant goals to be accomplished and the roles involved, spell out the criteria of truth and designate causal theories and schemes of action and interpretation" (Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000,

p. 705). The power of ideology and discourse as organizing processes within the institutional environment must therefore be recognized in constructing a holistic conceptual approach to the relationship between policy regimes and organizations.

This study builds upon the above insights by holding that the sustaining sets of "essential operations and techniques" are intrinsically mechanisms for enabling and coordinating the integration or translation of institutional elements into the "logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 161) of organizational action. These essential operations are tantamount to the elements that "create the lenses through which actors view the world and the very categories of structure, action and thought" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991a, p. 13). This logic intrinsically encapsulates the view "of a subjective social reality in which expectations are perceived or enacted", and "often incorporated into daily routines" (Wicks, 2001, p. 572).

To develop an integrative conceptual approach to the study of institutional and organizational dynamics aimed at providing a coherent account of the process by which institutions interpenetrate organizations, this study has been further influenced by Biesecker (1997), who sought to conceptualize and to comprehend "the process of integration of the many different plans of ... individual economic actors" (p. 2) as exchange occurs in the market place. Treating the market as a realm of social action, Biesecker elegantly formulates an explanation of the manner whereby the medium for coordinating and integrating the different actions within the market becomes institutionalized. Central to this model is the notion of "cooperative achievement among participants" (Habermas, qtd by Biesecker, 1997, p. 4), which is linked to the theoretical principles of communicative action and rationality (Habermas, 1981; 1984).

While Habermas's theory of communicative action applies to all forms of communication, to Biesecker, communicative action is a process of coordination which involves at least two participants: the policy maker, on the one hand, and the organization, on the other. The former represents the institutional or policy making regimes. The interactive, discursive relationship between the policy maker, as institution, and the organization, is the foundation upon which policy intervention and organizational transformation are built. In an ideal sense, this relationship is visibly and consciously

integrated and coordinated through mechanisms directed toward achieving mutual understanding through communicative action. To Habermas (1984), "communicative action" is synonymous with cooperative achievement of understanding among participants. "In communicative action, participants are not oriented primarily to their own success but to the realization of an agreement which is the condition under which all participants in the interaction may pursue their own plans" (qtd. in Biesecker, 1997, p. 4).

Communicative action reduces cognitive distance, and serves as a focusing devise to align interests for the achievement of joint goals (Nooteboom, 2000). Indeed, following Habermas, it is regarded as the chief guiding principle underlying successful and constructive social coordination. Therefore, Biesecker argues that it is through the process of communicative action that actors discursively interrelate, become more and more familiar with each others motivations and plans, and make sense of each others interests. In other words, the underlying assumption is that "people are willing participants in the search for a common consensus about how they understand their objective and social worlds and how they understand themselves" (CSTE, 2005). Consequently, norms which govern their relationship and their methods of operation are consciously modified to support the *new policy reality*. Biesecker's ultimate position is that the discursive relationship between actors is guided by "communicative rationality", that is, a state of interchange for reaching a mutual understanding in social action.

Conceptually, the conditions for communicative rationality are predicated on ideal speech-acts characterized by the implementation of reasonable goals and rules that are imperative for the preservation of the lifeworld's ... "fundamental characteristic of transmitting knowledge, securing social order, and socializing individuals by way of actions oriented to mutual understanding" (Deflem, 1994, p. 3). Within this rationality framework, participants are supposedly motivated solely by a cooperative search for truth or right, discourse is free of coercion, manipulation and distortion, and conditions of symmetry and reciprocity predominate. In other words, "... this ideal situation serves as the basis of a principle of equality of communicative opportunity" (Solum, 1988/1989, p. 2). Actions can be criticized or defended, methods of operations challenged, values re-examined, and expectations voiced. To Biesecker (p. 4)

"actions...are not simply grounded in knowledge of the object world ... but also in the norms of the society in which the discourse is taking place ... and the values of the partners in the discourse."

The goal of coming to an understanding is to bring an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another. Agreement is based on recognition of the corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness, and rightness (Habermas, cited In Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 178). Deflem (1994, p. 2) describes the validity claims as follows: (a) an objective speech-act is true when it is accepted to refer to a state of affairs in the world; (b) a normative speech-act is right when it fits within a complex of social values and norms; and (c) expressive and evaluative speech-acts are truthful when they are made by sincere communicative actors.

With respect to the first point, it is understood that the participants provide reliable knowledge when specific facts and statements concerning the natural or social world are made. However, while Biesecker (1997) acknowledges that *communicative rationality* "is not imposed as a set of external criteria" (p. 4), this study suggests that from the perspective of the rationality underlying discourse between policy institutions and organizations, its development, nature, and tenor are mediated by the rights and obligations implicit in the asymmetrical distribution of power between principles and agents. In other words, the discourses emanating from policy making agencies draw their strength from normative or legitimate social order, and are intended to sustain this asymmetry, to control meaning, and reinforce the legitimacy of policy ideology (Leonardo, 2003). These particular discursive relationships embody the authority to coerce. Conditions of symmetry and reciprocity may exist in the economic market place, and in any context, are the ideal.

But in the discursive relationship between policy institutions and organizations, the principle of equality of communicative opportunity cannot be sustained. There is no escaping the ideological agenda, regardless of the degree to which friction, tension and manipulation are seemingly absent from the communicative process. As Solum (1989) remarks: "Regulative speech-acts establish interpersonal relationships; regulatives are

deployed in normatively regulated action to reach understandings about the subjective world. The thematic validity claim of regulative speech acts is a claim to rightness" (p. 25). Henkel (1998) suggests that current evaluation practice is suffused with coercive authority and that its rationality is "not rationality of communicative action, with its goal of understanding and reflection, but instrumental rationality, with its goals of interest advancement" (pp. 290-291).

This study contends that a substantive, coherent theory of organizational action must recognize that the relationship between the institution and organization within specified fields is structured by discourse, and that discourse helps to contextualize the experiences of both policy makers and organizational actors. In the ideal world, discourse is the medium for shared meaning and "... represents the fusion of purpose, process, and outcome. It is where interests, engagement, and learning converge" (Garrison & Anderson, qtd. by Littleton & Whitelock, 2004, p. 173). By focusing attention on the model of "communicative action", this study further contends that discourse is the basis of the interpenetration of organizations by institutions (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos, 2000) and the mechanism by which social policies are implemented, and "relations of domination are sustained through modes of *legitimation*" (Leonardo, 2003, p. 205). The metaphor of discourse as communicative action may have given birth to Henkel's (1998) insightful conceptualization of "evaluation as a dialogue between evaluator and key actors to stimulate self-reflection, criticism, and action for improvement among all parties" (p. 289).

In essence, this study's approach to policy discourse models the Faucaultian conceptualization (Faucault, 1980) which is used increasingly by researchers to explicate how pools of social ideas are constructed to represent forms of *reality* and become objectified into social artefacts and administrative patterns such as policy orientations, schemes, frameworks and programs to serve institutional or governmental interests. Within discourse studies, policy, regulation, programs and guidelines constitute texts that are carriers of discourse about the management of, and activities within, public-service organizations. As pointed out by Smith (1984) and O'Neill (1998), it is through the medium of 'text' that such discourse objectifies ideology and is used by the state to

regulate and mediate social organization and relations. These understandings are well expressed by the view of discourse as "particular ways of organizing meaning-making practices [and] as a mode of governance ... delimits fields of relevance and definitions of legitimate perspectives and fixes norms for concept elaboration and the expression of experience (Lewis & Simon, qtd. by Gale, 1999, p. 396).

The discourse of educational provision and management within higher education organizations raises issues of accountability and legitimacy, and is about enhancing the management of social relation, processes, and events, by codifying the behaviors and actions that bureaucrats deem appropriate within specific organizational fields. However, discursive relationships serves organizational interests as well, by giving expression to local accountability, and particularly, to legitimacy claims in terms of the alignment of organizational goals with the wider institutional and societal values and expectations.

Summary, Research Objectives, and Questions

By focusing on the larger cultural and social system in which colleges are embedded, this review aims to demonstrate that institutionalism is a multifaceted, dynamic, and power-laden concept that offers deep insights into how rules and frameworks shape organizational life, and must remain an important focus for continuing integrated and coherent theory building to enhance organizational analysis. Colleges, as fully or partially funded public sector organizations, are obligated to operate as social agents with institutional mandates. As such, they are expected to be responsive to the institutional environment within which they are embedded, and, as Gumport (2001) asserts, pursue "missions" and achieve "results consonant with their public purposes" (p. 28).

This review also underscores the role of public oversight agencies in using "policy tools to improve the alignment of the performance of higher education with the expectations of the public" (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003b, p. 183). Institutional evaluation, accreditation, and various forms of quality audit and control are activities which scrutinize organizational governance and activities as part of a wider political process of policy making and the legitimation of effectiveness and quality to bring greater control over the behavior, functioning, and management of educational organizations. Quality

has therefore become a hotly contested construct, and is affected by the machinery of governmentality and "mired in instrumental responses to the accountability expectations of others" (Houston & Foote, 2001, p. 405).

By integrating issues of discourse within the analysis, this study attempts to more fully elucidate the complexities inherent in the organization/ institutional nexus, and fill out a gap within main-stream neo-institutional approaches. This research strategy aims to facilitate the study's interpretation of the particular discourses that have contributed to framing institutional standards and social policy, and influence the policy-makers' understanding of what constitutes effective colleges. Attention to the workings of discourse is therefore intended to allow the study to contextualize the policy makers' value preferences, and to explore social ideas that serve institutional interests in general. Interests define the preferences or "dispositional traits of actors – specifically the way an actor values alternative outcomes of the decision process being modeled" (Clark, 1998, p. 24).

Institutional interests, in the sense of *rules of the game*, may broadly be regarded as governmental interest, systematically arranged within policy instruments such as regulation, programs, and guidelines, and implemented to order and control events and social relations. Bureaucratic instruments usually aim to bring into effect specific publicly defined values, preferences and objectives, and circumscribe the autonomy and, to some extent, the decisions and choices which college-level organizations make for the provision of educational services and goods.

Overall, the issues raised bear reflection considering the unparalleled debate in recent decades about, and demands for, higher quality in post secondary education. As Tam (1999) asserts, "higher education is no longer seen as a privilege but as a right and an economic necessity... Colleges and universities now need to pay greater attention to quality, and to transform whenever necessary their organizational values, norms, structures and processes for a higher level of effectiveness and efficiency" (p. 217).

Discourse undoubtedly dominates the relationship between policy makers and organizations, raises issues of power, accountability and legitimacy. Intrinsically, discourse: (a) helps to contextualize the experiences of both policy makers and organizational actors; (b) enhances communication for the purpose of sense making,

building understanding, fostering organizational learning, shaping interests, values, activities, and commitments; (c) fosters understanding of the organization's obligation to secure and maintain legitimacy in relation to the institutional environment and social expectations; (d) represents organizational interests by giving expression to local accountability and legitimacy claims.

Since the aim of institutional evaluation is the analysis of how organizations operate internally, respond to, and interact with the institutional environment, it may be argued that a newly established quality assurance agency like the CEEC in Québec will purposively seek to determine the extent to which colleges are engaged in critical self-examination, monitoring, and reflection of the means whereby their operation and management ensure the achievement of the objectives of their social mandates and organizational mission. Success in these endeavors puts the policy regime in a better position to make strategic decisions regarding an interpretation of the courses of actions to be followed, and, the formulation of policy in dealing with recognized problems and matters of concern. Success also serves to legitimate the policy regime.

In attempting to understand responses to the policy regime, a logical assumption is that in recognition of the power of government, and in the interest of seeking to appear legitimate, college-level organizations in Québec will seek to assimilate within their behavior what Deflem (1994) calls bureaucratic, practical-moral discourse on *the rightness of action*, and salient ideas from the dominant discourses of the wider educational and social environment. This assumption converges with Oliver's (1991) contention that organizations gain legitimacy through conformity to institutional expectations, and from acting consistently with taken-for-granted norms and beliefs that render them "the only conceivable and natural behavior" (p. 148), and with Scott's (1995) notion that organizational legitimacy is associated with "cultural alignment, normative support, or consonance with relevant rules and laws" (p. 45).

This assumption also has salience from the perspective that organizations are cognition and interpretation systems that reason, analyze, think, produce knowledge (Daft and Weick, 1984), and see success in terms of being actively involved in analysing their enacted environment (Morgan, 1994), intruding into it for answers and, creating

organizational conditions geared to manipulate critical factors in this enacted environment to their advantage. Since colleges relate discursively with external quality assurance regimes primarily through the medium of text, this study seeks to determine whether the opportunity for self-evaluation is seized by Marianopolis College to construct and orchestrate particular discourses to justify its claim to the CEEC's seal of quality.

As previously indicated, the research question posed by this study is therefore the following: *In the context of institutional self-evaluation as a crucial quality assurance mechanism in higher education and an instrument of accountability, how, and with what underlying purposes, do colleges in Québec respond to the obligation to demonstrate fulfilment of responsibilities in relation to alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations*?

This question's importance arises directly from the study's conceptual perspectives particularly with respect to:

(a) the public management function of evaluation to systematically 'ensure achievement of specified quality or improvements in quality and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of quality and the outcomes achieved (Harman, 1998, p. 331);

(b) the need for key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of educational quality and the outcomes achieved by the educational process;

(c) the social and political implication of the establishment of the CEEC, the external quality assurance agency;

(d) the power of institutional rules, norms and practices to enable, as well as authorize and constrain as a condition of giving legitimacy and support;

(e) the stakes involved for the colleges undergoing institutional evaluation;

(f) the nature and function of the discursive relationship between the institutional environment and the colleges, and the understanding that colleges relate discursively primarily through self-evaluative text to the external quality assurance regime;

(g) the lack of empirical studies on institutional evaluation, and more specifically, dearth of neo-institutionalism research within the college sector in Québec.

In attempting to shed some light on the question, this study has three specific objectives, namely, to:

1. explore and analyze the policy approaches of the CEEC, the policy regime in Québec, to quality assurance and particularly, institutional evaluation;

2. develop a grounded theory case-study of the phenomenon of self-evaluation of Québec college-level organization, namely, Marianopolis College, to analyze how text is used discursively in the self-presentation process to demonstrate effectiveness and quality on a widely diversified set of criteria within the framework of accountability, and in alignment to the institutional environment and social expectations;

3. elucidate how text construction and organizational self-presentation serve the interests of the College.

In consideration of the scope of these objectives, four specific sub-questions have been identified for analysis:

(a) What are the CEEC's explicit approaches to quality assurance and particularly institutional evaluation of the college sector in Québec?

(b) How do these approaches enable an interpretation of the CEEC's philosophy regarding the performance society expect from the colleges?

(c) In approaching institutional self-evaluation, how is text used discursively in the self-presentation process by the College to demonstrate organizational effect-tiveness and quality in alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations?

(d) What organizational interests are served in the discursive process and why do they need to be served?

CHAPTER THREE

Methodological Orientation and Research Strategies

Introduction: Basic Objectives

The specific goals of this chapter are to: (1) discuss the salient philosophical and methodological issues surrounding qualitative research; (2) clarify the strategies for data collection, analysis and interpretation, and (3) explore the appropriateness of case studies as a research strategy in analyzing organizations. While specifying the problem and justifying its study is the primary crucial phase in the execution of a research strategy, "Selecting an appropriate research strategy is key to ensuring that research questions are addressed in a way which has value and is congruent with the overall topic, questions and purpose of the research" (Walshe, Caress, Chew-Graham, & Todd, 2004, p. 677). Since research approaches are rooted in values, this study has been concerned with appropriating "the paradigm that best accommodates the ontological, epistemological, and methodological dimensions" (Butler, 2002, p. 120) to ensure sense-making of the phenomenon being studied. This study adopts a constructivist, qualitative interpretive strategy of inquiry to address the research questions regarding the case being studied.

Philosophical and Methodological Approaches to Research

Research is "a perspective people take toward objects and activities" (Bogdan & Biklen, qtd. in Smith, 2001; 2006). It is about sense making through the interpretation of the patterns, causes, effects of, and problems underlying human behaviour using the appropriate methodology and the most refined, effective, and available procedures and techniques. Approaches to the discovery of reality derive intrinsically from ontological preoccupations and epistemological positions (Martin, 2003).

Martin (2003) views ontology as being concerned with "the entities of existence and the preconceptions about these entities that a researcher brings to any conceptual scheme, theory or system of ideas" (p. 110). Ontology is a metaphysical concept pertaining to the substance, essence, and properties of phenomena, or in other words, what constitutes the form and nature of their reality. Epistemology, on the other hand,

centres upon the sources, nature, and study of human knowledge (Klein, 1998; Smiraglia, 2002; Martin, 2003). To Heylighen (1993), the dominant question at the core of epistemology is "What distinguishes true (adequate) knowledge from false (inadequate knowledge)" (p. 1). Since the nature of human knowledge and its understanding can only possibly be acquired through different methods of inquiry, Heylighen further suggests that the researcher's preoccupation with the issue of appropriate or legitimate methodology, and the pervasive methodological competition among the various communities, originate from this basic question.

Epistemic assumptions, therefore, influence the way we approach sense-making of phenomena, and the theories, overarching belief and paradigms we adopt. Such assumptions influence our thinking and, to some extent, constrain our methodological choices as we frame researchable questions and develop research strategies that outline the direction and plans to follow as research proceeds. As Dooley (1990) observes, "different philosophies of knowledge point to different methods of gathering and presenting information" (p. 279). This point being stressed is that our methodological choices affect our research strategy, and the basis for action and directions taken by a study (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Patton, 1990).

Design decisions are crucially important, value-laden strategies, intended to contribute to the overall success with which useful and meaningful insights can be obtained about the truth value the researcher wishes to unravel, and to the achievement of the research objectives. Within the social sciences, the goal of unravelling and comprehending the patterns, regularities and structures within, and the processes underlying, social behaviour, is approached from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Bhaskar, 1986; Jackson, 1995; Palys, 2003). Quantitative perspectives are inherently positivist, and have traditionally been the more dominant.

Arguably, the driving force within positivist epistemology derives from the assumption that there is an objective reality in the social world that is discoverable; that the "fundamental social order underling the dynamic of things themselves" (Torres, 2002, p. 373) exists independently of the perceiver; and that the business of research is to seek to understand this objective reality through the use of theory, testable hypotheses and

techniques that are objective, rigorous, precise and rational (Bredo and Feinberg, 1982; Smith, 1990; Palys, 2003; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Ritchey; 2000, Torres, 2002). Seemingly, therefore, the duty of the social scientist is to observe and measure reality in a totally objective, value neutral manner, employing only those techniques that are reliable and valid. As Hodkingson (2004) points out, "the assumptions about methods, objectivity and research quality that underpin [positivist] approaches are controversial" (p. 10).

This study takes the position that there is no such reality residing in an objective external world that is discoverable by research except through the process of human construction (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Connolly & Keutner, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Greenbank, 2003), and holds that social research must be "implemented in ways that appreciate the value-laden nature of inquiry and that seek meaning and understanding of human experience ahead of causality" (Ritchie, 2001, p. 128). The implication of this human-centred, interpretative approach is that the imposition of external theory, and the use of hypotheco-deductive methods are incapable of providing the kinds of understanding and insights researchers attempt to gain of social phenomena in a research context. The essence of the interpretive construct rests in its ability to incorporate an understanding of the routines, choices, activities, thoughts, motivations and points of view of the actors or phenomena being studied. In effect, this study aims to enhance understanding of people, phenomena, and their social and cultural contexts (Bruner, 1986; 1990). To Jackson (1995), "The interpretive approach examines how people make sense of their lives, how they define their situation, and how their sense of self develops in interaction with others" (p. 9).

The epistemology that embodies this view is called phenomenology. This philosophy may be traced to Max Weber's concept of Verstehende, which essentially refers to the understanding the researcher gains from deep reflection, and the perspective within sociology called symbolic interactionism (Dooley, 1990; Denzin, 1989, Lincoln and Guba, 1985), which emphasises three factors: (a) human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them, (b) these meanings are a product of social interaction in human society, and (c) these meanings are modified and handled through an

interpretive process that is used by each person in dealing with the things he/she encounters (Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds, qtd. by Dooley, 1990, p. 280).

From a more contemporary perceptive, the distinguishing feature of qualitative interpretive research is the paradigm of constructivism. In ontological terms, the central tenet of the constructivist paradigm is that the knowledge we have about social facts is derived subjectively, that is, through consciously formed and socially and culturally based representations of them (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 2002). Thus, reality is viewed as a socially constructed product that must be situated within the broader social context of the individuals or groups tied to knowledge constructions. Further, social research must be "implemented in ways that appreciate the value-laden nature of inquiry and that seek meaning and understanding of human experience ahead of causality" (Ritchie, 2000, p. 128). The constructivist paradigm places emphasis upon a socially constructed, pluralistic reality that is relative to the "purposeful acts of intentional human agents" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 125), and holds: (1) that social reality is the product of sense making (Patton 2002); (2) that phenomena within the human world of experience "are human constructs and not existing entities with intrinsic natures" (Blumer, qtd. in Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 81). A very elegant reflection on constructivism is that "what we take as necessary and sufficient knowledge about the social world has been contained by the limits of our social categories and legitimated knowledge paradigms" (Smith, qtd by McPhee & Bronstein, 2002, p. 653).

Constructivism rejects the technically rational aspects of positivism and, as suggested by Johnson and Duberly (2000, p. 63), "point[s] to how our conventionally based and socially sanctioned modes of engagement are projected on to, and impose[s] a logic and order on, what we 'see'". Since reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Hodkinson, 2004) and contextually related, interpretive perspectives are defined by their attempt to understanding the contextual worlds of social actors through the cognitive schema they employ to assign meaning to phenomena (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988; Becker, 1996; Myers, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Understanding this constructed reality involves unravelling the life-world of the phenomena of interest "to reclaim ... meaning and significance by acts of interpretation [and] reconstruction of

the past in terms which make it comprehensible to the present" (Carr and Kemmis (1993, p. 236).

This study uses the methodology of constructivism to interpret the experiential world of a specific college-level organization in Québec as mediated by the process of institutional self-evaluation. Consequently, the documentary and interview evidence being analyzed is viewed as discourse reflective of the life-world of this particular case and "as descriptions of a social reality that is subjectively experienced" (Wicks, 2002, p. 316). Given the interpretive principles embodied within constructivism, the underlying aim is to gain greater insights into the ways by which this "social reality" is discursively projected through textual content from the case under study (organization/agent), to government (institution/principal) to serve organizational interests.

The Appropriateness of Case Study Research

The organization, provision and management of higher education constitute a complex, context-dependent, and multifaceted enterprise. Thus, the study and understanding of the diverse, academic programs, academic and administrative structures, and multi-layered student-centered services within higher education suggests the need for a research strategy distinguished by "... its breadth, its collaborative approach, its recognition of complex contexts, the use of multiple research methods, a realistic focus on process and outcome and its flexible yet rigorous approach" (Walshe et al., 2004, p. 678). These attributes are fully embodied within case studies. Given Stake's (1995) definition of a case as "a bounded system" that has working parts, a number of specific factors may be identified as key to this study's choice of case study:

1. a case study is "a detailed examination of an event (or a series of events) which the analyst believes exhibits (or exhibit) the operation of some identified general theoretical principle" (Mitchell, 1983, p. 192). This concept is of primary importance since it gives priority and force to the interest generated by the event studied, a point that Stake (1994) reinforces in stressing that a case study is "not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied" (p. 236);

2. a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, ... relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to be converged in a triangulating fashion" (Yin, 1994, p. 13).

3. Case studies draws attention to the critical importance of the researcher's role in the study (Baker, 1994; Tellis, 1997);

4. its flexibility makes it amenable to deal with complex social settings in which the researcher seeks to gather and explain information about the behaviour of the social phenomenon of interest (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995; McDonnell, Lloyd-Jones and Read, 2000; Walshe et al., 2004);

5. it is a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied (Smith, 1990);

6. it constitutes a design for organizing and interpreting data systematically and in depth (Miller, 1991);

7. it is capable of enhancing the emergence of ideas (Stake, 1994);

8. it requires the researcher to focus on data relating to context since situational factors are paramount to an explication of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990; Palys, 2003; Myers, 1997; Walshe et al., 2004);

Case study typology tends to be differentiated in terms of range in complexity, duration of time spanning the events of the case, or contribution to theoretical thinking (Eckstein, 1975; Bennett & George, 1997; Stake, 1994, 1995; Odell, 2001). Given this study's research objectives and research questions, it may be regarded as a crucial case study (Eckstein, 1975) since it seeks to contribute, through the identification of common patterns, to broader generalizations or an overall theory of some specific phenomenon. This typology corresponds to Stake's (1994; 1995) instrumental case study where in-depth, systematic and contextual analysis of the case is undertaken to unravel the intricacies of a phenomenon, and bring existing theory to the explanation and interpretation of the findings of research.

Strategy for Site Selection, Data Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation

Site Selection Factors

The major goal of this study is to interpret how discourses arising from government mandated institutional self-evaluation at the college-level are structured and presented to explain educational management, organization and operation in response to institutional and social expectations in the context of accountability. Several factors motivated the

choice of the evaluation experience at Marianopolis as the unit of analysis. Purposes focus attention on where to look for cases as well as evidence that will satisfy the purpose of the study and answer the research question posed (Bennett and George, 1997). The peculiarities of the contextual framework of Marianopolis helped to determine the use of a single case design. To be specific, given its educational heritage, the evaluative experience at Marianopolis was deemed revelatory, especially since its collegiate status represented a significant break point in the life of the organization.

In effect, the College met the strategic criteria posited by Marshall and Rossman (1987, p. 54) for selection. There was a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, people, programs, interactions and/or structures integral to the research question might be present. In addition, an appropriate role could be devised to maintain continuity of presence for a long as possible, thereby enhancing the quality of the data and credibility of the study by being more likely to avoid poor sampling decisions. Thus, my ability to focus on this site afforded me the opportunity to document and interpret, from a close-up, insider vantage point, and with full appreciation of the complexity of the problem and situational factors involved, what was happening in a particular pre-university college in Québec. To be specific, "critical, contextualist social research" (Newton, 2002, p. 48) was possible due to my insider position.

Thus, ease of access and personal interest in Marianopolis were not an overriding consideration. Rather, case selection was based primarily on the College's perceived "relevance to the research objective of the study" (Bennett and George, 1997, p. 10), and the opportunity afforded to maximize what could be understood about the phenomena of interest (Stake, 1995) or as Patton (1990) insisted, "what it [was I wanted] to be able to say something about at the end of the study" (p. 168). To be more precise, my choice was motivated by the uniqueness of Marianopolis. It is not a public CEGEP; rather, it is the only private pre-university English college in Montréal, designated as "an institution in the public interest", and approved for subsidies by the National Assembly of Québec.

An argument may be made to the effect that because Marianopolis is a 'private' college, my findings might be less interesting and/or relevant than might have been had I researched a public college. However, to seriously entertain an argument of this sort first

requires some justification based on solid empirical evidence to demonstrate its plausibility. Nonetheless, I suggest that how private colleges operate as social agents and respond to their institutional mandates to create educational quality through the development of appropriate capabilities is inherently no less interesting and the results no less relevant than they would have been within public colleges. In fact, the findings from research at a partially funded private college like Marianopolis may hold tremendous interest because of the higher stakes involved in maintaining its image owing to its claim to being an institution of excellence, and the economic and social challenges involved in retaining its private status.

With a student body of less than eighteen hundred, Marianopolis is a small, personal college which offers university-bound high school graduates an alternative to the larger public CEGEP. The English language public CEGEPs offer both pre-university and technical/vocational programs. Marianopolis also has the distinction of being the only institution, province wide, of having evolved out of a four year undergraduate degree granting organization into a two-year, pre-university college. Consequently, unlike the typical college-level institution, its tradition of higher education predates the introduction of the CEGEP system. Founded by the Congregation of Notre-Dame in 1908, Marianopolis has stressed a commitment to maintain a reputation for academic excellence in all of its mission statements. Under those circumstances, it was felt that there was a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, activities, programs, behaviours, interactions and/or structures that might emerge as part of the answer to the research question would be present.

Gaining permission from the Director General to conduct the research at the College was achieved through an informal process based on having established a sense of trust rather than through a formalized ethical research protocol. The actual process involved clarifying the purposes of the research, and explaining how the re-examination of data previously collected for the purposes of the institutional self-evaluation, as well as personally conducting interviews on site with interested participants under rigorous ethical guidelines were linked to the attainment of the research objectives of the study:

Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

One of the outcomes of the College's recent institutional evaluation experiences was the creation of a documentary file comprising multiple sources of data including: (see Appendix A for comprehensive list, p. 319).

(a) Field study documents, namely, narrative self-studies of the administrative, academic and program support sectors of the College
(b) Rudimentary field notes
(c) Documents related to internal policy, practices, and organization
(d) Minutes of meetings of various College structures
(e) Survey data of various types
(f) Informal interview data
(g) Reports from consultants
(h) The College's formal self-evaluation reports
(i) Formal external evaluation reports by the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collègial (CEEC)
(j) Documents related to relevant policy regulations and policy statements at the web sites of the CEEC and the Ministry of Education

These texts constituted my primary source of data because of their discursive significance and direct pertinence to the phenomenon of interest. Their importance as carriers of information and very concrete perspectives from various constituents on a wide range of organizational performance issues proved invaluable to my analysis and interpretation. This was particularly true of the narrative self-studies because of their embodied cohesion of shared beliefs about individual events and the connection between events and sense of identity and culture of those creating the narrative (Gudmundsdottir, 1991).

In accordance with the ethics protocol of McGill's Faculty of Education for participant selection and interview, I personally conducted one hand-recorded, and eight structured, audio taped interviews. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling. Since interviews placed emphasis on the participants' experiences of these issues, I used these additional sources of data during the process of constant comparison to integrate a range of perspectives on issues concerning the organization and operation of the College, and the self-evaluation processes in which the College had been involved,

as well as give accurate voice to the participants' view of reality. The identity of these participants has been protected by RECOGNIZING THEM AS INFORMANTS.

A hand-recorded interview, which last an hour and a half, took place in the office of one of the Commissioners of the CEEC. Eight audio-taped interview sessions at the College consisted of at most two sessions of forty five minutes each. Three participants in the audio taped interviews came from non-teaching sectors. One participant was a Board member from the outside community. The four remaining participants were members of the teaching faculty, all of whom had distinguished themselves at the College by assuming major administrative responsibilities.

The documents as listed above together with the transcribed interview data constituted the case study database being analyzed using procedural techniques drawn from grounded theory and the constant comparison method to facilitate textual analysis and interpretation. An extensive literature on such qualitative data management procedures exists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1998; 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998; Charmaz, 1998; 2000; Locke, 2001). Grounded theory is a qualitative interpretive research method that has been used extensively in education and across a variety of social science disciplines "to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24). This method emphasizes closeness and sensitivity to participants and phenomena in field-study settings prior to the building of theoretical concepts. The essence of grounded theory is that "One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23).

Thus, beginning with the data from each text fragment of the narrative self-studies, my goal was to delineate salient ideas, concepts, themes and issues to produce a holistic interpretation of organizational performance. The idea was to identify similarities, differences and relations between different text passages (Kelle, 1997) by constructing codes and cross referencing the text. In the words of Glaser (2002), grounded theory (GT) "is the generation of emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns, which are denoted by categories and their properties" (p. 2). Locke (2001) contends that the grounded theory approach is eminently compatible with management

and organizational research. To Wilson (2002), such compatibility is possible because "it enables research to capture the complexity of organizational situations and processes ... links well to practice, in that the organizational participants can recognize the reality described, ... [and] ... allows the investigation of new areas" (p. 486).

My approach to the application of grounded theory rested upon three pillars, namely, the building of concepts into codes, the derivation of the fundamental genetic relationships, patterns or categories which constitute the core message of the data, and the welding together of conceptual patterns and categories into a coherent body of theory that was therefore "grounded" within, or emanated from text. These three pillars or procedures have been defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Glaser (2002) regards "a concept as the naming of an emergent social pattern grounded in the research data" (p. 4). Open coding involved my looking for informal patterns or conceptual labels, and was a process whereby essential "incidents, events, happenings, [were] taken or analyzed as potential indicators of phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 7). Codes were differentiated in the body of the text by colours that stood for the areas to which they appeared to be relevant. They were created to fit the various kinds of social reality being described and therefore represented my perspectives regarding specific areas of text. The initial phase of open coding confirmed the observation that "most of the time ... is spent reading, rereading, interpreting, comparing, and thinking [about] the text" (Kelle, 1991, paragraph 2.9).

Axial coding, the second phase, enabled me to sort the relevant data bearing on specific points, and resulted in the emergence of conceptual labels which integrated the ideas generated as text fragments were continuously interrogated as part of the analytic sampling process in search of meanings. Following Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser (2002), such interrogation allowed appropriate probing to interpret what general patterns phenomena were instances of, and to what they pertained and referenced. In effect, axial coding enabled me to develop connections between conceptual labels, patterns and sub-categories (Creswell, 1998). At this level of the coding process, answers were possible to questions of who, when, where, why, how, and with what consequences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). To be more precise, axial coding sought connections between conditions,

contexts, strategies and consequences, and, as contended by Piantanida, Tananis and Grubs (2004) began "to point to the nuances and complexities (e.g. issues, concerns, dilemmas and problematics) related to the phenomenon of study" (p. 339). It was during this stage that Clarke's (2003) notion of situational analysis was integrated into the research procedure. Like the analytic devices known as conditional matrices (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), situational analysis alerted me as researcher to the multi-dimensionality of contextual issues, and the interrelationship between context and action. Situational analysis involved the identification of concepts followed through by appropriate analyses, including the use of memos to penetrate, interrogate, and open up data to expose core relationships, negotiations, and the fluidity of social phenomena within the 'situation' focused upon in the research.[2]

Selective coding, the third stage, was the basis for developing core concepts or concept categories. Selective coding required me to focus on identifying the conceptual dimensions being measured by sets of data with salient shared properties. My approach was to sort coded text segments on the basis of co-occurring conceptual similarities or differences within a given document. This process resulted in my being able to organize the patterns, sub-categories and their associated properties that best portrayed and preserved the "imageric meaning" (Glaser, 2002, p. 4) emerging through the ongoing process of textual analysis. In effect, I regarded the co-occurring codes used to organize the data as pointers to a more fundamental structure of an emerging theory, and the core concepts or concept categories under which they were subsumed as "the means by which the theory [could] be integrated" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7).

The process of segment-by-segment interrogation, and the sorting and storing of concepts and codes and cross referencing was a relatively manageable procedure because of my prior immersion in the self-evaluation process and close familiarity with the data previously generated. While this degree of involvement was a distinct advantage, it had its downside in that it was somewhat impossible to free my mind entirely of the evaluative themes or descriptive categories which the CEEC had imposed on the analysis of data and self-evaluation of issues. My ability to engage these data appropriately increased in proportion to my ability to clearly differentiate between the objectives of the academic

research being undertaken, and the objectives of institutional self-evaluation in which I had been a key player, and the concerns of the particular audiences being addressed.

Grounded theory requires an explanation of a given social phenomenon by identifying the dynamic core and subsidiary processes operating within it. Grounded theory utilizes the constant comparison method which demands theoretical sampling through the meticulous process of concurrently collecting and analysing theoretically sampled text with the ultimate aim of saturating categories and generating theory that is grounded in the natural context in which the inquiry took place (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser (2002) suggests that "conceptual saturation of interchangeable indices" (p. 4) has occurred when the researcher has ultimately succeeded in interpreting the potential indicators of pattern.

In this study, theoretical sampling was an approach to data collection in which sampling of data was driven by the theoretical concerns that were emerging from the provisional analysis of text. Following Clarke (2003), my theoretical sampling procedure focused "on finding new data sources (persons or things) that [could] best explicitly address specific theoretically interesting facets of the emergent analysis" (p. 557). Theoretical sampling is analogous to purposeful or conceptual sampling (Patton, 1990; Maxwell, 1996), and involved the selection of particular settings or events and organizational actors that were capable of providing richer information and insights about the phenomenon of interest than may have been obtained through random probability sampling.

The writing of reflective memos was a crucial component of the grounded theory approach. Their integration into the analysis aimed to sharpen the conceptual focus of the emerging categories, thereby enabling a deeper "theoretical grasp of the material ... and provide[ed] sharper, clearer guidelines for data collection" (Charmaz, 1998, p. 115). Glaser (1978) describes memos as *"the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding* ... Memo-writing continually captures the 'frontier of the analyst's thinking' as he [sic] goes through the data, codes, sorts or writes" (p. 83; author's italics in the original).

In effect, the procedures described enabled the study to achieve its aims of creating rich descriptions and explanations of the phenomenon of interest, and of constructing theoretical interpretations that were solidly grounded within the constellation of emerging concepts and themes. The final stage of interpretation and abstraction involved the interrelation, integration and refinement of categories to construct a theoretical framework from text in the form of propositions or generalized conceptual statements of relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) between unique categories and their concepts, as well as between distinct categories. The location of propositions within the text immediately follows the data to which they are linked.

To engage with literature from the beginning of the research process was one of the critical decisions I made. The use of existing theory to guide the research has its proponents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Locke, 1996). Strauss and Corbin (1998) regard the interweaving of literature throughout the grounded theory process as a valuable strategy because of the literature's potential contribution to the researcher's theoretical construction and interpretation, and its potential to provide examples of phenomena that can "stimulate ... thinking about properties or dimensions that we can then use to examine the data in front of us" (p. 45). This position goes against the advocation of engagement with the phenomenon of interest without pre-existing ideas or perspectives, for fear of contaminating, constraining, or impeding the researcher's analysis of codes emerging from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992).

In my case, there was not much of a choice about when to approach the literature related to the topic of study because of my wide reading during participation in the institutional self-evaluation of the College that had generated most of the data that was being re-examined and reinterpreted. In addition, meeting the requirements of my university program necessitated taking courses and being conversant with scholarly literature in the very area of my dissertation. These prior circumstances oriented me to the literature most closely related to the data to which I had access and of whose details I had knowledge. As a result, I had been somewhat already introduced to the literature required to situate the phenomenon within the existing theoretical framework that bore on those contextual aspects that were to be interpreted. Proactive engagement from the beginning

of the research with the "non-scholarly" literature such as government reports, regulations and policy guidelines also facilitated my analysis of the educational and institutional context within which the College operated, to provide the necessary background regarding the nature, role and purposes of colleges within higher education. However, I followed the recommendation to sample the literature after findings had been made (Charmaz, 2000), and returned to the literature as findings pointed me in specific theoretical directions. Examples of sampling of the literature occur throughout but is extensively illustrated is in Chapter 7 as I attempted to understand the purposes of the scripted discursive positions of the College. Interpretations that have vastly expanded the horizons of those anticipated emerged as a result of this process.

The Issue of Bias, Validity, Generalizability and the Single Case

Given the strong positivist conception of scientific rigour within social science research (Bunge, 1996), issues related to scale, representativeness and generalizability may be raised as a challenge to the validity of case study strategy to enhance knowledge development. These methodological concepts were developed in the context of positivist social science research, experimental work, and quantitative analysis (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). The issue of working at a microscopic scale revolves around the problem of ensuring *objectivity* and *generalizability* based on the study of a single case. However, there are very forceful arguments to the effect that even a single case can be viewed as acceptable provided it satisfies established research criteria. Patton (1990), for example, advocates a case study design when "one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or a unique situation in depth, and where a researcher can identify cases rich in information – rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question" (p. 54). Theoretical principles deemed evident in the phenomena's patterns and behaviour (Mitchell, 1983; Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993) may, upon exploration, be a source of this richness.

Odell (2001) holds that cases are appropriate for investigation when they are perceived to be intrinsically important, and argues that "understanding crucial break points is as important as testing any hypothesis that might be valid". Odell adds that:

> more comprehensive and more detailed contact with concrete instances of the event and behaviour ... helps sharpen distinctions ... stimulates fresh concepts, typologies, and hypotheses (p. 169).

Odell further argues that case studies offer more appropriate methodologies than large scale statistical methods where an understanding of context, process and change are essential. This position supports Donmoyer's (1990) contention of a misplaced emphasis on generalizability. Donmoyer views the particularizing that is possible within single case studies as valuable since it underscores the fact that human beings act toward things that are meaningful to them thereby generating meanings in the context of social interaction.

Starting from the position that the goal of case study is the illumination or interpretation of the processes at work in an event or phenomenon, this study took the position that "the use of a single site or a small sample size does not in itself threaten the validity or potential generalizability of a qualitative study" (Green, 1999, p. 2). In fact, Green's assertion that there is at best a spurious connection between representativeness of a sample and generalizability, and that generalizability matters to the extent that "concepts may be relevant to other settings and ... groups" (p. 2) is very pertinent and well taken. As Yin (1994) explains, single case studies are useful for analytical generalization to expand theory rather than for statistical generalization. Stake (2000b) also makes an interesting point in noting that case studies enable "naturalistic generalizations" through recognition of similarities of objects and issues and the "natural covariation of happenings" (p. 22) within context. This study fully supports the position that:

> The inference about the logical relationship between ... two characteristics is not based upon the representatives of the sample and therefore upon its typicality, but rather upon the plausibility or upon the logicality of the nexus between the two characteristics (Mitchell, 1983, p. 129).

Mitchell's point is that the case selected for study should be based upon its explanatory power rather than upon any assumption of its typicality. Innes, Greenfield and Hunton (2000) also suggest that case studies enable individuals working in similar contexts to compare sets of decisions identified in the case with their own. Quoting Bassey (who is writing about educational research), Innes et al. state that:

> An important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision-making to that described in the case study. The reliability of a case study is more important than its generalizability (pp. 400-401).

Leedy (1989) has suggested that internal validity is "the freedom from bias in forming conclusions in view of the data." (p. 27). Based on this definition, a case study is internally valid if outcomes or findings are not affected by the peculiarities of the design and conduct of the research. Bias may be assumed to effect internal validity because the case study researcher is immersed in, rather than being dispassionately divorced from, the context of the social phenomenon. This criticism is being addressed by noting that it is of less concern to case study researchers themselves, than it is to their critics, because of their epistemological position. However, this study sees bias as something to be recognized and monitored, and has also taken issues of validity into account to ensure the rigour and "trustworthiness" of the results of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The task of this particular study was to demonstrate a profound understanding of the conditions, interrelationships and complex processes at work within the context of the case from the perspective of the actors comprising the phenomenon of interest, and present findings that corresponded to these understandings. To achieve this objective, this study was informed by scholarly prescriptions regarding the attainment of internal validity, precisely: (1) clarifying the kind of phenomenon singled out for examination (Stake, 2000b); (2) clarifying assumptions and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study, and benefiting from long term observation at the site and repeated observation of the phenomena of interest (Merriam, 1998); (3) conducting formal interviews with ethical rigour; (4) applying "structural corroboration" (Eisner, 1991, p. 51) or triangulation (Mathison, 1988; Yin, 1994; Patton, 2002) which involved using multiple pieces of evidence from multiple sources to gain holistic understanding of the phenomenon from converging or intersecting lines of verification; (5) having a draft case study report reviewed by key informants (Yin, 1994).

Patton (1999) has suggested that "By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources, researchers can make substantial strides in overcoming the

scepticism that greets singular methods, lone analysts, and single-perspective theories or models" (p. 4). However, Patton stresses that researchers aught not only to view triangulation as a means of showing that different data sources or approaches produce similar results. Rather, they should "test for such consistency" (p. 4) since the discovery of inconsistencies may illuminate profoundly the phenomenon of interest. In this study, having applied this *best practice* during the coding process, I then focused "on what [was] learned by the degree of convergence" (p. 4).

External validity from a positivist perspective reflects the confidence the researcher can place in generalizations beyond the immediate case or cases with similar contexts. Technically, external validity or confidence increases as variations in places, people and processes increase without affecting the stability of the finding of the study. The positivist concept of external validity is inapplicable to case study methods since the focus is idiographic rather than nomothetic. On the basis that the practice of research and the epistemological foundations to the research methods are intertwined, the quantitative concept of generalizability or representativeness is irrelevant to qualitative research (Mitchell, 1983; Smith, 1990).

Campbell (1975) has sufficiently demonstrated that the generalizability of case study findings is a non-issue. Smith (1990), in summarizing the salient arguments put forward by Campbell stresses the following points:

1. generalizability is or is not an epistemological requirement depending on the intentions of the study;

2. generalizability of findings does not determine the validity of the study; validity depends on the plausibility of the logic of the analysis;

3. logical inference is the process by which the analyst draws conclusions about the essential linkage between two or more characteristics in terms of some systematic explanatory schema – some set of theoretical propositions;

4. the extent to which generalization may be made from case studies depends upon the adequacy of the underlying theory, and the whole corpus of related knowledge of which the case is analyzed rather than on the particular instance itself.

Consequently, external validity as applied to this particular case study has come to mean the ability to generalize results to some broader theory (Silverman, 1990; 1997; Yin, 1994; Hartley, 1994; Patton, 2002). Reinforcing these arguments is the understanding that the logical persuasiveness of each case is the foundation upon which its wider significance or transferability rests. Wolford (2001, p. 156) puts it in these terms:

> A case is significant only in the context of a particular theory, and logical inference replaces statistical inference. An extrapolation can be made between a particular case and a wider population only if there is a strong theoretical or logical connection between them.

Consequently, the theoretical propositions arising from this study's analysis are expected to serve as a basis for transferability between the case examined and the wider population of colleges. In light of the impracticality of generalizability in the statistical sense, this study has examined closely the central characteristics of the social environment of the case with two objectives in mind: (1) to create a rich portrait of the forces at work and the dynamics of the setting (Stake, 1995; 2000a) thereby enabling others to assess the merits of the strategies and modes of interpretation, as well as the value of findings; and (2) to provide "the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether the transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (Lincoln and Guba , 1985, p. 316).

Issues of Reliability and Dependability

The concept reliability refers to the extent to which findings can be replicated or reproduced by another researcher using the same methods of data collection. Underlying this concept is the notion that repeated observations of the same phenomenon by different inquirers should yield similar results. The implication is that exemplary research produces findings that are stable, accurate and precise. Reliability is a positivist construct that is consistently applied to experimental studies and quantitative analysis where the research purpose is the explanation of events and the discovery of causal relationships among statistically controllable variables. Merriam (1998) states that given the phenomenological perspective within qualitative research, and therefore "many interpretations of what is happening, there is no benchmark by which to take repeated

measures and establish reliability in the traditional [positivist] sense" (p. 205). Merriam adds that the fact that replication may not yield the same results in no way discredits previous findings, which stand until contradictory evidence surfaces. This study suggests that the notion of dependability and consistency seem more appropriate when critiquing the findings and conclusions obtained by a case study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). However, although I prefer the notions of dependability and consistency to reliability, this in no way minimizes the rigor that the research requires to guarantee its quality and *reliability*.

The question now posed is how has this particular case study enhanced the dependability of its results? There is remarkable convergence of thinking within the literature from which to draw regarding the resolution of issues related to dependability. For example, Eisenhart and Borko (1993) take the stance that "validity, ... regardless of the research design used, can be determined by how carefully the study is designed, conducted and presented; how sensitively it treats human subjects; and how well it contributes to important issues ..." (p. 93). Merriam's (1998, p. 198) perspective that "Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner" is quite pertinent. Since "ethical" was understood to mean credible or trustworthy, my aim was to achieve a high degree of rigour in the study's conceptualization, and in the gathering, treatment, interpretation and the presentation of its findings. As previously explained in discussing this study, the issue of validity focused on a thorough and intimate understanding of the totality of the research context, and on "giving special attention to completeness in observation, reconstruction and analysis of the case under study ... in a way that incorporate[d] the view of the "actors" in the case under study" (Tellis, 1997, p. 3).

Hammersly (1992) contends that the goal of finding plausible and credible explanations of phenomena is central to all research. Consequently, my goal was to incorporate rigorous and self-correcting strategies directly into each phase of the research to ensure the quality of the study. Thus, poignant discussions regarding the nature of verification in qualitative research (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers, 2002) influence the direction of the research. Morse et al. advocate integrating strategies such as

"investigator responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytic stance, and saturation" (p. 9) to produce solid outcomes. They argue that the appropriate use of these strategies enables the researcher to incrementally and systematically correct both the direction and development of the analysis, thereby continuously building rigor into the study.

Kemmis (1983) suggests that the key to the credibility of case study methods revolves around "the observer's critical presence" (p. 103) in the total context of the research. I interpreted this observation to mean that the researcher has an overriding obligation to engage in reflexive processes to interrogate his or her own biases and assumptions and produce the kind of work which has the indelible stamp of trustworthiness. To Patton (1999), reaching these standards of trustworthiness depends upon training, skill and experience. For me, reaching the standards set by Kemmis and Patton is a work in progress, and trial and error learning has been part of the process.

Reality is an elusive, contestable, flexible, and malleable construct to interpretive researchers. Consequently, following Guba and Lincoln (1981), Firestone (1987), and Sokolovsky (1996), the ability to be persuasive has been integral to the sense-making process of this study. I have therefore sought to demonstrate that the study's conclusions are supported by the data and the methods used in their collection, and that these conclusions make sense. Achieving this goal was very important since the reality being captured and presented by this case has been constructed primarily from observations, conversations, interviews, and document analysis within a social research context characterized by researcher closeness and intimacy.

Eisenhart and Borko (1993) suggest that all research should be conceived as arguments, where argument is defined as discussion involving different points of view. They also specify five standards which the general concept of research as argument must meet. This study contends that these five standards have been met.

1. contribution to knowledge in the field by being connected to previous knowledge so that readers can understand the development of the research question and the choice of methods;

2. a fit between the research questions, data-collection procedures and techniques of analysis; in other words, the research is driven by the research question;

3. the effective application of specific data-collection and technique of analysis;

4. addressing value constraints - that is, addressing the importance of the research and its (political) usefulness, and being sensitive to the use of value-laden languages;

5. comprehensiveness in the overall theoretical and technical quality, its balancing of standards, and its use of "triangulation by theory" or application of various explanations to the data at hand, and selection of the most plausible one to explain the research results.

Managing Challenges and Limitations

A key insight emerging from this analysis is that case study methods constitute a strategy of inquiry "concerned with subjectivity, reflection, multiple interpretations, and context" (Martin, 2003, p. 110). Reflection on my position relative to the College and to the research makes me fully aware that as researcher and an instrument involved in the research context, my impressions and reactions also form part of the interpretable data. My ability to research the meanings and interpretations of people, policy, activities, and circumstances in an organization with which I have been involved for close to three decades provided an opportunity to offer unique perspectives because of the shared history, and accumulated knowledge of the culture and of the organizational actors involved. However, the obverse of this advantage is that because of my insider vantage-point and resulting degree of closeness to the organization and its personnel, the meanings and interpretations derived may raise in other's perception issues of scope, objectivity, and credibility.

To be candid, because of my role as coordinator of the institutional evaluation project, and my history of engagement in many of the central areas of governance and administration at Marianopolis, I regarded having to address such perceptions when reporting research findings to an external audience as an inescapable possibility. Precisely whose interpretations were being offered? Were they overridingly, if not purely, my personal viewpoint? Did they reflect the multiple voices within the

organization, or did they reflect the bureaucratic position of the dominant coalition at the College?

It must be reiterated that for the most part the core data used for analysis in this research are derived from the body of text developed from a variety of documents collected during the institutional self-evaluation process of the College, 2001-2003. The text constituted by these documents was a synthesis of the discussion, consultation, viewpoints, and feed-back of key organizational actors and ultimately represented the organization's position. In other words, the text before me was constructed through comprehensive, participatory methods which touched the entire organization, and reflected the institutional voice.

In returning to, and in re-analyzing this evaluative text, several measures were adopted to meet the challenge of balancing critical distance and critical presence. I regarded it paramount to operate on the principle of sensitivity to the viewpoints of the original participants involved in the generation of the evaluative text, and to the totality of the particular contexts participants described. Thus, the various perspectives brought to the analysis of issues by members of the evaluation team and research participants during the self-evaluation process served as lenses to filter, rather than to determine, my interpretation of phenomena during the re-examination process to find meaning in the events and activities described in relation to the research questions.

Ultimately, however, the demands of critical presence in the totality of the research context necessitated producing findings I deemed trustworthy and could claim as my own based on training, skill, experience, and my understanding of the organization. Purposeful sampling and the integration of coded data into the analysis as theoretical concerns emerged advanced personal claims over the research process and the study's findings. It must be acknowledged, that, regardless of my imagined degree of control over the research process, a potential limitation arises from the intimate dependence on organizational actors for information. In trying to learn as much as possible about a phenomenon the researcher is inevitably involved with individuals in a dance whose steps he or she cannot fully dictate. The potential for deception always exists. However, I

suggest that this potential has been minimized due to my knowledge of the organization and its personnel, and attention to strategies for attaining internal validity.

The use of member checks and audit trails is regarded within certain quarters of the qualitative research community as a means of gathering tangible evidence of rigor, and of fostering confidence in the outcome of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of member checks was not a continuous process of seeking confirmation of results during data analysis and interpretation. Member checks by key participants in the interview process were introduced during the final stages of sharpening and improving the initial draft to gain feedback to mitigate personal bias as well as to deepen and refine the analysis.

However, involving key members in checking interpretations went beyond these goals. Evaluation is deeply rooted in politics, and there are political implications to the process since transparency is required. There are obvious challenges to exposing multiple aspects of organizational life and activity to detailed scrutiny in a research context, especially when the researcher plans to continue his or her work role in the studied organization after completion of the project. In my case this challenge did not appear overly serious since the external assessment of the College had been positive, and I saw my role as having to bring a theoretical perspective to bear on activities and patterns of organizational life that were already in the public eye. However, throughout this process, I felt obligated to find the right place for my experiences and understanding, to connect them with my value position and draw from other organizational actors as necessary to discover the *reality* in organizational situations, experiences and phenomena.

The decision not to integrate an audit mechanism into the research design may be regarded as a limitation. However, this study views audit trails as post-hoc evaluation strategies which enhance the documentation of the evolutionary course and the development of the completed study rather than strategies which contribute directly to an ongoing rigorous process and the actual attainment of dependable results. This perspective may be challenged, but following Morse et al. (2002), my position is that audit trails lack the ability to identify the decisions made throughout the research "and they do little to identify the quality of those decisions, the rationale behind those

decisions, or the responsiveness and sensitivity of the investigator to data ... [or] actual shortcomings that have impaired reliability and validity" (pp. 6-7). To ensure maximum success in this regard, I progressively applied methods developed by Yin (1994), Bennett and George (1997), and Popay, Rogers, and Williams (1998), who stress the importance of developing a case study protocol and the use of a checklist of criteria to assess the achievement of dependability of findings and conclusions from the research study (see Ritchie, 2001, pp. 133-134).[3]

This study is a performance narrative of a particular higher education organization. Generating this narrative within a framework of critical disclosure (Eisner, 1998) has been a journey of discovery. A key limitation to this discovery may be due in part to the researcher's bold attempt to apply grounded theory method to dissertation research without previous direct participation in its application and exposure to the intricacies and pitfalls of the experience. Technically, making sense of the different perspectives within qualitative research was a struggle in itself, but eventually it became apparent that the key to understanding the phenomenon of interest lay in adopting a version of the grounded theory method that was congruent with the epistemology underpinning the inquiry process generated by the particular questions framing the research. Once that insight was gained, it was easier to become immersed in the process and grapple with the uncertainty of correctly understanding and sensitively interpreting the range of meaning that might be constructed from the body of available text.

The goal of succeeding in developing theory that is truly grounded in the reality of the experiences being studied was central from the beginning to the end of the process. Following Piantanida et al. (2004), I sought "to bring a conceptual perspective to the situational and the individual experience" (p. 335) being studied, and to create a conceptual mosaic to convey a plausible and persuasive interpretation of the social phenomenon. I have therefore attempted to ground systematic interpretation of situational and individual experiences in the context within which they occur. Underpinning this overall approach to grounded theory has involved a striving to maintain consciousness of, and sensitivity to, the delicate position being held in relation to the inquiry. The study has used this "participatory consciousness" (Heshusius, cited by Piantanida et al., p. 336) to heighten the commitment

to laying out lines of reasoning about the concepts and relationships among them, and interpretation has been informed by the voices of the participants.

One of the chief challenges I faced was in ensuring that the narrative I produced used a consistently scholarly/academic style to project my arguments and findings. Ridding myself of the trappings of an evaluation discursive style was not easy, and may not have been entirely achieved because of my prior immersion in that kind of writing.

To conclude, in an attempt to achieve an instrumental case study, I have undertaken to pursue an in-depth, systematic and contextual analysis of the case to better understand the intricacies of the phenomenon of interest, bringing existing theory to the explanation and interpretation of the findings of research. It is anticipated that through the identification of common patterns and unifying concepts, this study will enable me to develop a number of propositions that may contribute to an overall theory of the specific phenomenon being studied.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mission, Organization, and Managing Change

Introduction and Objectives

This study now moves beyond the level of institutional policy and the theoretical role of the college sector to interpret, from a very practical, insider perspective, the discourses associated with increasing the relevance and quality of college education, and having this relevance and quality recognized by the organization's stakeholders and the beneficiaries of college education, and legitimated by the CEEC. As previously indicated, textual analysis of organizational-level discourse using grounded theory and the constant comparison method the basis for answering the overarching research question: *In the context of institutional self-evaluation as a crucial quality assurance mechanism in higher education and an instrument of accountability, how, and with what underlying purposes, do colleges in Québec respond to the obligation to demonstrate fulfilment of responsibilities in relation to alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations?*

In answering this question three important issues are being recognized: (1) college is a stepping stone to university education and social expectations must be met; (2) the emerging public theory of evaluation emphasizes the critical role of external agents with regards to accountability for conduct, and the legitimization or non-legitimation of organizational practices; (3) the nature of the College's discourse is integral to its self-justification.

Complex social systems like colleges and other institutions of higher learning "generally have multiple organizational layers, a great variety of actors and a wide range of organizational activities" (Alvarez, 2003, p. 233). This makes the implementation of externally induced reform, planned organizational change, and the outcomes of institutional evaluation problematic. Because of this complexity, attempting to explain how and why the organization of study routinely operates or performs in response to externally induced change and the pressures of institutional evaluation require analysis of

its complex internal characteristics, the dynamic relationships that exist between them, and the analysis of the environmental factors which are inseparable from the organization and influence its internal decision-making processes. In other words, coherently articulated theoretical explanations of organizational behavior must pay attention to the "... important analytical and methodological question ... of how the links between the internal organizational and the wider organization and its external environment are established" (Alvarez, 2003, p. 233).

This study takes the position that: (1) these links are established in the framework of organizational structures, their decision-making and operation, as well as the texts generated for agencies in the institutional environment in recognition of the politics and implications of external scrutiny; (2) colleges seize the opportunity for self-evaluation to demonstrate effectiveness and quality on a widely diversified set of criteria within the framework of evaluation as an instrument of accountability. Since colleges create evaluative text as a primary means of organizational discourse regarding their performance, in its analysis of the case selected, this study is specifically concerned with addressing the following question:

> In responding to institutional evaluation, how is text construction and its presentation used discursively by the College to demonstrate organizational effectiveness and quality in alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations?

To interpret the strategic use of the College's self-evaluation processes requires first an analysis of the ways in which the evaluative text communicates meaning to particular aspects of the organization's life through the discursive positions they occupy within the text. According to Johnstone and Firth (2005) content and organization of text are important clues to the discursive positions of an organization. They assert that "description of events is never neutral" (p. 191), so it stands to reason that content, language and organization of text are employed consciously or unconsciously "to maintain certain viewpoints and achieve certain aims" (p. 193). Consequently, following Johnstone and Firth, the discourse presented may be regarded as being constitutive of a

particular version of the College's experience, and a means of "managing stake and interest" (p. 193) owing to the college's investment in the outcome of evaluation.

Overall analysis suggests that two conceptual dimensions constitute the foundation of the College's capacity to demonstrate effectiveness and quality: (1) *organizational purposes, structure, and management*, and (2) *program delivery, operations, activities, services and student outcomes.* Three concept categories and the associated discursive positions related to the former dimension constitute the basis of this chapter's interpretation.

1. Knowhow and Commitment to Improve
2. Direction and Clear Purposes
3. Managing Change for Sustainable Strategic Development

Knowhow and Commitment to Improve

> The institutional evaluation may be defined as a continuous and concerted process of analysis and appreciation of the carrying out of the educational mission of an institution ...The institutional evaluation is the occasion, for each of the institutions, to reflect on its mission and on the main ensuing institutional objectives. The evaluation then leads the college to take a good look at its organization and management, to measure the achievement of its institutional objectives, to appreciate the methods adopted to ensure its development and to adjust itself to the expectations of society and to verify the quality of its communication practices.

This communication from the office of the Director General (January, 23, 2001) to the college community spells out, word for word, the nature, objectives and scope of the evaluation as described in the CEEC's institutional evaluation guide.

In entering into dialogue with the CEEC, the College immediately establishes rapport through the formulation of a *devis* or comprehensive research protocol for evaluating the structures, principal responsibilities and overall management and performance of the institution based on the criteria and sub-criteria specified in the Commission's Evaluation Guide. The *devis* sought to reflect the guidelines contained in the document *L'Application des politiques institutionnelles d'évaluation des programmes* (2002), and the prescriptions, recommendations and critical observations of the CEEC in the *Rapport d'évaluation: Évaluation de l'application de la politique institutionnelle*

d'évaluation des programmes d'études (PIEP) du Collège Marianopolis, 2001, as well as blueprints suggested in the literature on organizational evaluation.

In fact, there is remarkable convergence between the College's *devis* and the CEEC's guidelines. *Clearly defined objectives* articulate what the College wants to gain for itself as a result of the evaluation of its activities, organization, and operation. These objectives are described under the rubric 'Anticipated Results of Evaluation' whose tenor attests the College's acceptance of, and partnership with, the regulatory process, strategically stressing themes such as accountability, effectiveness, improvement, quality, and the culture of evaluation.

> The primary purpose of this self-assessment is to demonstrate public accountability by examining the College's mission and main institutional objectives, and by evaluating the degree to which administrative and service units, organization and management contribute to the achievement of the organization's mission and objectives. Marianopolis welcomes the opportunity for institutional evaluation, though externally driven, because the impetus from external evaluation should contribute to and support internal evaluation strategies (Self-Evaluation Report, p. III).

The ambitious but appealing set of results anticipated comprised:

1. an in-depth understanding of the functioning of the administrative units, service sectors and facilities which contribute to teaching activities and the support of teaching activities;

2. the expectation of being able to appraise the true nature of the relationship between the institution's mission, objectives, and the ways in which the teaching and learning process is administered and managed; in sum, the College expects, at the end of the project, to know whether or not it is fulfilling its educational mission; and whether or not the institution has the ability to offer quality education to guarantee the reliability of the diplomas it awarded;

3. the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses so that it might develop strategies to strengthen existing techniques, improve administrative and organizational effectiveness and efficiency and thereby the quality of education it provided. In that regard, the evaluation should be useful in moving the institution ahead to realize desired outcomes and conditions based on the generated knowledge-base and on the values of the College Community and interested stakeholders;

4. receipt of feed-back from the Commission's external evaluation to help direct the College's strategy for developmental planning, review and improvement;

5. gathering information for parents, students, teachers and other interested stakeholders about school performance and effectiveness was listed;

6. the enhancement of positive, cooperative attitudes and relationships toward institutional self-evaluation, and a sense of accountability for the accomplishment of the goals and objectives the College publicly promoted;

7. the development of sufficient knowledge-base and skills to foster its own culture of evaluation, that, through continuous self-assessment, the institution might be better placed to improve its organizational performance, and ensure educational quality in keeping with its mission.

The Report identifies five research questions derived directly from the five major criteria of the CEEC's Guide to structure the self-evaluation process. Thirteen *issues* (enjeux) that reflect the College's unique functioning are chosen to be explored in greater depth than others. These issues encapsulate three main themes: 1) Vision and Mission, 2) Structures (governance & academic) – Efficacy and Development, and 3) Resources and Services. These issues reflect the understanding that institutional performance is about achievement of objectives, or about being successful in enhancing or producing organizational-level value or quality; and that performance is an active concept whose meaning is implicated in doing something in relation to specified standards, values and purposes. The issues follow: (Self-Evaluation Report, pp. II-III).

1. Do the College's Vision and Mission Statements in fact communicate the organization's view of what Marianopolis stands for and what is excellent and worth accomplishing?

2. Do the stated purposes of Marianopolis and its performance situate the College within the academy of institutions of higher learning?

3. How is the College's commitment to student centeredness translated into action?

4. Do College structures make sense and facilitate the work?

5. Are the College's mission and vision supported by its structures?

6. Given the numerous changes at the College, including the implementation of a new governance structure, a) to what extent are mandates, roles, responsibilities and the chain of decision-making and accountability clearly defined? b) to what extent is there efficient coordination, alignment and interrelation between structures?

7. If we understand that many of the College's priorities are set in the context of a period of change and transition, especially in terms of the overall governance of the College and the need for more space, what are the priorities that should be addressed by the leadership of the College?

8. How advanced is Marianopolis in implementing workable program supervision within current academic structures?

9. What steps has the College taken to build organizational capacity?

10. How can renewal be effected in the professional development of faculty and staff in light of ongoing needs and institutional changes?

11. Is there an adequate human resources development policy in place?

12. What are the students' and faculty's perspectives on the College's performance?

13. How adaptable has Marianopolis been to change and renewal?

Careful attention is given to the data to be collected, method of data collection and analysis, as well as the scope and method of the consultative and collaborative process among various stakeholders and interested parties, especially those most affected by the evaluation itself. In its statement on assessment ethics, the College commits itself to rigorous evaluation in terms of fairness, comprehensiveness, and trustworthiness. An important feature of the devis is the *performance contract* which comes at the end of the report. This contract is derived from the principle issues raised in the overall assessments and seeks to indicate the direction to be taken by the College to improve itself. As previously indicated, performance contracts are pitched directly at the Commission because of its interests in how colleges intend to execute the planned actions for improvement to which they commit themselves.

The Commission's observations in its preliminary external review of the College's report on the evaluation of the Liberal Arts Program (1999) provide the context for the organization's preoccupation with *devis*. This external review was critical of

weaknesses in the report's evaluative design, particularly, the absence of a devis, which the Commission attributed to the report's failure to treat and analyze with methodological and analytical rigor key performance issues and dimensions, thereby calling the legitimacy of the College's capacity to undertake reliable evaluative research into question. The College's immediate strategy was to engage in a process of image repair and offer an account, that is, "an explanation designed to remove one from a situation that may reflect unfavorably on one's image or claims to legitimacy" (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1988, p. 177). In effect, these circumstances forced the College to respond to the CEEC's critique (Marianopolis College: Response to Preliminary Report of Nov. 17, 2000) in an attempt to clarify several issues with a view to softening the tenor of its final report, which became a public document.

It may be concluded that definitive strategies aimed at reestablishing the organization's credibility were adopted by the College in evoking a discourse of "knowhow' in its evaluation report. Following Elsbach (2000), this study suggests that the ambitious but appealing set of anticipated results, the thirteen issues chosen to reflect the College's unique functioning, and the protocol for evaluative research constituted a cluster of mediating messages that were being conveyed to the CEEC in an attempt to eliminate perceived threats to aspects of the College's legitimacy. The importance of "getting it right" (Field notes: Academic Dean's comment) is demonstrated by the participation of the Director General, the Academic Dean, and the Associate Academic Dean in the process of developing the College's *devis*.

The discourse of *knowhow* presents the College as a reflective, adaptive learning organization, with the capacity to undertake rigorous, reliable and professional evaluative research, and on that basis, the report enlists the Commission's trust and confidence in the report. The rhetoric implies a commitment to a process whose design will enhance the production of results in the form of information, insights, and feedback that will inevitably contribute to improved organizational performance. By progressively focusing on themes such as accountability, effectiveness, improvement, and the culture of evaluation as various facets of institutional life are portrayed, discourse associates the College with benchmarks of institutional quality. The underlying discursive positions

reek of impression management (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980; 2003), and carry considerable symbolic weight.

Direction and Clear Purposes

In undertaking the institutional self-evaluation project, the College's task was to analyze its effectiveness in integrating its overall structural and organizational framework as well as its associated academic policies, programs of study and teaching and learning activities to create the kind of educational institution its vision and mission statements encapsulates. The Commission's position was that a college's vision and mission must provide the foundation for its organizational structures and mandates, its organizational management procedures, program management, the development of human resources, and the allocation of material resources for institutional direction as well as for on-going development.

Creating and Communicating a Shared Vision

The College's discourse categorically asserts that the organization's vision and mission are fundamentally about *educational quality, adding value in the process of delivering services,* and *delivering satisfactory or even superior educational experiences* that make a positive difference to the immediate educational outcomes of students, and to the quality of their future lives.

Well articulated mission and vision statements objectify the *raison-d'être* of an organization by expressing a clear sense of purpose to guide the organization's actions and provide a picture of what the future should be. "Vision and mission provide the foundation and framework for all decisions and activities undertaken by the College" (Informant). From a practical standpoint,

> The primary purpose of the College is to offer pre-university academic programs to students in a way that promotes successful completion of studies within the specified time period and in an environment that encourages academic excellence, All policies and structures should be directed to serve this purpose (Field notes: office of the Academic Dean for the CEEC institutional evaluation, Dec., 2001).

Permeating the College's discourse of direction and purpose is its pursuit of objectives that are clear, relevant and congruent with its mission. As frequently pointed out in the literature, vision and mission statements may be regarded as dynamic expressions of the values, goals and culture that give the organization its purposes and guide its operation, expectation and future direction (Nanus, 1992; Valdez Perez, Milstein, Wood & Jacquez, 1999). From the outset, therefore, the College communicates the organization's view of what it stands for, that is, what it regards as excellent and worth accomplishing. It projects an image of how the organization should be working and how it should appear when things are going well. This particular discourse emphasizes the intended outcomes of the education of students, commitment to a shared educational purpose, student centeredness and academic excellence. In a very practical sense, the discourse of direction and purposes embodies a contract to create socially relevant programs and develop curricula which give students the educational formation necessary not only to pursue further studies successfully, but also to contribute in a meaningful fashion to the complex changing world of the future.

Educational Mission and Priorities

The November 1990 consultation report on mission and goals identified six shared concerns which reflected the emerging importance of organizational direction to the College: (1) the kind of educational experience we wish to offer; (2) the kind of climate we wish to create; (3) the quality of professionalism we wish to incorporate; (4) the kind of quality we need; (5) the kind and quality of services we need; (6) the future of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame (CND) within the College. These concerns constituted an educational and cultural context for the College's continued adherence to the curriculum and to the diverse regulations set forth in ministerial policy, and for the demonstration of its commitment to fulfil its contractual institutional mandate and obligations. Automatic renewal of the ministerial licence to operate in the public interest honoured this commitment.

A frequently made comment within the community is that the College complies with institutional regulations and program policy more so than other colleges. This

perception may stem from the organization's dependence upon government subsidies, and the fact that the College always operated from the position that, to a major extent, its priorities and objectives must converge with the Ministry's. In this regard, to make sense of what it wanted to achieve academically, the College translated its legal or institutional mission into an internal policy statement of its intentions. This policy statement is referred to in Québec as a *projet éducatif.* The College's current *educational project* is articulated in its Vision and Mission Statement whose roots may be traced to a very comprehensive statement entitled Nature and Objectives of Marianopolis College-1981.

That comprehensive statement set out the College's philosophy and purpose, and identified its niche within higher education and the values it enshrined to symbolize what it regarded as worthwhile to foster. This statement gave priority to "impart[ing] ... that knowledge, and the *development of those intellectual and moral habits and skills*, which are the essence of a general education seen in the context of preparation for university" (Faculty Handbook, 1982), and to *fostering personal growth and development* based on seven social values. However, the 1981 statement on the Nature and Objectives of Marianopolis College lacked the specificity needed to enable coherent strategic academic planning, problem-solving, and the development of managerial priorities for action. Thus, a new statement of Mission and Goals was approved a decade later in 1991, following a comprehensive process of self-examination, reflection, and dialogue for the purposes of institutional renewal.

The 1991 mission and goals statement integrated specific themes having direct links to the 1981 statement. The College defined itself as a pre-university institution offering the Diploma of Collegial Studies in Arts and Science programs, with a tradition of academic excellence fostered by 80 years of commitment of the Sisters of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame. As stated by Livingston, (1992), its aim was to provide an explicitly student focused education to a clientele from multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-denominational backgrounds, targeting specifically the holistic development of the individual student so that each might make a meaningful contribution to a complex changing society. The specific values promoted comprised self-confidence, self-respect,

self-reliance, tolerance, respect, responsibility for others, concerns for social justice and commitment to the care and improvement of the environment.

The fundamental thrust of the 1991 statement was to place the student at the *centre* of the College's education mission within the framework of a *learning community* that was committed to ensuring the *fullest personal growth and academic excellence* of *each* student. This statement not only identified the overall purposes of the College, but the specific actions it guaranteed on behalf of the student body, their intended outcomes, and the precise course to chart in response to changing demographic and environmental conditions. It may be argued that the 1991 Mission and Goals Statement was timely in that its implementation coincided with a wave of government review and reform of academic programs. It was instrumental in fostering reflection upon the kind of *organizational climate and culture* required to build shared vision and responsibility, heightened professionalism and improved communicative skills, and progressive and imaginative leadership. The discourse it embodied, and the consultation and dialogue involved in its formulation, generated the organizational purposes required to stabilize the College and guide its operation during the 1990s decade of rapid policy change and significant reform.

The educational project which formed the basis of the institutional self-evaluation derives from the envisioning process undertaken by the College as a result of one of the recommendations made in the strategic study and Plan of Action adopted by the Marianopolis Board of Directors soon after it came into being. Envisioning was seen as a collaborative activity to embrace and articulate the collective beliefs, values and ideals of the constituencies of the institution. This process focused on describing with unequivocal clarity what the College stands for and seeks to accomplish to enhance the future success of its students.

The resulting Vision and Mission Statement established an institutional, historical, and societal context for the activities of the College. It reflected a deep sense of awareness of the responsibility to be fully focused on the student, to be committed to serving social needs of Québec society, and to be open to the world. These specific purposes provided a starting point for comprehensively aligning and transforming

academic programs and organizational processes around a coherent set of goals. The 2000 Vision and Mission Statement enunciates a relatively broad philosophy of education, while delineating a blueprint that identifies who the College serves and the concrete choices it has made about what to deliver to its clientele. In effect, this statement constitutes "the stimulus of the organizational act and organizational action" (Gillespie, 2000, p. 29). It introduces new elements but cling tenaciously to the values of the two previous mission statements, thereby representing an amalgam that embraces a niche rich in educational heritage and academic success within which the College's contribution to the growth of Québec society will be made.

Preferences still exist within the college community for the 1991 Mission and Goals Statement:

> We've gone through various incarnations of mission. Personally, I like the version of the mission statement before this version because I felt it was much more precise and concrete and reminded us specifically of areas that we had to work on and we could measure. Does this course fit in what part of the mission? Is this part of the program for this part of the mission? (Informant).

> Now, I believe that if you think of the Commission for example, we'd love to be in a position where you can demonstrate that you obtained goals specified in the mission; and in order to do that, they ought to be more easily measurable, quantifiable even (Informant).

The concepts embedded in the current Vision Statement reflect seven themes which directly reflect the institution's purposes. These themes commit the College to:

1. Draw energy from its rich educational heritage;
2. Strive for educational leadership;
3. Build a dynamic and supportive environment;
4. Promote personal and intellectual growth;
5. Prepare students for academic excellence in their studies;
6. Prepare students for autonomous life-long learning;
7. Prepare students to make positive contributions as citizens of a complex and changing world.

The values embedded in the College's Mission Statement also express a number of key organizational commitments:

(a) Foster a student-centered focus within a dynamic, learning community;
(b) Pursue knowledge and understanding, i.e., a spirit of inquiry;
(c) Uphold the dignity of the individual, i.e., affirm individual value and worth;
(d) Foster a multicultural educational environment, i.e., value diversity, inclusiveness, and the contribution of all its members;
(e) Promote mutual respect, trust, integrity in action, and social and political justice; (this necessitates constant re-examination and readjustment of practices and policies);
(f) Enhance innovative teaching;
(g) Incorporate technology to better serve students' needs;
(h) Develop critical and creative thinking and effective communication;
(i) Practise responsible stewardship of the natural environment.

The overall process of *creating and communicating a shared vision and mission* reflects three interrelated ideals for *managing the College* and *steering its education process*, namely, student centred pedagogy, commitment to the success of all students, and responsiveness to diverse needs. The core values of the College's vision and mission therefore aim to give meaning to organizational work and to motivate the administration, faculty, and staff to strive toward the achievement of common institutional purposes.

There are several very important value positions within the College's educational mission which converge on the concept category *student centeredness within a dynamic learning community*. The very clear implication of this category is that students are the most vital organizational resource and as such will be nurtured within a community that is responsive to students' intellectual and developmental needs. More significantly, the theme of *development of valuable skills for life-long learning* reflects the College's intention to enable students to participate responsibly and competently in the immediate term and as future citizens in the political, social and economic life of the wider global society. Another powerful theme is that of *inclusiveness and the celebration of diversity.* This theme embraces values such as respect, trust, caring and the affirmation of individual worth, and with the others, are the building-blocks of the concept category *student centeredness within a dynamic learning community.* The principles enunciated derive from the values-framework of the rich heritage of the College, and when linked to student centeredness, reflect a commitment to enable students, regardless of background and prior level of academic performance, to achieve their maximum cognitive and social

development by mobilizing the resources and energy of the College to create conditions and processes conducive to their success.

The themes within the Vision and Mission Statement represent a bold attempt to anchor the College firmly within the global higher educational academy and strive to meet the quality criteria corresponding to its status as an institution of higher learning. They commit the College to educational breadth and depth, knowledge, skills, intellectual vitality, values and attitudes which define an agenda and community of excellence. Essentially, they identify a College that has learned that the key to educational effectiveness is the organization's ability to align institutional objectives with "well identified, pertinent and current expectations and needs [which] may come from students, the school system, the labour market or society" (CEEC, 2000, p. 10). Undoubtedly, the College is primarily concerned with implementing programs for which it has obtained Ministerial license. However, one of the clear messages in its discourse is that educational activities are pursued within the broader philosophical framework of the College's vision and mission.

The question that must be asked is to what extent do the conditions established by the College for achieving institutional objectives and for assessing the output and outcomes of organizational organization and activity validate the integrity of the stated purposes of the organization? Answers to this question will be provided as part of the discussion and analysis within the sections that follow and in subsequent chapters.

> **Proposition 1:** An educational institution that possesses a well articulated student-centred mission and vision is likely to engage in the priorities that are essential to effective management and academic quality.

> **Proposition 2:** An educational organization that couples vision, mission, and institutional mandate with effective action is capable of meaningful improvement and change.

Managing Change for Sustainable Strategic Development

M*anaging change for sustainable strategic development* is a major concept category and an essential discourse in the College's self-definition. This discourse stresses three things in particular to the CEEC: (1) dynamic educational institutions have the capacity to improve themselves through systematic, sustained efforts that change the conditions for governance, and organizational strategies and processes with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively; (2) handling change at Marianopolis is an integral part of strategic management, and is accomplished through systematic approaches to the review, planned development and reinforcement of organizational strategies, structures and processes for improving organizational effectiveness; (3) handling change derives its energy from the convictions of internal constituents and external stakeholders that the institution's mission and vision are relevant, that the services the organization provides are valuable and effective, and that without ongoing meaningful improvement, overall quality and the College's capacity to serve institutional needs would be jeopardized. Consequently, meaningful change has allowed the College to operate effectively in the face of internal and external forces and challenges.

Organizational Development and Viability

Dynamic educational institutions have the capacity to improve themselves through systematic, sustained efforts that change the conditions for governance, organizational strategies and processes, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively. The position expressed by the College was that adaptability and openness to change and renewal was at the core of the organizations capacity to e*nsure sustainable organizational development and viability* and had been an enduring strength throughout its historical evolution. In fact, for more than the two preceding decades, the College had demonstrated ongoing alertness to critical issues, and sought to identify new needs in innovation, pedagogy and management. Further, within the prevailing climate of significant external and internal challenge and flux, the organization was successful in undertaking to proactively shape, redefine, and renew itself to serve the students' current, as well as their future academic and social development needs and the broad needs of the

community. Thus, the case being made is that using its own internal human resources and expertise as well as the skills of external consultants, the College was able to identify the needs required to improve organizational capacity and efficiency, and instituted actions intended to ensure its continued development in the face of internal and external challenges.

Changing societal conditions force leaders to think in new ways and demand new and better responses to problems. The momentous decision in the late 1960s to opt for a pre-university system rather than struggle to maintain its undergraduate degree status was a strategic response to change. The present ongoing study of internal structures and academic programs under the direction of its Board illustrates a similar response.

Discourse amassed numerous phenomena in support of the concept category of *managing change for sustainable strategic development*, an essential part of the College's self-definition. For example, the formulation of a statement of institutional mission and goals in 1981 helped the College to define its philosophy, purpose and vision of the future focused on student learning. Four years later, the Williams Report (Williams, 1985), at the behest of College Council, called for a commitment to a future of imaginative and decisive action, and a commitment to maintain, strengthen and redefine the College's traditional goal of academic excellence to include a wider range of activities and achievement. Specifically, Williams called for a paradigm shift which embraced diversity or "dimensions of education other than simply classrooms and grades" (1985, p. 3).

The creation of the Professional Development Office and the construction of the Athletics and Computer Facilities Complex were direct outcomes of this report. While initial planning for the complex predated the report, it was timely in refocusing attention on the imperative of constructing the facilities to gain legitimacy as a fully integrated and comprehensive College. These facilities allowed the College to break its dependency upon a nearby private high school for the provision of most of its physical education course offerings. In fact, the complex led, upon its completion in 1987, to the establishment of a Physical Education Department, and also launched the College along the path

to achieving its vision regarding "*encouraging innovative teaching and incorporating technology to better serve [its] students*".

Other outcomes of the William's Report included a major upgrade of the language lab as well as a new, more attractive and convivial faculty/staff lounge. The William's Report stimulated improvements in several other areas as well, including academic counselling services, curriculum development, the evaluation of student work, timetabling, admissions policies and practices, and publicity strategies. A more systematic approach evolved to funding the College through the creation of a parent-alumni association, and the rationalization of the structure of student fees. This report also initiated the first survey of student opinion at the College and the first satisfaction survey of its graduates.

Library and audio-visual services were professionally reviewed in 1988-1989 leading to modernization in terms of quantity and relevance of collection, appropriateness of technology and technical resources, and service quality to programs, students and faculty. Concurrent with these changes, a Professional Development Office was established, and a coordinator appointed to facilitate and promote activities that would stimulate the development of the faculty and thus enhance their effectiveness within the classroom and the institution.

Livingston's (1992) Report on the Institutional Review was a significant milestone for the College. This review undertook a comprehensive study of the College's goals and objectives as well as its structures. Emerging from this process was the formulation and adoption of a more coherent statement of Mission and Goals (1991), and a set of recommended structures that might effectively respond to these goals. As a result, Academic Areas became Academic Departments and Departmental Coordinators became Department Chairpersons. In addition, an Academic Management Team (AMT), made up of the Academic Dean and the Department Chairperson became a formal administrative/academic component of College structure. In keeping with the specific pedagogical goals articulated in the 1991 Mission and Goals Statement, the College undertook to establish a framework for organizing and integrating the curriculum based

on four key competencies, namely, c*ommunication, critical thinking, social interaction* and v*aluing.*

However, the far reaching and revolutionary proposals to regroup academic departments to take into account a more program approach to college education and split the Mathematics and Science Department into two separate departments, (a Mathematics Department and a Science Department), were rejected. Livingstone also proposed a model for integrating elements of total quality management (TQM) into academic operations as well as the implementation of competency-based teaching after the Alverno College model (Alverno College Faculty, 1979/1985). At the time, such ideas were beyond the frontiers of acceptability of governance and most of the teaching personnel because they augured radical transformation of the familiar and the traditional. Ministerial reforms have subsequently forced the College to reexamine issues connected to the program approach, quality assurance, competency-based teaching, and the intransigence of the departmental model.

The College's more recently created Learning Resources Centre is also traceable to Livingston's review. This centre provides support by allocating specialized resources directly to given courses, most notably language-based courses that are part of the general education component to improve the performance of the at-risk student population. In addition, Livingston also recommended the creation of an assessment team, and the engagement of specialists to establish training programs for team building and quality improvement of management. Their adoption may have had a significant impact on the development of administrative competencies and the future direction of the College.

Widespread study and consultation on Faculty evaluation occupied the College during the 1994 academic year, leading, in 1995, to the adoption of a policy on the Evaluation of Teaching Personnel. In fact, Marianopolis has been the leader, province wide, in the development and implementation of policy on the evaluation of faculty.

Organizational Reinvention for Improved Governance

Like any other complex organization, Marianopolis is a grouping of human, material and technical resources within a formal structure of tasks and authority

relationships to accomplish a set of desired educational goals in an efficient and effective manner. At the core of the concept category *managing change for sustainable strategic development* is the notion that building organizational capacity matters to the organization. Capacity building is a dynamic, ongoing process by which people within organizations actively develop resources and services and implement strategies, policies and programs in pursuit of more effective and sustainable performance. The importance of capacity building is well illustrated in the discourse regarding *organizational reinvention for improved governance.*

The institutional self-evaluation of Marianopolis which commenced soon after the installation of a new Board allowed the College to describe how it had managed the events associated with *changes in governance structures* and the College's increased emphasis on policy direction, planning, and strategic leadership to support the organization in its mission. A point well taken at the time was that, "while management structures are an essential component of any institution, those structures must be expressly designed with the individual in mind. The purpose of those structures should be to organize the College's resources for the most effective and successful achievement of its vision and mission" (Field notes: Universalia consultant, Faculty/Staff Workshop, June, 2001).

In portraying the events confronting the Board, the College aimed to show that the organization had faced up to its responsibility to take the necessary steps to implement strategies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its management processes, and the overall performance of structures and committees. Evaluative text presents the College as an organization *striving for effective and dynamic management* during a period of enormous change, and also as an organization providing educational services within a *framework of competent governance* despite the constraints imposed by changing management structures. It is also identified with *effective performance* in relation to deliberately formulated policy goals. Getting these messages across to the CEEC was important since organizational structure and operations constitute the medium for providing direction and exerting authority.

The complexity of the actions, activities, and decisions associated with *organizational reinvention* constitute a context within which the success attained in the reinvention process may be measured. The discourse explaining this process to the CEEC focuses on the list of challenges identified to be facing the College by the institutional evaluation team: (1) understanding the then current governance model; (2) coping with the changing relationship of the College to the CND; (3) reviewing the terms of By-Law No. 1, which defined the governance of the College; (4) deciding the composition and mandate of the Board of Directors and the proposed Foundation; (5) aligning the strategic functions of the Board and Foundation with the day-to-day operations of the College; (6) reviewing the mandates, including responsibilities and lines of accountability, of administrative offices and college committees; (7) reviewing academic structures following program reform; and (8) reviewing the office of the Director General in light of the change in governance.

To appreciate the complexity of the circumstances defining the concept sub-category *organizational reinvention,* it is necessary to briefly trace the contextual framework of the evolution of governance from the organization's inception as a college in 1969. In an attempt to create responsible and representative governance, and in recognition of "the democratic principle that those affected by a decision be involved in the decision-making process" (Minutes of College Council, September, 1970), College Council was established in 1970, and its constitution completed and approved in 1975. Its powers, though extensive, were somewhat circumscribed by the authority of the Visitor, who, under Bill 174 of the National Assembly of Québec which legally incorporated the College, was the nun acting as the Superior General of the Congrégation. The Board of Trustees was formally constituted in 1983 with the purpose of providing a more comprehensive governance structure that included a body with ultimate authority in the event of necessity. The Board of Trustees comprised six to eight members of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, appointed by the Visitor.

Within the by-laws of the Corporation, the Board of Trustees and College Council had very different powers. The Trustees exercised *powers of necessity* which comprised ultimate authority in financial and property management; ultimate reserve authority to be used rarely, if at all, against disarray arising from unforeseen circumstances where the

power of other duly constituted bodies is not clear; the right to preserve the aims and objectives of the College and its ties with Les Soeurs de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame (CND); and the right to recommend to the Visitor, after consultation with College Council, the Sister to be appointed as chief executive officer (president) of the College. The Board of Trustees exercised its powers at arm's length from the day-to-day operation of the College and met only once a year. In addition, the Board of Trustees assumed responsibility for major financial expenditures such as in the building of the sports-classroom complex in the mid-1980s.

The authorities of the Congrégation responsible for the jurisdiction to which the Marianopolis Community belonged made appointments from within the Congrégation to the strategic offices of the Academic Dean, Registrar, and Coordinator of Finance, thereby securing the levers of power at the operational level, and ongoing influence of the tradition and value system of the religious order. However, since 1988 certain offices have been opened up to a selection process.

College Council was the front line governance structure. It comprised thirty-five members, and was, in practice and in effect, the governing body responsible for all the operational policies and practices of the College, its long-term planning and development, and making recommendations to the Board of Trustees in the case of major capital outlays. All administrative and service areas and academic departments were represented individually on College Council. Its chairperson was the President of the College, with responsibility for the implementation of the decisions of the Board of Trustees and of the College Council.

Serious concerns about the continuing role of the CND, cuts in government funding, possible threats to private education, and the long term financial viability of the College underscored the organization's need for reinvention and an enhanced capacity to plan and manage for meaningful change and effective governance in the interest of survival. These concerns precipitated two major events. In November, 1995, the Board of Trustees launched preliminary discussions on the issue of the future of Marianopolis College in the agenda item "No. 5" of Transfer of the Marianopolis College Corporation to a Lay Board. A year later in November, 1996, upon the proposal of the Executive

Committee to the President, the first extraordinary amalgamated session of the Board of Trustees and College Council took place. As a result, the decision was taken to study and address the issue of the governance of the College, with the aim to strengthen administrative structures and give the College all the powers required to fulfil its mandate effectively.

The study commissioned by the College to examine academic and administrative structures questioned the effectiveness of College Council. The report was particularly critical of the fact that internal membership was top heavy relative to stakeholder membership of the wider community. College Council was deemed too large and unwieldy to perform effectively in several strategic areas and Council's mode of operation and decision-making process was reported as unclear. Universalia, the external consulting firm responsible for the report, identified three operational factors that affected the Council's effectiveness:

1. the College's two-tier governance structure separated important operational and strategic management functions that should have been integrated and coordinated under a common corporate structure and visible leadership;

2. vital strategic planning and management processes at the level of the Board of Trustees occurred with the exclusion of external stakeholder participation ;

3. social and demographic forces rendered the CND increasingly incapable of continuing to provide leadership and competent management in a rapidly changing educational, technological, cultural, and political environment. In effect, its membership was aging and shrinking without noticeable infusion of younger talent.

Influenced by the findings of Universalia's report, the Board of Trustees acted decisively to set up a broadly representative ad hoc committee to draft by-laws for a new structure for governance and a separate Foundation for the College. Thus, within the context of the existing charter, the College sought to reinvent and renew itself through the establishment of an eighteen-member Board of Directors, subject to the authority of the Visitor, to exercise the rights and powers to fully manage the affairs of the Corporation. The new constitution enshrined the rights of the Board of Directors to exercise all powers necessary for promoting and preserving the mission of the Corporation, attaining the

objectives of the Corporation, assuring the workings and progress of the Corporation, and recommending the appointment of the Director General to the Visitor.

Essentially, the newly created governance structure attempted to attain two goals: (1) develop a framework which integrated and coordinated a wide range of managerial and responsibility functions within one framework. These initiatives aimed to increase substantially external stakeholder participation in strategic affairs, and neutralize the effects of, but compensate for, the declining human resource capacity of the CND, thus ensuring a continuing but changed role for the CND; and (2) ultimately create a corporate lay board with ownership of the College's assets, and its assumption of all legal rights and responsibilities of the College.

However, since the power of ownership of assets and all legal rights and responsibilities still reside with the Visitor, in accordance with Bill 174, the CND retains substantial rights. Such rights are demonstrated through exercise of the power to appoint eleven representatives to the Board of Directors, at least six of whom may by drawn from outside the religious order, and the right of the Visitor to appoint to the Board, the Sister of the CND, that is, the Member of the Corporation and Superior (CEO) of the College. The changes leading to current governance has therefore ensured a continuing, but changed role for the CND while simultaneously greatly strengthening the powers of the Board of Directors to plan, enact policy, and manage the overall affairs of the College.

The discourse of organizational reinvention essentially stresses that in undertaking governance reform, the College exercised significant degrees of control over the uncertainty and ambiguity of its environment. Notably, the Board of Directors was created through the coordinated action of the College and its most powerful institutional stakeholder, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame (CND), to develop a more decentralized, flexible management *mechanism for meaningful change and organizational improvement.* Its effective execution reflected the high degree to which *shared ideals and value systems* existed among stakeholders, and the ability of stakeholders to adopt strategies and procedures to achieve specific quality objectives in response to organizational mission, social expectations, and the broader, but crucial institutional environment. This interpretation rests on the textual evidence that an immediate aim of the Board was to

initiate a series of strategies and procedures to ensure achievement of specified quality standards, thereby enabling key stakeholders to have confidence in organizational processes and outcomes.

> **Proposition 3:** Sustainable organizational development and viability is a function of organizational adaptability and openness to change and renewal.

Shouldering Responsibility for Effective Management and Organizational Improvement

Within a complex organization like Marianopolis College, the actions and activities associated with the fulfilment of mandates, and the degree of alignment and communication between levels of authority structure provide crucially important information regarding management's effectiveness in ensuring the achievement of specified quality standards. S*houldering responsibility for effective management and organizational improvement* at the administrative and academic levels is a powerful concept sub-category which helps to summarize the Board's interpretation of its mandate, and the measures adopted in pursuit of such interpretation. This concept sub-category comprises two finer themes: administrative action and leadership, and enhancing coordination, performance and accountability.

Administrative action and leadership. As a major theme, *administrative action and leadership* rests upon specific strategic actions which significantly reflect the intent of the new Board of Directors to put a stamp of leadership on governance. Actions such as preparation of the agenda, voting procedures and operations reflected an expressed desire for *transparency, scrupulousness, and effectiveness* (Board minutes). Consequently, the rules of procedure lent themselves to the coordination of meetings in order to enhance the efficiency with which business was conducted at the upper levels of operation and the efficient use of the valuable time of Board members. In the interest of gaining the capability to undertake activities having long-term strategic importance as well as shorter-term operational significance, the Board created three strategic standing committees, namely: (1) Building and Ground; (2) Academic Planning and Development; (3) Finance and Audit, and also reserved the right to act through the creation of special committees to study and report on projects of a temporary nature which were not within

the scope of any Board Standing Committee. Responsibility for, among other things, implementing decisions of the Board and taking such actions as delegated to it by the Board, and dealing with contingencies arising between meetings of the Board fell to its crucial arm, its Executive Committee.

To illustrate the Board's stamp of leadership, the CEEC' attention was focused on activities such as the creation of a new Vision and Mission Statement to clearly describe how Marianopolis wanted to be known, and what purposes the institution would serve; the Board's determination to take measures to guard against financial risk and ensure continued financial viability by being directly involved in the budgeting, financial planning and financial monitoring process; the establishment of a Foundation to provide the College with the financial means to retain its position of educational leadership and its ability to offer financial aid to students who could not otherwise benefit from a Marianopolis education; and the implementation of measures to fill crucial gaps in structure and address administrative deficiencies.

Besides these key immediate priorities, discourse underscored the Board's ambitious and transformative program which included the review of academic and administrative structures; the review of medium to long-term information technology planning options available to Marianopolis and the development of approaches that best fit the needs of the various College stakeholders; the assessment of the College's space and physical plant to meet current and future space needs; and the Board's approval of the relocation of the College to the Mother House of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame followed by a program of building and renovation at the new Campus. As stated by the Director General, this move was as "an opportunity that allows us to strengthen our vision of 'building a dynamic and supportive environment' for our students and for ourselves, while at the same time reaffirming the vital links we maintain with a remarkable heritage" (Communication to the Marianopolis Community, February 26, 2002).

Several other decisions reflected the College's discourse of leadership. For example, its examination of professional development structures and resources, and the procedures for pedagogical renewal and innovation; in light of the technology, space, and physical plant needs, its review of the finances and budgetary processes to ensure the

availability of necessary resources; mechanisms for ongoing review of vision and mission, and assessment of the congruence between these directional aspects and College practices.

Two key strategic decisions and actions completed the discourse of leadership: the Board's move to upgrade the Colleges technology services and administrative information system in recognition of gaps in service provision, but more importantly, the Board' affirmation that Academic Council, Finance, Personnel, and the Student Life Committee, as standing committees of the College, are legislative bodies with the capacity to determine aspects of policies and procedures, and make recommendations relating to policy. In essence, the latter decision reflected decisive action to rationalize College committee structures and bring clarity to their inter-communication and operations according to an action plan which:

(a) strengthened the effectiveness, efficiency and levels of participation of College standing committees;

(b) replaced the Senate with improved processes and mechanisms of consultation, participation and consensus building;

(c) revised the governance structure accordingly;

(d) implemented any restructured model of Standing Committees for a trial period of two years, at which time it should be reviewed for viability.

These strategic decisions by the Board sought to address serious problems of structural misalignment caused by the by-law under which committees or positions with a direct relationship to College Council had been restructured to create new governance. Emphasis was placed upon legislative functions. In the contingency of the events, numerous mandates and policies were left intact, causing minor to somewhat serious problems that stemmed from not recognizing and coordinating mandates within and between new and old structures. Official attempts to examine the implications of the major changes in structures as well as the introduction of additional services commenced only in September, 2001.

Institutional self-evaluation brought several critical issues to the fore, but primarily the role and mandate of the Senate. College Senate was created to maintain the

collegial model in practice under College Council. The Senate was intended to be a major cog within the reinvented system of governance. This 22-member body, originally chaired by the DG, consisted of heads of services, department chairs, faculty members, staff members and students. In justifying the creation of the Senate, several voices within the community argued that such a structure was necessary to temper the effects of the corporate management model which the Board of Directors represented, a model perceived inappropriate for an educational institution. The Senate was also expected to serve as an instrument for fostering and maintaining collegiality. "It's a great strength for our College"; "This College has not done well because of leadership; it has done well because of collegiality" (Field notes: Report on Staff/Faculty Workshop, June, 2001).

The Senate was constituted as a *consultative*, not a *decision-making or legislative* entity. Under the previous By-Laws, the four Standing Committees, Academic Council, Student Life, Finance and Personnel reported to College Council. These four committees focused on specific operations within the College and, in many respects, were the starting point for formulating appropriate plans, policies and procedures to reach organizational goals. The College standing committees constituted the first level legislative structures of the College. "In the interest of broader coordination and collegiality these committees brought to Senate their various policies for its consideration and suggestions" (Field notes). However, the Senate concentrated exclusively, as well as overzealously, on one aspect of its mandate, namely, to

> review policies and procedures received from the College's Standing Committees and recommend such policies and procedures to the Director General if deemed appropriate.

Furthermore, in the manner of its operation, Senate operated as though it was part of the direct chain of command, although it had a consultative, not a decision-making or policy control function. This was problematic, causing the relationship of the Standing Committees to the Senate to be somewhat ambivalent and strained. This anomaly was unwittingly caused by virtue of its position within the administrative structure, its particular mandate, its membership composition, and its perceived role and operational procedure which, incidentally, did not coincide with the spirit of College policy. These

circumstances seem to suggest that Senate attempted to substitute itself for the defunct College Council that the Board of Directors had replaced, thereby creating governance within governance and forestalling and frustrating committee work and stifling both the energy and contribution of committee members. The Senate acquired "the potentially conflicting role as a forum where the position of legitimate, but more localized, vested interests [were] negotiated and formulated" (Field notes: Review of College Committee Structures – Final Report, May, 2002). Its ineffectualness and misalignment became a notable issue, college-wide.

Unfortunately, the implications of reporting relationship, the creation of certain key offices and the potential for overlapping of responsibilities and mandates had had little discussion in policy formulation. Yet, how structures function and interrelate with each other are relevant aspects to effective organizational performance. For example, when the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) and Personnel Committee were created, the issue that should have been addressed by policy makers was what mechanisms were appropriate to bring the awareness of the inter-connectedness of very specific curriculum and faculty-personnel matters to the deliberations and operation of these organizational structures in relation to the Office of the Academic Dean.

Subsequent disbandment of the Senate has allowed for a richer dialogue between the College's personnel and the Board, avoids frustration on personnel's part where crucially sensitive matters may be concerned, and provides the means to ensure that the voice of faculty and staff is truly heard by the leadership within the context of currently emerging governance structures. More importantly, it has removed the threat of a substitute hierarchical decision-making structure and allowed the Board to assume its full constitutional role.

The Board's resolve to rationalize college committee structures may also be seen as an attempt to facilitate the management of interrelated curriculum and personnel matters in a way that permits the desired flexibility in achieving outcomes in a spirit of cooperation.

> Certainly the Board moved to clarify lines of accountability and lines of responsibility. I still think that there are practical issues that need to be addressed; how committees are run, just on that kind of level to make it

> efficient. But I certainly would say that the Board has tried to move in that direction. They may have to be some follow up (Informant).

In the discourse of leadership, the office of the Director General (DG) is shown to be extremely pivotal to the execution of the policies of the Board and the operation of the College in general, since the Director General is the "*administrative and academic head of the College*," with the responsibility and authority "*for the execution of all educational and administrative policies as determined by the Board of Directors*," and for the smooth running of the diverse sectors of the College. By virtue of the office and the powers conferred by the Board with regard to ultimate responsibility for general administration and program management, the Director General is prominently involved in critical decision-making, policy formulation, operational management and strategic planning and implementation, and in assuring that the necessary day-to-day operations of the College are coordinated and carried out effectively and efficiently. Through these means, the DG is kept in constant communication with the diverse set of responsibility centres in the College, thereby being afforded the opportunity to give input to discussions and to provide leadership and motivation in a timely fashion.

Discourse highlights the integral nature of the role and actions of the Director General in relation to the sub-category *administrative action and leadership*. From an operational point of view, emphasis is placed on the close association of the Director General with personnel matters in an attempt to establish a Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) to review, modify, and create a coherent set of policies related to staff and faculty working conditions.

The hiring of a Human Resources Coordinator in late 1998 followed by the establishment of a joint Human Resources and Professional Development Office (HRPDO) initiated the makings of a human resources management policy. With the growth of technical capability, this office enabled the College to review its personnel policies and to bring attention to other working conditions that should be implemented either as a result of changes to existing laws or simply in order to extend benefits to faculty and staff. Priority issues included a faculty workload and classification policy,

and the development of pay equity provisions and policies and procedures relative to working conditions for the staff and teaching personnel.

The enormity of the challenges faced is demonstrated by the fact that the office first had to set up basic things like filing systems, and a data-base system. In terms of employees and particularly in terms of faculty, it was necessary to set in place procedures that provided requisite information, guaranteed equal access for everyone, and ensured that when there were problems, people were dealt with fairly and equitably. Making personnel realize that the office was there to support them was a key priority.

The significance of the creation of a joint Human Resources and Professional Development Office cannot be overstated. In fact, the circumstances surrounding the establishment and initial operation of this office reflect the recognition of a serious administrative gap, and the need for radical change and improvement in the area of personnel management. The Human Resources Coordinator replaced a faculty and staff personnel committee which lacked a clear and effective mandate, requisite skills, and adequate community support. While its intentions were in the best interests of its constituents, functionally, its contribution to its area of responsibility was solely goodwill. Discourse suggests that in creating the HRPDO, the College sought to create a new structure that could accomplish a number of tasks: (1) bring order, structure, coherence and transparency to a vital but neglected area of administration; (2) professionally and efficiently assist the new Board of Directors in the execution of its duties; (3) provide the institutional and instrumental support to faculty, staff and administrative officers necessary to enhance the development of a capable, motivated workforce, and maintain a climate of trust within the network of relationships; (4) implement policies that increase their overall effectiveness of operations.

Within two years of the establishment of the HRPDO the foundation for achieving these goals was laid, albeit through a change agency model that was driven by determination to implement policy based on standard practices drawn from public-sector management, the Colleges mission, and rapid transformation of the existing order of things. Given an organizational culture steeped in caution, if not resistance, to change,

decisions to quickly apply strategies to meet the goals desired by this change agency model predictably engendered tension, frustration and confrontation.

The slow pace of change may be explained by "the awareness of the implications of change at the level of operation, whether because of policies ... and/or historical practices" (Field Notes). This view posits that a cautious and deliberative approach enables policies and practices to take root and to inform action at all levels, thereby reducing the potential for arbitrariness, and increasing the relevance and coherence of the policies and practices in themselves and in relation to others. In addition, this view sees the consideration of adjustments and adaptations within the larger purpose or original intent of organizational objectives, and calls for recognition of the *important* difference between update and philosophical reversal. Underpinning this position is the presumption of the stability, desirability, and immutability of organizational objectives, once formulated (Field Notes).

However, frustration among faculty with deliberative incrementalism, and the slow and tentative pace of change is illustrated in the following remarks:

> One of the things I think that is a problem here is perhaps due to our administrative connection with a community that doesn't really ever move very quickly on things. There is a lot of what you might call that period of discernment that they go through. Two conflicting cultures toward progress exist here (Informant).

> The 'Marianopolis way' is a bit of a weight around our necks, it seems to me; and we tend to fall back on it whenever we sense being changed, and I have to say by-and-large that all institutions are averse to change. But I think that too is part of this culture, the notion that our motto talks about a 'tradition of excellence', and the emphasis tends to be upon the tradition and therefore it tends to be on the culture and the way we have done things, and I think that makes it very difficult to change, certainly in the short term (Informant).

> There is an obvious potential for disengagement when people who have a desire to move things forward a little bit faster are faced with internal struggles and personalities which tend to slow things down (Informant).

The issues surrounding the establishment of the HRPDO at Marianopolis illustrate cultural organizational dynamics, as well as the operation of mimetic isomorphic pressure

(DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; 1991), whereby, to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity, and enhance legitimacy within common organizational fields, organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that are perceived to epitomize success. Its establishment also illustrates the principle of cognitive isomorphism whereby professionals who share similar training, education, experiences, outlook and worldview gradually interpenetrate organizations and introduce similar kinds of management techniques and ways of organizing that exemplify perceived models of how organizations should operate.

Beyond strengthening the College through accomplishments in the area of human resource management, leadership from the top is demonstrated discursively through the DG's critical operational involvement with management issues touching on the adequacy, appropriateness and functioning of the structures, strategic planning concerns related to the College's space and physical plant needs, and technological improvements of the College for the benefit of students and the community, as well through the ability to resolve problems decisively. A case in point is stemming the tide of fractiousness and disintegration caused by the long-term challenges faced by one particular academic department in resolving conflict, achieving broad-based consensus, making decisions and maintaining stable leadership. The department in question has had to identify key issues and educational challenges, establish team norms and team-building processes, develop a consensus-based leadership and decision-making model, and establish an agreement on procedures for conflict resolution. Another case in point is putting to rest a long-standing organizational debate over splitting Mathematics and Science into two departments by decreeing their separation.

Given the scope and nature of the restructuring affecting the College, another example of administrative leadership within the organization's discourse is the activation of a consultative management team to the Director General comprising heads of services and other designated staff members to provide input on administrative issues and concerns affecting the College as a whole. To reinforce the need to develop operational efficiency and sound managerial skills, the Director General's Management Team (DGMT) focused on team-building, training, and the creation of a team charter which comprises a

commitment to a set of purposes, goals, norms and roles. Extending the concept of leadership, the Board of Directors has participated in training session focusing on training themes such as purposes, responsibilities, leadership, and the function of Board committees. Training in management models has become an annual affair and aims to heighten the Board's understanding of its role as a governing body, particularly in the area of responsibility and accountability, and enhance the Board's capacity to apply decision-making strategies effectively and efficiently. However, the symbolic value of complying with externally legitimized structures like the HRMO, and the practice of training for team-building and improved management in raising the profile of the College must be underlined.

> **Proposition 4:** Effective organizational action depends upon the degree to which shared ideals and value systems exist among stakeholders within the educational community, and upon the ability of stakeholders to adopt strategies and procedures to achieve specific quality objectives.
>
> **Proposition 5:** Positive systems-outcomes are a function of organizational coordination, direction and transformative leadership.

Enhancing coordination, performance and accountability. The College's emphasis on academic excellence and other related values within its discourse raises issues of effectiveness in relation to academic structures. The phenomena reflecting the concept sub-category *enhancing coordination, performance and accountability* may be identified as integration of academic structures; appropriate academic mandates; program development, management, and program approach; and, departmental organization and integration to achieve institutional objectives. This concept sub-category also reflects the College's aim to demonstrate effectiveness in the coming together of people, their collaboration, and the combination of specific human and team-building attributes within systematic arrange-ments of patterned relationships for managing the organization's strategic perspective and achieving distinct academic purposes.

This concept sub-category underscores how crucial collaboration and interaction are to ensuring that outcomes reflect shared goals and represent and include all stakeholders. Enhancing coordination and performance are presented as critical elements in the achievement of the quality education to which the College has committed itself.

Contributing to this process is the departmentalization of academic disciplines and the logical grouping of activities within specialized responsibility units or non-teaching sectors. Such strategies are said to promote academic steering, provide support to students and faculty, and facilitate the monitoring of performance.

The role of Academic Council in policy development and policy review, in germinating program initiatives, in the evaluation of learning achievement, as well as in making recommendations to the Board with regard to submissions to the CEEC and the Ministry of Education, features prominently in the discourse regarding the workings of the academic system. Given its function "to advise the Board on any matter concerning the programs of studies dispensed by the College and the evaluation of learning achievement, including the procedures for the certification of studies" (law governing public colleges, 1993), its prominence befits its importance as the College committee structure responsible for the entire academic mission and life of the institution particularly with regard to achieving quality standards. The central message to the Commission of Evaluation is that Academic Council has "a vision and a concern for the college as a whole ... [and] has been marked by an evident commitment to promoting and supporting the policies and practices conducive to academic excellence" (Field notes: from the office of the Academic Dean for the CEEC institutional evaluation, Dec., 2001).

To highlight Academic Council's capacity to achieve its policy mandate, discourse features several key activities and initiatives. For example: (1) Academic Council, under the aegis of the Academic Dean, applied the Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Programs (IPEP) to the Liberal Arts program, and reviewed the structure, goals and activities of the Marianopolis certificates; (2) supervised the implementation of the new Science (200.B0) program; (3) reorganized the format of the College Calendar to reflect the program approach; (4) reviewed the Institutional Policy an the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA); (5) drafted a language policy; (6) developed and applied policies and procedures for the allocation and administration of student spaces in complementary courses, taking into consideration, the impact of allocation on pedagogy, faculty and students; (7) introduced a new Creative Arts, Literature and Languages (500.A0) program; (8) coordinated revisions of the Social Science and the Music programs according to

program objectives; (9) critically reviewed the format and structure of course outlines to validate their conformity to Ministry regulations; (10) developed *plans of student success* in response to Ministry directives; and, (11) developed an academic information system to provide statistical data and reports in a timely manner and in specified format on wide-ranging issues.

Academic Council's effectiveness in undertaking responsibilities of such importance and scope may be attributable to its ability to use its knowledge base:

> to facilitate communication within and between levels, and to set long range and wide confines for consideration of major academic goals, issues and responsibilities of Marianopolis ... [and to maintain] strong links with those who have immediate responsibilities at the level of development, coordination, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum and academic programs ... (Field notes: from the office of the Academic Dean for the CEEC institutional evaluation, Dec., 2001).

The critical importance of the office of the Academic Dean to the attainment of specific levels of performance and quality standards is second to none in the evaluative discourse. Positioned at the apex of the academic pyramid, the specific mandate of the Academic Dean is to ensure the implementation of the Règlement sur le Régime des Études Collégiales (RREC) in areas specific to the responsibilities of the Office. Reporting to the Director General, the Academic Dean is therefore primarily responsible for the implementation and continued realization of the collegial programs as set out by the Ministry of Education, the quality and proper functioning of all teaching departments, as well as all services and facilities of an academic nature, and for the adequate and appropriate planning, administration and operation of all facilities and services necessary to the instructional programs of the College. Since the Academic Dean is an *ex officio* member and chairperson of Academic Council and through relationships with various academic support services, a tremendous amount of power is centralized in the office, reflecting the diversity of responsibilities and tasks associated with the College's academic agenda. References to the centralization of power is met with a response that either recognizes the degree of responsibility delegated and coordinated, or one that suggests managerial overload. There is truth in both positions.

Since the responsibilities of the Academic Dean closely centre on academic decision-making process and the levers of academic life, they carry significant strategic operational importance. In exercising the mandate of this office the Academic Dean is brought into *direct consultation* with a variety of academic structures, and this has implications in terms of their enhanced operational efficiency and effectiveness. In discourse, this level of consultation is regarded as key to the execution of responsibilities in the following areas: (1) *development of programs and curricula* according to directives from the Ministry; (2) *coordination of student academic advising,* working with academic advisors and student services counselling personnel; (3) *coordination of the academic budget* based on data received from department chairs and on financial stipulations received from the Coordinator of Finance; (4) *implementation of the College Policy for the Evaluation of Programs and the Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement*; (5) *fully supervising all special projects* of an academic nature; (6) and *providing data and analysis* related to student performance.

The fact that the office of the Associate Academic Dean (AAD was created with an explicit *student centred role* figures prominently in the College's self-presentation. To be very specific, the College created the Office of the AAD expressly to *offer teaching support services essentially centred on the academic achievement of students, student supervision and student-teacher interaction.* The AAD not only builds on the support of teachers, department chairs, advisors and counsellors but also seeks to communicate to different groups, but especially to students, the expectations and standards of the College. In this regard, "the AAD proposes, on behalf of students, the recommendations or accommodations and the extra instruction or guidance which is regarded appropriate for each situation" (Field notes: office of the AAD).

The College's intention to favourably position itself in relation to specific forms of support aimed at positively changing student behaviour and enhancing the chances of student success is reflected in activities discussed in relation to the office of the Associate Academic Dean. To be specific, this office has a student centered focus, concentrating on activities such as review and assessment of the standing of students in all program each term; validation of, and response to, the requests of students for special consideration and

for special needs in courses and tests; and, monitoring of students who appear problematic or at risk and those in poor academic standing, These forms of support speak to the priority given by the College to student success in response to the expectations of Ministry of Education. Reaching first-semester students in difficulty is an ongoing challenge, and substantially explains the introduction of a formal mid-term assessment in all courses and for all students since Autumn 2002. The student centered focus of the office of the AAD also embraces the institutional recommendations required by some students for scholarships, awards, or university entrance, and the recommendations for deserving students whose university applications require institutional support.

The responsibilities that are centralized in the Office of the Registrar and are related to student recruitment, admission, orientation, providing relevant data for planning of course/program requirements, scheduling of courses, registration, requirements for graduation and all academic records, including the management of information systems and transmission of academic records to the Ministry are also discussed in a framework of enhancing coordination, performance and accountability.

Academic advising is addressed from the perspective of an essential program management function that plays a pivotal role in the chain of support which helps to define the College as an organization committed to offering a supportive and welcoming learning environment to all students. This commitment involves advising students, usually on an individual basis about registration, course selection, the College's academic policies and procedures, problems related to course change and withdrawal, program planning and transfers, liaison with high schools and universities, options for university and opportunities for scholarships. Support is structured according to specific needs and begins at orientation when new students learn to prepare a schedule for registration, and continues until graduation. This form of support responds to the Ministry's call for student integration services.

Discourse also pays attention to the College's commitment to pro-actively develop academic program planning, management and coordination through an umbrella group called The Academic Management Team (AMT). Comprised of key individuals such as the Academic Dean, the Department Chairpersons, and the Associate Academic

Dean, this team initiates change to, develop, implement and review the academic curriculum of the College in response to: government directives, the College's Mission and Goals, College policies, and department Curriculum Committee proposals.

In clarifying the strategic importance of AMT, the message communicated is that the strength of this team derives from four sources: (1) its ability to coordinate curriculum and programs to ensure quality education to students through the enhanced capacity of the College to provide coherent effective academic services; (2) its ability to coordinate staffing needs, recommend resource allocation and new hiring, review pedagogical policies and respond to concerns which directly affect the academic achievement of students such as student workload, examination practices and schedules, faculty/student interaction; (3) its possession of a considerable base of knowledge, competencies and capabilities from which to draw in the process of cooperative deliberation, planning, and monitoring, given it representation of the disciplines of general and specific education of the programs offered at the College, and is proximity to faculty and students; (4) its vital role in assisting the Academic Dean in reconciling organizational strategies with institutional perspectives and vision, thereby helping to ensure that the interests of students are kept central during the decision making process.

Academic Departments are presented as the focal College structures in the implementation of academic policies, programs of study, and the teaching and learning activities adopted to create the kind of educational institution the vision and mission statements of the College encapsulates. From a purely academic or teaching perspective, Marianopolis is organized into seven departments: Physical Education; English; Liberal and Creative Arts; Mathematics; Science; Social Science; and Modern Languages.

Two key aspects regarding the role of academic departments are addressed. First, by being comprised of teaching personnel with responsibilities for specified disciplines, academic departments provide an organizational context for the development of curriculum, the responsibility for which is deeply rooted within the history and culture at Marianopolis. In this regard, note is made of the assumption, since 1997, of increased responsibilities for the administration of academic programs with particular reference to the components of general education and/or specific education. Second, academic

departments at the College, unlike those in public CEGEPs, have traditionally served vital personnel functions, thereby fulfilling responsibilities in relation to the administration of academic programs. Thus, departments have become the basic framework in the College, a non-unionized institution, for organizing curriculum with the flexibility needed to achieve the educational objectives of the College, taking into consideration issues related to the assignment of teaching personnel according to the number of teaching preparations, contractual status, and employment security.

Discourse treats academic leadership and management at the departmental level with consideration equal to that given to the higher echelons of the organization. Thus, the following issues regarding the importance of joint Curriculum/Program Committee to departmental functioning are explored:

1. ensuring academic departmental management of the design, implementation and evaluation of curriculum within the context of ministerial and college regulations and guidelines, and of recommending the assignment and hiring of teaching personnel is explored;
2. responsibility for the implementation of the general and specific education components of program within their respective domain, for all matters pertaining to the courses offered, in particular curriculum development and adherence of course outlines to Ministry standards, as well as monitoring specific aspects of the implementation of the IPESA.;
3. periodic monitoring and ensuring that courses conform to the objectives established by the Ministry and the guidelines of the College relative to the provision of information that students need. This information relates particularly to course requirements, methods of evaluation of student work, and student work-load;
4. systematic monitoring of multi-sectioned courses to ensure equity in regards to objectives, content, equivalence and fairness in standards, level of difficulty, and text-book content and level;
5. ensuring that departmental/college policy on the sequencing of courses are carried out so that students will be able to develop the skills and competencies required at any level, prepare for Ministry Exit Exams, and for transition to university studies. These day-to-day management activities take place with the largest possible consultation within the departments and beyond, that is, with the Dean's Office and the Academic Management Team.

Exploring how department chairpersons function as the strategic link between the administration of the College, the faculty, and the students is the final element in the discourse of *enhancing coordination, performance, and accountability*. The official definition notes: "The position, exercised in the spirit of collegiality, carries the authority necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning within the department consistent with the mission and goals of the College" (Faculty Handbook).

The importance of department chairs derives from the responsibility they assume individually for particular programs or program components, departments and disciplines, and at the same time collectively for the Educational Project and programs of the College as a whole. Reporting to the Academic Dean on all matters of concern within the departments, their explicit primary responsibility is to enhance the education of the students, and to address students' concerns whether they arise from programs, courses or teaching personnel within the department.

The importance of Chairs is discursively demonstrated by their involvement in critical tasks such as the hiring and the integration of new teaching personnel into the department; ensuring that departmental personnel fulfil all contractual obligations with the College; conducting regular departmental meetings in order to facilitate the discussion of departmental business, disseminating information to department members; initiating policies and procedures for the assessment of curriculum, and implementing within their departments such policies and procedures that have been approved by the legislative structures of the College, and by the Ministry of Education. In addition, based on students needs, Chairs, in consultation with the curriculum committee, organize courses offered by the disciplines and programs in the department, and recommend the assignment of teaching personnel. Their close collaboration with the Office of the Registrar enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the course scheduling and student registration processes.

Two comments are in order. First, the College's capacity to develop strategies to *enhance coordination, performance and accountability* helps to underscore the highly decentralized yet integrated and coordinated responsibility network of structures that are subsumed under the Academic Dean's Office, as well as the strength of both inter and

intra-departmental connection and collaboration, essential prerequisite of effective program management. Second, the strategy of affording prominence to the effective performance of the College's academic accountability system within the evaluative discourse stems from the fact that the elements of such systems are regarded as crucial by the CEEC and are regularly and closely monitored by that agency.

The College's method of operation tends to reflect two disciplines from Senge's (1990) model of the learning organization. The first is *"systems thinking"* in which the organization is regarded as a network of connected structures within which primary emphasis is placed on relationships rather than on individual units separate from one another, and responsibility is shared for generating creative solutions to managing tasks and problems. Within the organizational framework of the College, there has been a high level of understanding of pedagogic imperatives, the mandates and role of each academic structure, and of the communication, information flow, and coordination necessary between components to ensure the development and implementation of coherent and effective programs of study. The second discipline is *"building shared vision,"* in which members engage in the process of *collaborative envisioning of futures* for their individual sector/department, and the College as a whole.

This aspect of the College's presentation also reflect the extent to which culture under-girds strategic decision-making processes and powerfully influences patterns of organizational behavior. At a deep level of operation, history and tradition have fostered the evolution of particular relationships and roles, practices and expectations, and a set of "givens" that define how things are done at Marianopolis. As pointed out in this statement that elegantly sums up the general perception within the College:

> Individual faculty and staff are committed to the particular groups of students, and to each student, entrusted to their care. Our ideal has been the pursuit of academic excellence in all curricular endeavours, supported by appropriate structures; our claim to achieving this leans toward the tentative and hesitant, but it would be assailed quickly to the extent it is false (Field notes: from the office of the Academic Dean for the CEEC institutional evaluation, Dec., 2001).

Embedded in the culture at Marianopolis is the understanding that students are at the centre of the organization's mission. A fundamental aspect is the belief that productivity comes through people who have a strong sense of ownership of what they do and are able to influence the behaviour of the organization. This helps to enhance cooperation within the College rather than competition, thereby allowing each member with a stake in the school to share in what the group achieves or attains. It also evokes challenges and persistence. Equally important is the understanding that opportunities must be provided for teachers to work collaboratively to solve problems and develop new initiatives, and that participation in decision-making processes is necessary for those affected directly or indirectly by reform or institutional improvement efforts.

> **Proposition 6:** Ongoing fulfilment of educational mission and mandate is dependent on the organization's ability to build capacity to meet contingencies and challenges as they emerge within the environment.

> **Proposition 7:** The ability of college-level education to achieve its mission and mandate is relative to the quality of its academic coordinating structures.

Summary

Colleges, as fully or partially funded public sector organizations, operate with institutional mandates. As such, they are expected to be *responsive to the institutional environment* through their mission, patterns of organization and strategies for development, and to pursue policies and activities which serve the public good. In its discourse, the College sought to be self-identified with a *shared vision and mission* that had been collaboratively developed, was student centred, and committed to the success of all students and to being responsive to diverse needs. The core values of the organization's mission and vision aimed to give meaning to organizational work and to motivate the administration, faculty, and staff to strive toward the achievement of common institutional purposes. *Organizational reinvention* signified adaptability to change in the interest of strengthening administrative structures for effective governance.

Discourse implies that strengthening operations through continuous strategic development has been a distinctive organizational attribute, reflecting the aims of openness

to renewal, improvement, and organizational viability, the ability to identify the needs required to improve organizational capacity, efficiency and viability, and determination to act purposively to ensure its continued development in the face of internal and external challenges.

Unquestionably, the task of developing, coordinating and aligning structures in relation to established values of best practices was a major enterprise that was successfully accomplished by the Board's leadership. While it is true that in its initial decision making process the College had not always given appropriate consideration to achieving optimum structural alignment in governance, faced with the problems this situation created, it acted to develop the coordination and inter-communication necessary to improve its organization and management and promote the attainment of its objectives and the fulfillment of its mission, enabling key stakeholders to have confidence in organizational processes and outcomes.

Overall, discourse attempts to position the College as an organization that, for the most part, has faced up to its responsibility not only to identify crucial development needs, but has taken the necessary leadership steps to implement strategies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its management processes, and hence its overall future performance. The actions and activities associated with the fulfilment of mandates, the rationalization of College committee structures, and the degree of alignment and communication between levels of authority structure provide crucially important information regarding management's effectiveness in ensuring the achievement of desirable quality standards. Such decisions and actions also show a conscious effort by the College to improve internal operations before pressure for changes becomes acute.

CHAPTER SIX

Responsiveness to Institutional Needs and Social Expectations

Issues and Objectives

In this chapter, the study explores key elements of the College's capacity to demonstrate effectiveness and quality in response to institutional needs and social expectations, focusing specifically on the dimensions of *program delivery, operations, activities, services and student outcomes*. In so doing, this study completes the examination of the ways by which text is constructed and the College presents itself to give meaning to particular versions of the organization's life within the framework of evaluation as an instrument of accountability.

Selective coding and interpretation suggest that the discourses related to these dimensions of organizational effectiveness and performance quality may be integrated into a theoretical framework consisting of five concept categories:

1. Orientation to Effective Program Delivery
2. Tying Student-Centeredness to Mission
3. Enhancing Effectiveness within a Framework of a Human Organizational Face
4. Enabling Student Progress through Material Resources Support
5. Achieving Institutional and Student Success

Orientation to Effective Program Delivery

Since the delivery of academic programs[5] is the core business of the organization, the College's discourse sets out to demonstrate reasonable performance in relation to program delivery, operations, and activities. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the College's *program approach* are part of the organization's story of meeting crucial student needs and institutional obligations, but overall, it is suggested that, despite some limitations, the approach substantially achieves the objectives intended by Government.

The *program approach* is an important component of the reforms introduced by The College Education Regulations of the General and Vocational Colleges Act, 1993.

This "approach" consists of coordinating, managing and evaluating programs, and in supporting efficient practices related to designing, planning, engaging in and assessing teaching, bearing in mind the spirit of the entire program of studies. From a policy perspective, pre-university academic programs are expected to prepare students to succeed in university through the integration and inter-transfer of specific competencies within the courses of general and specific education. Distinctive college-level variables mediate how these expectations are met at the local level. This stands to reason since colleges differ in their organizational culture, mission, the clientele they serve, internal characteristics and the dynamics of the relationships between these characteristics themselves, as well as the ways in which they interact with the environment from which they draw students and stakeholder support.

One of the aims of program reform is to create a *sharing of responsibility* between the Ministry and the colleges for determining both structure and content of programs. However, this sense of *shared responsibility and mission*, so to speak, is informed by the College's pragmatic recognition of three critical aspects of the asymmetrical distribution of power between itself and government: (a) the determination of "public purposes" within the context of higher education is the legitimate authority of Government; (b) the DEC is awarded by the Ministry of Education; and (c) Government certifies and subsidizes Marianopolis.

Given the prevailing wisdom that, to a large extent, the priorities and educational objectives of the Ministry are those of the College, progressively, since 1994, Marianopolis revised and renewed its programs based on the competencies, objectives, and standards established by the Ministry. The general education component and all specific education components of studies were revised to ensure that ministerial program goals were represented within courses and had indeed become the framework for teaching and learning. These revisions, as well as the introduction of the newest programs proceeded with a strong commitment to support the spirit of the reforms by developing programs which conformed to ministerial regulations while reflecting organizational mission and goals. Notably, the revision of programs was seized as an opportunity to

redefine and further expand the concept of excellence in the Social Science program, thereby augmenting its status within the hierarchy of the College's pre-university programs.

It was imperative that the College underlined the importance of general education owing to its capacity to account for almost half of the overall course credits for the diploma requirement, and its capacity, through the goals and objectives of its disciplines and courses, to make significant contributions to both program relevance and coherence. The effectiveness of the general education component at the College was affirmed by the CEEC's official stamp of excellence in 1998, after its official evaluation. Not only did the CEEC acknowledge that general education at Marianopolis provided opportunities to help students understand the interrelationships of all academic pursuits, but also that most of its courses were designed to adequately prepare students for university undergraduate studies.

Discourse presents the College's ability to develop an institutional perspective regarding its responsibility for coordinating programs is presented as a major challenge, linked to the heightened and significant responsibilities assigned to curriculum committees for following the ministerial guidelines for objectives and standards, and for effectively achieving expected program outcomes. In fact, the issue of responsibility at the college-level for coordination within a program and among programs devolved into a major preoccupation since the self-evaluation of the Social Science Program in 1996 and the 1997-1998 self-evaluation of the general education component. Davison's (1998) official report on the latter emphasized that "while informal initiatives have been made among disciplines to develop program links, our structures have not formally facilitated the development of a program approach" (p. 135). To be specific, the College had not succeeded in "defining the structures and practices enabling them to assume [the] new management role" (MESS, 1993 p. 37) envisioned by the Ministry of Education in its publication entitled Colleges for the 21st Century. Davison's (1998) report boldly committed the College to a very specific action of taking "responsibility for the creation of the formal academic framework necessary to incorporate program committees into the academic structure" (p. 136).

The College's slow, tentative, and deliberative approach to achieving this planned action may be attributed to two factors in particular. First, programs of studies have both a general and a specific component, and every program offered by the College incorporates disciplines drawn from different departments. Since no single department includes all the disciplines of any program, integration of, and inter-communication between both the general and the specific components are vitally necessity for implementing a true program approach. Second, the College was aware of the necessity of finding means to flexibly and coherently integrate the program approach within existing structures and pedagogical activities that were founded on the department model of grouping teachers, course sequencing, and the evaluation of student learning.

Discourse makes the case that Academic Council fulfilled its supervisory role in keeping with its overall responsibility for the governance of design, implementation, evaluation, and revision of academic programs and other policies/practices as required by the Ministry and by the CEEC. Specifically, in its conceptual and practical approach to program management, Academic Council sought to devise a model that built on the experience of the academic structures most closely related to curriculum by establishing primary responsibility for coordination and general implementation at the departmental level, since curriculum/program committees already nested within these structures and assumed significant departmental responsibility. Thus, academic departments, in conformity to their responsibility for disciplines within the domain of programs, assisted curriculum/program committees in the exercise of their new role by facilitating efficient coordination with other departments responsible for disciplines in the various programs. In addition, regular meetings of AMT enabled greater interaction of the Chairs, fostering increased cooperation and goodwill in the shared task of understanding and delivering programs to students.

The program approach requires the development of significant levels of pedagogic intercommunication and integration between the two components of study, namely, the general and the specific. The CEEC had expressed its concern that general education be represented on permanent program committees within the specific

component of studies, and that the general education component have input into the comprehensive assessments. Discourse indicates that the College's general and specific components achieve their specific and unique program objectives, and that supervisory structures exist to promote these ends.

However, the College acknowledged in its evaluation report that no clear and official guideline on the incorporation of the general education component into a permanent program committee structure had evolved at the time of the institutional evaluation, signifying that for the most part, the two program components operated without systematic dialogue at the departmental level. Although several very effective organizational routines had been instituted to support the program approach, no official policy actually existed that formally defined the objectives of the program approach, its governance including the instruments which designate responsibility for specific tasks to ensure program coherence. Thus, there was tacit admission that the absence of formal policy constituted a gap in the academic management framework, and that, in light of the obligation to give students quality education, it was imperative to focus on the nature of total program supervision and find a place for it in College structures.

Few faculty members regard the absence of formal supervisory policy as problematic since there is little enthusiasm for potentially vexing procedures or superordinate program structures that might erode the function of existing curriculum/program committees and traditional departmental autonomy without necessarily improving the actual program delivery process. The challenge for academic leadership is therefore to determine the best way to implement a coherent program management policy that respects the spirit of Ministerial guidelines, while minimizing the perception of loss of departmental autonomy. Policy to this effect has currently been developed to define the structures and practices deemed necessary to enable the College to assume full responsibility for the increased autonomy and accountability involved in fulfilling the new management role, but awaits implementation and testing for effectiveness.

> **Proposition 8:** Success in the delivery of academic programs reflects the degree to which team building and team work has been established between organizational actors.

Proposition 9: The delivery of coherent programs depends upon the organization's capacity to coordinate and integrate its network of program structures and their responsibilities.

Tying Student-Centeredness to Mission

The College's mission is student centered. In practical terms, mission is regarded as commitment to achieving objectives and the focusing of teaching and the whole complex of organizational resources on the student and the facilitation of learning and academic progress. The College's discourse embodies the multi-dimensional scope of the two constructs.

Relevance and Coherence

Because program relevance and coherence are significant indicators of student centeredness and institutional quality, they feature prominently in the policy of the Ministry of Education and the CEEC. At the time of the development of academic programs by the Ministry and participating university representatives, college deans and teachers, it was envisioned that program objectives and standards would foster conditions of relevance and coherence within college education characterized by:

(a) a genuine continuity between pre-university programs and university programs;

(b) a program approach;

(c) education focusing on the mastery of learning, using a competency-based approach;

(d) education that contributes to the holistic development of the individual.

The textual message related to *relevance to ministerial standards and objectives* is that Marianopolis seeks to integrate the values encapsulated in its vision and mission within the curriculum thereby providing students with an educational formation that conforms to the standards and objectives set out by the Ministry. In effect, institutional relevance rests upon the attainment by students of discipline specific knowledge requirements; students' development of generic skills/ competencies necessary for smooth transition to university-level studies; the College's inculcation of basic

values required for living in society; and, its capacity to take the heterogeneous nature of the student body into consideration.

The discourse of relevance supports the College's educational mission of enabling students to "receive a broad, rich cultural education and instruction centred on transferable skills" (Davison, 1998, p. 27). Thus, the College's ability to develop a strong learning culture and to ensure that across all program areas students are encouraged to learn through a process of self-discovery and self-direction to take responsibility for their own cognitive and personal development are held up as clear sign-posts of relevance. In demonstrating program relevance, the College addresses aspects of congruence between the educational outcomes anticipated in its Vision and Mission Statement and the qualities the Ministry attributes to educated persons such as abilities necessary for them to become self-directed life-long learners capable of making positive contributions as citizens of a complex and changing world (MESS, 1993).

The College's position is that, to a major degree, its academic programs have successfully integrated into their learning activities values/competencies such as breadth of vision and perspective, critical and creative thinking, communicating effectively, acting with self-discipline and personal integrity, and the exemplification of social responsibility. By adopting the strategy to make each course contribute to the attainment of one or more of these competencies, and collectively, to represent these competencies across the entire spectrum of the curriculum has enabled the college to achieve varying levels of integration at the departmental level. In addition, several of the pedagogic themes explored within the College's learning activities embrace and promote diverse institutional values such as the development within groups of a sense of community, informed and respectful student interaction, social justice, gender equality, environmental responsibility, ethical behaviour, and civic responsibility.

Since programs offered have a pre-university focus, discourse deals with the importance to the College's academic structures of meeting the criterion for relevance by coordinating interactions with external educational institutions and addressing critical areas such as university programs in Québec and other matters of an academic nature. In this

regard, department chairpersons share the responsibility for communicating directly with the universities on matters affecting program to ensure relevance in relation to the university community, consistency between the objectives, standards, and content of the specific education components, and the expectations of the university community. Regular contacts are maintained with the universities, including going directly to the appropriate authorities when the need arises to obtain the necessary information or clarification of program needs. Conversely, the universities convey any changes in their requirements to the College, to which the response has been prompt. These communicative procedures work satisfactorily, and serve the mutual interests of both the College and the universities.

Fostering coherence through the integration of specific program elements is a theme that is constructed from several building blocks. For example, taking into consideration the Ministry's framework for the mastery of learning using a competency-based approach, discourse asserts that not only are the skills which students must acquire clearly described within course objectives, but the learning activities within both the specific component and general component of studies are also organized around the general goals that incorporate the competencies to be acquired by the students. In addition, courses target the standards of performance for each of these competencies.

The strategy of surveying students before each new semester is also linked to coherence owing to its generation of student choices that are refined to create course offerings geared to student needs, and the scheduling, in specific departments, of requisite upper-level courses as well as advanced and enriched sections of courses and electives. Similarly, attention is focused on the strategy of integrating and appropriately sequencing learning activities to develop structured programs that enable student progression from semester to semester in the acquisition of program abilities at increasing levels of mastery. This strategy improves students' chances of fulfilling their Exit Profile requirement, so that, by the time of graduation, they will have attained each program goal at the standard necessary to adequately undertake university studies.

To complete the construction of the discourse of coherence, the College underscores a number of student-focused activities including providing students with courses of varying levels of difficulty and optimizing the choice of elective courses within each program, the special attention given to levels of student ability, particularly the organization's flexible accommodation of the special needs of weaker students, the enrichment needs of stronger students, and changes in student options and other contingencies like the transfer of a student from one program to another. The College also highlights the implementation of measures within its *plan for success* to respond to the specific needs and expectations of certain groups of student such as those whose mother tongue is not English or whose background is lacking in certain areas.

Achieving Equity and Fairness in the Evaluation of Student Achievement

Meeting student needs through practices that are fair and equitable for different learning contexts is powerful pedagogy as well as part of the accountability system set up by the Ministry. The Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA) speaks to such practices and is the most important academic policy governing students and faculty. Essentially, this policy "describes the goals and objectives of [College] policy, the means taken to arrive at comprehensive and fair evaluation, the sharing of responsibilities by all participants, as well as the methods and criteria for evaluating [its] implementation" (IPESA, 2001, p. 2). Consequently it is regarded as a fundamental quality instrument whose application is regularly monitored by the CEEC.

The IPESA's effectiveness in producing performance that is aligned with stated organizational and external policy objectives is traceable to the high level of partnership and responsibility sharing by individual teachers, groups and structures with comprehensive rights "in a spirit of collegiality" (Field notes: Academic Dean). In attesting the policy's effectiveness in supporting and improving the quality of education, the points most stressed by the College are that:

1. the policy raises the consciousness of both teacher and student regarding the needs for evaluative standards that are based on clearly articulated criteria of fairness and equity;

2. it enhances an appreciation for *evaluation in context*, and respect for the students engaged in meeting the objectives of a program and a course;

3. it has been instrumental in *enhancing cooperation* among faculty and institutional structures responsible for monitoring evaluation and certifying students.

Because of its central pedagogical importance, formal monitoring of the implementation of the IPESA to guarantee its continued integrity was an issue which the College was obligated to address. In fact, the College took the position that systematic monitoring was the only guarantor of continued success in developing a culture of conformity to the objective of meeting the expectations of students regarding fairness and equity in conformity to organizational mission and goals.

In its discourse, the College points out that the organization enforces the Ministry of Education regulations (Règlement, art. 23) which require that at the beginning of each term every student should receive an outline for each course. Since transparency is a priority, these outlines list objectives, content, methodology, pondération, prerequisites, details of evaluation and approximate dates for readings, projects, tests, as well as penalties for non-attendance and for submission of late assignments. Discourse stresses that because the College views student assessment as "a continuous, progressive and system process ... [and] one of the ways in which Marianopolis fulfils its responsibilities as an academic institution" (IPESA, p. 1), teachers collaborate by setting clear goals and objectives in their courses, informing students of the requirements of their courses, and discussing evaluation procedures with students.

Furthermore, it is noted that in evaluating student learning, teachers meet policy expectations to respect the rights of students. These rights include fair evaluation, prompt grading, continuous evaluation, adequate feedback on their academic progress, accessibility to teachers during office hours, and an appeal procedure should they feel they have been unfairly evaluated. Teachers also monitor and report on the progress of students in poor academic standing as required by the Associate Academic Dean and the Academic Advisors. The fact that the College takes student attendance quite seriously and has developed guidelines (IPESA 2.1.3) for faculty on student attendance is also

stressed. In fact, according to guidelines from the Academic Dean, students are regularly informed that "the learning process at Marianopolis is designed to be dynamic (not occasional) and personal (not anonymous)".

Discourse makes it clear that the obligations of teachers include the posting of full schedules and office hours on office doors. Typically, instructors meet or exceed the number of formal office hours required by the College. Office hours are specifically intended to provide extra time to deal with the learning needs of students and any other matter which may affect their progress. Guided by College policy, teachers also make themselves available to students during the official examination period to discuss questions arising from courses just completed and courses to be given in the next term.

The College also contends that the principle of consistency in the structure and equity within multi-section courses is fully recognized and acted upon within the departments. For example, each semester, curriculum committees ensure that there is coherence and fairness of evaluation within sections, both during the semester and during the grading of final exams. Policy relating to the implementation and grading of common final exams and multi-section courses in general aims to guarantee equity. College wide, the organization ensures the coordination and coherence of course content by adopting either identical course outlines, or course outlines that are relatively identical in their essential elements, along with regular meetings of the instructors of the course. In addition, the ability of the College's academic information system to compile grade equity reports which take into account the academic strength of student groups, and enable the interpretation of equity in grading standards particularly in relation to multi-section courses is interpreted and communicated as a major advancement in promoting equity and fairness in evaluation.

A point of interest is that the formal notification of students of their progress by mid-term has become an important strategy in getting students to positively reflect on their progress and interpret their assessment as a sign that faculty care about their learning and are committed to motivate them to do whatever is necessary to get better end-of term evaluations. Evaluations leading up to the final exam are both formative and

summative in nature. Formative evaluation is particularly relevant to the educational process because it allows teachers to assess student performance and progress through the process of continuous feedback from students in the program. Since the aim of formative evaluation is to improve work in progress, effectively used, it encourages an ongoing reflective practice and assists in the planning of intervention strategies and the implementation of corrective measures. Formative evaluation is therefore capable of shaping the subsequent outcome of student performance as positively as possible.

In recognition of the ultimate summative focus of the evaluation of student achievement, the College's discourse stresses that assessments during the semester and the assessment at the end of the semester yield grades that are valued marketable assets, and that the organization makes every effort to assure fairness and equity, as well as consistency and rigour. Such efforts are absolutely necessary given the highly competitive nature of the students in particular programs, and the implications of a student's standing in a class and program in terms the R-score, of acceptance to special programs and faculties in universities, eligibility for awards and scholarships within and outside the institution, as well as acceptance to the more prestigious university (Field notes: the Academic Dean's Office).

> **Proposition 10:** The more relevant academic programs are to institutional standards and objectives as well as to organizational values, the more likely programs are to develop elements of quality.
>
> **Proposition 11:** Program relevance and coherence may be achieved to the extent that programs implement measures to develop competencies, and meet the specific needs and expectations of all student groups.
>
> **Proposition 12:** The implementation of policy respecting equity and integrity in the evaluation of student achievement is necessary for increased student motivation and improved performance.

Mobilizing Capabilities for Student Progress

The text regarding the mobilization of capabilities for student progress attributes the effectiveness of the College's pedagogic services to the activity of faculty, academic advisors, the Associate Academic Dean, academic departments, and the Financial Aid Office within operationally interlinked systems. Thus, collectively, these systems provide

students with support covering the entire spectrum of educational life at the College and beyond to the University. They bring students into closer contact with teachers and involve attention, effective guidance and supervision, remediation and reinforcement to enhance performance and increase the chances of student success. They also enhance the integration of second-language students into the academic life of the College, and increase their self-assurance and their chances for success.

In addition, they offer financial support to students in need to ensure that no student who has the desire and the ability to attend the College should be prevented from doing so for financial reasons. Literally, the message is that all the administrative and pedagogical services are mobilized to ensure the highest levels of student achievement and success. The text positions the College as an institution that takes a holistic approach to the analysis of student performance and improvement, and as one whose success is derived from its capacity to successfully identify areas of weakness in performance, assess the root causes of low achievement, document and follow-up individual students' progress, and implement planned data-based decision making to facilitate change and continuous progress.

As the Academic Dean pertinently observed "The transition to the highly competitive world of college life can be difficult for some students, both for the very intelligent student who may not have had to develop good study skills thus far to excel and for the student who may become aware of certain personal limitations that affect overall academic performance" (A plan for the Success of Students, 2000, p. 3). Thus, while students enrolled in the various programs at Marianopolis all have the potential to succeed academically, for a variety of reasons, a small proportion of students experience academic difficulty, perform poorly, and become problematic or at risk of failing several courses, and of being categorized as having poor academic standing. Based on evidence from monitoring students who are experiencing academic difficulty, poor performance may be attributed to weak motivation, lack of confidence, difficulties in adjustment to this particular stage of the life cycle, stressful family relations, inadequate language skills, or simply poor working habits.

In keeping with the College's vision "to be a leader in building a dynamic environment where students can grow both personally and intellectually" (1981 Mission and Goals Statement), responding effectively to all student needs is a priority, so a variety of capabilities and resources have been mobilized for this purpose.

> I just had a student here in my office. She's having trouble this term. She's a good student in general, but her mother is sick with a host of problems and this girl who is only eighteen is kind of head of the family. She's got to take care of the family, so she's missing classes and she's struggling. She's not failing, but what I sensed in talking to her was that in many other places she kind of just would have disappeared. But here she still feels that she has to persist with her work, and she has gone to every one of her teachers and she's been told precisely that. Every one of her teachers has said, don't worry, this piece of work will be due on such-and-such a date. We can arrange things. I think in part this is what makes this institution good. The people, what they do to generate this kind of success! I'm quite certain she'll come through at the end and her marks are not going to be quite as good as they otherwise would be, but she'll manage to get through. She'll be going on to university. The problems that she has at present hopefully will disappear. She'll be back on track, and she'll be one of our solid students at university (Informant).

Discourse pays particular attention to the College's use of curriculum development strategies to enrich programs and also offer a variety of courses in specific categories suited to students of varying abilities, interests and backgrounds. For example, as a discipline within the General Education component of studies, English, in all its courses, teaches written and oral communication and uses literature as a vehicle for developing these skills. The literary content of courses enables this discipline to develop the students' awareness of literary culture, but the major goal is to use language to develop the students' ability to think critically and creatively. Although certain types of resources have been limited in the College, a significant choice has been made over the years to concentrate on the particular need of students in their placement in the English and French courses. A growing concern of the English Department is the need to be able to adapt its curriculum to adequately serve the increasing student clientele for whom English is a second or third language.

> I think there are some people who feel we should not admit students who are not already fairly strong intellectually. In fact, I was sitting on the English hiring committee recently, and there were questions about why we are admitting all of these second language students whose skills aren't up to par. 'We should be going back to traditional English', somebody remarked. This is one side. But going right back to the early 1970s, I think some of our most interesting students were not necessarily the brightest students that we have had over the last 30 years. So I am on the opposite side, the one espoused by the College. I think the real strength is what you do with the students you accept, not what they have for you (Informant).

In exploring the adoption of curriculum development strategies to enrich academic programs, the College points out that since approximately 45% of its students come from francophone high-schools and English is their second or even third language, an emerging mission has become devising strategies for helping to integrate second-language students into the academic life of the College and attain the degree of independence and self-assurance required to achieve their goal of attending university. In pursuit of this mission, the English Department has been highly successful in the placement of students within language courses, and in introducing courses to help students whose skills are not adequate to be able to cope with college-level English. In fact, since 1997, a complete sequencing of courses has been developed to enable students to develop appropriate skill levels in thinking, oral and written communication, and prepare for the Ministry's English Exit Exam. Courses include the non-credit *Preparatory English* course (English 002) and the *Composition and Literature* course (English 101) whose sections are all taught by faculty trained in second language pedagogy.

The teaching strategy involves intensive one-on-one work with weaker students not only in their first semester, but also in their second semester as second-language specialists maintain continuity with these students groups registered in the follow-up English 102 course sections. To further ensure that the necessary resources are available to support students in need, one teacher coordinates the English component of the College's peer-tutoring project which trains tutors to help students with problems in English. The College's learning centre enables the tutoring of students experiencing

difficulty in language, and provides opportunities for first-year second-language students to work with a second-year student in the peer-tutoring project to improve their skills. The College also supports the departmental priority of using release time to develop resource materials for second language students and to identify other ways of meeting student needs.

In sum, the message conveyed to the CEEC is that the constant attention, supervision, tutorial help and reinforcement of good working habits by teachers has brought greater success for students who are serious about remediation, and that the support services provided by the English Department for second language students anticipate problems with learning for this very sizeable group of College students with language difficulties. These preventative measures are held up as being instrumental in achieving three goals: upgrading students' skills to the level adequate for coping with college-level English; helping to integrate second-language students into the academic life of the college; and equipping them to attain the degree of independence and self-assurance required to achieve their goal of attending university. The overall good results of the students on the English Exit Exam are seen as strong indicators that the support services provided by the English Department are effective.

Discourse also pays attention to strategies adopted in the Modern Languages Department to determine the appropriate placement level of the student to ensure progressive development of the language skills specified by the department, and accomplish the goals prescribed by the Ministry. Teachers have developed placement-level grids that specify guidelines for course content, evaluation and general policy, thus ensuring consistency between sections of the same course given by different teachers, and between sections of the same courses at the same level. These guidelines apply particularly to French because of its compulsory status in college programs.

The College's policy on language seeks to foster the growth of knowledge, critical thinking, effective communication, and social interaction in its preparation of students for university studies. Marianopolis is described as a leader among the English colleges in developing a policy statement on language, whose rationale and vision speak

to a commitment to support and enhance the very highest quality of language experience, and to faculty's obligation to adapt to their disciplines the three criteria set by the Ministry of Education for the English Exit Exam: comprehension and insight, organization of response, and expression, in the evaluation of student achievement, (IPESA 3.3.4). Thus, teachers focus on preparing students to present information verbally in a clear and understandable manner. The achievement of clarity and persuasiveness are targeted in their development of student's oral communication skills. The superior performance displayed by students in the English Exit Exam is given as an indicator of a successful language policy.

In addition, while the official language of formal education is English, discourse recognizes that there may be circumstances that favour the offering of a discipline course within the specific education component, in French, to support students in their studies. The conditions under which such courses are offered are governed by a protocol developed by Academic Council. This form of support ranges from easing the demands of student workload in the initial stages of study, to providing a challenge to students who wish to extend their mastery of French, the second language of the College.

Student-Teacher Interaction and Faculty Support

One of the strengths of Marianopolis is its relatively small size (including class size). "It's size. We know one another. It's hard to get lost in the College" (Informant). This attribute has contributed to the organization's capacity to develop dynamic forms of student-teacher interaction. The amount of *encadrement* (extra-classroom supervision) that the institution provides for students is presented as a key institutional strength. Mandatory posting of office hours and teachers' availability during the designated periods constitute the front line pedagogical mechanism for supporting students outside the classroom. In the case of the Departments of Mathematics and Science, students may approach any instructor of the course they are taking during office hours.

By structuring the Academic Calendar to include teacher-student days when faculty members are expected to be available for consultation with students, the College is able to commit more human resources to student supervision. The provision of these

periods at strategic times during the semester addresses the need to expand time for faculty and students to meet outside the increasingly tight schedule on matters related directly to their courses of study. The high level of student-teacher interaction in and out of the classroom is a means of providing opportunities for student-support.

> We try to get the best out of our students. The teachers of the College really do believe they have a job to do. They spend far beyond the minimum three or four hours a week or whatever it is in each department — I think it is five in Science. I spend a lot of time on the various floors. The line-ups are there. I see students constantly (Informant).

Monitoring attendance, punctuality, and the progress of students are formal organizational strategies to detect students with personal and academic problems. Teachers have a responsibility to report on the progress of students in their classes who are in academic difficulty and forward to the appropriate offices the names of students who have not been attending regularly and have been missing assignments and tests. This reporting is required early in the semester and permits the Associate Academic Dean and the Academic Advisors to identify students whose performance is potentially problematic. The College's position is that constant attention, supervision and the reinforcement of good working habits usually has dividends for students who are serious about remediation.

> I think we do a good job at bringing along those students who are not stellar. We have given more attention to doing that over the past five or more years. I think as our student base shifted from more strictly Anglophone to the Francophone and Allophone, we became more aware that students coming in have needs mostly stemming from language issues, and as a result, we've mostly had to pay attention to that. It's had a more general payoff and we became more sensitive to student's coming in who are not so strong. But even aside from that, and prior to that, the teaching faculty has had an attitude to students, in other words, challenging them, and guiding them as well. I think this helps students no matter what level they're at. When they come here they're sort of coached and helped into developing those skills of studying. I know Student Services does study skills workshops. The success is there. And some statistics I've seen from Academic Council are that indeed we not only turn out high quality students who come in with high quality marks, but for students who come in with lower marks, the statistics show that indeed

they tend to come out with a higher average than the one they come in with (Informant).

Proposition 13: Colleges that mobilize their knowledge resources to ensure student progress are likely to enhance greater student performance than colleges that do not.

Proposition 14: The more coordinated and integrated the organizational student support system, the more likely it is to result in greater student success.

Proposition 15: Dynamic forms of student-teacher interaction and teacher support result in greater success for students who are serious about remediation.

Superior Teaching Performance within an Enabling Environment

At Marianopolis, teaching effectiveness is at the heart of all the processes and strategies adopted to successfully prepare students for university studies and the accomplishment of the objectives of the organization's mission. Within academic circles, the assessment of teaching is a tried and tested way of determining, through the lens of student perception, service quality, particularly teaching quality. Since 1995, student evaluation of faculty members has been conducted every semester for faculty on sessional contracts, and every three semesters for those on regular contracts, though faculty on regular contracts might request to be evaluated more frequently if they so wish. An enormous bank of cumulative, stable, trustworthy, and generalizable data therefore exist to provide standards against which individual and group comparisons can be made.

Showcasing the quality of teachers' performance through the eyes of students eminently served the *image-building interests* of the College. Between August 1995 and December 2001, the Marianopolis Accumulative College-wide Student Evaluation Report contained assessment data based on a total of 47,472 student opinions. On a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor), faculty's overall grade was 1.94, with 73.5% of assessments in the very good to excellent range. The scores on individual items (see Appendix B, p. 319) clearly indicate high levels of professionalism and quality performance.

However, the College decided that a much more academically focused survey bearing directly on teaching effectiveness, teacher/student interaction, and learning experiences should be administered to its 4th semester and 2nd semester Science and Arts students. To interpret succinctly the measurements from the 193 questionnaires completed in relation to standards appropriate to the College, reference is made to the percentage of students responding in the strongly agree/agree categories compared to the strongly disagree/disagree categories using three criterion measures for the level of performance: (a) *outstanding performance*: 75 percent and higher; (b) *satisfactory performance*: 70 to 74.9 percent range; and (c) *unsatisfactory*: less than 70 percent.

Based on these criteria 19 of the 22 items measured were in the outstanding range, 1 satisfactory and 2 unsatisfactory. The item "Teachers evaluate and keep tract of students' learning progress" fell into the satisfactory range.

Students' assessments in the outstanding performance range indicate that teachers hold high expectations for student learning and success and let students know they are expected to meet them. They also show that teachers provide organized, clear and focused instructions for assignments and tests, make efficient use of class time, set clear standards for classroom behaviour, and apply standards fairly and consistently. Students agree that teachers are respectful, fair, and consistent in their dealings with them, promote understanding and respect among students of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and ensure a good classroom environment for learning and teaching.

The message to the CEEC is that teachers interact with students in positive, caring ways. For example, teachers are credited with showing interest in helping students deal with academic problems, with encouraging their development of skills such as critical and creative thinking, self discipline, cooperation, dependability, positive work attitudes, and with making what they teach understandable. Teachers provide specific and timely feedback on how well students are doing, as well as give those who are experiencing difficulty with their courses the extra time and instruction required to succeed in their studies. The student survey indicates that teachers enjoy the respect and confidence of students, and appear to work for a common purpose. The fact that one of the highest

scores (93.3 percent) is on the item "teachers make both female and male students feel equally valued", speak well about the organization. However, students suggest that teachers needed to pay closer attention to review and re-teaching as necessary to help students master their learning material, and to making links between course content, students' experiences and their future plans.

Overall, based on the analysis of student responses, the findings suggest that members of the teaching faculty are the most important institutional resource. However, in designing a comprehensive institutional self-evaluation and in seeking to ensure the production of trustworthy results, faculty impressions and opinions were also garnered regarding areas such as the quality of learning experiences provided for students, the professional life of teachers, the services and resources of the College, and mechanisms for leadership and management. Sixty six percent of the 135 faculty members surveyed responded. In reflecting on the quality of learning experiences provided for students, teachers in high proportions indicated that:

(a) they have high expectations of themselves and of students;

(b) apply appropriate technology to improve their teaching; use a variety of instructional strategies based on classroom situation and student needs, and a variety of techniques to assess student performance and progress;

(c) develop student competencies in accordance with the primary objective of learning activities to enhance self-discipline, cooperation, dependability and positive work attitudes;

(d) model and promote life-long learning, and attempt to make links between course content, the students' experiences and their future plans.

The picture painted of organization-level characteristics is also very positive, with scores within the satisfactory to outstanding range. To illustrate, respondents feel that the organizational climate is supportive and collegial, that the College has implemented the values (vision, mission and objectives) it embraces and that teachers overall share these values. Agreement is high among faculty that administrators, teaching personnel and staff work together to advance the goals and objectives of the College. In addition, faculty members characterize the College as a place where varying skills, knowledge and

philosophical perspectives are valued and utilized, and as one whose curricula integrates local, national, global, multi-cultural, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives. Faculty also assert that the College offer a sufficient variety of academic programs and courses to suit the needs of students, and that teachers work for a common purpose. In addition, they express the opinion that the College community believes that all students can succeed in their academic pursuits, and that the organization positively shapes the conditions under which students learn. Finally, faculty affirm that the organizational culture seeks to eliminate unfair practices including those that discriminate by race and gender, and to be fair and consistent in enforcing codes for student discipline and employee conduct.

Discourse based on faculty perception is also used to communicate the sense that the College provides a safe and secure climate and working environment for its employees, that it promotes understanding and respect among the different socio-economic and cultural groups within the community, and that it possesses a social atmosphere in which teachers of both genders feel equally included and valued.

Instituting a Plan for Success

The Marianopolis Plan for Success (MPS) is presented as a good example of an academic innovation that upholds the student centred approach the College's Vision and Mission Statement enunciates. This project allows the College to coordinate and channel efforts related to student improvement by providing access to needed resources, both human and financial. It also aims to increase understanding and knowledge of factors related to student success such as metacognitive skills, transdisciplinary abilities and motivation, and to generate a renewed sense of enthusiasm, motivation and energy for all those involved in improving the academic success of students pursuing the tradition of excellence that characterizes the College. (ALMA MATTERS, Fall 2004, p. 3).

Three distinct but related areas of activities of the MPS are highlighted within discourse. *Support for academic success* is the primary objective of the plan. While Marianopolis is fortunate in that it enjoys a very high level of success in comparison to many other colleges, there are nevertheless some areas to be targeted for improvement.

The Plan for Success allows for the design of initiatives that promote overall student success in terms of raising the pass rate in the first and second semester of each new cohort, augmenting the registration rate in the third semester and increasing the graduation rate within two years. This plan targets ongoing success for all students through initiatives including a study skills handbook for new Social Science students, workshops gathering together faculty and staff into a dialogue on the key elements of student successs, and an awareness campaign which highlights study skills pertinent to a college education.

The second area highlighted is *addressing very specific student needs* through the development of a fully comprehensive Learning Resources Center (LRC) where measures of support directly related to given courses, most notably language-based courses that are part of the general education component, are offered to the at-risk student population. The MPS allocates specialized resources to supplement the array of services already offered to the entire student body. For example the *peer tutoring project* serves several hundred students per year (notably in Quantitative Methods, Economics, Biology, Chemistry, English, French, Mathematics and Physics). The *group tutoring project* in Physics provides support for second-year courses without peer tutors, and the *monitoring projects* in English and French caters to students with weak language skills.

The third area of focus is *specialized enriching activities* which have been developed to offer opportunities to apply acquired knowledge beyond the confines of the classroom as a way of enriching and creating greater interests in the curriculum, and to enable the exploration of careers. These enriching activities significantly broaden the horizon of the MPS and reflect full recognition of the need to embrace the entire body of Science, Social Science and Arts students. In some cases, pre-existing projects have been integrated into the Plan for Success, for example, the Science Fair, Robotics Project, Mathematics Competitions, the Marianopolis certificates, and the Model United Nations project. As it stands, close to half of the student body is involved in MPS activities, many in more than one project.

In presenting its Plan for Success, the College uses the opportunity to point out that the goals of the Plan reinforced the need for an effective academic information system, and that one had been fully developed and currently operated to track student performance, and to identify students at risk, provide accurate data on their distribution across programs/disciplines, and provide assessments of intervention measures, including reliable data on the impact of support strategies. In fact, this instrument has gained the capacity to produce hard and reliable information on the full impact of what the College does in support of its weaker students. It actively supports program and institutional objectives and has produced several reports touching upon crucial academic concerns. It was used in the self-evaluation of both the general education component of studies and in the overall institutional evaluation.

> **Proposition 16:** Superior teaching performance within an enabling educational environment is a mark of institutional effectiveness

> **Proposition 17:** Academic services and systems are successful in relation to their ability to identify and commit resources to support the different needs of all students.

Comprehensive and Effective Student Services

A crucial element of the overall discourse is the comprehensiveness and relevance of the student services available to learners. The Student Services Department comprises six separate support sectors: Campus Ministry, Counselling, Health Services, Sports Animation, Student Life Animation and Practical Information and Services. The personnel in these sectors are portrayed as an integrated team of multi-disciplinary professionals and educators dedicated to enhancing the quality of student-life for all students, and to working collaboratively with the academic and other sectors of the College to provide a holistic approach to education, thereby enabling students to identify and achieve their educational goals. One informant asserted that Student Services shares in:

> ... the task of developing and maintaining a community where students learn and grow both within and outside the classroom, [and] is committed to the development of the whole person within an accepting, caring and fun environment.

The discourse connected to Student Services strongly suggests that the College recognizes the benefits of intellectual, spiritual and personal growth and development beyond the classroom. Thus, the very comprehensive programs and services, demonstrate four core competencies, namely, the capacity: (a) to deliver quality support and assistance to all students; (b) to develop comprehensive activities designed to reinforce the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, physical and social dimensions of students' lives; (c) to work as a student-centered team, and (d) to create conditions which foster student participation and healthful student expression. In surveying students one question covered the gamut of student services, focusing on whether services and activities of the Student Services department provided students with a high quality of social life. Overwhelmingly, students regarded these services as outstanding.

The competencies exhibited by Student Services flow directly from the values of its mission statement: *sharing with the College at large the task of developing and maintaining a community where students learn and grow both within and outside the classroom.*

> Our main strength is that we're a team down here. We're a group of professionals and we all have the same goals in mind. We all want to work with the students and we want to help the students grow to become more independent. They have to grow as individuals in all different ways. We encourage them to get involved in things outside the classroom. Everyone here cares about the students and I think that's hard to find in some places. If a student comes down here with any kind of problem, someone is going to help them. We'll go out of our way to make phone calls, to do whatever we can to take care of them (Informant).

Discourse characterizes the student services personnel as a unit dedicated to developing and implementing major educational and leadership activities that are in keeping with the mission and vision of the College. These activities are important in their own right, but their institutional relevance derives mainly from their complementarity with teaching, their contribution of the attainment by students of institutional objectives, and their ability to take into consideration the ever-changing needs of the student population.

Discourse underscores clusters of services. For example, Campus Ministry is associated with building community, tolerance, mutual understanding and trust, the celebration of diversity, the fostering of a spirit of service to others, and the enrichment and enhanced awareness and self-expression of participating students. Counselling Services are defined by the provision of workshops aimed at enabling students to develop self-awareness, enriched interpersonal relationships, and ways to share of information and concerns regarding contemporary issues of importance to young adults. Workshops focus on critical areas like study skills, problem solving, assertiveness training, interview skills, career exploration, independent living, stress management, eating disorders, HIV/AIDS, sexuality and abusive relationships.

Personal development, self-understanding, the general well-being and self-actualization of students also feature prominently in the discourse regarding the effectiveness of Student Services. This particular focus recognizes the indispensability of psychological counselling and career planning services to the College's vitality as a post secondary organization, and to the stability, purpose and direction in the students' academic lives. Since the promotion of positive educational experiences among students also rests upon the quality of their mental and physical health, the broad scope of the program of health education is described in order to reveal the organization's work in the area of nutrition awareness, information on eating disorders, AIDS awareness, and emergency response and intervention. Discourse also explores the role of the College's sports program in offering opportunities for a wide variety of physical activities and its valuable contribution to the enrichment of the education of students.

Undoubtedly, part of the ongoing success of Student Services stems from the opportunity provided to students to participate annually in a leadership training program. Leadership training aims at increasing the level and quality of student participation; to provide tools for sustained student involvement in the exploration issues, the sharing of ideas and interests; and to stimulate innovative approaches to solving problems and learning outside the classroom. In effect, helping students to reach their fullest potential is a priority.

Proposition 18: The most effective student services programs are those that complement teaching and contribute to the attainment by students of institutional objectives.

Student Initiatives, Growth and Development

In the College's Vision and Mission Statements there is a commitment:

(a) to preparing students to make positive contributions as citizens of a complex and changing world;

(b) to welcoming students from all cultures, faiths, and social backgrounds to come together within and beyond the classroom in mutual respect and trust;

(c) to encouraging each other to act with integrity, promote social and political justice, and practice responsible stewardship of the natural environment.

The strategy adopted to showcase the manner in which the College honoured the three above mentioned commitments while teasing out the "specialties" of the organization was to enlist the help of a recent graduate who had developed an interest in the evaluation project. The constructed narrative identifies motivation, encouragement, support, caring, and the dedication of resources and personnel as the elements involved in enhancing student initiative, growth and development. As stated by Wilkins and Thompson (1991), and Boyce (1996), narrative enables the construction of reality. It does this by serving as "a tool or program for making sense of events" (Gephart, 1991, p. 37).

To the graduate in question, *reality* is that "classroom academics are not much use without practical application of that knowledge, and learning in a dynamic environment is always more fulfilling". Six major themes emerge from this narrative and form the basis of the discourse of student initiative, growth, and development: (1) environmental consciousness and activity, (2) commitment to success in facing technological challenges, (3) celebrating cultural diversity, (4) community/international outreach, (5) motivation and student support, and (6) acceptance and sharing.

In this graduate's *reality*, there is a clear link between the activities of the Education and Environment Club (EdEn), and the College's ability to raise consciousness about environmental issues, corporate activity, and human rights. There is also a clear

link between student initiated activities in the technical field of robotics, and the College's ability to foster students' commitment to success and the critical thinking required to find creative approaches to problem solving. Thus, the College gets credit for students' success in facing technical challenges by virtue of developing competencies in areas such as student-organized fund raising, team building, brainstorming and experimental modeling, as well as leadership in showcasing talents and demonstrating ambassadorial skills at competitions.

The College's first ever one-day celebration of Middle Eastern culture in April 2000 is used to underscore the harmony existing among a group of students whose cultural backgrounds traditionally have known less than amiable relations. The gathering of the Jewish students of the Marianopolis Hillel together with the Arab Student Association and the Armenian Club was, according to the event co-chairs, an event intended to "provide students with the incentive to put religious and ethnic differences aside and interact socially as a group sharing a similar culture". Celebratory festivities included music, food, and a variety of activities related to each culture, proceeds from which were donated to a Jewish-Arab kindergarten located in the Middle East. The signing of a Declaration of Commonality by the three group representatives highlighted the event, symbolically sealing a compact of peaceful coexistence.

Highlighting the work of the Marianopolis Chapter of Free the Children was a significant way of illustrating the College's success in fostering social and political justice at the level of student activity. Established in 1998 by a Marianopolis student, this chapter evolved from a single-handedly managed student project to become one of the most visible and dynamic student groups on campus, eventually symbolizing what may be achieved "twenty-five cents at a time, by selling candies and chocolate bars to fellow students, staff and faculty as well as by organizing fundraising activities at the College" (Graduate). Thus, motivated by a desire to "improve the welfare of children in developing countries" (Graduate), in the very first three years of the project's initiation students raised enough funds to build two schools in Nicaragua, and help finance the

teachers' salaries and the purchasing of school supplies, as well as support other Free the Children initiatives.

An equally powerful illustration of the College's success in fostering social and political justice at the level of student activity was the major outreach project that led a delegation of 18 students, faculty and staff in July 2002 "to the 'other side' of Mexico to learn, live and reflect about our collective future in a global world" (Graduate). This venture provided an opportunity for the students to better understand the importance of trade alternatives, like the emerging fair trade coffee market, and to put Mexican history into a current world context.

> To see the conditions and issues people have to deal with and how they cope with them is quite a humbling experience. From the coffee fields and autonomous health clinics and schools in Chiapas, to the urban cooperatives and political movements we saw part of an ongoing struggle against poverty, and for justice and dignity (Graduate).

Within this narrative, the College's capacity to provide motivation and student support is framed in relation to two specific factors: (1) how the organization responds to certain student needs through the creation of special certificates such as International Studies, Law and Social Justice, Enriched Commerce, Third World Studies and Honors Science that provide a method of teaching students and encouraging them in their quest to gain more knowledge and experience in their respective fields; and (2) the development of a vibrant gamut of student initiatives like Middle-Eastern Day, Free the Children, Model United Nations, the Debating Club, International Day and celebrations ranging from Chinese New Year to Hanukah which "instill a sense of multi-culturalism in the Marianopolis community and create a culturally wholesome environment for students to learn and share their ethnic diversity" (Graduate).

The final theme, acceptance and sharing, is used to illustrate the ideals of promoting minority groups, of ensuring equal acceptance and treatment of all groups by clubs within the community regardless of religion or race, and fostering freedom of expression of the richness and value of these groups. Acceptance is particularly viewed in

relation to the emphasis that is placed on promoting women in science and engineering, traditionally male dominated careers.

The exercise of creative skills and competencies involved in participating in extra-curricular interests and various forms of self-expression, and of taking ownership of the activities promoted by the College reflect the display of attitudes and dispositions of intellectually sensitive, socially responsible, self-motivated, self-directed, creative, and enterprising students. The attribution of the formation of such attitudes and dispositions to the College's ability to provide "a well-rounded education within a comprehensive learning environment" (Graduate) underscores the organization's commitment to provide the opportunity, freedom, encouragement, support, and nurturing necessary for students to discover and develop academic talents and leadership qualities.

In fact, the reality embodied within the sense-making processes of this particular narrative may be subsumed under the concept category *mission in action*, as it is possible to see practical evidence of the attainment of the College's mission within the themes explored. The sense of mission in action may be summed up by the comment that:

> Marianopolis prides itself on helping to shape young minds and turning students into socially responsible adults. Students at Marianopolis are always part of a larger plan: a well-rounded education comes within a comprehensive learning environment. Marianopolis provides the opportunity for students to come together and share their talents for a common purpose i.e., to make learning, living and sharing worthwhile (Graduate).

Personal growth and student development are explicit pursuits within a mission of educational excellence. Quoting an *Education for Capability Manifesto* by the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA, 1979), Billings (2003) argues that:

> A well-balanced education should, of course, embrace analysis and acquisition of knowledge. But it must also include the exercise of creative skills, the competence to undertake and complete tasks and the ability to cope with everyday life; and also doing all these things in co-operation with others (p. 338).

> **Proposition 19:** Personal student growth and development depends on the institution's ability to develop specific cognitive abilities, attitudes and dispositions.

Enhancing Effectiveness within a Framework of a Human Organizational Face

Discourse related to enhancing institutional effectiveness in a context of a human organizational face may be framed within four integrated concept sub-categories which pertain to the role of human resources management (HRM) in fulfilling responsibilities of ensuring an adequate number of competent administrative personnel, faculty and staff with the skills, abilities, knowledge, experience and vision needed to further and to achieve organizational goals, and sustain high levels of organizational performance over the long term.

Fair and Equitable Recruitment

One of the competencies that educational organizations should demonstrate is the ability to make good choices from among the candidates available, especially those selected for teaching. This is essential since the quality of education in the institution depends largely upon teachers' academic qualifications, their instructional abilities, experience, motivation, commitment to the task and to the organization, their decision-making abilities and vision with respect to the development of courses, the implementation of programs, and their adaptability to innovation and change.

Recruitment focuses on obtaining employees with the skills, abilities, knowledge and experience required to fill the teaching, administrative and staff positions within the College. Discourse therefore stresses that by effectively coordinating human resources, the College has succeeded in attracting, developing and retaining a teaching faculty with academic and professional competency and genuine interest in the students. The idea that the College values the quality of teaching and that wide-spread acceptance prevails among faculty for routine evaluation of teaching effectiveness and overall professional competence, is conveyed.

Paragraph 5.1.7 of Chapter 5, Personnel Management, of the document Faculty Handbook: Working Conditions for Teaching Personnel, January 2002, specifies that "the *standard requirement for an appointment to a teaching position* is a Master's degree in the discipline in which there is an opening" (p. 3). College policy, in some circumstances,

may deem appropriate other qualifications. However, the Masters degree is the standard requirement since it indicates a thorough academic preparation in the teaching area. Some teachers also have Doctoral degrees, Education Diplomas and Master's degrees/Diplomas in the teaching of English as a second language.

In exploring its ability to enhance the quality of the personnel choices made, the College focuses upon : (a) the adoption of multi-faceted and flexible hiring procedures that involves the Human Resources Coordinator, the curriculum committees of the department concerned, the Academic Dean, and the Director General; and (b) the adoption of a flexible approach to recruitment based on different academic credentials and performance criteria to reflect intrinsic cultural intra-departmental differences and objectives, as well as the model which best serves departmental needs. These differences are integrated within organizational routines and procedures, and contribute to the College's goal of attracting and selecting very competent teachers.

The College's ability to assess the competence of newly hired personnel derives from two policy standards:

1. the initial contract of a teacher is always sessional and only sessional contracts may be offered until the teacher has either accumulated two years of seniority or has signed six sessional contracts within a period of four years;

2. in order to be considered for a reappointment, teaching personnel on sessional contracts must have their performance evaluated during the contract period, and must demonstrate satisfactory performance.

In effect, once employed by the College, performance evaluation and the demonstration of competence become central issues. Discourse suggests that practical integration procedures have been instituted to effect the smooth transition of newly hired teachers to departmental and College life. For example, newly hired teachers are provided with relevant course material such as textbooks, course outlines, old tests, old final exams, handouts, and assigned a mentor. Careful mentoring occurs, particularly in the first semester by senior faculty selected to facilitate the transition process, and at the end of the semester, interviews are conducted with new teachers to discuss their experiences.

Mentoring is obviously beneficial to both the teacher and the College. It is an effective strategy for easing new teacher into departmental routines and culture. It facilitates the adjustment that is vitally necessary in the face of novel obligations and circumstances, brings out the pedagogic skills of promising teachers to increase their chances of being retained, and helps new teachers to make a good start toward reaching their career goals. A poignant comment made during the formal interview process is that:

> One of the ways this College can ensure it can survive with the kind of excellence it has into the future is by attracting high quality, highly educated, highly motivated faculty. And it then needs to socialize that new faculty, new young faculty – I assume that they'll be young – into the way of working at education and students that's been part of the culture of this place ... to pass on values, to pass on ways of being independent, to pass on underlying assumptions about education. So you need to teach the young teachers well. It's not just the nine to five. It's about all those things that come from being a person who's committed to education and committed to young people and committed to the institution. You have to model it. (Informant).

> **Proposition 20:** Colleges that recruit faculty possessing the knowledge and competencies required to be effective teachers produce very positive learning outcomes.

Teaching Evaluation for Performance Improvement

The evaluation of teaching personnel is a major aspect of *performance assessment*. Its primary purpose is "to develop and implement procedures and assessment so that [the College] may continue to improve" (Faculty Handbook). The process is aimed at arriving at objective human resource decisions. This goal was identified in the 1991 Mission Statement and has become fully integrated into the culture of the College. The system currently in use was formally approved and implemented in 1995, replacing earlier procedures which were inconsistent in regularity and in departmental application.

To be brief, discourse suggests that the 1995 evaluation policy represented the positive culmination of a number of processes. Philosophically, the College sought to relate faculty evaluation to other organizational efforts to improve teaching. Having gained faculty cooperation and widespread acceptance of the idea of evaluation as an

institutionalized process, the College defined the purposes and objectives of evaluation, and systematically arrived at procedures for making crucial policy decisions about who will be evaluated, with what regularity, the official uses of evaluative data, and whether or not to publish the results. Finally, the College established an office for administering the policy and for keeping the College community informed.

An explanation of the details of the practical application of the College's teacher evaluation policy has been integrated into the discourse. For example, all teachers are evaluated by means of student evaluations in week 12 of the semester and for the first two years new teachers are on sessional contracts. Teachers on sessional contracts are evaluated every semester [Faculty Handbook, Hiring, 2.4.1]. Teachers on regular contracts are evaluated on a rotating basis once every three or four semesters, but may request to be evaluated more frequently if they so choose. The College recognizes that student evaluation is an incomplete conceptualization of faculty evaluation, but views it as a reasonable and trustworthy procedure for systematically gathering particular evidence about teaching effectiveness. Thus, teaching evaluation has been broadened to encompass not only student evaluation, but service to the College, professional development activities, and community involvement. The latter form of evaluation is based on a year-end report and updated CV. Teachers on sessional contracts are encouraged to supply year-end reports which present critical self-reflections on their engagement with the content, objectives and course methodology, an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and a vision of their future in the educational process.

The organization's position is that philosophically and practically, evaluation is meant to be a constructive process engaging the administration and the teacher, emphasizing the goal of achieving a fair balance between the summative and formative dimensions. This approach serves administrative purposes for monitoring the quality of teacher performance to ensure that appropriate standards are being maintained. The focus of the formative aspect is upon the examination of classroom practices, identification and acknowledgement of shortcomings, self-reflection by teachers, and self-motivation to find methods to improve classroom performance.

The intent of the summative aspect is to allow the administration to judge teachers' proficiency and efficacy, and make crucial HRM decisions including those related to the non-renewal of contract, the awarding of residual sections, the granting of regular contracts, special training or professional development or other steps to be taken and the time frame involved to redress unsatisfactory evaluation. Policy serves developmental purposes by providing faculty with performance feedback to reinforce desirable classroom behaviours, while seeking to guide and motivate teachers to improve performance where needed. Policy also provides a means for validating faculty selection procedures, hiring decisions, and specific professional development activities. It may even allow academic leaders to identify faculty with potential for advancement in other spheres of the College's operation.

> **Proposition 21:** The assessment of teaching performance for the purpose of ensuring that appropriate standards are maintained and to find methods to improve the teacher's classroom performance will result in higher levels of student achievement.

Teaching Improvement through Professional Development

In appreciation that fostering teaching improvement through professional development and maintaining faculty motivation are vital to the effectiveness of educational institutions, a Professional Development Office was created in 1988. As stated by Altman (2000) professional development (PD) "consists of institutional (or departmental) programs and practices designed to enhance faculty effectiveness and satisfaction in the diverse roles which faculty play as classroom teachers ... and disciplinary professionals" (p. 2). PD plays an important role in upgrading general teaching skills and in sensitizing teachers to pedagogical trends as well as emerging issues that may impact crucially on classroom management, teaching methodologies and styles.

In addressing teaching improvement through professional development, the College emphasizes two specific policy orientations. To clarify, one is the PD activities that focus on providing service to the College. The other, while touching this function, is more directly oriented towards service to the individual teacher upon request. The former

category consists of activities somewhat associated with classroom pedagogy, particularly on methods which provide faculty with knowledge and skills to perform to acceptable standards, taking into consideration discipline content, student population characteristics, student behaviours and needs. The latter orientation is the area of providing professional development information of general applicability to faculty, and embraces services such as technical assistance with course preparation, student evaluations, and the development of desirable classroom strategies for informing either students or teachers of classroom performance. In short, the CEEC is assured that the organization's strategy is to help faculty members function more effectively through these instruments. Notably, also, since the introduction of program reform in the early 1990s, many activities have emanated from the academic departments themselves, and are in some ways linked to the implementation of program innovations and the facilitation of a common vision of program objectives, standards, and competencies.

The College's establishment of a Human Resources Office in 1988 integrated the professional development function within the wider field of human resources coordination. Initially, the coordinator of this office primarily concentrated upon the short-term to medium-term goal of laying the foundation for setting up the office and an effective human resources management system. The intent was to develop coherent and innovative policy approaches to enhance employee motivation and performance, and help build the organizational capacity required to manage the most important College resource, namely, people. The many demands resulting from the pursuit of these important tasks, especially those related to the systematic and vigorous reviewing of the policy within all staff and faculty documents, caused professional development activities to have a secondary status within the office during the period 1999 to 2001. As indicated by the College, the sense of partial neglect explains why the faculty survey does not indicate high levels of agreement that a broad range of opportunities for professional development was offered, or that the organization was committed to improving teaching through professional development practices.

However, discourse underlines the fact that since this initial period, the PD office has assumed its full mandate relative to fostering teaching improvement and increasing the proficiency of office staff. In fact, it is noted that the HR/PD coordinator has succeeded in instituting a working committee ranging from six to ten volunteers from all sectors of the College to help articulate and plan PD activities, and make professional development more visible and meaningful. It is this committee in conjunction with AMT and the Director General's management team that currently determines the themes for professional development days and the criteria for financial support to PD activities off campus.

> **Proposition 22:** Implementing effective professional development activities for college faculty increases both faculty motivation and teaching competence.

Building Good Employee– Management Relations and Organizational Climate

The kind of relationships which exist between the administration, heads of services, faculty and staff, play an important role in determining the social climate, level of motivation, turnover of personnel, level of performance and the overall effectiveness of an educational institution in achieving its mission and goals. Unlike the public colleges, employees at Marianopolis are not represented by a union, and consequently, the labour management relationship traditions which prevail in those circumstances do not apply. The fact is that the College has been reluctant to use the term management and labour, given its organic history, the collegiate system, and the joint responsibility assumed by all parties for policies and working conditions.

A number of key issues are advanced in presenting this aspect of the College's operation to the CEEC. To be specific, since the College does not have a faculty and staff association or employee union leading to signed collective agreements, the process of managing employee relations must be simplified. The Board of Directors therefore adopts working conditions by means of resolutions on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and the Director General. The initiative for change in these conditions may originate from a number of sources: members of the administration, employees or

standing committees. However, this simplified process has been no guarantee of the avoidance of problems and divisions amongst personnel, or between the personnel and the administration.

The College was quite forthright in explaining that the main source of division had been faculty perception of workload inequity across the disciplines. However, with the establishment of the HR/PD Office and the makings of a human resources management policy in late 1998, attention focused on working conditions that should be implemented either as a result of changes to existing laws or simply in order to extend benefits to faculty and staff. Overall, therefore, the College succeeded in fostering greatly improved relations by:

(a) resolving the workload issue to the satisfaction of the majority of the different academic departments;

(b) revising the classification policy to meet the expectations for remuneration by its faculty and staff;

(c) improving and expanding the existing comprehensive list of benefits covered in the faculty and staff handbooks;

(d) complying with the law respecting salary equity and fulfilling its obligations to its female and male staff by reclassifying those salary categories deemed to be underpaid.

A major strength of the College has been its ability to always count upon faculty cooperation to accept with good grace interim solutions, and collaboratively recreate the type of environment in which relations would improve and the pedagogical business of the College could proceed. Historically, the College's organizational culture appears to have fostered the growth of fair and reasonable expectations, and the building of relationships and community (see Handy, 1993 for the notion of psychological contracts). The stability of this culture has been founded upon frequent interaction and communication between both parties especially in the formulation of policy respecting faculty and staff, and by the eventual development of a climate of trust, based on meeting each other's expectations, consistency and fairness in actions, and honest two-way communication.

> I think because there is not a union mentality here, there is not much of a division between us, between the administration, faculty and staff. People here are part of the community as we call it, the Marianopolis community (Informant).

The data suggest that policies relating to staff and faculty working conditions, including recourse and appeal procedures evolved incrementally and organically as the College's purposes and mission were modified progressively to reflect new social, economic, political, demographic, and pedagogical realities, as well as changes in the expectations of both parties. With the creation of the HR office, the College deliberately focused attention on clarifying, improving, and formalizing policy with a view to adjusting for the future.

As previously indicated, the departmental structure has played a pivotal role in enhancing organizational values and relations. Academic departments are the basic unit of organization for the development, implementation, management and integration of the academic programs. These procedures are managed bearing issues of personnel in mind. By embedding policy that empowers curriculum/program committees to make vital personnel decisions in the execution of their course planning mandates, the College has sought to ensure the negotiation and equitable resolution of personnel related issues by teachers for teachers within the framework of the guidelines of the College and pertinent information provided by the Human Resources Coordinator.

> **Proposition 23:** Building good employee-management relations and organizational climate leads to increased faculty motivation and teaching competence.

Enabling Student Progress through Material Resources Support

One of the factors enhancing organizational effectiveness is the capacity to make the most expeditious use of an organization's resources. The College is very forthcoming in affirming that its provision and appropriate allocation of material and information technology resources contribute to its effectiveness as an educational institution. Discourse stresses that regardless of program, the College enhances the development of

information and technology literacy to enable students to have a sufficient level of skills to deal with the large volume of data and information to which they are exposed.

Discourse is highly expressive of the library's role in supporting the mission of the College "to create an exciting learning environment" and in achieving the objectives of its academic programs. This stance is justified since the library's primary focus has been to provide services that students and faculty need in ways that are most effective and efficient. Library services have therefore contributed to the expansion of knowledge in a wide range of subject areas, facilitated student research, and enabled students to learn and to apply information technology and to assimilate important cultural values. The library's main strength is viewed as its ability to collect and provide information, and to offer instruction in research techniques and information use in support of the Colleges academic programs.

The College explores a number of key services. For example, the library's *instruction programs* are designed to foster the acquisition of specific competencies. All first year students at Marianopolis have an in-class presentation and a written library assignment that they do on their own time. The assignment introduces them to layout of the library, its personnel, and to the library's collections and computerized systems. This instructional session is a collaborative venture with the English Department and forms part of the evaluation in English 101 courses.

A more advanced instruction program is offered to all Social Science students in their Research Methodology class. A lecture followed by a "hands-on" assignment in the library allows students to become familiar with the Social Science reference collection, the intricacies of the subject search modes for the monograph collection, the Boolean search technique for periodicals and to use critical thinking skills in assessing information from online data bases, collections and the Internet. Some searching is also done online to the university library catalogues. This assignment, corrected by the librarians, assesses both technical competence and appropriateness of sources. Other courses, notably in humanities and the social sciences, receive individual sessions as needed. Extra individual instruction is made available to students as part of the reference service as the

need arises. The librarians, at the request of faculty, prepare course specific bibliographies to help direct student research. In recognition that an unfortunate side effect of the Internet has been the overwhelming temptation to plagiarize from online sources, the library provides a plagiarism detection service to teachers who have research papers they have reason to believe have been plagiarized. While this service is in its infancy, its usage is on the increase.

Support to programs is demonstrated through the offering of a number of information services:

(a) *Cyber reserve services* provide students with teacher solutions, quizzes, sample tests and the like on the library web page. Students have continuous access to these essential materials and use them heavily.

(b) The *library web page* offers a wide range of services in addition to cyber reserves. It has course links, faculty web pages, online book orders, the virtual reference desk, a link to iPAC and various web based databases. It is also the portal to other library catalogues, the AV web page, the Peer Tutoring web page and links to a variety of vocational sites.

(c) The *audio-visual web page* is primarily designed to help faculty to order and book AV materials. It also has a variety of links to assist in this process.

(d) The *peer tutoring web page* facilitates online booking for the Learning Centre as well as providing access to a variety of appropriate web pages and CD-ROM databases.

(e) The *Internet public access catalogue* (iPAC) allows students and faculty to search the listings of the library collections not only in the library but also from home. It also allows patrons to renew books from home, to see what items they have borrowed and when they are due back in the library. It offers not only keyword searching but also browse searching as well.

Audio-visual services are under the management of the Coordinator of Library and Audio-visual Services, and are provided together with library services within an integrated facility and resource policy. Other forms of support include creating a career and information unit which stocks a wide variety of materials to assist counsellors and students in vocational guidance; providing access to an extensive reference and textbook collection designed to encourage students to study and do homework on campus; and

online access from off-campus sites by current students and community members to the library catalogue, numerous data bases, many with abstracts, or full text articles and other information, and other Internet sites. The library's ability to adapt service programs to meet changing institutional needs also features in discourse, and particular attention is paid to the fact that the library's personnel have developed the hardware, software, telecommunications networks, and other services and systems that supply and organize content.

The College's capacity to provide essential information technology resources for students in all academic programs is a major selling card in the organization's self-presentation. Providing students with a schema to build a foundation of skills, techniques and understanding, and teachers with access to technology services which allow them to tailor learning to meet program needs and student abilities are central discursive themes.

On a practical level, discourse deals with a number of key aspects. For example, the use of 'expert' part-time students and alumni in addition to full-time staff has resulted in building a computer technology team which provides students and faculty with various levels of help-desk support, available via telephone, e-mail and through face-to-face, hands on contact. Support and extra resources for special projects and demonstrations involving computers and technology are also available to students and faculty as needed. The college provides e-mail accounts on the academic network to students, faculty, and staff at no charge, and students and faculty have access to these accounts from any computer that has internet connectivity.

Such accounts grant the user a print quota, a specific amount of disc space, and limit the user in terms of their ability to install software which is not licensed by the College. The account also provides access to numerous instructional applications, by far the most important of which support the teaching of mathematics and science, as well as the methodology courses in Social Science. The use of some of these applications is incorporated into the course material; others are made available to students for purposes of independent study, practice, and review. Lab assistants are available to assist students in their use of computer equipment and software applications. Although instructional

applications have priority over individual student use, even when labs are booked for classes, the computer technology personnel endeavour to make computers available for individual use.

The College also focuses the CEEC's attention on the quality with which it manages computer technology services. Five specific areas are addressed: (1) computer personnel access, when necessary, to outside consultants who are available for special projects and installations; (2) supporting services by employing student lab assistants who are selected based upon their experience with the software available on the workstations is pedagogically sound management; (3) upgrading equipment, software and network infrastructure on an ongoing basis to reflect current standards and meet increased demands for computing resources; (4) ensuring an adequate number of computers on the network for the exclusive use of students; and (5) purchasing equipment that allows wireless access to the academic network and the Intranet from computers being installed in faculty offices.

Discourse also deals with the regular surveying of faculty to enable the College to provide the required software and teaching materials in the computer labs and other workstations. Prior to the institutional self-evaluation two major surveys of student satisfaction with the computing facilities had been done with highly favourable results. Informational and technology services formed part of the students' and teachers' surveys during the institutional self-evaluation because of their direct pedagogical links to the support of teaching and learning process. Both surveys enabled the College to confirm that the organization's performance was in the satisfactory/outstanding range. Indicators comprised sufficiency of resources for student needs in terms of doing course-related work, technical efficiency and assistance, accessibility to resources in terms of time to get work done, quality of equipment and adequacy of data bases for research and course related work, and efficiency and courtesy of staff.

The College projects the image that very solid pedagogical principles have guided both the budget allocation process and the determination of budget priorities. These principles reflect (a) direct student need; (b) responses to changing pedagogical

standards and pedagogical needs; keeping pace with technology; (c) enhancing teacher satisfaction and motivation; (d) aiming at providing a safer, more attractive physical environment; and (e) ensuring the long term viability of the College (Field notes: institutional evaluation report of the Finance Committee). In sum, efficient mechanisms are said to exist to ensure that the needs of different programs and support sectors are addressed and that the budget decision-making process adequately represent the different programs and support sectors. Professional financial audits confirm responsible financial management. The bottom line, therefore, is that the College is organized and managed in ways which promote the attainment of its objectives and the fulfillment of its mission.

In the allocation of funds, the College has identified five major goals in keeping with the organization's vision to strive to create a dynamic and supportive learning environment, and its mission which clearly places "the student [at] the centre of the Marianopolis learning community".

The primary goal is meeting students' needs and maintaining quality education in a budgetary responsible manner. Consequently, despite direct interaction with students on a scale like Student Services or the teaching faculty, when decisions have to be made that are difficult ones, this is done by putting the students at the center of decisions.

Within discourse, budgetary responsibility means capital expenditures in areas primarily related to the support of teaching activities. Four categories of spending are associated with this goal: investing in computer technology to meet the long-term goals of ensuring the system's capacity to handle students' academic and registration needs; directing sizeable capital outlays toward maintaining the usefulness of the library's collection and to updating its management collection and public access system; investing in equipment for the science labs to improve safety and upgrade facilities; and continued support of students "beyond the classroom" by funding student activities such as the Certificate Programs, Liberal Arts lectures, Science Fair, Model UN, sports teams and Robotics.

The second goal is maintaining tuition fees at manageable levels for students and their parents. This has been achieved through establishing tuition fees and financial aid

criteria that are conducive to "welcome students from all ... economic backgrounds" (interview Debra). Increases in tuition fees are tied to the Consumer Price Index and government cutbacks. However, student bursaries also increase to ensure that reasonable levels of financial assistance are available so that financial need is not a barrier to access. Ensuring fiscal responsibility through the presentation of a budget with a suitable surplus to manage unforeseen expenses and accumulate funds for planned capital expenditures is the third goal.

Fourth in priority, the budget concentrated on improvements to the buildings and grounds, with innovations in the area of energy efficiency involving the progressive outfitting of rooms with energy saving devices. Attention to personnel needs constituted the next order of priority. In the evaluated period, several full and part-time positions were added and total release time for faculty was increased. Personnel needs also included adjustments in salary and benefits to keep close to the public sector scale and ensure that the College was able to hire and retain the best faculty and staff.

Maintaining the viability of the College was the final but basic goal discussed within discourse. Strategies reflected two perspectives, financial and program. Financial decisions based on long-term strategic planning included a balanced budget, the allocation of surplus funds to the Contingency Fund on an annual basis, and the setting up of a new building fund for future building and renovations needs. The College also focused on building capacity to respond to changing pedagogical standards and program needs. This particular activity included providing the equipment and resources necessary to implement program changes as put forth by the Ministry, supporting the evaluation of programs, and meeting the additional costs for implementing the recommendations of the institutional evaluation, as well as the Plan for Success.

Ensuring that the needs of the different programs and administrative sectors are met is accomplished through the mechanism of the composition of the Finance Committee, the budget process, and the allocation of human resources. Budget decisions involve the collaborative input of a finance committee of stakeholders that comprises faculty, staff, the student body, administration and the Board. The parties involved in the decision-making

process are thus quite representative of the different programs and sectors. This process allows for every head of service or department chair to input their operating expenses and to personally present their requests for capital expenditures to the budget committee twice a year, initially for the proposed budget in May and again for the revised budget in November.

> The Finance Committee receives and assesses urgent needs as they arise during the course of the year. As long as a balanced budget can be maintained, and the expenditures are consistent with the College's vision, the requested expenditures are generally approved ... Apart from being party to the overall decision process, the Director General is responsible for the initial approval of capital requests. Tuition fee increases, general salary increases, operating expenses and capital expenditures must be approved by the Finance Committee before being brought to the Board (Finance Committee self-study).

The level of involvement described indicates that the institution's approach to ensuring fiscal responsibility and efficient allocation of scarce resources is both systematic and collegial. Financial and other external audits provide the verification that the Finance Committee does an efficient job. For example, good reports come from the government in terms of the rapport financier, and the student audit based on the Registrar's files. Despite the small staff, clearly defined responsibilities making for substantial independence in how work is done blended with the teamwork and pooled decision-making makes for greater operational efficiency.

> **Proposition 24:** Providing and appropriately allocating material and information technology resources in relation to assessed student needs and organizational purposes enhances organizational capacity and leads to sustained student improvement.

> **Proposition 25:** Economic viability and long-term growth is related to budgetary processes that focus on establishing priorities appropriate to building capacity to respond to changing pedagogical standards and program needs.

Achieving Institutional and Student Success

The ultimate test of institutional effectiveness and academic quality is student success, however defined, and this depends primarily on the organization capacity to achieve its stated aims of ensuring the mastering knowledge, developing specific program skills and expected standards of excellence. The main educational objective of Marianopolis is the successful preparation of its students for university studies. Successful preparation involves accomplishment of the objectives of organizational mission within the context of academic programs, curricula and pedagogy. In other words, success is measured by outcomes-based criteria which tend to be regarded by the public, regulatory agencies and within several circles of academia as the major indicators of meeting social and institutional expectations and obligations. These indicators have traditionally reflected the cognitive outcomes of schooling, namely scholastic achievement and academic progress, and to a major degree, function as proxies for the quality of education.

Key Performance Indicators

Four key performance indicators convey quantitatively the message of institutional and student success:

1. First term success rate measured by the percentage of students passing all courses.
2. Perseverance/program retention, measured by third semester registration rates in the same program.
3. Graduation rate in the original program within the prescribed period of two years (for programs other than Music-Science and the transitional Accueil program).
4. Program appeal measured by enrollment stability over the years.

The College's Academic Information System was used to gather data from the following sources: CHESCO (*Cheminement Scolaire*) reports for the entire private and public college system, PSEP (*Profil Scolaire des Etudiants par Programme*) reports for

close to 50 colleges within the SRAM, SRAQ and SRAL data base, as well as reports generated internally by the College. The College's Academic Information System was then used to compare results at the College to results at all other private colleges in the same program, and to results in all public colleges in the same program. Results were examined for the total college enrollment, separately for each individual program offered, as well as a function of incoming secondary averages of the students for the two larger programs. The statistics for the performance indicators presented (see appendix for tables and charts) are for the combined totals of the five cohorts spanning the period 1998 to 2002, as well as for each cohort separately. Statistical performance indicators reveal characteristics that are not unexpected given the overall high level of performance on the attributes already measured. In fact, such indicators are key components in the process of triangulation for organizational effectiveness and quality.

Discourse begins with the premise that success in the first term is very important for students' motivation, perseverance and eventual graduation rates. The results presented indicate that the College has consistently a much higher proportion of students passing all courses in first semester than other colleges either in the private or the public sector, and a much lower proportion of students who pass fewer than 50 percent of their courses. The point stressed is that this success rate is not entirely due to the higher secondary averages of incoming students. It is shown in Charts 6A2 and 6A3 (focusing on the large-enrolment programs 200.01, 200.B0 and 300.01) that students with secondary averages in all ranges perform better at Marianopolis than their peers at the 47 colleges in the SRAM, SRAQ and SRAL network.

The fact the organization is characterized by perseverance rates that are consistently superior to those in other colleges constitutes the second area addressed by the College. The rate of third semester re-registration in the same program at the same college may be regarded as an indication of students' perseverance, of a suitable initial choice of program on the part of students, and of the appeal of the college to the students. Across the college network, the total rate of re-registration in third semester (regardless of program) is taken as an indication of students' perseverance and the appeal of the

college. However, it must be noted that a change of program is not necessarily an indication of failure, since college years are a time when students explore in order to discover the most appropriate orientation for them, and changing a program may be a result of this exploration. Actually, there is a tradition among a small number of the organization's students to transfer to out-of-province universities after their first year, and so are excluded from the count of students who return to the college in third semester. This should not be viewed negatively, since it is not a sign of failure or lack of perseverance. Most of these transfer students are of high caliber, and are admitted to prestigious educational institutions in Canada and the United States.

The third aspect addressed regarding institutional and student success is that substantially higher proportions of the College's students graduate within the prescribed two years than students at other colleges either in the private or in the public sector. The College makes a point of emphasizing that this rate of success is not entirely due to the higher incoming secondary averages. Charts 6C2 and 6C3 provide graduation rates in the large-enrolment programs as a function of secondary averages, indicating that the organization's students graduate on time in higher proportions than students with similar secondary averages in the SRAM, SRAQ and SRAL network.

In fact, Chart 6C3 indicates that the rates of successful completion of the Social Science program within the prescribed two-year period at Marianopolis far exceeds the rates for the students in the comparison group in all ranges of incoming secondary averages. For example, within the 75-79 secondary average interval, each year (from Autumn 1998 to Autumn 2002) the graduation rate Marianopolis students was more than twice the corresponding rate in the comparison group. Overall from Autumn 1998 to Autumn 2002, the total rate for the Marianopolis students with averages in the 75-79 secondary average interval was 61% versus 28% for the comparison group.

The College made particular note of the finding that the 61% rate for this sub-cohort of the students at the College even exceeded the 53% rate for students from the comparison group with secondary averages within the higher 80-84 interval (refer to the bar-graph). Similarly, in the Science program, the 56% graduation rate for Marianopolis

students with incoming secondary averages of 75-79 was much higher than the 33% rate for students in the comparison group with even higher incoming secondary averages of 80-84.

Students at the College with average secondary marks above 75% have a graduation rate within the prescribed two-year period that is higher in the Social Science program than the rate for corresponding groups of students in the Science program. This observation was unexpected, and may be partly explained by the fact that more students in the Sciences change programs during their college years than their counterparts in the Social Sciences. However, this is a solid indicator that students can and do succeed in the Social Science program, and that the notion that students in the Social Sciences do not perform as well as those in the Sciences is untenable.

Discourse highlights the fact that while there has been public apprehension regarding a steady drop in science enrolments at the provincial level, Marianopolis has consistently attracted qualified students to its Science program, and, in fact has seen enrolments grow in relation to the réseau. In fact, the science enrolment might have increased even more, but for the limitation of classroom and laboratory facilities, which are presently operating at full capacity. In the Social Sciences enrolments at Marianopolis have also increased slightly relative to the réseau. However, there is evidence that secondary averages of social science students in the réseau have increased more than they have at Marianopolis.

In presenting its indicators of institutional and student success to the CEEC the opportunity was seized by the College to compare traditional measures of success based on course marks vs. the R-score, a measure currently applied by Québec universities in the admission process. To clarify, the Academic Information System Project Coordinator describes the R-score as a relative measure, which compares each student's performance to the performance of other students, the 'group.' This measure is regarded as being reasonably fair provided the various groups of students have fairly similar distribution of students in terms of their academic strength. The coordinator further stressed that over the

years a number of corrections have been applied to the R-score formula (such as the group strength index).

However, these corrections do not always compensate for the fact that in some cases R-scores may produce a much distorted picture of the students' performance. In particular, when it comes to a highly select group of students in an enriched course, the students' marks tend to be high and closely distributed (high group average with low standard deviation), reflecting the true overall abilities of the students. The students at the lower end of this type of group are severely penalized by excessively low R-scores. Their R-scores misrepresent their true performance, and do not reflect their relative strength compared to students in other 'regular' groups. The Coordinator of the College's Statistical Information System made this comment:

> To clarify this problem in non-technical terms, consider, for example, a group of athletes of Olympic calibre vs. an ordinary group of athletes. It is quite natural to expect the athletes at the bottom of the first group to be better than even the top athletes in the second group; yet if R-scores were used for selection to the Olympic team, athletes from the lower half of the first group would be classified below many of the members of the second group, and rejected from the team.

In its presentation of student success, the issue of the R-score was directed to the CEEC as a major concern of the College since the organization takes pride in providing its best students with opportunities for enrichment, often by grouping these students in special classes. In its attempt to influence the strategic priorities the CEEC should address, the College not only stressed that much time has been devoted to analyzing the effect of R-scores on such groups, but also that its concerns about the negative effects of the R-score on such groups are shared to some extent by other colleges offering enriched courses. It also expressed apprehension regarding the potential loss of such courses, if no effort is made by universities to recognize their true worth, or if no adjustment is applied to R-scores.

Summary

Serving student needs and social expectations through the delivery and support of programs is the essence of the discourse presented. Each academic program has specific aims that reflect social expectations. The College's message is that in delivering programs, the organization aims to provide students with the knowledge requirements and develop the skills and competencies necessary for smooth transition to university-level studies within the framework of rigorous discipline-based education and general education. Discourse suggests that the College achieves its student centred mission through a variety of effective pedagogical strategies. These include human resources management and the application of various forms of material support to enable student progress in keeping with the educational mission. The Student Services Department is distinguished for its comprehensiveness, student centred vision, and its capacity to complement teaching.

Discourse is clear that the College's recruitment of faculty and its evaluation of teaching performance have become critical to ensuring the maintenance of appropriate standards, and of finding methods to improve the teacher's classroom performance and enhance higher levels of student achievement. Also emphasized is the organization's ability to provide and appropriately allocate material and information technology resources in relation to assessed student needs and organizational purposes has contributed to the College's goal of enhancing organizational capacity, of sustaining student improvement and maintaining quality education. Discourse also implies organizational-level understanding of the necessity to link economic viability and long-term growth to budgetary processes that focus on establishing priorities appropriate to building capacity to respond to changing pedagogical standards and program needs. The bottom line is that programs are organized and services provided in light of the conditions and objectives to which they are intended to respond. Finally, the College is presented as having attained the objectives of its mission, and the objectives related to institutional and student achievement and academic progress.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Issue of Organizational Interests

Introduction and objectives

Previously, in reviewing the literature dealing with implementing and complying with regulatory prescribed quality assurance procedures, this study attempted to demonstrate that evaluation carries much weight because of the significance of what is at stake for the various individuals, interest groups, and constituencies both inside and outside the organization, and that the political implications of institutional evaluation are so serious that the process tends to evoke responses which serve the interest of the organization. Further, it was also stressed that given its political context, institutional self-evaluation, as an instrument of accountability, provides an opportunity for colleges to discursively demonstrate effectiveness and quality on a widely diversified set of criteria. Having examined the self-presentation strategies adopted by the College, this case analysis now focuses on interpreting the particular organizational interests being served in the discursive process, and the rationale underlying the need for serving these interests.

Organizational Interests

From this study's analysis of "*mission, organization and managing change*" as well as "*responsiveness to institutional needs and social expectations*", it may be argued that the College uses the self-evaluation process to script particular discourses that embody the social realities of organizational experiences and organizational performance. In other words, the College has attempted to demonstrate, in a convincing manner, through story telling and impression management, what the organization is about, what it stands for and can offer, and what may be unique about it. These discourses are constructed from, and reproduce perceptual, cultural, and ideological frameworks which serve particular organizational interests. Karreman and Alvesson (2001) assert that organizations use discourse to develop, clarify and solidify their identity: "social identities are knit together through the various accounts people tell about the events and circumstances in their life – informing both others and themselves who they are and,

perhaps equally important, who they want to be; who they want to become" (p. 65). Thus, this study argues that discourse has allowed Marianopolis not only to be self-defined and identified in relation to specific values, standards and practices, but also to present an image or portrait that influences how others think about the organization. This contention is rooted in the fact that the perceptions of outsiders are the ingredients for the creation of externally defined image and organizational reputation.

Identity, Image, and Reputation

Identity, image and reputation are interwoven social constructions. The concept identity is meant to capture "the perceived core characteristics of the organization" (Karreman & Alvesson, 2001, p. 61) or the "dynamic configuration of the" organization's "defining characteristics" (De Ruyter & Conroy, 2002, p. 510). To Albert and Whetten (1985) and Whetten and Mackey (2002), identity describes what is central, enduring and distinctive about the organization. Elsbach and Kramer (1996) associate the central and distinguishing attributes with the organization's core values, culture, modes of performance and products. Identity is synonymous with self-image, that is, how the organization as a social actor defines itself (Czarniawska, 1997; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Self-definition is based on a cognitive appraisal of how products, or services and processes are combined to signify the capabilities and worth of the organization in relation to others. Thus, the College's strategies of text construction, presentation and evaluative discourse are expressive of self-image and identity. It may be contended that the College's sense of identity satisfies the organization's need for distinctiveness and continuity (Whetten and Mackey, 2002, citing Baumeister, and Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail). The sense of continuity provided by the College's identity is necessary to stabilize core characteristics and activities and create "a temporal orientation of past (who we used to be), present (who we are now), and envisioned (who we want to become)" (Fox-Wolfgram, Boal & Hunt, 1998, p. 90).

The College's vision and mission statements hold the key to the organization's sense of distinctiveness and continuity that is reflected in its commitment to academic excellence, student centeredness, educating students to be self-directed, life-long learners

in the context of its rich educational heritage that links the organization "directly through the Congrégation de Notre-Dame to the first educational endeavours of 17th century Ville *Marie*." These themes have been stable elements of every vision and mission statement since the first in 1981, and have influenced both organizational thought and action.

> We do produce a lot of excellence. There is a quality of teaching that is quite engaged. It has been more engaged and more personal although our goal of success now less easy to achieve. It's the combination I think of the dedication to teaching and the kind of students we've attracted since about 1975 ... To be very frank, because we have very strong relationships at the administrative level, I think that filters down to everybody and every service area and every faculty within the department to feel that excellence and commitment to excellence and engagement in a process will be acknowledged (Informant).

An examination of the evolution of values enunciated in the 1981 Statement of Mission and Goals, in the 1992 Report on the Institutional Review, and in the 1999 Vision and Mission Statement reveals a fundamental continuity in the College's identity. Following Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000), although the College's identity has been subject to shifts in its interpretation and meaning it has retained "labels for "core" beliefs and values that extend over time and context" (p. 65). The enduring nature of the Colleges identity may be attributed to the fact that "it is collectively reiterated in practices and routines [and] embedded in organization culture" (Rodrigues & Child, 2003, p. 1). The continuity of the College's identity with excellence in education as well as its sense of distinctiveness is rooted in organizational culture. "We certainly highlight in our literature a tradition of excellence, that indeed students who come through here have a high success rate in university placement and what have you" (Informant). Distinctiveness embodies the sense of what defines the college, namely, those characteristics that say something about itself, its importance (De Ruyter & Conroy (2002). Part of its distinctiveness is being a small, private college with a pre-university focus, linked through the CND to the foundations of education in Montreal, and its consistent delivery of the academic outcomes of its mission.

> If I had to summarize in just a few words what the identity of this college is, I would say educational excellence in a human environment ... teachers do a lot to help the students through (Informant).
>
> It may be sacrilege to say it, but this is a first rate institution. We're collectively responsible for this tradition of excellence, this dedication that exists here. The strength, the reputation of this place has always been the people (Informant).
>
> Speaking as both a parent and administrator, I do think that this school basically does use the premise that we look at ourselves, look at what we do, and look to see if there is a way we can do it better. So that helps to make us a better organization, and I think that we do put the students at the centre. Certainly the teachers do (Informant).

Identity is socially constructed through interaction with external actors rather than solely through internal agency (Weick, 1995; Giddens, 1991; Gioia et al., 2000). To Whetten and Mackey (2002), "Identity involves interactions and interrelationships between insiders and outsiders and, perhaps especially, insider perceptions of outsider impressions" (p. 70). Hatch and Schultz (2002, p. 992, citing Mead and Jenkins), assert that identity formation is a relational construct associated with processes of social experience and activity as the organization relates to these processes and to other actors within these processes. Hatch and Schultz (2002) contend that identity is continuously constructed as part of a dance-like "interchange between internal and external definitions of the organization offered by all organizational stakeholders who join in the dance" (p. 1004).

Following Hogg (2000) and Bartel (2001), it may be asserted that the College's sense of identity and distinctiveness has resulted in enduring forms of self-categorization that have provided the means for its self-definition in relation to others within the organizational field. Hogg suggests that self-categorization and social comparison are mutually dependent processes, and that forms of comparison are guided by the identity that the organization claims. Thus, the College's identity serves as a lens through which experiences are filtered and provides the frame of reference for organizational self-categorization and members' social comparison. Bartel suggests that organizational self-categorization enhances the clarification of structural relations among groups and promote assimilation to an in-group 'prototype' that prescribes appropriate attitudes,

feelings and behaviour. In other words, the discourses related to the College's performance are part of the self-categorization process and help to cement stakeholder identification with the organization.

Image is a multi-faceted construct and there are differences in how the College's image may be theorized. It may variously be regarded as how members think others perceive the organization (*construed organizational image*: Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994); as how organizational leaders would like outsiders to see the organization (*desired image*: Whetten, Lewis & Mischel, 1992, cited in Scott & Lane, 2000); as what outside constituents and the external public actually think about the organization (*created image/impression*: Berg, 1985;); and what members project about the organization to influence how others think about the College (*projected image*: Bromley, 2000; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Regardless of the conceptualization, the College's image involves cognitive reactions of different groups with which it is associated. Lievens (2005) suggests that image "serves as a template to categorize, store, and recall organization-related information" (p. 1). The issues addressed below by three informants help to capture the sense of *desired* and *projected* image:

> It does well with relationships, people together, faculty and students. Administrators, faculty and staff relate together. I go elsewhere and I see a lot of "That's their department. That's their business". So it has nothing to do with me kind of thing. Here people go about, but they work together. We have some divisions that exist in the College, but I think that the relationship that exist between each individual, the respect in general that's carried out between each one of us, I think that's one of the things that we do well (Informant).

> This is a caring place ... teachers do a lot to help the students through, and I think the students are remarkable in their caring for each other. I think it's quite a positive environment and I don't think either of my kids would argue with that ... It's really very positive and sometimes maybe a bit of a shock to go to university from an environment that's this caring (Informant).

> There is a transformation that takes place here. I remember the Director General of a CEGEP at one of those meetings of the Commission. He comes over to me because he has heard of Marianopolis and says "What do you feed your students exactly at Marianopolis?" Not knowing where

> he was coming from, I said, "What do you mean?" Our Marianopolis debating team had just trounced their debating team. I didn't know anything about it, but apparently every year this is what happens. He said there was something about our students. They seem to walk about with an air of confidence. There is something in what he said. Not all of our students are kind of first rate students, but in general as a group they're good students. But I think what we manage to do is instil in students a sense of worth, a sense of confidence in themselves and over the time that they're here an ability to organize themselves, so that success will be in hand (Informant).

The intimate interrelationship between identity and image has been addressed in the literature by Gioria, Schultz and Corley (2000). Based on their model of identity-image interdependence, it is suggested that Marianopolis not only responds to the image and attitudes held by others, but internalizes and synthesizes these images and external attitudes, leading eventually to a new self-definition and further reaction to the image and attitudes held by others of the new self. This iterative, reflexive process whereby a continuously changing synthesis is created between self-definition and external definition explains how the College's identity is created and maintained. Gioria et al. (2000) suggest that:

> Construed external image ... is key to the process of initiating changes in identity; it represents organization members' interpretation of the feedback received from outsiders regarding the organization's fulfillment of expectations. It also represents the medium through which members determine how outsiders perceive the organization, thus affording a benchmark against which they can compare their own sense of organization (Gioria et al., 2000, p, 70).

One of the notable developments at Marianopolis in the past decade or so has been the greater emphasis placed on marketing the organization after being quite muted about the school for most of its history as a pre-university college. Few in the college would dispute that the "organization felt its reputation and image were sufficient to keep the numbers coming in that were needed" (Informant). In fact, the College was quite transparent about this aspect of its culture and operation in its self-evaluation report. An interesting take on the College's reserve in marketing itself to its external publics is that "the College's business of education is associated with a mission rather than with a

commodity or product to be marketed because of its close association with the CND" (Informant). Be that as it may, the College's academic standards for admission in keeping with its emphasis on a tradition of excellence also engendered "a sense of Marianopolis as being a kind of elitist institution" (Informant), although the organization was neither elitist in its student recruitment practices nor in the cultural composition of its student body.

> There may be this sense that because it is a private college, and it has sort of a tradition of high academics, there may be a kind of --- a sense of Marianopolis as being a kind of elitist institution. But I don't know to what extent that's warranted. I believe that those students prepared to go to university look at Dawson, Vanier, John Abbott and Marianopolis and grade our college higher in relation to the others because of what it delivers. So, I think the College's image is that of a higher pressure, academically oriented institution that's maybe a little bit more aloof than some of the other ones (Informant).

While the capacity to produce academic excellence within academically committed students remains a trademark of the College, Marianopolis has lost some of its competitive advantages as other colleges within the shared organizational field have improved their academic performance and overall effectiveness. The competitive landscape and the program choices available to academically committed students are not the same currently as they were fifteen years ago. Not only have other colleges improved their performance, but they have seized the technology of the Internet to design websites that are quite effective in influencing students' and parents' perceptions. Marianopolis has been a laggard in embracing the Internet as a means of marketing itself and making the College more accessible and transparent to the outside community, but this organizational attitude has rapidly changed as it renews itself, reinforces its identity and forges new strategies for stability and viability. Institutional self-evaluation served to alert the College to the crucial challenges it needed to face regarding image.

The organizational identity dynamics model (Hatch & Schultz, 2002) helps us to make sense of organizational identity in relation to both culture and image. In this model, culture is defined as "the tacit organizational understandings (e.g. assumptions, beliefs and values) that contextualize efforts to make meaning, including internal self-definition"

(p. 996). In this model, four processes appear to be paramount in explaining the relationship between identity, culture and image:

(a) *Mirroring*: identity mirrors the images of others;
(b) *Reflecting*: reflecting embeds identity in culture;
(c) *Expressing*: identity expresses cultural understandings;
(d) *Impressing*: expressed identity leaves impressions on others (p. 991).

Hatch and Schultz reinforce the position that identity is affected by the images others have and the stories spread about the organization. These images foster reflection and self-examination and help to induce the reconstruction or strategic reorientation of the organizational self. Since organizational members aspire to a positive identity and image, reflection is a cognitive process necessary for shaping the organization's identity claims. Hatch and Schultz (2000) suggest that organizational identity is embedded in culture, and they contend that "deep cultural values and assumptions ... are activated by the reflection process", (p. 1000) leading to identity reinforcement or change. Reinforced or changed identity reflects "the ideas, beliefs, and values or ideologies concerning what the organization should be doing, how it should be doing it, how it should be evaluated, and how these aspects should be reflected in structures and processes" (Fox-Wolfgram, Boal, & Hunt, 1998, p. 90). The data I examined resonate with the ideas of Hatch and Schultz, leading me to support the contention that culturally embedded identity functions like an organizational lens mediating strategic agenda concerns (Dutton & Penner, cited by Oliver & Börgi, 2005), and decision-making processes (Fombrun, 1996).

To Hatch and Schultz (2002), as organizational identity is expressed, so is its culture. Thus, the image projected by Marianopolis may be regarded as what it wants others to accept about what gives it its core features, distinctiveness and continuity. Projected identity is meant to influence outside appraisal of the organization. Managed organizational identity should therefore aim to impress external stakeholders about the worth of the organization and actively involve them in the organization's business (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Christensen & Cheney, 2000). Scripting particular discourses about its performance is integral to the College's managed organizational identity.

De Reyter and Conroy (2002) adopt a social institutional approach to the construction of an organization's identity, by introducing the notion of relation to the horizons of interpretation made possible by society, and the way in which internal interactions occur within the organization to manage business and deliver services in relation to social expectation. To De Reyter and Conroy, "horizons are the ideas and ideals of a society as to which organizational characteristics are to count as important or significant." (p. 510). Organizational identity is regarded as having the capacity of developing intelligibly only in relation to such horizons. This notion of "horizons of interpretation" is comparable to the idea of "a specified set of institutionally standardized social categories" that serve as referents for the "categorical identity claims" of organizations (Whetten & Mackey, 2002, p. 397). The College's discourse aims to demonstrate that its vision and mission statement encapsulates a set of "categorical identity claims" that are not only congruent with the values and ideals of society, but are also concretely delivered in relation to social expectations. In other words, the organization's identity claims are rooted in a logic of appropriateness.

The interaction of organizational members at Marianopolis, their activities and decisions play a vital role in identity construction since interactions and internal processes reflect certain standards or ideals about which organizational characteristics are to be valorized and cultivated because of their cultural and social advantages. In fact, De Reyter and Conroy (2002) suggest that organizational identity comprises those ideal images to which the organization aspires. Given their desirability, such ideals mirror important organizational attributes, and provide the College with a sense of purpose, meaning and direction, or a framework for its action. Whetten and Mackey (2002) also argue that:

> image and reputation [are] components of a symmetrical communications process between the organization (self) and relevant stakeholders (others). The two-way communications interchange is used as a regulative device to maintain an acceptable level of congruence between organizational activities and identity claims (p. 400).

From this conceptualization, the College's reputation may be regarded as the reciprocal of its image, and is treated as "a particular type of feedback received by an

organization concerning the credibility of its identity claims" (Whetten & Mackey, 2002, p. 401). The self-evaluation process opened these claims to scrutiny, and helped to confirm and cement the credibility of such claims. The insight that identity claims need to be credible underscores the critical role of communication in successfully managing the College's reputation.

> We highlight in our literature a tradition of excellence, that indeed students who come through here have a high success rate in university placement and what have you. And so I think the image that we present is one of, "If you're going to come to Marianopolis you're going to need to work." Thus, it is not so much the social environment as it is an academic environment (Informant).

The College's discourse strongly argues that the academic environment is founded upon the social environment, upon the people, the sense of community and collegiality, and the way this translates into personal development, self-expression, community involvement, academic procedures, standards and activities that are congruent with, and also shape, identity.

The various conceptual approaches to reputation in the literature reflect the multiple facets of the construct, but invariably adhere to the principle that reputation is formed by observers through their perceptions, interpretations, and impressions of the organization (Clark & Montgomery, 1998). For example, Bromley (1993; 2000; 2001) views reputation as the collective subjective beliefs held by members of a social group. Fombrun and Van Riel (2003) place the *collective subjective beliefs* into an appropriate context by associating them with appraisals that stakeholders make of the organization's capacity to fulfill the expectations it creates. Rao's (1994) perspective focuses on pervasive collective beliefs within the organizational field about an organization's identity and prominence. Other definitions include the esteem or overall estimation in which organizations are held by stakeholders (Fombrun, 1996; Heugens, Van Riel, & Van Den Bosch, 2004), and the dominant attributes ascribed to organizations by the multiple constituents that assess it (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990).

Fombrun's (1996) analysis of corporate image attributes corporate reputation to the interplay of four factors: credibility, reliability, responsibility, and trustworthiness. The

College's evaluative discourse resonates with claims to such factors. Fombrun and Van Riel (1997) further suggest that "reputations constitute subjective, collective assessments of the trustworthiness and reliability of firms" (p. 10). Applied to Marianopolis, the College's reputation is the composite of impressions and attributes derived through sense making processes as external reflection by stakeholders occurs in relation to the identity and the image projected by the organization. The College's reputation is evidently shaped by significant histories and assessments of performance and fundamental dimensions of the organization's effectiveness. It may therefore be concluded that the College's reputation encapsulates stakeholders' sense of organizational attractiveness and quality. Deephouse and Carter (2005, citing Shenkar and Yuchtman-Yaar, 1997) suggest equating "reputation with image, esteem, prestige, and goodwill in developing the encompassing concept of organizational standing" (p. 331). In stating that "Our heritage links us directly through the Congrégation de Notre-Dame to the first educational endeavours of 17th century Ville Marie ..." the College's mission statement evokes not only a strong sense of trustworthiness and reliability in the institution, but also a sense of considerable credibility, responsibility and organizational standing.

Scripting particular discourses about its performance is therefore integral to the management of the College's reputation. Fombrun and Foss (2001) suggest that:

> "Reputation management" is an emerging discipline whose central tenet is that strong reputations result from initiatives and messages that are in tune with the distinctive values and personality of a company, and which are meaningful to all company constituents and stakeholder groups ... It presents reputation management as a source of competitive advantage, and nothing less than enlightened self-interest (p. 3).

Identity, Image, Reputation and Legitimacy

From the above discussion this study suggests that Marianopolis has attempted to use discourse to effectively manage its identity, image and reputation. Since organizational reputation derives intrinsically from organizational identity and image, in the process of reputation management, the College's self-presentation has been a vital strategy of external communication to enhance the organization's success in gaining acceptance of the identity it has constructed and the image it projects. Arguably, the

College's discursive positions illustrate the process of image building and reputation management. The understanding that an organization needs to connect more personally with external stakeholders, especially the politically important ones, and provide increased access to itself (Hatch & Schultz, 2002) has powerful implications for the kind of self-definition the College discursively constructs.

If one accepts the position that reputation connotes an assessment of comparative status or relative standing of an organization among those in a particular domain along a set of performance indicators (Ruef and Scott, 1998), organizational reputation may be regarded as a critical resource (Shrum & Wuthnow, 1988), a trusted strategic asset (Fombrun, 1996), or an intangible asset that encapsulates an organization's current assets, position, and likely future behaviour (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997).

The primary business of the College is the delivery of effective academic programs and the successful preparation of students for transition to university studies. This business derives from its institutional mandate and social contract and its development and viability depends upon its reputation. As Fombrun (1996) explains, when contracts are entered into with a product or service provider, discriminant choices are made on the basis of reputation gleaned from recommendation and information. The implication of this insight presents serious challenges to the College regarding the management of stakeholder impressions of organizational reputation to bring about favourable behaviors among students, parents, and other stakeholders, including government.

Fombrun and Foss (2000, p. 1) identified six key factors that have enhanced my understanding of the means whereby the construction of stakeholder impressions of organizational reputation may occur:

1. *Emotional appeal*: the degree to which the organization is liked, admired and respected;

2. *Products and services*: perceptions of the quality, innovation, value, and reliability of the organization's products and services;

3. *Financial performance*: perceptions of the organization's profitability, prospects, and risk;

4. *Vision and leadership*: how much an organization demonstrates a clear vision and strong leadership;

5. *Workplace environment*: perceptions of how well the organization is managed, how it is to work for, and the quality of its employees;

6. *Social responsibility*: perceptions of the organization as a good citizen in its dealings with communities, employees, and the environment.

Fombrun and Foss further assert that in the perception of stakeholders, the construction process is instrumental in transforming organizational reputation into resources and assets. These ideas mirror to some extent the view that the reputation of an organization is in large part derived from its identity, encompassing everything that the organization does and concerns itself with in four major areas of activity

(a) products or services created and sold;

(b) the environment within which the product or service is produced;

(c) information – how the organization describes its product/services and publicizes its activities;

(d) behavior – how the organization members behave toward each other and toward non-members (Olins, cited by Carmeli, 2003).

The factors listed by Fombrun and Foss and the areas of activity identified by Carmeli are subsumed within the concept categories that interpret how the College aligns itself with the institutional environment and with social expectations. Taking these factors and areas of activity as instruments for constructing stakeholder impressions of organizational reputation, it stands to reason that an organization like Marianopolis competes with other organizations within the same field on building distinctive and favourable reputations to gain competitive advantage, long-term viability, and legitimacy. The nature of the good or service provided by Marianopolis College and the degree of social accountability involved in educational provision suggest that gaining and maintaining legitimacy is inextricably linked to the institution's identity, image, and reputational status. Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) suggest that "an organization is ...

legitimate to the extent that its means and ends appear to conform to social norms, values, and expectations" (p. 177). Matthews very elegantly elaborates this point:

> Organizations seek to establish congruence between the social values associated with or implied by their activities and the norms of acceptable behaviour in the larger social system in which they are a part. In so far as these two value systems are congruent we can speak of organizational legitimacy. When an actual or potential disparity exists between the two value systems there will exist a threat to organizational legitimacy (Matthews, quoted in Tilling, 2004, p. 4).

These understandings of legitimacy are echoed throughout the literature. Dowling and Pfeffer (1975, p. 122) state that organizations attempt to "obtain congruence between the social values associated with or implied by their activities and the norms of acceptable behaviour in the larger social system of which they are a part". Similarly, Oliver (1991) contends that legitimacy is gained from conformity to institutional expectations and from acting consistently with taken-for-granted norms and beliefs that render them "the only conceivable, obvious and natural behaviour" (p. 148). Scott (1995) has provided an elegant integrative framework for understanding the different but simultaneous institutional pressures or influences for legitimacy that organizations can experience. This framework asserts that "Institutions consists of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour" (ibid, p. 33). Scott argues that legitimacy is associated with "cultural alignment, normative support, or consonance with relevant rules and laws" (p. 45).

> Now are we talking societal legitimacy? I think that if you do – if you succeed in the mission that you choose and in the mission that is assigned to you by society – the answer is absolutely yes. Therefore this College is legitimate (Informant).

In Hybels' (1995) view, legitimacy "exists only as a symbolic representation of the collective evaluation of an institution, as evidenced to both observers and participants perhaps most convincingly by the flow of resources" (p. 243). However symbolic the representation may be, this study contends that legitimacy exists as a real force which may be increased or decreased by organizational behaviour. Tillings (2004) compares

legitimacy to currency since it is necessary for an organization's operation. Both Suchman (1995) and Hybels (1995) argue that organizations use their legitimacy as an instrument to attract and maintain groups of critical stakeholders who control a number of resources. Comprising such valued stakeholder groups are the following:

(a) the state, through its control of contracts, licences, grants, regulation and legislation;

(b) the public, though their control of patronage as customers and clients, and their control of community interest and support;

(c) the financial community, through their control of investments;

(d) the media, through their control of influence over public perception wield power to increase pressure from any number of predetermined sources (Hybels, 1995, p. 244);

(e) critical stakeholders, employees and organizational analysts (Suchman, 1995).

The notion that legitimacy is gained through conformity to rules and practices is traceable to Weber (1947) who also argues that legitimacy is associated with the organization's ability to adapt to changing social norms and with gaining acceptance by instilling widespread belief in the organization's absolute value. Weber (1968) advocates that social actors should govern themselves by "determinable maxims" or deliberate behaviours that are regarded as "obligatory or exemplary" (p. 31), and consequently rooted in the actor's conception of legitimacy, meaning, what is considered appropriate or adequate. Parsons (1960) views such action as crucial to organizations seeking social legitimation of their utilization of the scarce resources allocated to them.

The College's Mission and Vision Statements specify the values and goals that are preferred and or desirable. These values and goals reflect the College's interpretation of shared social expectations and understandings of what is considered to be right and obligatory institutional behaviour. They give direction and purpose to the College and also embody norms or standards against which activities can be compared. As such, they integrate evaluative elements into the organization's life. In fact, the CEEC uses the College's mission to provide the framework for evaluating the degree to which administrative structures and management procedures contribute to the achievement of

the mission's principal objectives and activities, as well as the institution's overall effectiveness.

Practically every aspect of organizational behaviour at Marianopolis is shaped by what scholars regard as rules, routines, procedures and scripts that are cognitively constructed to cope with the practical, objective conditions that actors face in the performance of their roles (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1987; Di Maggio & Powell, 1991; Scott, 2001). Student/teacher evaluation, mid-term assessments together with the formal reporting of the progress of students, the hiring of teachers with masters degrees as the standard minimum credential, and the adoption of strategies and procedures to enhance student success are examples of the "taken-for granted" characteristics of Marianopolis.

As a quality assurance agency, the CEEC exercises an instrumental role in determining the taken-for-granted procedures, routines and features appropriate to the college sector. In this regard, the contention that "cognitive elements are more basic to the operation of social systems and provide frameworks on which normative and regulative systems are constructed" (Ruef & Scott, 1998, p. 879) has tremendous weight. The areas into which policy intrudes are primarily: (1) equity in grading across multi-sectioned courses and fairness in the assessment of student learning; and (2) the program approach and program coherence. The CEEC also serves as the legitimating agent that confers cognitive legitimacy on the College. To the College, gaining cognitive and normative legitimacy from the CEEC represents an affirmation that the processes adopted to produce pedagogical outcomes, as well as the general values and goals underlying the processes are natural features of the collegial environment. In other words, it is equivalent to receiving the stamp of institutional relevance. Relevance is an attribute of quality. Quality connotes effective performance. Within Marianopolis and in the eyes of the CEEC relevance is achieved in relation to four variables in particular:

1. implementation and reinforcement of the ministerial objectives for academic programs;

2. consistency between objectives, standards and content of the program and the expectations of the university community;

3. the response of academic programs to student needs and expectations;
4. consistency between objectives, standards and content of academic programs and the College's mission.

The idea that an organization's capacity to perform depends upon resources finds its roots in the resource-based view of the firm (Penrose, 1959), and the currently prevalent capabilities or competence-based view into which the resource-based view has evolved. To Penrose (1959), the fundamental strategy of the business firm was the development of productive opportunities and their successful leverage to enhance its competitive position through the management of administrative functions and sets of human and material resources that comprised its organization. Penrose regarded experiential knowledge and human competencies as the most important factors in the dynamic production of services from the organization's resources, and by extension, the keys to the organization's competitive position. Nelson and Winter (1982) expanded the concept of organizations as "repositories of knowledge" (p. 175), arguing that the productive knowledge of an organization resided within its operational routines.

Lengnick and Wolff (1999) contend that the resource-based view:

> ...rests on the collection, development, enhancement, and exploitation of a deliberately chosen set of elemental, building block competencies and assets that are isolated from imitation and appropriation. Structures and systems are designed to nurture, protect, and exploit these key capabilities and resources in ways that enable a firm to create a deliberate, path-dependent future to achieve competitive advantage (quoted by Lynch and Baines, 2004, p. 171).

The capability-based theory of competitive advantage has been developed to explain the performance of business firms in the context of their operation in the marketplace. However the theory has utility to the operation of public-service educational organizations because of the emphasis placed on relationships between the organizational environment, managerial, technological, financial, human capital and knowledge assets. Thus, the observation that organizational capabilities are linked to the possession of a hierarchy of interlocking operational and organizational routines and skills that evolve through search and feed-back mechanisms to bolster the firm-specific knowledge base

(Zollo & Winter, 2002) has particular salience to the findings emerging from the interpretation of this particular case.

Equally relevant to this case's interpretation is the "dynamic capability" perspective (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1990) which regards a distinctive competence as "a set of differentiated skills, complementary assets, and routines that provide the basis for a firm's competitive capabilities and sustainable competitive advantage in a particular business" (p. 26). Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) subsequently extended this idea to mean "the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments" (p. 516). Another formulation that elegantly captures the "capability" perspective has been proffered by Zollo and Winter (2002, p. 340): "A dynamic capability is a learned and stable pattern of collective activity through which the organization systematically generates and modifies its operating routines in pursuit of improved effectiveness".

Zollo and Winter (2002) argue that organizational capabilities represent the fundamental building blocks or organizational routines and processes exploited to achieve effective performance. Core competences (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), derive from such building blocks and are sets of differentiated skills, routines and assets that provide the basis for an organization's competitive advantage. Consequently, core competencies are major value-adding skills, capabilities and strengths which drive organizational processes and activities for accomplishing different outcomes. Distinctive organizational capabilities may be regarded as those very special and unique strengths which distinguish an organization from its competitors and provide the means for its out performance of competitors in the delivery of goods and services.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to undertake a comprehensive treatment of the literature on capability-based theory, (see Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Grant, 1991; Teece & Pisano, 1998; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Teece, 2001; Butler, 2002), a number of particular observations which apply to this case study are necessary. For example, Arthurs and Busenitz (2003) cogently argues that "dynamic capabilities are primarily concerned with assessing the environment (both internal and external), and taking actions to adjust the resource base in order to attain

superior future performance" (p. 10). One of the aspects this current study has stressed is recognition of the need for new governance structures and the influence of institutional elements like new government regulation in motivating dynamic capabilities. Thus, the importance of superior decision making to deal strategically with policies and actions required to adjust the organization's performance to meet new challenges or opportunities cannot be overstated. Flexibility and responsiveness of the organization to internal and external forces bring about changes in structure, technology, resource allocation and personnel. Conversely, the extent of change in such elements may signal flexibility and responsiveness and therefore organizational capability.

This study contends that the College's core competencies may be associated with the organization's ability to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple technologies (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), the whole strategic chain of technological and production expertise that create value for customers (Stalk, Evans, & Shulman, 1992), as well as political processes within organizations, organizational culture and interpersonal networks (Nordhaug, 1994). Pitt and Clarke (1999) insightfully stress that:

> Despite differences in terminology and emphasis, these interpretations of competencies imply purposeful managerial configuration and orchestration of the firm's structures, collective routines and personal initiatives. They credit effective firms with relatively abstract and generalized knowledge of how to create, integrate and exploit distinctive business architectures for competitive advantage. These competencies draw on applied and theoretical knowledge grounded in the technical, entrepreneurial and administrative routines of the organization and in the minds and notebooks of its staff (p. 302).

Following conventional wisdom, it may be argued that the College's most fundamental core competencies are the degree of organizational learning and stock of accumulated knowledge (Grant, 1991; 1996; Senge, 1992; Leonard-Barton, 1995; Barney, 2001). Marianopolis exists as a knowledge institution in a knowledge-based society. According to Leonard-Barton (1995), the dynamic capabilities which characterize such an organization are the knowledge resources that are used to solve problems and enhance organizational effectiveness. Based on the evidence, this study concurs with the argument that (1) knowledge creation is largely the by-product of harnessing and integrating the

knowledge generated by individuals in the organization (Grant, 1991; 1996); and (2) that knowledge accumulates as a result of organizational routines and the growth of associated experience, the articulation, refinement and sharing of knowledge as individuals interact, and the codification of knowledge to provide guidelines, sense-making instructions and rationales for the execution of future tasks, as well as provide more effective decision making (Zollo & Winter, 2002).

Summary

The college sector in Québec has been increasingly forced to justify itself by demonstrating effectiveness and quality on a widely diversified set of criteria within the framework of an emerging public theory of evaluation as an instrument of accountability. This study took the position that there are organizational interests to be served in implementing and complying with regulatory prescribed quality assurance procedures, since evaluation carries much weight owing to the significance of what is at stake for the various individuals, interest groups, and constituencies both inside and outside the organization. These interests revolve around the projection of an image that preserves intact the identity to which the College is attached, and the external and internal reputation the College perceives it has been able to achieve. It was argued that discourse is the instrument through which the interests of the organization are served. In effect, text is constructed and presented to project a positive self image of organizational performance to model rightness of its actions, thereby casting the College in a favourable light to its principal target audience, the CEEC, and interested stakeholders. Such discourse interprets and gives meaning to the College's experiences through the construction of a social reality that embodies the members' sense of place, who they are, and how they wish to be perceived. In other words, discourse is used to manage both stake and interest for the organization.

Based on the theory underpinning the activities of the College and the discursive positions within text, it may be asserted that experiential knowledge and human competencies are the most important factors in the dynamic production of services from Marianopolis' resources, and by extension, the keys to the organization's superior

performance. This study strongly suggests that the College claims legitimacy on the basis of success in developing capabilities to coordinate managerial, technological, financial, human capital and knowledge assets in pursuit of improved effectiveness.

Evidently, evaluation raises the stakes for both reputation and organizational legitimacy because of the degree of transparency and social accountability involved. This study posits that gaining and maintaining legitimacy is inextricably linked to the College's identity, image, and reputational status. Building a distinctive and favourable reputation enables the College to gain competitive advantage within its field.

CHAPTER EIGHT

An Integrative Analysis of Findings and Concluding Observations

Context of the Study

From the perspective that quality assurance may be regarded as "processes which are adopted to ensure and to continuously improve the quality of the educational provision which is offered" (Hartley & Virkus, 2003, p. 33), or "systematic management procedures adopted to ensure achievement of specified quality or improvements in quality and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of quality and the outcomes achieved" (Harman, 1998, p. 331), this study undertook to examine, from a framework of institutional self-evaluation as a quality assurance mechanism in higher education and an instrument of accountability, how, and with what underlying purposes, do colleges in Québec approach the task of demonstrating fulfilment of responsibilities in relation to alignment with the institutional environment and with social expectations.

This study has been instrumental in providing a unique opportunity to interpret and document, from a close-up, insider vantage point, what has been happening in a particular pre-university college in Québec. Through the lens of the very powerful socio-cultural and institutional context that circumscribes and permeates the college-level sector, this study has been able to address some of important issues associated with the implementation of quality assurance procedures in Québec, and gain insights into the intricacies of the social and political realities of a particular organization's experience of institutional self-evaluation.

For example, this study has been able to provide a basis for advancing integrated explanations to the dynamic relationship between colleges and their associated institutions, and the resulting complex behaviors, structures, and processes that characterize the nature and internal environments of the colleges. By analyzing the educational policy framework which prescribes the role, activities and operation of the colleges, the policy changes affecting college-level pre-university programs and academic management, and the

mechanisms for, and intent of, ministerial supervision and quality assurance, this study has contributed to clarifying: (1) the socio-political context within which evaluation policy in Québec has been framed and administered; (2) its underlying objectives and conceptual content; (3) the types of evaluative criteria employed and their implications in terms of the policy makers' understanding of organizational performance; and (4) the capacity of the evaluative criteria to illuminate the human, socio-cultural and structural variables that interplay to influence organizational quality and effectiveness. In addition, by recognizing that a discursive relationship exists between government and the colleges, this study has also enabled an examination of the particular discourses that are integral to the value preferences of government.

This thesis provides an insider's perspective on a complex and often controversial area, namely, institutional performance. In reflecting on the process of engagement with the data and with informants, one of the outstanding features of this process has been the degree to which opinions and triangulated data have been positive regarding the vast majority of performance variables. However, the emerging thesis of superior institutional performance in no way seeks to deny or stifle pockets of critical voices regarding crucial matters like misaligned organizational structures, the traditionally slow pace of change, or the seeming inaction on specific issues. The value of these pockets of criticism lies not only in their ability to clearly identify gaps in policy, bottlenecks, and inefficiencies in operations, but also to stimulate dialogue that results in contributions to improvements in organizational policy and performance.

It must also be pointed out that as an insider I have had to address role-ambiguity and self-doubt regarding the depth of detail that should be disclosed about organizationally sensitive issues, and when or when not to apply a very critical gaze. Consequently, the process of engagement has been infused with critical self-reflection, reflection on the situation and a keen sense of self-awareness of the impact the insider status can have on who or what is being researched. Overall, the approach adopted has sought to grapple with the multiple realities of college life with ethical sensitivity, fairness, balanced and nuanced judgement.

Findings Relative to Quality Assurance and the CEEC

Externally mandated quality assurance practices within higher education tends to bring into sharp focus the normative and regulative power of institutions and the tensions existing between government and its bureaucratic organizations as principal, and the colleges as public agents. Sanderson (2003) has observed that, "Evaluation is, by nature, part of a policy process conditioned by interests located in social and political processes operating in particular organizational contexts" (p. 342). The cornerstones of quality assurance policy in Québec are program and institutional evaluation within a framework that comprises the colleges, the Ministry of Education, and an external agency, the CEEC. From the outset, evaluation targeted three interrelated goals: improvement, management and accountability. As a quasi validation or accreditation body delivering a quality label that may be trusted by students, university authorities, and other stakeholders, the CEEC's mandate is to fill the quality information gap. At the local level, tensions derive from two sources: the power conferred upon the CEEC to gather hard evidence on performance to support its task of certifying and affirming the relevance and quality of programs, institutional management and services, and the political nature of accountability.

This study has explored the critical role played by the Commission (CEEC) in developing a discursive, quality assurance relationship between the policy sector and the colleges. A major thrust of the Commission's strategy is to instill the idea that self-evaluation is not a goal in itself, but a process which must be designed in a manner that produces usable results to enhance performance. From any number of perspectives the CEEC's overriding mission has been to help colleges constantly improve the quality and relevance of the education they offer. In its manner of operation the CEEC has focused on strengthening and sustaining the quality and integrity of the education provided by the colleges, and on encouraging these organizations to develop a culture of continuous evaluation and quality improvement through self-reflection and self-examination of the ongoing inputs, interactions and outcomes of the educational process.

Thus, in committing itself to this ideal, the Québec model of evaluation has placed improvement, the enhancement of quality and accountability in the forefront. The

entire quality assurance process has had a decidedly formative flavor. It does appear that the Commission's aim is to gain information to put back into the program or organization being evaluated, to bring about greater effectiveness and quality in ongoing operations.

> I've been involved in at least three of our evaluations, and in all those cases I certainly felt that however pointed and probing, and in some sense the critical sum of the questions made then, the overall intent of them was more to ensure that we become aware of areas where we perhaps needed to do some improvement, rather than being kind of punitive (Informant).

> In meeting with the members of the Commission when they come to evaluate our programs, I've been really impressed with how knowledgeable and how clear thinking those individuals are. I think their reports have often targeted the right areas (Informant).

The Commission has indicated its resolute commitment to "including feedback from and exchanges with colleges in its exploration of the issues" (CEEC, 2006, p. 5), and to hearing the colleges' "points of view on the effects of its work, the evaluation process it has implemented, ... concerns and priorities regarding the development of college education over the next few years, as well as the strategic priorities that the Commission has set for itself" (p. 5). In the interest of what it called *sharing and moving forward together*, the Commission undertook to visit each college from mid-January to March 2006.

Like other quality assurance agencies, the CEEC holds the college system accountable to respond to current needs with respect to technical and pre-university education. In fact, it is possible to see the policy maker's interpretation of society's expectations within the framework of the programs government approves – the aims, goals and objectives of the programs, and the criteria and norms applied in the evaluation of programs and the institutions themselves. While it is true that the number and range of social needs subsumed within the program components and goals are tremendously broad, government's interpretation and understanding of social needs converge with those embedded within academic and social discourse. In effect, the intent of their specification has been to focus college education on preparing students to participate responsibly and competently as citizens in the political, social and economic life of Québec and the global society.

Sociological institutionalism provides a powerful conceptual framework for explaining the CEEC's ability to coerce colleges to develop the appropriate academic and organizational processes, and allocate requisite resources to produce the outcomes of education as required by the programs offered and the college's mission. Such processes and resources evidently contribute to the quality of the institution. The CEEC has placed particular emphasis on the delivery of relevant and coherent programs, and on using effective teaching methods that are adapted to the objectives of the programs and those of the learning activities. Such methods must also be adapted to students' characteristics to enable them to achieve stated objectives in accordance with established standards. In addition, Colleges are required to implement measures to identify learning difficulties, and create guidance, support and follow-up services to enable students to overcome these difficulties.

Fundamentally, meeting social expectations is interpreted by the CEEC as being organized and managed in ways which promote the attainment of ministerial objectives and the fulfillment of mission. The implication for the colleges is that they are expected to buy into government's particular model of college-level education and management. From this study's interpretative analysis, Marianopolis has demonstrated that the elements of quality associated with meeting social expectations are being targeted by the organization with some degree of success.

Findings Relative to the Images Projected Within Evaluative Discourse

The emerging public theory of evaluation in Québec emphasizes the critical role of external agents with regards to accountability for conduct, and for the legitimization or non-legitimation of organizational practices. This helps to explain why public policy approaches to college education are directed increasingly to achieving greater efficiency by focusing on performance in relation to deliberately formulated policy goals, achievement in relation to competencies, the use of performance indicators to measure quality, and on self-monitoring and self-evaluation as core organizational activities.

In undertaking this study of organizational response to the policy maker, a key issue was how self-evaluative text is constructed and presented to demonstrate effectiveness and

quality on a widely diversified set of criteria within the framework of evaluation as an instrument of accountability, and how this discursive process serves the interests of the organization. This study has strongly supported the assumption that discourse is used by the College as a means of "managing stake and interest" (Johnstone & Firth, 2005, p. 193) owing to its deep investment in the outcome of evaluation. One informant nailed what the stakes are when the College undergoes evaluation.

> We don't brag about it, but I believe we think we're very good and we're the best. And every time the evaluation is carried out, I think these are the stakes, Are we going to measure up to what we feel it indicates? What we think that we are worth? This is on the line and I think in part that's why we still have a tendency to kind of [pause] resist the process of evaluation. It's not something that we relish to engage in because I think we feel a little bit immediately threatened. Somebody is going to look at us and put in danger maybe this perception that we have about ourselves.

"Matters of interests and stake are salient issues that people build up, undermine, and attend to in their talk as part of doing particular interactive business" (Carl, 2002, p. 4). The College's evaluative text must therefore be regarded as a form of 'talk'. Because of matters of interests and stake, in presenting itself in text, the primary aim of the College has been the creation of discourse that models rightness of its actions by projecting a positive self-image of institutional performance, thereby casting the organization in a favourable light to its principal target audience, the CEEC. Such discourse interprets and gives meaning to organizational experiences through the construction of a social reality that embodies the members' sense of place, who they are, and how they wish to be perceived. In other words, discourse is used to manage both stake and interest for the organization.

The following conceptualization of how organizational discourse relates to the environment may be proffered. Following Daft and Weick (1984), and Morgan (1994), the College treats government and its agencies like the CEEC as part of its own mode of organization and views external quality assurance structures as part of its own system and domain of essential interaction. From this theoretical vantage point, as a cognition and interpretation system, the College sees success in organizing the quality assurance

component in terms of engaging in *communicative rationality* and creating organizational discourse geared to manipulate critical factors in this enacted environment to its advantage.

Manipulative processes may be regarded as self-referential and aimed at serving its own interests as interaction with the institutional environment occurs. Since the end product of the College's response to institutional quality assurance is text and discourse, theoretically, such response comprises an authoritatively articulated expression of organizational experiences within which fields of relevance and legitimate perspectives on the life world of the institution are defined and delineated. Thus, at a basic level, text embodies narrative aims at enhancing the CEEC's capacity to make sense of, and build understanding about the College as well as create a sense of how the relationship between the institutional framework and the College is structured. However, and more significantly, at a deeper level text is the vehicle through which the College constructs, scripts, and orchestrates particular discourses for the purpose of serving specific organizational interests.

The concept categories derived from text constitute the labels for the College's discursive positions. Following ideas developed by Elsbach (2000), this study finds that discourse initiates a series of mediating messages to the CEEC in an attempt to eliminate perceived threats from a previous evaluation to aspects of the College's legitimacy. To be specific, the discourse of knowhow and commitment to improve presents the College as an organization characterized by adaptive learning and re-creative capabilities, and, on that basis, enlists the Commission's trust and confidence in the organization. It implies a commitment to a process whose design enhances the production of results in the form of information, insights, activities, and decisions that are useful to the organization for its improvement. This particular discourse also communicates the message that feedback which significantly addresses the issues of the study and clarifies the major problems and challenges will inevitably contribute to organizational learning, and performance enhancement. By focusing on themes such as accountability, effectiveness, improvement, and the culture of evaluation, this discourse self-identified the College with benchmarks of

institutional quality. The idea of quality discourse is progressively elaborated as various facets of institutional life are portrayed, with subtle overtones of impression management.

The discursive position of direction and clear purposes communicates a vision and a set of values that guide the College's operation, expectations and future direction. This particular position emphasizes the intended outcomes of the education of students, commitment to a shared educational purpose, student centeredness and academic excellence.

Managing change for sustainable strategic development is presented as a capacity of enduring strength throughout the historical evolution of the organization. The thrust of this discourse is that building organizational capacity matters and that capacity building is a dynamic, ongoing process by which people within the College actively develop resources and services and implement strategies, policies and programs in pursuit of more effective and sustainable performance. The message communicated to the CEEC is that Marianopolis has continuously demonstrated ongoing alertness to critical issues, and a capacity to handle change through systematic approaches to the review and planned development and reinforcement of organizational strategies, structures, and processes for improving organizational effectiveness.

In essence, this discourse identifies the College with effective leadership particularly during periods of uncertainty, and a framework of strategically formulated goals for organizational improvement. These goals reflect ongoing adaptability to change and renewal, and a commitment to identify new needs in innovation, pedagogy and management. Further, within the prevailing climate of significant external and internal challenge and flux preceding the institutional evaluation process, Marianopolis purposively undertook to identify the needs required to improve organizational capacity and efficiency, and to shape, redefine, and renew itself to serve ongoing academic and social development needs and the broad needs of its community.

In presenting issues regarding the fundamental direction and purposes of the College as well as of the organization's operations and activities, discourse posits that through its programs, Marianopolis accomplishes the objectives and standards set out by

the Ministry and has integrated its mission within a relevant, broad-based and rigorous set of academic programs and curricula. In addition, its student-centered focus is tied to its mission and has been effective in motivating teachers and administrators to mobilize the energy and resources of the College to develop strategies and pedagogy which enable students, regardless of background, to achieve high levels of academic success and personal growth.

Discourse speaks about making education more relevant and coherent to student needs, and about effective program delivery and management, focusing particularly on the College's success in implementing the IPESA, and the organization's ability to ground program planning priorities within the organization's vision to strive to create a dynamic, supportive and effective learning community. Discourse also advances the view that educational services are provided within operationally interlinked systems that give students support covering the entire spectrum of educational life at the College and beyond to the university. These systems bring students into closer contact with teachers and provide the attention, effective guidance, supervision, remediation, and reinforcement to enhance performance and increase their chances of success.

In effect, the central thrust of this message is that the College's main concern is student learning. This has major implications. Notably, faculty and academic as well as administrative structures are required to focus on the total student experience, take the heterogeneous nature of the student body into consideration, and adopt a holistic approach to the issue of student improvement. There needs to be considerable personal effort on the part of teachers to introduce students to the demands of intellectual work. In addition, the organization must commit to mobilizing a comprehensive range of administrative and pedagogical capabilities and services to ensure the highest levels of personal growth and development, student achievement, and academic success.

Two specific strategies underlie the mobilization process: (1) the development of an integrated human resources policy that aims at attracting, developing, and retaining a teaching faculty with academic and professional competency and genuine interest in students; (2) the deployment and appropriate management of informational and

technology services, and additional support to various student centered needs and activities through budgetary procedures. These strategies derive from the organization's high expectations of students, the belief that all students can succeed in their academic pursuits, and that the College is accountable for developing the capability to positively shape the conditions under which students learn and enhance their chances of success.

Consequently, however imperfect, structures are managed for effective performance and support the College's vision and mission. Problems related to structural misalignment have had little noticeable effect on teachers' performance and the provision of services which support the teaching process. Collectively, the various discourses point to considerable success in the attainment of the College's objectives, the primary one being the successful preparation of its students for university studies. In fact, the organization self-identifies with graduating "students who are intellectually prepared for university, have significantly developed the competencies to become self-directed life-long learners, and can function successfully as citizens in the wider community and world" (Brooks, 2003, p. 13).

Overall, the College's evaluative discourse makes a strong claim not only to the attainment of organizational objectives, but more specifically to the achievement of institutional and student success based on a number of key performance indicators. In this connection, multiple pieces of evidence suggest that the organization's students enjoy a much higher rate of success than their peers in other colleges in terms of pass rates in the first semester, retention rates within the initial program, and graduation rates within the prescribed two-year period.

Success in the first semester is considered very crucial for students' motivation, perseverance and eventual graduation rates. Data from Quebec's Ministry of Education*, strongly suggest that student success rates in the fourth semester are highly correlated with first semester success rates. Thus, the first semester or initial transition period appears critical to the final outcome of student performance. The literature on the issue of transition from secondary school to higher education substantially reinforces the

* Data Bases have only recently become accessible to the college.

Ministry's finding (Denison, 1998). As part of a broad program of research by McGill University's Centre for University Teaching and Learning, Denison (ibid) provides an extensive literature review in his doctoral study of the transition of students to university with a focus on academic life in the first semester.

While it is unquestionable that the College enjoys a very high level of student success in comparison to many other colleges, such success has not led to smug complacency. Rather, the College has continued to target many areas for improvement, and its learning and teaching support services provide for adequate monitoring of student response and progress, and for taking appropriate action according to circumstances. Overall, discourse posits that the fundamental contributing factors to the high level of institutional and student success at Marianopolis are the commitment and dedication of the teaching faculty, the administration and staff.

Allen and Grisaffe (2001) argue that "positive work attitudes, on the part of employees, will translate into greater loyalty to, and satisfaction with, the organization on the part of customers" (p. 210). They also suggest that committed employees tend to have a "heightened interest in the organization maintaining its customer base" (ibid, p. 210). This study contends that the organization's discourse conveys the message that the College's success rests solidly on the behaviour defined as "organizational citizenship" (Organ, 1990; 1997; DiPaola & Hoy, 2005) which refers to the behavior that "supports the social and psychological environment" (Organ, 1997, p. 95) in which tasks are performed at the College. This concept relates to the willingness of teachers, administrators and other groups at Marianopolis to exert efforts beyond the formal obligations of their roles to benefit students, and benefit the organization in general. These voices reinforce the point made about organizational citizenship:

> Our institution has always been the people. I have been elsewhere and can vouch that there is something particular about the people and the students here. There is something about the faculty. There is a kind of symbiosis about it. Evidentially it's nothing physical. It's not necessarily the specific design of our program. I'm trying to see by a process of elimination, but I come always to the people, because I've gone elsewhere. I've seen people who are quite qualified, but they kind of never have that dedication that is

> exhibited here to the task, to the students. We have a tendency to deliver (Informant).
>
> I still think of the example one day the DG brought a student down to see me. The house where the student was staying had burned down the day before. I guess he came in and was very distraught and went right to the Director General. And she consoled him and literally brought him down here to see what we in Student Services could do for him. She brought him to the library, for he needed some books. I don't know where else a student could walk right to the Director General or right to someone's door like that and not be turned away or told to come back some other time. So just the fact there, that it is an open door policy here and people can come and get assistance on the spot makes us different (Informant).

Grounded Theoretical Findings

This study used a multidisciplinary theoretical framework and a case study approach to obtain specific understandings and insights of the phenomenon of interest. The grounded theory approach was deemed an appropriate method to apply to the case since its ultimate goal is to find and interpret what theory is explicit in the text that describes or accounts for the phenomenon of interest (Glaser, 1998). Glaser suggests two criteria for judging the adequacy of the emerging theory: that it fits the situation, and that it helps people in the situation to make sense of their experience and manage the situation better. From an interpretivist perspective, theory is elucidation of phenomena and a means of enriching understanding.

The overarching thesis which emerges is that Marianopolis College is an organization characterized by superior institutional and student performance. To be explicit, this study suggests that the phenomenon of superior institutional and student performance can be conceptualized within the framework of the hypothetical reasoning that follows. In adopting strategies and procedures to achieve specific quality objectives in response to needs and social expectations and continue to successfully prepare students for university studies, the direction and purposes delineated in the College's student-centered mission enabled the organization to pursue outcomes centered on academic excellence and capacity building to sustain effective performance. The College's success derived from four sources in particular: the strength of shared ideals

and value systems among its stakeholders; organizational adaptability and openness to change and improvement; the resolve to grapple with crucial issues, challenges, and circumstances to improve overall system performance; and organizational coordination, direction and transformative leadership.

Management attained its goal of excellence in the delivery of its academic programs and student success through full commitment to its student centered mission. The strategies which subsumed this commitment focused fundamentally on designing and providing relevant and coherent pre-university programs; coordinating and integrating the College's network of academic support structures and their responsibilities; developing and retaining a teaching faculty with academic and professional competency and genuine interests in students; aligning structures and services with the total student experience; mobilizing knowledge, material, and financial resources to build organizational capacity and support the different needs of all students to ensure their highest levels of achievement; and developing a supportive, collegial climate.

Theoretically, the inductively constructed interdependent concept categories point overwhelmingly to the critical importance of several key factors:

(a) creating a clear and coherent vision and mission;

(b) being focused on the transformation of core administrative structures consistent with a vision of, and mission for, the future;

(c) the organization's high expectations of students – specifically the belief that all students can succeed in their academic pursuits;

(d) organizational coordination, direction and transformative leadership;

(e) being committed to the development of capacity to enable the organization to effectively sustain itself, support student learning and growth within a student-centered environment, and deliver academic programs consistent with vision, mission, student needs and social expectations.

As Guskin and Marcy (2003) remark:

> ... vision provides a starting point for comprehensive aligning and transforming academic programs and organizational processes and structures around a coherent set of goal. Establishing ... a vision quickly

> yields a set of pragmatic choices about what to pursue and what not to pursue. Developing alignment around a coherent vision of the future also gives the campus a clear identity in terms of which to rally its community, and to position itself with prospective students and stakeholders (p. 12).

The propositions that emerge from the patterns, unifying themes and concepts within the data embody a coherent explanation of organizational response to management of the educational process in response to institutional regulations, norms and social expectations. Since "an extrapolation can be made between a particular case and a wider population only if there is a strong theoretical or logical connection between them" (Wolford, 2001, p. 156), these propositions have the potential to serve as a basis for transferability from the case examined to the wider population of colleges. They also suggest avenues for future process-based research on the organization and functioning of the colleges, and should inform models of quality development to this effect.

Proposition 1: An educational institution that possesses a well articulated student-centred mission and vision is likely to engage in the priorities that are essential to effective management and academic quality.

Proposition 2: An educational organization that couples vision, mission, and institutional mandate with effective action is capable of meaningful improvement and change.

Proposition 3: Sustainable organizational development and viability is a function of organizational adaptability and openness to change and renewal.

Proposition 4: Effective organizational action depends upon the degree to which shared ideals and value systems exist among stakeholders within the educational community, and upon the ability of stakeholders to adopt strategies and procedures to achieve specific quality objectives.

Proposition 5: Positive systems-outcomes are a function of organizational coordination, direction and transformative leadership.

Proposition 6: Ongoing fulfilment of educational mission and mandate is dependent on the organization's ability to build capacity to meet contingencies and challenges as they emerge within the environment.

Proposition 7: The ability of college-level education to achieve its mission and mandate is relative to the quality of its academic coordinating structures.

Proposition 8: Success in the delivery of academic programs reflects the degree to which team building and team work has been established between organizational actors.

Proposition 9: The delivery of coherent programs depends upon the organization's capacity to coordinate and integrate its network of program structures and their responsibilities.

Proposition 10: The more relevant academic programs are to institutional standards and objectives as well as to organizational values, the more likely programs are to develop elements of quality.

Proposition 11: Program relevance and coherence may be achieved to the extent that programs implement measures to develop competencies, and meet the specific needs and expectations of all student groups.

Proposition 12: The implementation of policy respecting equity and integrity in the evaluation of student achievement is necessary for increased student motivation and improved performance.

Proposition 13: Colleges that mobilize their knowledge resources to ensure student progress are likely to enhance greater student performance than colleges that do not.

Proposition 14: The more coordinated and integrated the organizational student support system, the more likely it is to result in greater student success.

Proposition 15: Dynamic forms of student-teacher interaction and teacher support result in greater success for students who are serious about remediation.

Proposition 16: Superior teaching performance within an enabling educa-tional environment is a mark of institutional effectiveness

Proposition 17: Academic services and systems are successful in relation to their ability to identify and commit resources to support the different needs of all students.

Proposition 18: The most effective student services programs are those that complement teaching and contribute to the attainment by students of institutional objectives.

Proposition 19: Personal student growth and development depends on the institution's ability to develop specific cognitive abilities, attitudes and dispositions.

Proposition 20: Colleges that recruit faculty possessing the knowledge and competencies required to be effective teachers produce very positive learning outcomes.

Proposition 21: The assessment of teaching performance for the purpose of ensuring that appropriate standards are maintained and to find methods to improve the teacher's classroom performance will result in higher levels of student achievement.

Proposition 22: Implementing effective professional development activities for college faculty increases both faculty motivation and teaching competence.

Proposition 23: Building good employee-management relations and organizational climate leads to increased faculty motivation and teaching competence.

Proposition 24: Providing and appropriately allocating material and information technology resources in relation to assessed student needs and organizational purposes enhances organizational capacity and leads to sustained student improvement.

Proposition 25: Economic viability and long-term growth is related to budgetary processes that focus on establishing priorities appropriate to building capacity to respond to changing pedagogical standards and program needs.

Findings Relative to Interests, Identity, Image, and Legitimacy

This study's application of existing theory to the findings relative to the images projected within the evaluative discourse has yielded an interpretation suggestive of the use of discourse to achieve two goals, namely, to develop, clarify and solidify the organization's identity, and to be self-defined and identified in relation to specific values, standards and practices which present an image or portrait that influences how others think about the organization. The central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten & Mackey, 2002) which form the organization's identity are encapsulated in the College's vision and mission, whose central philosophy embraces student centeredness within a learning community, academic leadership in building a dynamic and supportive environment, and preparation of students to pursue academic excellence. The College's vision and mission links the organization to a rich educational heritage that is traceable directly through the Congrégation de Notre-Dame to the first

educational endeavours of 17th century Ville Marie. This heritage shapes its "vision of the dignity of the individual and the [College's] quest for knowledge and understanding". The College's identity therefore provides it with a sense of continuity and stability.

This response came to the question "What do you think is the identity this College has tried to create?"

> I think the expression of it is in our missions and goals and our current mission statement. This is the identity we are trying to create. However, every one of those statements implies engaging in an activity, commitment and a willingness and energy to move forward. I guess that that's the identity we want to create, I'm not sure that is the operating practise. So there is the difference. There may be a schism between our desired identity and the realities of the operation (Informant).

The salience of organizational-level identity may be heightened when members perform organizational activities such as boundary spanning work that involves interactions with external groups (Bartel, 2001). Given the context of externally mandated quality assurance, and modern society's need to hold organizations accountable for their actions (Czarniawaska, 1997; Whetten & Mackey, 2002), Bartel's observation has critical implications for boundary spanning activities like institutional evaluation which has crystallized the organization's identity and furnished the image that members project to influence how the CEEC thinks about it. The College's sense of identity and image are interdependent and mutually reinforcing characteristics. Its projected image comprises a cognitive appraisal of how organization culture, resources, services, and processes are combined to define the capabilities and worth of the organization. Discourse constitutes the vehicle for projected image.

Image management may also be seen as an organizational strategy for seeking to foster stakeholder identification with the organization through two independent processes:

1. presenting stakeholders with desired organizational images that are attractive and,

2. influencing the extent to which stakeholder participation in the organization attracts and holds members attention (as compared with available alternatives).

Historic stakeholder identification with the organization's vision, mission and values that guide the organization's operation has helped to solidify the College's reputation, which refers to the esteem or overall estimation in which the organization is held (Fombrun, 1996; Heugens, Van Riel, & Van Den Bosch, 2004), and the dominant attributes ascribed to the organization by the multiple constituents that assess its image (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Interviewees predominantly describe the College's reputation in terms that reflect elements of quality: "good students"; "an excellent College offering excellent education"; "a small school": "a place that's special and unique"; "academic seriousness"; "preparing a lot of students for a variety of non-academic things"; "a place that's friendly and cares for the students and faculty and staff"; "a place that produces good quality students".

> This College has a reputation for excellence. There are a couple of primary factors involved. Obviously at the base of it are well educated and committed teaching personnel. A lot of the teaching personnel here I think approach what they do from the perspective of a university context in terms of academic effort and quality of work. And consequently, there is that attention to challenging the students academically. So students leave here with a good preparation for university studies. Word of the success of students who go through here and get into the universities that they want feeds back to the students looking for a college to go to. So over the years we've started getting very – actually, we continue to get strong students coming in. And so there is a kind of cycle that we build up. We not only challenge our students, but also I think we do a good job of trying to help them make the transition from school to university. And so I think that is sort of where the reputation comes (Informant).

> To have the reputation that we have for producing good quality students! We have a track record of sending a high proportion of our graduates not just to the university of their first choice, but to the program of their first choice in the university of their first choice. That in itself builds up a certain momentum and it provides a benchmark against which you are challenged all the time. You don't like to see a reputation like that slip away. And so we all tend to rise to that. So it's the combination of students and faculty, and oddly enough the reputation itself which we all know. That bubble reputation is always a precarious thing, but it can be an incentive, a very powerful incentive (Informant).

Organizations like Marianopolis compete with other organizations within the same field on building distinctive and favourable reputations to gain competitive advantage, long-term viability, and legitimacy. The nature of the good or service provided by Marianopolis College and the degree of social accountability involved in educational provision suggest that gaining and maintaining legitimacy is inextricably linked to the institution's identity, image, and reputational status. As contended by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) "an organization is ... legitimate to the extent that its means and ends appear to conform to social norms, values, and expectations" (p. 177). To Marianopolis, legitimacy, like reputation, is an intangible asset or resource that is prized because it is conferred by the environment, and the viability and value of the organization in the social exchange process depends upon obtaining it.

Since the College's activities, society's perception of the adequacy of such activities, and the norms of appropriate organizational behaviour fuse to create a lens through which legitimacy is determined, legitimacy has accrued to the College in varying degrees through its conformity to institutional rules, programs, policy orientation, norms, cultural and social influences, as well as through adopting appropriate and seemingly successful organizational structures, forms, routines and action. Evidently, the College is concerned with showing that performance meets the standards that the external regulatory body and internal stakeholders expect and monitor. This is necessary to provide the resources needed to make the organization instrumental for its participants. The College is highly cognisant that 'constituent judgements" [of performance] "lay at the heart of organizational legitimacy" (Zammuto, 1982, p. 18), and that its legitimacy "is determined by those observers of the organization who assess its conformity to a specific standard or model" (Ruef & Scott 1998, p. 879). Legitimacy is a priority to the College because it bears heavily on issues of organizational image, reputation, self-maintenance, and survival. Embedded in the evaluative discourse is the theme that the College's performance is predicated on conformity to ministerial programs and policy, cultural and social values, the norms of acceptable behaviour as well as the adoption of dominant and seemingly successful organizational structures, procedures, routines and activities.

Thus, Marianopolis College has used discourse to claim institutional compliance with the laws and regulations of the state, (meaning the Government of Québec), and the oversight powers and evaluative prescriptions of the CEEC. Discourse has also been used to establish that the College has internalized fully the spirit of public policy, and in its behaviour and operation is neither reactive nor resistant toward prevailing regulations, or to the CEEC, the quality assurance arm of the Ministry of Education.

To Marianopolis, legitimacy affirms "ongoing role performance" of the organization and provides "symbolic assurances that all is well" (Ashford and Gibbs, 1990, p. 183). From a very pragmatic perspective, the self-interests of the College are intertwined with its legitimacy calculus. Marianopolis is seeking to receive continued governmental support and resources in the form of subsidies for the delivery of its academic programs. Private education has been coming under increasing pressure from certain groups in Québec. Consequently, the College has a vital stake in influencing the policy process by helping to provide a basis for government's tacit justification of its commitment to respect the right of private education as part of the "public good".

Gaining regulative legitimacy also minimizes government scrutiny and regulatory activities that otherwise might be imposed. It wins favourable media coverage rather than instigate negative media attention. The cognitive elements of legitimacy such as "the rules that specify what types of actors are allowed to exist, what structural features they exhibit, what procedures they can follow" (Ruef & Scott, 1998, p. 879), though subjectively formed, have crystallized with time and through self-perpetuating routines to become institutionalized and embedded within the identity of the College.

In its pursuit of conformity to ministerial programs and policy, cultural and social values, and the norms of acceptable behaviour, the College has employed its skills, abilities, knowledge, knowledge management, learning capabilities and the energy of human beings to become an effective organization. Managing these capabilities or human capital assets to achieve institutional goals is decidedly crucial to organizational effectiveness, claims to legitimacy, and survival. For example the College's ability to take inputs from the environment, transform them and secure continual environmental

acceptance of its outputs and services is a clear indication of effectiveness and a mark of legitimacy. Its claims to legitimacy also rest upon management's effectiveness in developing the capability to anticipate and embrace change. Anticipating change, according to Harrison and Shirom (1998) is proactive and "entails conscious efforts by numbers to improve environmental standing or internal operations before pressure for changes become acute" (p. 48). The same may be said for the organization's capacity to maintain its social relevance. Ultimately, therefore, the discursive positions underlying the College's claim to legitimacy rest solidly upon the ability of the organization to view legitimacy as a value or resource that is internally produced and sustained through effective management and the development of organizational capabilities.

The capability-based theory of competitive advantage has particular relevance to Marianopolis. Following the theory, it may be argued that the College's competences and capabilities rest fundamentally on specific strategic decisions and organizational processes that manipulate and convert resources and assets into new value-creating services within the competitive organizational field (Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Theoretically, also, it may be concluded that the core organization-specific competencies exhibited by Marianopolis embody the collective knowledge of the people that constitute the College. These competences serve two purposes in particular: they define the organization's ability to manage its internal and external operations; they also constitute the major value-adding skills, capabilities and strengths which drive organizational processes and activities to achieve superior performance in accomplishing different outcomes, and in sustaining forms of competitive advantage. Intrinsically, the competencies exhibited by the College derive from its commitment (see Selznick, 1957) to academic excellence, and the alignment of such commitment with the imperatives and norms of organizational effectiveness and quality.

Following Wyner's (2003) approach to the effective organization, members of the College appear to understand that the intent of management is to be a guide to their everyday strategic decisions. They appear to understand how and why specific operational decisions relate to achieving targeted success. Finally, they seem to

appreciate that resources, analytical tools and people with skills, as well as energy and motivation must be available to assemble and coordinate the multiple pieces of the building blocks of the organization's business, and to take on the challenges of producing effectiveness and quality.

Wyner's approach to the effective organization evokes Drucker's (1994; 1995) theory of the business, which is applicable to the College's understanding of the relevance of higher-level performance in a competitive field. Marianopolis has a unique theory of the business, comprising assumptions about the environment within which the organization operates, assumptions about its mission, and assumptions about the core competencies required to accomplish its mission. These assumptions shape the organization's behaviour and define what it considers as meaningful policies, activities and results. Marianopolis operates as a private college in an environment of publicly funded CEGEPs. It competes for high calibre students from a pool of slowly shrinking Anglophone students. However, it admits an increasing number of Francophone students as well as students whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. Increasingly too, the belief is growing that the College has a mission to help serious, though weaker students, and is remarkably good at doing so.

The socio-political context in Québec makes its future somewhat unpredictable even though its vision of the future is one of stability. The College's stakeholders as well as the students it attracts have very high expectation of the educational process. The intrinsic values of the College's vision and mission focus on the student, places emphasis on academic excellence and upon developing the students' competencies to become self-directed, life-long learners. The mission also encompasses various dimensions that go beyond academic excellence.

From this study's interpretation of text, the core competencies that are associated with the College's performance include:

(a) reputation management and the ability to generate an image of quality;

(b) the ability to attract and retain very highly qualified teachers and enhance its knowledge-based advantages;

(c) the ability to develop a learning focus and a set of facilitatory process and structures that enhance learning;

(d) teaching quality and the ability to turn out students who have had excellent academic preparation, and have a solid grounding in the skills necessary for self-directed, life-long learning and leadership;

(e) the ability to deliver quality support and assistance to all students and add value in the process of education regardless of the performance level at entry;

(f) the ability to develop activities designed to reinforce the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, physical and social dimensions of students' lives;

(g) the ability to create conditions which foster student participation and healthful student expression.

(h) its ability to change, to be renewed, and take decisive action to sustain continuous organizational learning in fulfilment of its excellence agenda;

(i) the ability to instil a heightened sense of commitment and organizational citizenship.

These findings go a long way to explain the tenor of the particular viewpoints that follow:

> I think what we do well is challenging the students that we meet in our classrooms to strive and achieve. And I think we not only do a good job of challenging them, but I think we also do a job of mentoring them and helping them to develop those vital skills. We do a good job of challenging our students and preparing them for university (Informant).

> We do try to convey that we are an excellent college offering excellent education. It's a small school. I think we like to give the impression that the students don't fall through the cracks. Even though we say it's different from high school and the teachers aren't running after the students, in fact the teachers do go after the students here. When students are not showing up to class or nor handing in papers, I know certainly counsellors get calls from teachers, or they go down to student services to ask for help too (Informant).

In sum, the particular version of pre-university education that the College has presented in its discursive positions posits alignment with the appropriate forces, social values and expectations, material practices, mental scripts and "institutional logics" (Scott, 2001; Friedland & Alford, 1991). The College's version of "reality" shows achievement in

key areas (see Bober, 2004) such as leadership, strategic planning, student centeredness, personnel focus, process management, information and analysis, and performance monitoring and measurement. The acceptance by its stakeholders that the behaviour embodied by the College is appropriate enables the organization to claim legitimacy by the standards and light of its organizational field. From this perspective, organizational legitimacy conforms to Suchman's (1995) definition as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (p. 574).

Directions for Future Research

This thesis not only links existing theoretical literature to the case study, but also carries implications back to the theoretical literature. First, the emerging grounded theory of superior institutional performance and student success appears to fit two models of quality management in higher education, namely, the transformative model (Harvey & Knight, 1996), and the engagement model of program quality (Haworth & Conrad, 1997). Secondly, the argument is made that institutional theory needs to pays greater attention to the very mechanisms capable of providing more precise and detailed explanation of how control mechanisms operate to mediate the organizational/institutional nexus. It is hoped that this study's conceptual approach to discourse as the instrument for structuring and mediating the relationship between the organizations and institutions will stimulate more debate within the institutional literature. This study also suggests that the application of Biesecker's (1997) model of cooperative achievement among participants provides a basis for dialogue that may contribute to extending the horizons of current understanding regarding the way discourse is structured between policy agents and public sector organizations.

In addition, this study's treatment of legitimating processes carries implications back to the literature on legitimation. It has made a case that the powerful traditional ritualistic conception of legitimacy needs to be broadened to recognize that legitimacy ultimately rests upon the foundation of management's ability to fulfill their institutional obligations by developing core competencies and distinctive capabilities which enhance

the organization's capacity to instil widespread value, and meet the varying demands for accountability. In the prevailing climate of scrutiny and evaluation, and given the centrality of performance measurement and standard setting within higher education, this conception of legitimacy has implications for the literature of public sector organizations, and, at a more practical level, the operation of colleges in Québec.

In concluding this study, a number of directions for future research are suggested. One of the contributions of this research has been the study's elucidation of how educational quality, within the conceptual framework developed, is interpreted and attained at a particular college. Fruitful research may be directed to analyzing the relationship between contextual organizational variables and quality, across a broader spectrum of colleges.

It may be suggested that the dominant public policy challenge for the provincial government is the performance of the larger, publicly funded colleges – those that likely have a smaller proportion of students who could be called "serious". While such colleges may adopt missions in keeping with the ideals of a student-centered learning community, their scores on performance indicators may not be closely aligned with their ideal image as may be the case with scores for Marianopolis. What should policy makers do to strengthen these colleges is certainly a question for future research. A brief comment is in order.

In addressing this question, it may be useful to define quality in terms of the processes involved with achieving reasonable performance outcomes taking into consideration the calibre of students enrolled in the public colleges. The issue then becomes the extent to which academic programs have been implemented and are functioning and are being managed as the logic of the program intends. As noted by McDavid & Hawthorn (2006), achieving program objectives is closely tied to the efficient deployment of resources, and being attuned to the core technologies or organizational competencies that are most associated with accomplishing the desired outcomes. Consequently, government needs to identify and benchmark strategies that are associated with acceptable levels of performance among peer institutions, establish minimum measurable acceptable standards for performance as well as indicators of progress,

deploy the physical resources and human capital assets necessary to raise standards, and monitor student performance and how human and physical resources are used.

Based on the strength of findings by the Québec Ministry of Education that highly correlates student success rates in the fourth semester with first semester success rates, (Field Notes, CEEC Workshop, 2001), it stands to reason that the first semester or initial transition period appears critical to the final outcome of student performance. The determination of the organizational-level variables and strategies associated with higher first semester student success rates is an area for future research.

Depending on location, colleges in Québec have had to compete against each other not just for students, but for the best students. If the capability-based theory of competitive advantage is correct, an organization's ability to outperform others rests on the competences and capabilities that are mobilized through specific strategic decisions and organizational processes to manipulate and convert resources and assets into new value-creating services within the competitive organizational field. Thus, research may also be directed to the following issues: (1) Do colleges possess competitive resources, and if so, what defines them? (2) To what extent are such competitive resources important in attaining the objectives of the colleges? (3) If such resources are important, can they be assessed? (4) If such resources are important, how do the colleges enhance and maintain them? These are questions posed by Lynch and Baines (2004, p. 172) in relation to the university sector in the UK. They are also relevant to future research on the colleges in Québec.

Finally, the direction future research may take is the testing of select theoretical propositions from the list inductively constructed to describe the relationship between the patterns, unifying themes, concepts and categories. In testing these propositions valuable data should emerge regarding the degree of convergence between the colleges in relation to the strategies and procedures they adopt to achieve specific quality objectives in response to needs and social expectations.

References

Åberg, J-O. (1997). *A Summary of the Rational and the Legitimate: A study of the theory and practice of evaluations,* (1-12). Doctoral dissertation at the Department of Sociology, Götegorg University. Retrieved 26 November 2003 from http://www.sam.kau.se/sociologi/sums/joasum.html

Abrahamsson, B. (1993). *Why Organization? How and Why People Organize*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

A Focus on Students (2004). *Alma Matters*, Fall. Marianopolis College, 3.

Albert, S., & Whetten. D. (1985). Organizational identity. In L.L. Cummings & B.M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*, vol. 7, (pp. 263-295). Greenich, CT: Jai Press.

Alexander, F. (2000). The changing face of accountability: Monitoring and assessing institutional performance. *The Journal of Higher Education,* 71 (4), 411-431.

Allen, N. J., & Grisaffe, D. (2001). Employee commitment to the organization and customer reactions: Mapping and linkages. *Human Resource Management Review*, 11(3), 209-236.

Alkin, M.C.Jr. & Christie, C. (2004). An evaluation theory tree. In M.C. Alkin (Ed.), *Evaluation roots*, (pp. 381-392). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Almond, H. (2000). The department chair as faculty developer. *The Department Chair*, (10), 4, 1-6.

Al Rubaie, T. (2002). The Rehabilitation of the case-study method. *European Journal of Psychotherapy, Counselling & Health.* 5 (1), 31-47.

Alvarez, A. (2003). Toward an interpretative framework to conceptualize social processes in large information systems implementations. *Information Technology for Development*, 10, 233-247.

Alverno College Faculty. (1979/1985). *Assessment at Alverno College. Revised Edition.* Milwaukee: Alverno College.

Aoki, M. (2001). *Toward a comparative institutional analysis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Arnold, E. (2004). Evaluating research and innovation policy: a systems world needs systems thinking. *Research Evaluation*, 12 (1), 3-17.

Arthurs, J., & Busenitz, L. (2003). *Dynamic capabilities and new venture performance: The moderating effects of venture capitalists*. Paper presented at the Lally-Darden Entrepreneurship Scholar's Retreat at Rensselaerville, NY.

Ashforth, B., & Gibbs, B. (1990). The double-edge of organizational legitimation. *Organization Science*, 1 (1), 177-194.

Association of English Colleges (1992). Draft brief presented to the Parliamentary Commission of the Québec National Assembly on the future of Québec colleges, Montreal.

Auditor General (1998). *University of PEI Audit Report*, Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Baguley, P. (1994). *Improving organizational performance. A handbook for managers*. England, Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Book Company Europe.

Baiman, (1990). Agency research in managerial accounting: A second look. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 15 (4) 341-371.

Baker, R. (2002). Evaluating quality and effectiveness: Regional accreditation principles and practices. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 28 (1), 3-7.

Baker, T.L. (1994). *Doing social research*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Ball, S. (1994). *Education reform: a critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press.

Ball, S. (1997). Policy sociology and critical social research: a personal review of recent education policy and policy research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 23 (3), 257-274.

Ball, S. (2000). Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: Towards the performative society? *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 27 (2), 1-23.

Barbarie, A. (1986). Evaluating government R & D: Beyond "quality of research." In J. Wholey, M. Abramson, & C. Bellavita (Eds.), *Performance and credibility. Developing excellence in public and nonprofit organizations,* (pp.109-116). Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company.

Barley, S.R., & Tolbert, P.S. (1997). Institutionalization and structuration: Studying the links between action and institution. *Organization Studies*, 18 (1), 93-117.

Barnetson, R. (1999). A review of Alberta's performance-based funding mechanism. *Quality in Higher Education*, 5 (1), 37-50.

Barnett, R. (1992). *Improving higher education: Total quality care*. Buckingham, U.K: SRHE & Open University Press.

Barnett, R. (1994). The idea of quality: Voicing the educational. In Doherty, G.D. (Ed.), *Developing quality systems in education*, (pp. 68-82). London: Routledge.

Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management,* 17 (1), 99-120.

Barney, J. (2001). Is the resource-based "view" a useful perspective for strategic management research? Yes. *Academy of Management Review*, 26 (1), 41-56.

Barrow, M. (1999). Quality-management systems and dramaturgical compliance. *Quality in Higher Education*, 5 (1), 27-36.

Bartel, C. (2001). Social comparisons in boundary-spanning work: Effects of community outreach on members' organizational identity and identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 46, 379-413.

Bates, R. (1988). *Evaluating schools: A critical approach.* Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Becker, H.S. (1996). The epistemology of qualitative research. In R. Jessor, A., Colby, & R. Schweder, (Eds.), *Essays on ethnography and human development: Content and meaning in social inquiry*, (pp. 53-71). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beetham, D. (1991). *The legitimisation of power*. London: Macmillan

Bélanger, C. (2000). *Quebec History: The quiet revolution.* Retrieved 17 January 2003 from faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/QuebecHistory/index.htm

Bennett, A., & George, A. (1997). *Research design tasks in case study methods*. Paper presented at the MacArthur Workshop on Case Study Methods, Belfour Center for Science and International Affairs (BCSIA) Harvard University.

Berg, B. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences.* (2nd Edn.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Berg, G., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Nakamura, J. (2003). A mission possible? *Change*, 35 (5), 41-47.

Berger, P., & Luckman, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. New York, NY: Anchor.

Bhaskar, R. (1986). *Scientific realism and human emancipation*. London: Verso.

Biesecker, A. (1997). The market as an instituted realm of social action. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 26 (3), 215-231.

Biesta, G. (2004). Education, accountability, and ethical demand: Can the democratic potential of accountability be regained? *Education Theory*, 54 (3), 233-250.

Billing, D. (1998). Quality management and organizational structure in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education & Policy Management*, 20 (2), 139-159.

Billing, D. (2003). Generic cognitive abilities in higher education: An international analysis of skills sought by stakeholders. *Compare*, 33 (3), 335-350.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2003). 'In praise of educational research': Formative assessment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29 (5), 623-637.

Blau, P., & Scott, W. (1962). *Formal organizations*. San Francisco: Chandler.

Bleiklie, I. (1998). Justifying the evaluative state: New public management ideals in higher education. *European Journal of Education*, 33 (3), 299-316.

Bloom, B., Hastings, J., & Madaus (Eds.) (1971). *Handbook of formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Bober, M. (2004). The challenge of instructional accountability. *Tech Trends*, 48 (4), 48-51.

Bogue, E. G. (1998). Quality assurance in higher education: the evolution of systems and design ideas. In G.Gaither (Ed.), *Quality assurance in higher education: An international perspective*, (pp. 7-18). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Boisvert, F. (1998). Marianopolis' position of strength in the community. *Alma Matters*. Spring, 90th Anniversary Issue 1.

Boyce, M. (1996). Organisational story and story telling: a critical review. *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, 9 (5), 5-26.

Breakwell, G., & Millward, L. (1995). *Basic evaluation methods. Analysing performance, practice and procedure.* Leicester: BPS Books.

Bredo, E., & Feinberg, W. (1982). Part Two: The Interpretive Approach to Social and Educational Research. In Bredo, E. and Feinberg, W., (Eds.), *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, (pp. 115-128). Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.

Bromley, D. (1989). *Economic interests and institutions: The conceptual foundations of public policy.* New York: Basil Blackwell.

Bromley, D. (1993). *Reputation, image and impression management.* Chicester, U.K: John Wiley & Sons.

Bromley, D. (2000). Psychological aspects of corporate identity, image, and reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review,* 3, 240-252.

Bromley, D. (2001). Relationships between personal and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35 (3/4), 316-331.

Brooks, S. (2003). *The institutional self-evaluation report: Marianopolis College.* Prepared for the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignment collégial, Montreal: Marianopolis College.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bullough, R.V. Jr., Clark, D.C., & Patterson, R.S. (2003). Getting in step: Accountability, accreditation and the standardization of teacher education in the United States. *Journal of Education and Teaching,* 29 (1), 35-51.

Bunge, M. (1996). *Finding philosophy in social science.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life.* London: Heineman.

Burrell G. and G. Morgan (1994). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis.* London: Virago.

Butler, T. (2002). *Building IT resources in post-industrial organizations: Cases on the Development and application of IT competencies.* Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Accounting, Finance and Information Systems, University of Cork, Ireland.

Campbell, D.T. (1975). Degrees of Freedom and the Case Study. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8, 178-193.

Campbell, J. (1977). On the nature of organizational effectiveness. In Goodman, P.J., & J.M. Pennings (Eds.), *New perspectives on organizational effectiveness*, (pp. 13-55). San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Carl, W. (2002). *Organizational Legitimacy: A discursive accomplishment in multilevel marketing research.* A paper presented at the Organizational Communications Division of the National Communications Association annual conference, New Orleans, LA, November 21-24, 2002.

Carmeli, A. (2002/2003). Relationship between organizational and structural characteristics and local authorities fiscal health. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 26 (3/4), 426-464.

Carnal, C. (1982). *The Evaluation of Organizational Change*. Aldershor, England: Gower.

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1993). Action research in education. In Hammersley, M. (Ed.) *Controversies in Classroom Research.* (235-245). Buckingham: Open University Press.

CEEC (1994). *Evaluating programs of studies*. Quebec: Gouvernement du Québec.

CEEC (2000). *The institutional evaluation guide*. Quebec : Government of Quebec.

CEEC (2001). *Évaluation de l'application de la politique institutionnelle d'évaluation des programmes d'études (PIEP) du Collège Marianopolis. Quebec*: Gouvernement du Québec.

CEEC (2002). *L'application des politiques institutionnelles d'évaluation des programmes.* Quebec: Gouvernement du Québec.

CEEC (2005). *2006 college tour reference document*. Québec.

CHEA (2003). *Statement of mutual responsibilities for student learning outcomes: accreditation, institutions and programs.* Retrieved 19 November 2003 from www.chea.org/pdf/StmntStudentLearningOutcomes9-03.pdf,

Charmaz, K. (1998). The grounded theory method: An explication and interpretation. In R.M. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary field research: A collection of readings*. (pp. 109-126). Prospect Heights: IL: Waveland.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), (pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Cheng, Y. C. (1993). *The conceptualization and measurement of school effectiveness: An organizational perspective*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, U.S.A.

Christensen, L.T., & Cheney, G. (2000). Self-absorption and self-seduction in the corporate identity game. In M. Schultz, M.J. Hatch & M.H. Larson (Eds.), *The expressive organization: Linking identity, reputation, and the corporate brand*, (pp. 246-270), Oxford, U.K: Oxford University Press.

CICIC (2004) At http://www.cicic.ca/postsec/accreditation/accreditation.en.stm accessed 08/06/2004.

CIHE (2004). *Role and value of accreditation.* Retrieved 20 July 2004 from http:/ www.neasc.org/cihe/cihorole.htm

Clark, B., & Montgomery, C. (1998). Deterrence, reputation, and competitive cognition. *Management Studies*, 44 (1), 118-128.

Clark, W.C. (1998). Agents and structures: Two views of preferences, two views of institutions. *International Studies Quarterly*, 42 (2), 245-270.

Clarke, A. (2003). Situational analyses: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. Special Issue on Theory and Method. *Symbolic Interaction*, 26(4), 553-576.

Clegg, S., Pitsis, T., Rura-Polley, T., & Marosszeky, M. (2002). Governmentality matters: Designing an alliance culture of inter-organizational collaboration for managing projects. *Organization Studies*, 23(3), 317-338.

CMEC (1999). *A report on public expectations of post-secondary education in Canada.* Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Codd, J. (1999). Educational reform, accountability and the culture of distrust. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 34 (1), 45-53.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education*, 5th Edition. London: Routledge Falmer

Conlon, M. (2004). Performance indicators: Accountable to whom. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 16(1), 41-48.

Connolly, E., Conlon, S., & Deutch, J. (1980). Organizational effectiveness: A multiple-constituency approach. *Academy of Management Review*, 5(2), 211-217.

Connolly, JM, & Keutner, T (1988) (Eds). *Hermeneutics versus science? Three German views: essays by Gadamer, HG, Specht, EK, Stegmuller, W.* South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.

Conseil des Colléges. (1990). *The College-level social sciences program: Revision affecting the future*. 6 (3). Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil des Collèges (1992a), *College education: Priorities for renewal*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil des Collèges. (1992b). *Report on the state and needs of college education.* Gouvernement du Québec.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13, 4-21.

Corwin, R.G. (1987). *The Organization-society nexus: A critical review of models and metaphors*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Craig, G. (1999). Improving organizational effectiveness through systemic diagnosis. *Vantage Point*, 14 (3), 1-6. Retrieved 06 December 2002 from http://www.oeconsultgroup.com/organizational diagnosis.htm

Creswell, J. W. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CSTE (2005). *Teacher research as communicative action: Studying research groups using Habermas's discourse ethics.* Retrieved 25 February 2005 from www.cste.educ.ubc.ca/trca_prodes 1.html

Czarniawska, B. (1997). *Narrating the organization: Dramas of institutional identity.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Daft, R., & Weick, K. (1984). Towards a model of organizations as interpretative systems. In Tsoukas, H. (Ed.), *New Thinking in Organizational Behaviour: From Social Engineering to Reflective Action*, (pp. 187-203). NY: Academic Press.

Dale, R. (2000). Globalization and education: Demonstrating a 'common world educational culture' or locating a 'globally structured educational agenda? *Educational Theory*, 50 (4), 419-426.

Davenport, T., & Prusak, L. (1998). *Working knowledge: How organizations manage what they know*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston: MA.

Davis, L.E., & North, D.C. (1970). Institutional change and American economic growth: A first step towards a theory of institutional innovation. *Journal of Economic History*, 30, 131-149.

Davison, K. (1998). *The general education of studies self-evaluation report: Marianopolis College*. Montreal: Marianopolis College.

Dean, M. (1999). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern societies*. London: Sage.

Deephouse, D., & Carter, S. (2005). An examination of differences between organizational legitimacy and organizational reputation. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42 (2), 329-360.

Deetz, S. (1992). *Democracy in an age of corporate colonialization: Development in communication and the politics of everyday life*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Deflem, M. (1994). Social control and the theory of communicative action. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 22 (4), 355-373. Retrieved 25 February 2005 from www.cas.sc.edu/socy/faculty/deflem/zjurgsoc.htm

Deming, W.E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deming, W.E. (1994). *The new economics for industry, government, education*. MIT, Center for Advanced Engineering Study, Cambridge: MA.

Denison, D.B. (1998). *The transition to university: Academic experiences in the first semester*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, McGill University.

Dennison, J, & Gallagher, P. (1986). *Canada's community colleges: A critical analysis*.Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Denzin, N.K. (1989). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, (pp. 1-18). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1998a). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1998b). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

De Ruyter, D., & Conroy, J. (2002). The formation of identity: The importance of ideals. *Oxford Review of Education,* (28) 4, 509-522.

DGEC. (1984). *Édition commentée du réglement sur le règime pédogogique du collégial.* Ministère de L'Éducation, Quebec

Dill, D. (1995). Through Deming's eyes: A cross-national analysis of quality assurance policies in higher education. *Quality in Higher Education,* 1 (2), 95-110.

Dill, D. (1998). Evaluating the 'Evaluative State': Implications for research in higher education. *European Journal of Education,* 33 (3), 361-78.

Dill, W. R. (1958). Environment as an influence on managerial autonomy. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 2, 409-443.

Dill, D.D., Massey, W.F., William, P.R., & Cook, C.M. (1996). Accreditation and academic assurance: Can we get there from here? *Change, 28* (5), 16-24.

DiMaggio, P.J., & Powell, W.W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review,* 48, 147-160.

DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W.W. (1991a). Introduction. In Powell, W.W. & DiMaggio, P. J. (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis,* (pp. 1-38). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W.W. (1991b). *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DiPaola, M., & Hoy, W. (2005). Organizational citizenship of faculty and achievement of high school students. *The High School Journal,* 88 (3), 35-44.

Donald, J.G. & Denison, D.B. (2001. Quality assessment of university students: Student perceptions of quality criteria. *Journal of Higher Education,* 72, 478-502.

Donmoyer, R. (1990). Generalizability and the single case study. In E.W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate,* (pp. 175-200). New York: Teachers College Press.

Dooley, D. (1990). *Social Research Methods*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Dowling, J., & Pfeffer, J. (1975). Organizational legitimacy: Social values an organizational behavior. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 18, 122-136.

Downey, L. (1988). *Policy Analysis in Education*. Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.

Drakich, J., Grant, K., & Stewart, P. (2002). The academy in the twenty first century. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 39 (3), 249-260.

Druckman, D., Singer, J. & Van Cott, H., (Eds.). (1997). *Enhancing organizational performance*. Washington, D.C: National Academy Press.

Drucker, P. (1994). The theory of the business. *Harvard Business Review*, 72 (5), 95-104.

Drucker, P. (1995). *Managing in a time of great change*. New York: Penguin.

Dubin, R. (1976). Organizational effectiveness: Some dilemmas of perspectives. In S. Spray, (Ed.), *Organizational Effectiveness*, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.

Dumont, L. (2002). Institutional evaluation in FAC colleges. *Contact,* 7(1), 2.

Dutton, J., & Dukerich, J. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34, 517- 554.

Dutton, J., Dukerich, J., & Harquail, C. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39, 239-263.

Eaton, J. (2001). Regional accreditation reform. *Change,* 33(2), 38-45.

Eaton, J. (2003). *Accreditation and recognition in the United States*. OECD/Norway Forum on Trade in Educational Services: Managing the internationalization of Post-secondary Education, Trondheim, Norway. Retrieved 12 November 2003 from www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/ihec/policy/USAccreditation.pdf

Eaton, J. (2005). Quality and an international higher education space. *International Higher Education,* 40, (summer), 3-4.

Eckstein, H. (1975). Case study and theory in political science. *In Handbook of Political Science Vol VII.* (Eds.) Greenstein, F. & Polsby, N., (pp. 94-137). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Eisenhardt, K. (1989). Agency theory: An assessment and review. *Academy of Management Review*, 14 (1), 57-75.

Eisenhardt, K.. & Martin, J. A. (2000). Dynamic capabilities: What are they? *Strategic Management Journal*, 21, 1105-1121.

Eisenhart, K., & Borko, H. (1993). *Designing classroom research: themes, issues, and struggles*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Eisner, E.W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York: MacMillan.

Eisner, E.W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Elsbach, K., & Kramer, R. (1996). Members' responses to organizational Identity threats: Encountering and countering the *Business Week* rankings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41, 422-476.

Elsbach, K. (2000). The architecture of legitimacy: Constructing accounts of organizational controversies. Chapter 16, Prepared for John T. Jost, and B. Majors (Eds.), *The Psychology of Legitimacy.*

English Language Colleges of Quebec (1992). *Brief presented to the Parliamentary Commission of the Quebec National Assembly on the Future of Quebec Colleges.* Montreal.

Etzioni, A. (1964). *Modern organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

Ewell, P. (1990). *Assessment and the "New Accountability": A challenge for higher education's leadership*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Ewell, P. (1994). A matter of integrity: Accountability and the future of self-regulation. *Change*, 26 (6), 24-29.

Ewell, P. (1999). Assessment of higher education quality: promise and politics. In S.J. Messick, (Ed.), *Assessment in higher education: Issues of access, quality, student development, and public policy*, (pp. 147-156). Mahwah. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ewell, P. (2002). A delicate balance: The role of evaluation in management. *Quality in Higher Education.* 8 (2), 159-171.

Firestone, W.A. (1987). Meaning in method: the rhetoric of quantitative and qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 16 (7), 16-21.

Fogel, R.W. (1997). Douglas C. North and Economic Theory. In Droback, J.N. & Nye, J.V., (Eds.), *The frontiers of the new institutional economics*, (pp. 3-12). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Fombrun, C. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Fombrun, C., & Foss, C. (2001). The reputation quotient, Part 1: Developing a reputation quotient. *The Guage, Delahaye Medalink's Newsletter of worldwide Communications Research*, (pp. 1-4). Retrieved 26 August, 2005 from file:///guage/fombrunfossreputation1.html (08/26/2005).

Fombrun, C., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 233-258.

Fombrun, C., & Van Riel, C. (1997). The reputation landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 1 (1 & 2), 5-13.

Fombrun, C., & Van Riel, C. (2003). *Fame and fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Foucault, M. (1980). The eye of power. In Gordon, C. (Ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977.* Translated by Gordon, C., Marshall, L., Mepham, J., & Soper, K. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In: G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller, (Eds), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*, (pp. 87-104). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fox-Wolfgram, S.J., Boal, K. & Hunt, J. (1998). Organizational adaptation to institutional change: A comparative study of first order change in prospector and defender banks. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43 (1), 87-126.

Friedland, R. & Alford, R.R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions. In DiMaggio, P. & Powell, W. (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, (pp. 232-263). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gadamer, H.G. (1988). On the circle of understanding. Hermeneutics versus science? In Connely, J.M., & Keutner T., (Eds.), *Three German Views*, (pp. 68-78). IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Gadamer, H. G. (1975). *Truth and method.* NY: Seabury Press.

Gauthier, M. (2004). Incentives and accountability: The Canadian context. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 16(2), 95-107.

Gephart, R.P. (1991). Succession, sensemaking and organizational change: A story of a deviant college president. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 4 (3), 35-44.

Geva-May, I. (2001). Higher education and attainment of policy goals: Interpretations for efficiency indicators in Israel. *Higher Education*, 42, 265-301.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University.

Gillespie, K. (2000). The challenge and test of our values: An essay of collective experience. *To Improve the Academy,* 18, 27-37.

Gioia, D., Schultz, M., & Corley. (2000). Organizational identity, image and adaptive instability. *Academy of Management Review*, (25), 1, 63 – 81.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*: *Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Glaser, B. (1978). Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press,

Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs forcing.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions.* Mill Valley, CA.: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (2002). Conceptualization: On theory and theorizing using grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1 (2), 1-31.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* New York: Anchor Books.

Gooderham, P.N., Nordhaug, O. & Ringdal, K. (1999). Institutional and rational determinants of organizational practices: Human resource management in European firms. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44 (2), 384-416.

Grace, G. (1995). *School leadership: beyond education management: an essay in policy scholarship.* London: Falmer Press.

Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91, 481-510.

Grant, R. (1991). The resource-based theory of competitive advantage: Implications for strategy formulation. *California Management Review*, 33 (3), 114-135.

Grant, R. (1996a). Toward a knowledge based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management*, 17 (Special Issue), 109-122.

Grant, R.M. (1996b). Prospering in dynamically-competitive environments: Organizational capability as knowledge integration, *Organization Science*, 7, 375 - 387.

Green J. (1999). Commentary: Generalisability and validity in qualitative research. *British Medical Journal*. Retrieved 12 May, 2003 from www.findarticles.com/cf_o/m0999/7207_319/55670112/print.jhtml

Greenbank, P. (2003). The role of values in educational research: The case for reflexivity. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(6), 791-801.

Greening, D., & Gray, B. (1994). Testing a model of organizational response to social and political issues. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 467-498

Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Guba, E,G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research,* (pp.105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gudmundsdottir, S. (1991). Story maker, storyteller: Narrative structure in curriculum, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 23: 207-218.

Gumport, P. (2000). Academic restructuring: Organizational change and institutional imperatives. *Higher Education*, 39, 67-91.

Gumport, P. (2001). A report to stakeholders on the condition and effectiveness: Post-secondary education. *Change*, 33 (3), 27-41.

Guskin, A., & Marcy, M. (2003). Dealing with the future: Principles for creating a vital campus in a climate of restricted resources. *Change*, 35 (4), 10-21.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action, vol. l: Reason and rationalization of society*. (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action, Volume 2: lifeworld and system: The critique of functionalist reason.* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.

Hale, J. (1998). *The performance consultant's fieldbook: Tools and techniques for improving organizations and people*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Hale-Haniff, M. & Pasztor, A. (1999). Co-constructing subjective experience: A constructivist approach. *Dialogues in Psychology, 16.0.* Paper presented at the Mind-4 Conference, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland.

Hall, P., & Taylor, R. (1996). Political Science and the three new institutionalisms. *Political Studies,* 46 (5), 936-957.

Hall, P., & Taylor, R. C. (1998). The potential of historical institutionalism: A response to Hay and Wincott. *Political Studies*, 46 (5), 958-962.

Hamel, J., Dufour, S., & Fortin, D. (1993). *Case Study Methods*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong with ethnography?* London: Routledge.

Handy,C. (1993). *Understanding organizations*, (4th Ed.). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Harbour, C. (2002). The legislative evolution of performance funding in the North Carolina community college system. *Community College Review*, 29 (4), 28-49.

Harbour, C. (2003). An institutional accountability model for community colleges. Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 27, 299-316.

Harman, G. (1998). Quality assurance mechanisms and their use as policy instruments: Major international approaches and the Australian experience since 1993. *European Journal of Education*, 33 (3), 331-348.

Harrison, M., & Shirom, A. (1998). *Organizational diagnosis and assessment: Bridging theory and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hartley, J.F. (1994). Case studies in organizational research. In Cassell, C., & Symon, G., (Eds.), *Qualitative methods in organizational research*: *A practical guide*, (pp. 208-229). London: Sage.

Hartley, R.J., & Virkus, S. (2003). Approaches to quality assurance and accreditation of LIS programmes: Experiences from Estonia and United Kingdom. *Education for Information,* 21, 31-48.

Harvey, L. & Green, D. (1993). "Defining quality." *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 18(1), 9-34.

Harvey, L. (1995a). Editorial: The quality agenda. *Quality in Higher Education*, 1(1), 5-12.

Harvey, L. (1995b). Beyond TQM. *Quality in Higher Education*, 1(2), 123–46.

Harvey, L. (1995c). *Quality assurance systems: TQM and the new collegialism*. Centre for Research into Quality, University of Central England, Birmingham, UK.

Harvey, L. (2002). Education for what? *Teaching in Higher Education*, 7 (3), 245-263.

Harvey, L. & Knight, P. (1996). *Transforming higher education*. Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press UK.

Hasselbladh, H., & Kallinikos, J. (2000). The project of rationalization: A critique and Reappraisal of neo-institutionalism in organizational studies. *Organization Studies*, 21 (4), 697-720.

Hatch, M.J. & Schultz, M. (2002). The dynamics of organizational identity. *Human Relations*, 55 (8), 989-1017.

Haug, G., & Tauch, C. (2000). *Toward a coherent European higher education space: From Bologna to Prague*. Retrieved 15 July 2005 at www.eaie.org/pdf/bologna.asp

Haworth, J.G., & Conrad, C. F. (1997). *Emblems of quality in higher education: Developing and sustaining high-quality programs*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Heck, R.H., Johnsrud, L.K., & Rosser, V.J. (2000). Administrative effectiveness in higher education: Improving assessment procedures. *Research in Higher Education*, 41(6), 663-684.

Heidegger, M. (1976). *Being on time*. NY: Harper & Row.

Henkel, M. (1998). Evaluation in higher education: conceptual and epistemological foundations. *European Journal of Education*, 33 (3), 285-297.

Hernon, P. (2002). Quality: New directions in the research. *Journal of Academic Leadership*, 28 (4), 224-231.

Heugens, P., Van Riel, C., & Van Den Bosch, F. (2004). Reputation management capabilities as decision rules. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41 (8), 1349-1377.

Heylighen, F. (1993). Epistemology, introduction. *Principia Cybernetica Web*. Retrieved October 28, 2003, from http://pespme1.vub.ac.bc/EPISTEMI.html

Hira, A. & Hira, R. (2000). The new institutionalism: Contradictory notions of change. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology,* 59 (2), 267-282.

Hodson, P., & Thomas, H. (2001). Higher education as an international commodity: Ensuring quality in partnerships. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* 26 (2), 101-112.

Hodkingson, P. (2004). Research as a form of work: Expertise, community and methodological objectivity. British Educational Journal, (30), 1, 9-26.

Hogg, M. (2000). Social identity and social comparison. In J. Suls & l. Wheeler (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Comparison: Theory and Research,* (pp.401-421), NY: Plenum.

Houston, D., & Foote, J. (2001). Normative implications of assessment and Evaluation: a critical view. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 26 (5), 403-416.

Huntley-Maynard, J. (1992). *From Notre Dame Collegiate Institute to Marianopolis College: The evolution of an institution (1908-1975), A case study of pivotal decisions.* Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Administration and Policy Studies in Education. McGill University, Montreal.

Hybels, R. (1995). On legitimacy, legitimation, and organizations: A critical review and integrative theoretical model. *Academy of Management Journal,* Special Issue: Best Papers Proceedings, 2(4), 241-245.

Ingram, P. & Clay, K. (2000). The choice within constraints: New institutionalism and implications for sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology,* 26, 525-546.

Innes, M.A., Greenfield, S.M., & Hunton, M. (2000). Using case studies for prescribing research—an example from homoeopathic prescribing. *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics,* 25, 399-409.

ISO (1994). *Quality management and quality assurance -- Vocabulary.* Report number: ISO 8402, Geneva: International Organization for Standardization.

Jackson, W. (1995). *Doing social research.* Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.

Jensen, M., & Meckling, W. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior. *Journal of Financial Economics,* 3, 305-360.

Jepperson, R. L. (1991), Institutions, institutional effects and institutionalism. In Powell, W.W., & DiMaggio, P.J., (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, (pp. 143-163). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Johns, G. (2006). The essential impact of context on organizational behaviour. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(2), 386-408.

Johnson, P., & Duberly J. (2000). *Understanding Management Research.* London: Sage.

Johnstone, L., & Frith, H. (2005). Discourse Analysis and the experience of ECT. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice*, 78, 189-203.

Juran, J.M. & Gryna, F.M. (1988). *Juran's quality control handbook.* New York: McGraw Hill.

KanJi, G., & Maura E SÁ, P. (2003). Sustaining healthcare excellence through performance measurement. *Total Quality Management*, 14 (3), 269-289.

Kaplan, B., & Duchon, D. (1988). Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Information Systems Research: A Case Study. *MIS Quarterly*, 571-586.

Karreman, D., & Alvesson, M. (2001). Making newsmakers: Conversational identity at work. *Organization Studies*, (21) 1, 59-89.

Katz, D., & Kahn, R.L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: Wiley.

Kemmis, S. (1993). Action Research. In Hammersley, M., (Ed.), *Educational research: current issues*. London: Paul Chapman.

Kelle, U. (1997). Theory building in qualitative research and computer programs for the management of textual data. *Sociological Research Online*, 2(2). Retrieved 31/08/2006 from http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/2/1.html

Kincheloe, J., Steinberg, S. & Gresson, A. (Eds.) (1996). *Measured Lies: The bell curve.* New York: Free Press.

Kiser, E. (1999). Comparing varieties of agency theories in economics, political Science, and sociology: An illustration of state policy implementation. *Sociological Theory*, 17 (2), 146-170.

Klein, P.D. (1998). Epistemology. In E. Craig. (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
Retrieved 28 October 2003 from www.rep.routledge.com/article/P059

Kor, Y., & Mahoney, J. (2004). Edith Penrose's (1959) view of the resource-based view of strategic management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(1), 183-191.

Lamertz, K., & Baum, J. (1996). The legitimacy of organizational downsizing In Canada: An analysis of explanatory media accounts. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 15 (1), 93-107.

Laughton, D. (2003). Why was the QAA approach to teaching quality assessment rejected by academics in UK HE? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education.* 28 (3), 309-321.

Lawler, E., Nadler, D., & Cammann, C. (1980). Uses of organizational assessment data. In E. Lawler, D. Nadler, & C. Cammann (Eds.), *Organizational assessment: Perspectives on the measurement of organizational behaviour and the quality of work life*, (pp. 25-45). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Leach, L., Neutze, G., & Zepke, N. (2001). Assessment and empowerment: Some critical questions. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 26 (4), 293-305.

Le Compte, M.D., & Goetz, J.P. (1982). Problems of reality and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research.* 52 (1), 31-60.

L'Écuyer, J. (n.d.). *An evaluation commission as an agent of change: The Experience of the Quebec Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement Collegial.* Unpublished Paper.

L'Écuyer, J. (1997). *Three years of evaluation in Quebec colleges.* Paper presented at INQAAHE 1997 Conference "Quality without frontiers", South Africa, May 24-28.

Leedy, P. (1989). *Practical research: Planning and design.* New York: McMillan.

Legge, K. (1984). *Evaluating planned organizational change.* London: Academic Press.

Leonard-Barton, D. (1995). *Well-springs of knowledge: Building and sustaining the sources of innovation.* Harvard Business School Press, Boston: MA.

Leonardo, Z. (2003). Discourse and critique: Outlines of a post-structural theory of ideology. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 203-214.

Levy, M., Jr. (1952). *The Structure of Society.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lievens, P. (2005). Organizational image/reputation. In press *Encyclopedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, (Eds.), S. Rogelberg & C. Reeve, Sage Publication. Retrieved 01 Septebmber 2005 from users.ugent.be/~flievens/pub.htm

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging Confluences. In N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lindberg, G., Schrag, C., & Larsen, O. (1963). *Sociology*. New York: Harper and Row.

Lingenfelter, P. (2003). Educational accountability. *Change*, 35 (2), 18-25.

Littleton, D., & Whitelock, D. (2004). Guiding the creation of knowledge and understanding in a virtual learning environment. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7 (2), 173-181.

Livingstone, J. (1992). *Report on the institutional review: Marianopolis College, 1990-1992*. Montréal: Marianopolis College.

Locke, K. (1996). Rewriting the discovery of grounded theory after 25 years. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 5(2), 239-245.

Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lodge, M., & Wegrich, K. (2005). Control over government: Institutional isomorphism and governance dynamics in German public administration. *Policy Studies Journal*, 33 (2), 213-233.

Lynch, R., & Baines, P. (2004). Strategy development in UK higher education: Towards resource-based competitive advantages. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and* Management, 26 (2), 171-89.

Magnuson, R. (1980). *A brief history of Québec education: From New France to Parti Québecois*. Montréal: Harvest House.

March, J. & Olsen, J.P. (1984). The new institutionalism: organizational factors in political life. *American Political Science Review,* 78, 734-749.

March, J., & Olsen, J.P. (1989). *Rediscovering institutions*. New York: Free Press.

March, J. & Olsen, J.P. (1996). *Democratic governance*. New York: Free Press.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Martin,W., & MacDonell, A. (1978). *Canadian Education: A sociological Analysis.* Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall.

Martin, T.J. (2003). Divergent ontologies with converging conclusions: a case study comparison of comparative methodologies. *Comparative Education*, 39 (1), 105-117.

Martinez, R., & Dacin, M.T. (1999). Efficiency motives and normative forces: Combining transactions costs and institutional logic. *Journal of Management*, 25 (1), 75-96.

Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher,* 17(2), 13-17.

Mason, D., & Slack, T. (2003). Understanding principal-agent relationships: Evidence from professional hockey. *Journal of Sports Management*, 17, 37-61.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research*: *A philosophic and practical guide*. London: Falmer Press.

McCann, M. (2001). Supreme Court decision making: New institutionalist approaches. *American Political Science Review*. Retrieved 23 June 2003 from www.finadarticles.com/cf_o/m0259/1_95/73021439/print.jhtml

McDavid, J., & Hawthorn, L. (2006). *Program evaluation & performance measurement: An introduction to practice.* Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

McDonnell, A., Lloyd Jones, M., & Read, S. (2000). Practical considerations in case study research: The relationship between methodology and process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 32 (2), 383-390.

McLendon, M., Heller, D., & Young, S. (2005). State postsecondary education policy innovation: Politics, competition, and the interstate migration of policy ideas. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76 (4), 363-400.

McPhee, D. & Bronstien, L. (2002). Constructing meaning: Strengthening the policy-practice link. *Social Work Education*, 21(4), 651-662.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education.* San Francisco: Jossey Base Publishers.

MEQ (2000). *Quebec policy on university funding.* Quebec: Ministère de L'Éducation. Gouvernement du Québec.

MEQ (2004). College Education. Retrieved 25 August 2005 from http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/rens/brochu/anglais/college.htm

MESS (1987) *Revising the College-level Social Sciences Concentration-Governmental Orientations.* Direction générale de l'enseignement collégial : Gouvernement du Québec.

MESS (1993). *Colleges for the 21st century: College education in Québec, Future directions and renewal measures.* Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la science: Quebec.

Meyer, L. H., & Evans, I. M. (2003). Motivating the professoriate: Why sticks and carrots are only for donkeys. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 15, 151-167.

Meyer, J., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83, 340-363.

Meyer, J., & Rowan, B. (1991). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. In W. Powell and P. DiMaggio, (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis,* (41-62), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meyer , J.W., & Rowan, B. (1992). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. In J. Meyer & R. Scott, (Eds.), *Organizational environments-ritual and rationality.* London: Sage.

Miller, D. (1991). *Handbook of research design and social measurement.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Milligan, M. (2003). Displacement and identity discontinuity: The role of nostalgia in establishing new identity categories. *Symbolic Interaction*, 26(3), 381-403.

Mitchell, J.C. (1983). Case and situation analysis. *The Sociological Review*, 31(2), 187-211.

Mizruchi, M.S., Fein, L.C. (1999). The social construction of organizational knowledge: A study of the uses of coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 44, 653-683.

Moore, M.H. (2003). Introduction. *Harvard Law Review*, 116, 1213-1228.

Morgan, G. (1990). *Organizations in Society.* New York: St-Martin's Press.

Morgan, G. (1994). Organization as flux and transformation. In Tsoukas, H. (Ed.), *New thinking in organizational behaviour: From social engineering to reflective action,* NY: Academic press.

Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1 (2), 1-19.

Myers, M. D. (1997). Qualitative Research in Information Systems, *MIS Quarterly,* 21(2), 241-242.

Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership: Creating a compelling sense of direction for your organization.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Neave, G. (1998). The evaluative state reconsidered. *European Journal of Education*, 33 (3), 265-285.

Nee,V. (1998), Sources of the new institutionalism. In Brinton, M.C., & Nee, V. (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in sociology*, (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Nee, V., & Ingram, P. (1998). Embeddedness and beyond: Institutions, exchange, and social structure. In Brinton, M.C., & Nee, V. (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in sociology*, (pp. 19-45). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Nelson, R. & Sampat B.N. (1999). *Making sense of institutions as a factor shaping economic performance*. Retrieved 5 November 2003 from www.sipa.columbia.edu/Research/Paper/99-6.pdf

Nelson, R. & Winter, S. (1982). *An evolutionary theory of economic change*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University

Newton, J. (2002). Views from below academics coping with quality. *Quality in Higher Education,* 8 (1), 39-61.

Neyland, D. & Woolgar, S. (2002). Accountability in action?: The case of a database purchasing decision. *British Journal of Sociology*, 53 (2), 259-274.

Nilakant, V., & Roa, H. (1994). Agency theory and uncertainty in organizations: An evaluation. *Organizational Studies*, 15, 649-672.

Nooteboom, B. (2000). Institutions and forms of co-ordination in innovation systems. *Organization Studies*, 2(15), 915-939.

Nord, W. (1983). A political-economic perspective on organizational effectiveness. In K. Cameron, & D. Whetten (Eds.), *Organizational effectiveness: A comparison of multiple models*, (pp. 95-134). New York: Academic Press.

Nordhaug, (1994). *Human capital in organizations: Competence, training and learning.* New York: Oxford University Press.

North, D.C. (1990*). Institutions, institutional change and economic performance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

North, D.C. (1995). Five propositions about institutional change. In Knight, J., & Sened, I. *Explaining Social Institutions*, (pp. 15-26). Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press.

North, D.C. (1997). Prologue. In Drobak, J.N., & Nye, J.V., (Eds.), *The frontiers of the new institutional economics.* (pp. 3-12). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

OECD (1975). *Review of educational policies in Canada: Quebec.* Paris: OECD

OECD (1995). *Schools under scrutiny.* Paris: OECD.

OECD (1999). *Innovating schools.* Paris: OECD.

Odell, J.S. (2001). Case study methods in international political economy. *International Studies Perspectives*, 2, 161-176.

Oliver, C. (1991). Strategic responses to institutional processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 16 (1), 145-179.

Oliver, D., & Bürgi, P. (2005). *Organizational identity as a strategic practice.* Fourth International Critical Management Studies Conference, Cambridge, UK, 4-6 July. Stream 10: Identity: Exploring the impacts of individual and collective constructions.

Olmesdahl, P. (1999). Preoccupation with quality. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 4 (3), 419-424.

O'Neill, B.J. (1998). Institutional ethnography: Studying institutions from the margins. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, XXV (4), 127-144.

Organ, D. (1990). The motivational basis of organizational citizen behavior. *Research in Organizational Behavior,* 12, 43-72.

Organ, D. (1997). Organizational citizenship behavior: Its construct clean-up time. *Human Performance*, 10, 85-97.

Oswick, C., Anthony, P., Keenoy, T., Mangham, I., & Grant, D. (2000). A dialogic analysis of organizational learning. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37 (6), 887-1002.

Ouchi, W.G. (1979). Review of O. Williamson's markets and hierarchies: Analysis and antitrust implications. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 540-544.

Ouchi, W. (1980). Markets, bureaucracies and clans. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25, 129-141.

Padaki, V. (2002). Making the organization learn: demystification and management action. *Development in Practice*, 12 (3 & 4), 321-337.

Palys, T. (2003). *Research Decisions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives.* (3rd Ed.). Toronto: Harcourt Brace.

Pandit, N. (1996). The creation of theory: A recent application of the grounded theory method. *The Qualitative Report*, 2(4), 1-14. Retrieved 17 November 2005 from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-4/pandit.html

Parsons, T. (1960). *Structure and process in modern societies.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Parsons, T. (1969). Some Ingredients of a General Theory of Formal Organization. In Litterer, T.A., (Ed.), *Organizations: Systems, Control and Adaptation, II.* New York: Wiley.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods.* Newburg Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. (1998). Forward. In S.T. Gray and Associates, *Evaluation with power. A new approach to organizational effectiveness, empowerment and excellence*, (pp. XI-XIII). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Patton, M.Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research.* Retrieved August 20, 2003 from www.findarticles.com/cf_O/m4149/5_34/5845/871/print.jhtml

Patton, M.Q. (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. London: Falmer Press.

Pennings, J. & Goodman, P. (1977). Toward a workable framework. In P. Goodman & J. Pennings (Eds.), *New perspectives on organizational effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Penrose, E. (1959). *The theory of the growth of the firm*. London: Basil Blackwell.

PERC (2004). Home page at http://www.evaluationtool.org/, Accessed 10 July 2005.

PERC (2006). Home page at http://www.evaluationtool.org/, Accessed 02 February 2006.

Pfeffer, J. (1982). *Organizations and organizational theory*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing.

Piantanida, M., Tananis, C., & Grubs, R. (2004). Generating grounded theory of/for Educational practice: The journey of three epistemorphs. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 17(3), 325-346.

Pitt, M., & Clarke, K. (1999). Competing on competence: A knowledge perspective on the management of strategic innovations. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management,* 11(3), 301-317.

Popay, J., Rogers, A., & Williams, G. (1998). Rationale and standards for the systematic review of qualitative literature in health services research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 8, 341-351.

Porter, P. & Vidovich, L. (2000). The globalization of higher education policy. *Education Theory*, 50 (4), 449-465.

Powell, W. (1991). Expanding the scope of institutional analysis. In Powell, W.W. & DiMaggio, P.J. (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*, (pp. 183-203). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Powell, W. & DiMaggio, P.J. (1991), (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Power, M. (1994) *The Audit Explosion*. London: Demos

Power, M. (1996). Making things auditable. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 21 (2/3), pp. 289-315.

Power, M. (1997). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Power, M. (1999). *The audit society: Rituals of verification.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prahalad, C., & Hamel, G. (1990). The core competence of the corporation. *Harvard Business Review*, 68 (3), 79-91.

Rao, H. (1994). The social construction of reputation: Certification contests, legitimation, and the survival of organizations in the automobile industry: 1895-1912. *Strategic Management Journal*, 15 (8), 29-44.

Rapport du comité d'étude des cours commun à tous les étudiants de CEGEP. (1970). Ministère de l'Éducation, Québec.

Rhoades, G., & Sporn, B. (2002). Quality Assurance in Europe and the US: Professional and political economic framing of higher education policy. *Higher Education*, 43 (3), 355-390.

Rinehart, G. (1997). Quality improvement: Not another reform movement. In D. Richardson, R. Blackburn. C. Ruhl-Smith, & J. Haynes, (Ed.), *The Pursuit of continuous improvement in educational organizations*, (pp. 1-14), Lantham: Maryland, Oxford Press of America.

Ritchey, F.J. (2000). *The statistical imagination: Elementary statistics for the social sciences.* Boston: McGraw Hill College.

Ritchie, J.E. (2001). Case series research: a case for qualitative method in assembling evidence. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice.* 17, 127-135.

Robbins, S.P., Coulter, M., & Stuart-Kotze, R. (2000). *Management.* Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall.

Rodrigues, S. B. & Child, J. (2003). *The dynamics of organizational identity construction and deconstruction.* Birmingham Business School Working Paper related to the work of CIBOR.

Room, G. (2000). Globalization, social policy and international standard-setting: The case of higher education credentials. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 9(2), 103-119.

Ross, S. (1973). The economic theory of agency: The principal's problem. American Economic Review, 63 (2), 134-139.

Ruef, M. & Scott, R. W. (1998). A multidimensional model of organizational legitimacy: Hospital survival in changing institutional environments. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43 (4), 877-904.

Rugman, A., & Verbeke, A. (2002). Edith Penrose's contribution to the resource-based view of strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 23(8), 769-780.

Ruttan, V.W., & Hayami, Y. (1984). Toward a theory of induced institutional change. *Journal of Development Studies*, 20, 203-223.

Saksvik, P.Ø., Nytrø, K., Mikkelsen, A., & Dahl-Jørgensen, C. (2002). A process evaluation of individual and organizational occupational stress and health interventions. *Work & Stress*, 16 (1), 37-57.

Salter, B., & Tapper, T. (2000). The politics of governance in higher education: The case of quality assurance. *Political Studies*, 22 (1), 66-87.

Salter, B., & Tapper, T. (2002). The external pressures on the internal governance of Universities. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 56 (3), 245-256.

Sanderson, I. (2003). Is it 'what works' that matters? Evaluation and evidenced based policy making. *Research Papers in Education*, 18 (4), 331-345.

Scheerens, J., & Bosker, R. (1997). *The foundations of educational effectiveness*. Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd.

Schein, E. (1970). *Organizational Psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Schlenker, B.R. (1980). Impression management. Monterey, CA: Brooks/ Cole.

Schlenker, B.R. (2003). Self-presentation. In M. R. Leary and J. P. Tangney, (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity*, (pp. 492-518). New York: Guilford.

Schlenker, B.R., & Weigold, M.F. (1992). Interpersonal processes involving impression regulation and management. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 43, 133-168. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Scholl, R. (1981). An analysis of macro-models of organizations: The goal and political models. *Administration & Society*, 13(3), 271-298.

Schotter, A. (1981). *The economic theory of social institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schwandt, T.A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S., (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp. 118-137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schwandt, T. (1997). Evaluation as practical hermeneutics. *Evaluation*, 3, 69-83.

Schwartz, N. (1999). Self reports: How the questions shape the answers. *American Psychologist*, 54 (2), 93-105.

SCOEA (2003). *Institutional evaluation framework: Overview*. Retrieved 01 June 2004 from www.scoea.bc.ca/Overview-2003.pdf

Scott, R.W. (1992). The Organization of Environments: Network, Cultural, and Historical Elements. In Meyer, J.W. & Scott, W.R., (Eds.), *Organizational Environments* (pp. 155-175). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and Organizations*. London: Penguin.

Scott, W. R. (1998). *Organizations: Rational, natural and open systems*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Scott, W.R. (2001). *Institutions and organizations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Scott, S., & Lane, V. (2000). A stakeholder approach to organizational identity. *Academy of Management Review*, (25), 1, 43-62.

Scott, G., & Hawke, I. (2003). Using an external quality audit as a lever for institutional Change. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28 (3), 324-332.

Scriven, M. (1967). *The methodology of evaluation*. Washington, DC, American Educational Research Association.

Seashore, S. (1983). A framework for an integrated model of organizational effectiveness. In K. Cameron, & D. Whetton, (Eds.), *Organizational effectiveness*, (pp. 55-69). New York: Academic press.

Seippel, O. (2001). From mobilization to institutionalization. The case of Norwegian Environmentalism. *Acta Sociologica*. 44, 123-137.

Selznick, P. (1949). *TVA and the Grass Roots. A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Selznick, P. (1957). *Leadership in administration*. New York: Harper and Row.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization.* Doubleday, New York, 1990.

Senge P. M. (1992). Building learning organizations. *Journal of Quality and Participation,* 15 (2), 30-38.

Shadish, W.R.Jr. (1998). Evaluation is who we are. *Americal Journal of Evaluation,* 19(1), 1-9.

Shrum, W., & Wuthnow, R. (1988). Reputational status of organizations in technical systems. *American Journal of Sociology*, 93 (4), 883-912.

Silverman, D. (1990). *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Silverman, D. (1997). *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice.* London: Sage.

Singh, P. (2004). *Globalization and education. Education Theory*, 54 (1), 103-115.

Sirotnik, K. (2000). Making sense of educational renewal. *Kappan Professional Journal.* PDK Home

Smiraglia, R.P. (2002). The progress of theory in knowledge organization. *Library Trends*. 50 (3), 330-349.

Smith, D. (1984). Textually mediated social organization. *Social Science Journal*, 36 (11), 59-75.

Smith, M. (2001, 2006). Evaluation. *Encyclopaedia of Informal Education.* Retrieved 10 April 2006 from www.infed.org/biblio/informal education.

Smith, N.C. (1990). The Case Study: a useful research method for information management. *Journal of Information Technology*, 5, 123-133.

Sokolovsky, M. (1996). Case Study as a Research Method to Study Life Histories of Elderly People: Some Ideas and a Case Study of a Case Study. *Journal of Aging*, 10 (4), 281-294.

Solum, L. (1988/1989). Freedom of communicative action: A theory of the First Amendment freedom. *Northwestern University Law Review*. Retrieved 25 February 2005 from http://home.sandiego.edu/~lsolum/Westlaw/freedomofcommunicativeaction.htm

Spicer, C. (1997). *Organizational public relations: A political perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Srikanthan, G. and Dalrymple, J., (2002). Developing a holistic model for quality in higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 8(3), 215-224.

Stake, R. (1994). Case studies. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S., (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research,* (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. (1995). The Art of Case Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. (2000a). Case studies. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S., (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research,* (pp. 236-248). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. (2000b) 'The case study method in social inquiry', in R. Gomm, M. Hammersley and P. Foster, (Eds.), *Case study method*, (pp. 19–26). London: Sage.

Stalk, G., Evans, P., & Shulman,L. (1992). Competing on capabilities: The new rules of corporate strategy. *Harvard Business Review*. 70(2), 57-69.

Steyn, G. (2004). Harnessing the power of knowledge in higher education. Education, 124 (4), 615-631.

Stinchcombe, A.L. (1997). On the virtues of the old institutionalism. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 1-18.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*, (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 571-610.

Sveningsson, S., & Alvesson. M. (2003/1) *Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle*. Institute of Economic Research Working Paper Series.

Tam, M. (1999). Quality assurance policies in higher education in Hong Kong. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 21 (2), 215-226.

Tedeschi, J.T. & Riess, M. (1981) Identities, the phenomenal self, and laboratory Research. In J.T. Tedeschi (Ed.), *Impression Management Theory and Social Psychological Research.* (pp. 3-22). New York: Academic Press.

Teece, D.J. (2001). Strategies for managing knowledge assets: The role of firm structure and industrial context. In I. Nonaka & J.D. Teece (Eds.). *Managing industrial knowledge: Creation, transfer and utilization*, (pp.125-144). Sage, London.

Teece, D.J., & Pisano, G. (1998). The dynamic capabilities of firms: An introduction. In G. Dosi, D.J. Teece, & J. Chytry, (Eds.), (pp. 193-212). *Technology, organization, and competitiveness: Perspectives on industrial and corporate change*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Teece, D.J., Pisano, G., & Sheun, A. (1990). *Firm capabilities, resources and concept of strategy*. CCC Working Paper No. 90-8. Berkeley CA. University of California.

Teece, D., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18 (7), 509-533.

Tellis, W. (1997). Introduction to case study [68 paragraphs]. *The Qualitative Report* [on-line serial] 3 (2), 1-12. Retrieved 15 May 2004 from http://www.nova.edu/sss/QR/QR3-2/tellis1.html

Tesoro, F. (2000). *Implementing global performance measurement systems: A cookbook approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer.

Tilling, L. (2004). *Refinements to legitimacy theory in social and environmental accounting*. Commerce Research Paper Series, No. 04-6, ISSN: 1441-3906.

Thune, T., & Welle-Strand, A. (2002). The ambiguous quality agenda in Norwegian higher education policy. *European Education*, 34 (2), 74-92.

Torres, C.A. (2002). The State, Privatisation and Educational Policy: a critique of neo-liberals in Latin America and some ethical and political implications. *Comparative Education*, 38 (4), 365-385.

Tribus, M. (1994). Total quality management in education: The theory and how to put it to work. In Doherty, G.D. (Ed.), *Developing Quality Systems in Education*, (pp. 83-105). London: Routledge.

Trinczek, R., & West, A. (1999). The evaluation study–using statistics and indicators to evaluate universities in Europe: aims, fields, problems and recommendations. *European Journal of Education, Research, Development and Policies,* 34 (3), 343-356.

Trottier, C., & Bernatchez J. (2005). *Higher educational policy in Quebec: A case study.* AIHEPS Alliance for International Higher Education Policy Studies. New York, Retrieved 16 March 2006 from www.nyu.edu/iesp/aiheps/downloads/ finalreports/May%202005/ Quebec_case_study_May05.pdf

Tsoukas, H. (1994). *New thinking in organizational behaviour: From social engineering to reflective action.* London: Butterworth Heinemann.

Trow, M. (1996). Trust, markets, and accountability in higher education: A comparative Perspective. *Higher Education Policy*, 9 (4), 309-324.

Universalia. (1997). *Marianopolis College: Strategic study*. Montréal, Québec.

Valdez Perez, A., Milstein, M., Wood, C., & Jacquez, D. (1999). *How to turn a school around: What principals can do.* Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Van Damme, D. (2002). Trends and models in international quality assurance and accreditation in higher education in relation to trade in education services. *OECD/US Forum on Trade in Educational Services*, 23-24 May, 2002. Washington, DC.
Retrieved 15 July 2005 from www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/29/2088479.pdf,

Van de Ven, A. (1980). A process for organization assessment. In E. Lawler, D. Nadler, & C. Cammann, (Eds.), *Organizational assessment: Perspectives on the measurement of organizational behavior and quality of work life*, (pp. 548-568), New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Verhoest, K. (2005). Effects of autonomy, performance contracting, and competition on the performance of a public agency: A case study. *Policy Studies Journal,* 33, (2), 236-258.

Vidovich, L. (2002). *'Acceding to audits': New quality assurance policy as a 'settlement' in fostering international markets for Australian higher education*? Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference Brisbane December, 2002.

Wallace, R.C. (1996). *From vision to practice: The art of educational leadership.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, INC.

Wallace, K & Wolf, A. (1999). *Contemporary sociological theory: Expanding the classical tradition*, (5th Ed.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Walleri, R. (1997). Case study five: Accountability through collaboration: The Oregon shared information system. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 5 (1), 61-67.

Walshe, C., Caress, A., Chew-Graham, C., & Todd, C. (2004). Case studies: A research strategy appropriate for palliative care? *Palliative Medicine*, 18(6), 677-684.

Warme, B., Malus, E., & Lundy, K. (1994). *Sociology: A window on the world.* Toronto: Nelson Canada.

Warrimer, C.K. (1984). *Organizations and their Environments: Essays in the Sociology of Organizations*. London: Jai Press Inc.

Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organization.* Translated A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Weber, M. (1968) *Economy and society*. Translated and edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich. New York: Bedminster Press.

Weick, K. (1995). What theory is not, theorizing is. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 385-390.

Welch, C., (2001). *IMP and the traditions of institutionalism.* Competitive paper to be presented at the 17th Annula/MP Conference, Oslo, 9-11 September, 2001.

Wellman, J.V. (2001). Assessing state accountability systems. *Change*, 33(2), 47-53.

Welsh, J., & Metcalf, J. (2003a). Cultivating faculty support for institutional effectiveness activities: Benchmarking best practices. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 28 (1), 33-43.

Welsh, J., & Metcalf, J. (2003b). Administrative support for institutional effectiveness activities: Responses to the "new accountability." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 24(2), 183-193.

Wergin, J. (2005). Higher education: Waking up to the importance of accreditation. Change, 37 (3), 35-41.

Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5(2), 171-180.

Whetten, D., & Mackey, A. (2002). A social actor conception of organizational identity and its implications for the study of organizational reputation. *Business & Society*, (41), 4, 393-414.

Whittaker, P. (1993). *Managing change in schools*. Buckingham: UK, Open University Press.

Wholey, J., Abramson, M., & Bellavita, C. (1986). Managing for high performance: Roles for evaluators. In J. Wholey, M. Abramson, & C. Bellavita, (Eds.), *Performance and credibility: Developing excellence in public and non-profit organizations*, (pp. 1-16). Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company.

Wicks, D. (2001). Institutional mindsets of invulnerability: Differentiated institutional fields and the antecedents of organizational crisis. *Organization Studies*, 23 (3), 569-592.

Wicks, D. (2002). Institutional bases of identity construction and reproduction: The case of underground coal mining. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 9 (3), 308-355.

Wilde, J., & Sockey, S. (1995). *Evaluation handbook.* Evaluation Assistance Center-Western Region, New Mexico, Mexican Highlands University, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Wilkins, A. & Thompson, M. (1991). On Getting the Story Crooked (and Straight). *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, (3), 18-26.

Williams, R. (1985). *Institutional evaluation report to College Council: Marianopolis College*. Montréal: Marianopolis College.

Williamson, O.E. (1975). *Markets and hierarchies: Analysis and antitrust implications.* New York: Free Press.

Williamson, O.E. (1979). Transaction cost economics: The governance of contractual relations. *Journal of Law and Economics,* 22, 233-261.

Williamson, O. E. (1985) *The economic institutions of capitalism.* New York: Free Press.

Williamson, O.E. (1989). Rediscovering institutions: The organizational basis of politics. New York, NY: Free Press.

Williamson, O.E. (1996) *Efficiency, power, authority and economic organization.* Groenevegan, T. (Ed.), Boston: Kluwer.

Wilson, T.D. (2002). Review of Karen Locke's grounded theory in management research. *Organization Studies*, 23, 484-487.

Wolford, G. (2001). *Site selection within comparative case study and ethnographic research. Compare.* 31 (2), 151-164.

Wyner, G. (2003). The effective organization. *MM* , November /December, 6-7.

Yin, R. (1989). *Case study research: design and methods.* Beverly Hills, Sage Publishing.

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research; design and methods,* (2nd ed). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Yonezawa, A., & Kaiser, F. (2003). *System-level strategic indicators for monitoring higher education in the twenty first century.* Bucharest, Romania: Unesco

Zammuto, R. (1982). *Assessing organizational effectiveness: Systems Change, adaptation and strategy.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Zollo, M., & Winter, S. (2002). Deliberate learning and the evolution of dynamic capabilities. *Organization Science*, 13(3), 339-351.

Zucker, L.G. (1987). Institutional theories of organization. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 13, 443-464.

Zucker, L.G. (1988). Where do institutional patterns come from? Organizations as actors in social systems. In Zucker, L.G. (Ed.), *Institutional patterns and organization: culture and environment,* (pp. 23-52). Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Zumeta, W. (1998). Public university accountability to the state in the late twentieth century: Time for a rethinking? *Policy Studies Review*, 15 (4), 5-22.

NOTES

[1] Three particular standards for imitation may be identified (Haunschild & Miner, 1997, quoted by Lodge & Wegrich, Ibid., p. 217):

1. "frequency-based imitation" (imitation based on the sheer number of applications among other organizations);

2. "trait-based imitation" (imitation of selective templates);

3. "outcome-based imitation" (imitation of particular processes drawn from apparently successful organizations whose success is measured in terms of output). [p.39]

[2] Three main cartographic procedures are integral to situational analysis (Clarke, 2003, p. 554; 559-560):

- situational maps that lay out the major human, non-human, discursive, and other elements in the research situation of concern and provoke analyses of relations among them;

- social worlds/arenas maps that lay out the collective actors, key elements, and the arena(s) of commitment within which they are engaged in ongoing negotiations. Such maps offer meso-level interpretations of the situation, engaging collective action and its social organizational and discursive dimensions;

- positional maps that lay out the major positions taken, and not taken, in the data vis-à-vis particular discursive axes of variation and difference, concern and controversy surrounding complicated issues in the situation. [p. 92]

[3] Popay, Rogers, and Williams (cited by Richie, 2001, pp. 133-134) advocate the use of a checklist of criteria to assess the achievement of dependability of the findings and conclusions from the research study. This checklist addresses technical as well as epistemological concerns regarding the type of knowledge generated by the case study:

- Does the research illuminate the subjective meaning, actions and context of those being researched?

- Is there evidence of the adaptation and responsiveness of the research design to the circumstances and issues of real-life social settings met during the study?

- Does the sample produce the type of knowledge necessary to understand the structures and processes within which the individuals or situations are located?

- Is the description provided detailed enough to allow the researcher to interpret the meaning and context of what is being researched (i.e., confirming the description from the point of view of the study's purpose)?

- How are different sources of knowledge about the same issue compared and contrasted? Are subjective perceptions and experiences treated as knowledge in their own right (i.e., confirming the transparency of the data collection and analysis)?

- How does the research move from description of data, through quotation or examples, to an analysis and interpretation of the meaning and significance of it (i.e., setting the study's findings within a theoretical framework)?

- What claims are being made for the generalizability of the findings to either other bodies of knowledge or to other populations or groups?

- Is the relevance of research to a variety of different stakeholders clearly indicated (i.e., assessing the usefulness of the findings to decision makers). [p. 103]

[4] To government, the following social needs are satisfied through the transmission of the common cultural core within the general education component:

- Mastery of the language of instruction as a tool for communication and reflection, and mastery of the basic rules of rational thought, discourse and argumentation;
- The ability to communicate in other languages, primarily French and English;
- Openness to the world and to cultural diversity;
- Appreciation of the riches of their cultural heritage through familiarization with the accomplishments of human civilization;
- The ability to situate themselves with respect to the major schools of thought;
- The ability to think critically, independently and reflectively;
- Personal and social ethics;
- Mastery of knowledge relevant to the development of physical and intellectual well-being. [p.135]

[5] Within its legal framework Marianopolis offers nine pre-university programs leading to the Diploma of Collegial Studies (DEC): (1) Science 200.B0; (2) Social Science 300.A0 (including Commerce Profile 400.AB); (3) Creative Arts, Literature and Languages 500.A1; (4) Liberal Arts 700.B0; (5) Music 501.A0; (6) Music and Science (200.11); (7) Music and Social Science (300.11); (8) Music and Creative Arts, Literature and Languages (500.11); (9) Arts and Sciences 700.AO [p. 181]

APPENDIX

A. COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Primary field study documents, namely, narrative self-studies of various sectors of the College (Library, Information Technology Services, Student Services Department, Human Recourses and Professional Development Office, Information and Development Office, Finance Office);

2. Rudimentary field notes;

3. Documents related to internal policy, practices, and organization (Administrative and Academic structures and offices: By-Laws of the College, Policies related to faculty and staff, the IPESA, IPEP, Plan for Success, Language Policy, The Board and its committees, Director General, Academic Dean, Associate Academic Dean, Registrar, Academic Council, Senate, AMT, Admissions Personnel, Academic Advisors, Academic Departments and committees, Project Coordinator Academic Information System, Coordinator Peer Student Project, Student Congress);

4. Minutes of meetings of various College structures (The Board, Academic Council);

5. Survey data of various types (240 Questionnaires administered to a random sample of 4th and 2nd semester students; 135 Questionnaire administered to faculty; The Accumulative College-wide Student Evaluation Report based on a total of 47472 responding students);

6. Data derived from formal interview process (Commissioner, CEEC; 8 informants);

7. Reports from consultants (Universalia, 1997, Marianopolis, Strategic Study; Universalia, 2001, Review of Administrative and Academic Structures);

8. The College's formal self-evaluation reports (Livingston, 1992, Report on the Institutional Review; Williams, 1984, Institutional Evaluation Report to College Council; Brooks, 1996, The Social Sciences Evaluation Report; Davison, 1998, The General Education Component of Studies Self-Evaluation Report; Ray, 1999, The Evaluation of the Liberal Arts Program; Brooks, 2006, Evaluation of the Science Program);

9. Formal external evaluation reports by the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collègial (CEEC) (Social Sciences; General Education Component; Liberal Arts).

10. Documentation from www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca and www.meq.gouv.qc.ca

B. OUTCOME OF ANALYZING ACCUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT DATA

Accumulative Assessment Data

The following items were measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree), yielding the following mean scores:

(a) Instructor holds classes regularly	1.18
(b) Instructor begins/ends on time	1.44
(c) Instructor grades fairly	1.80

Three items were measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) with the following results:

(a) Learning activities cover material	3.25
(b) Instructor speaks clearly	3.25
(c) Instructor treats students with respect	3.39

Measurement on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) yielded the following mean scores:

(a) Instructor returns work on time	4.27
(b) Instructor presents course material in organized way	4.00
(c) Instructor is enthusiastic about subject matter	4.31

A 5-point scale ranging from 1 (always) to 5 (never) was also used to determine if the:

(a) Instructor was available during office hours	1.73
(b) Instructor explains material in a way the student can understand	1.94
(c) Instructor answers questions clearly	1.88

In addition, these accumulative data revealed that instructors closely followed the course outline and that students were interested in the subject matter and seldom miss classes.

C. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: GRAPHIC PRESENTATION

INDICATOR A FIRST SEMESTER SUCCESS RATE

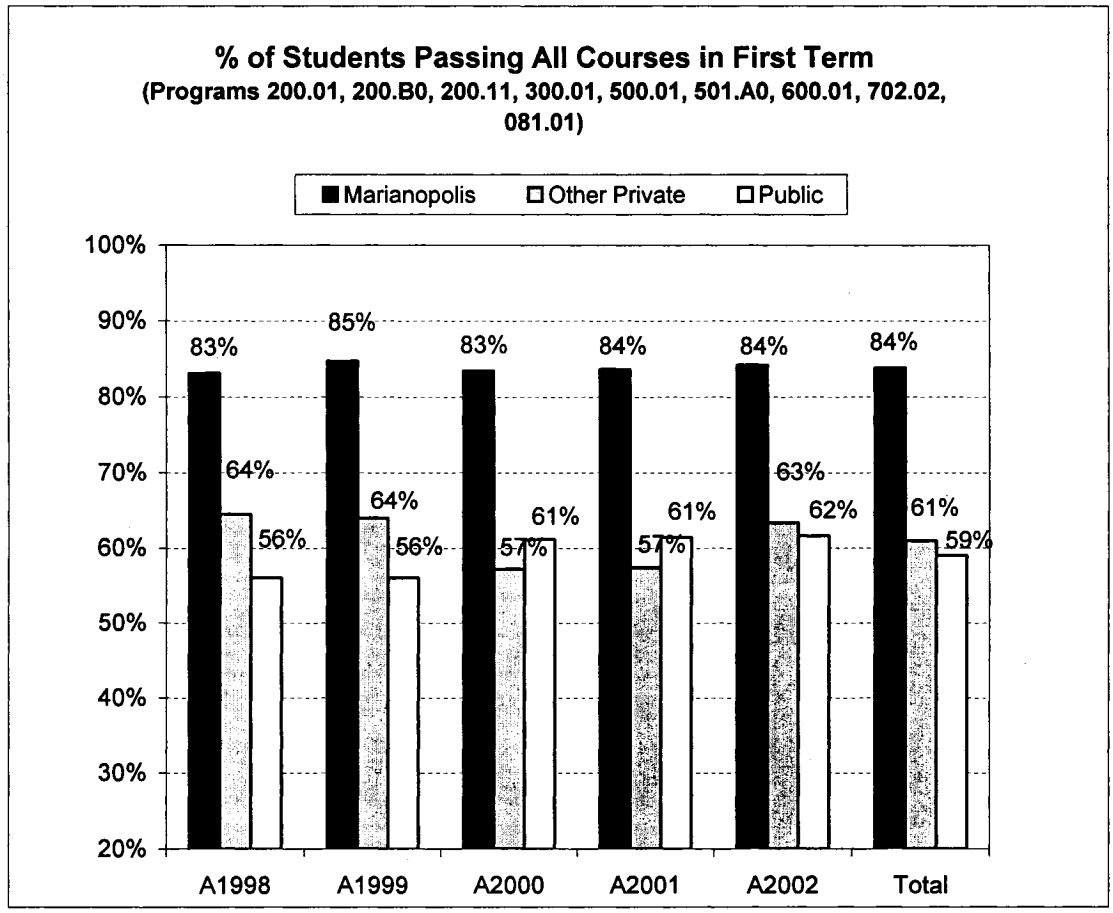
The indicator first term success rate is examined separately for each program as well as for the total college enrolment. Table 6A provides combined totals for the five autumn cohorts of 1995-99. It lists enrolment, the secondary average (mean) for the group, the percent of students who passed all courses, and those who passed fewer than 50% of their courses. Chart 6A-1 provides the same data in the form of a bar-graph for the two large-enrolment programs.

TABLE 6A Success Rate in First Term (% of Students Passing Courses) (Combined Totals for the Autumn Cohorts of 1998 to 2002)

	MARIANOPOLIS				OTHER PRIVATE COLLEGES				PUBLIC COLLEGES			
Prgm	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Passed 100%	Passed ≤ 50%	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Passed 100%	Passed ≤ 50%	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Passed 100%	Passed ≤ 50%
200.B0	2125	87.6	89.6%	1.9%	3360	84.5	77.0%	6.8%	40642	83.8	69.3%	10.4%
200.11	41	86.9	93.4%	0.0%	40	87.3	89.3%	0%	250	86.6	80.4%	1.6%
300.01	1671	78.6	75.7%	6.9%	3078	76.0	60.8%	14.7%	62874	74.2	53.9%	19.3%
500.01*	97	77.6	76.3%	5.2%	869	76.2	73.9%	7.1%	12879	74.9	61.6%	15.4%
501.A0	40	78.3	80.0	2.5%	86	77.5	67.5	3.5%	1385	76.5	60.4	8.9%
600.01	23	75.1	82.6%	2.2%	35	74.5	71.5%	7.1%	1961	76.3	64.3%	12.9%
700.02	197	82.3	92.9%	4.1%	30	80.2	76.6%	10.0%	1985	79.8	74.5%	7.4%
081.01	22	82.2	72.7%	0%	85	67.3	25.2%	28.7%	8048	69.0	37.1%	30.7%
Total	4216	83.4	83.8%	4.0%	7583	71.1	60.9%	9.4%	130024	77.1	59.0%	16.4%

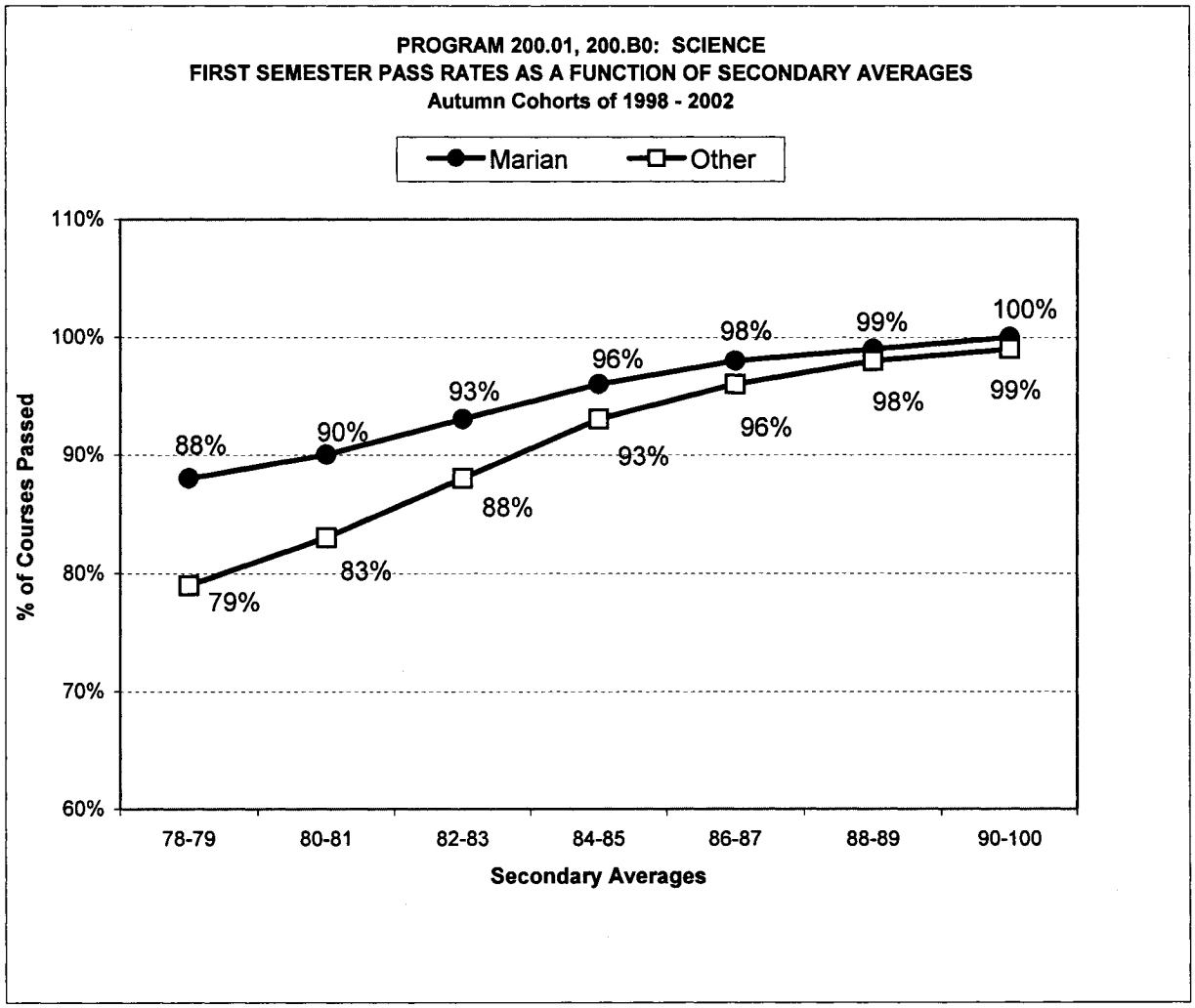
(Source: CHESCO reports V2005)

CHART 6A-1



(Source: CHESCO reports V2005)

CHART 6A-2 First Term Success Rates in the Science Program



(Source: PSEP reports produced by SRAM)

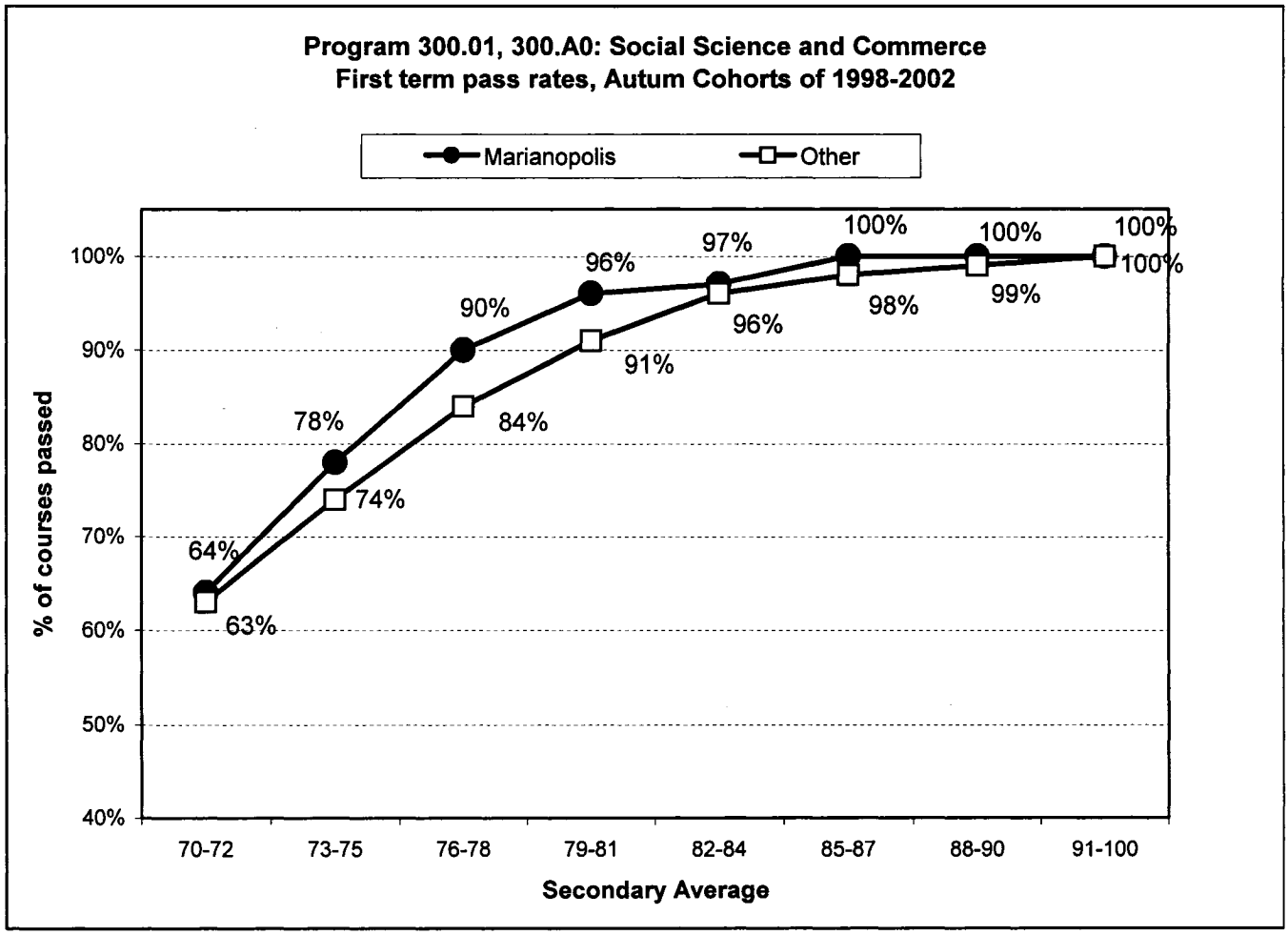
Note: "Other" refers to close to 50 colleges in the SRAM, SRAQ, and SRAL réseau.

Disciplines included:

General: English (603), French (602), Humanities (345), and Physical Education (109);

Program-specific: Biology (101), Chemistry (202), Mathematics (201), and Physics (203).

CHART 6A-3 First Term Pass Rates in the Social Science and Commerce Program



(Source: PSEP reports produced by SRAM)

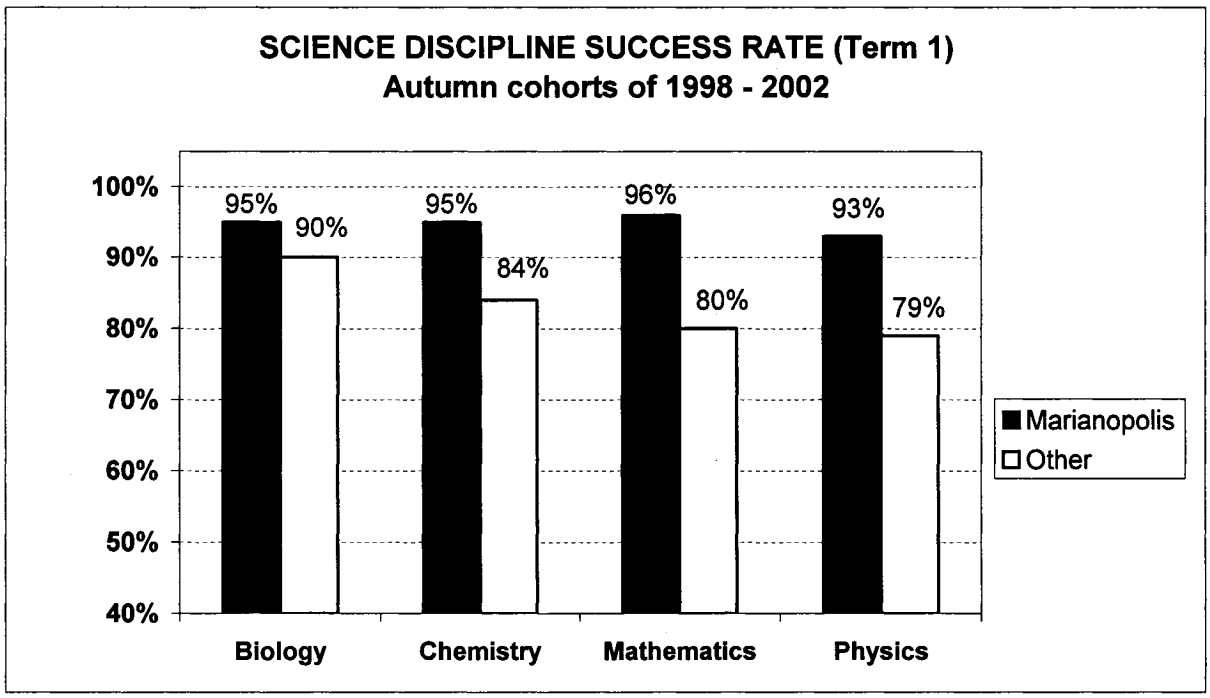
Note: "Other" refers to close to 50 colleges in the SRAM, SRAQ, and SRAL réseau.

Disciplines included:

General: English (603), French (602), Humanities (345), and Physical Education (109);

Program-specific: Economics (383), History (330), Mathematics (201), Psychology(350), Quantitative Methods (360), Research Methods (300), and Sociology (387)

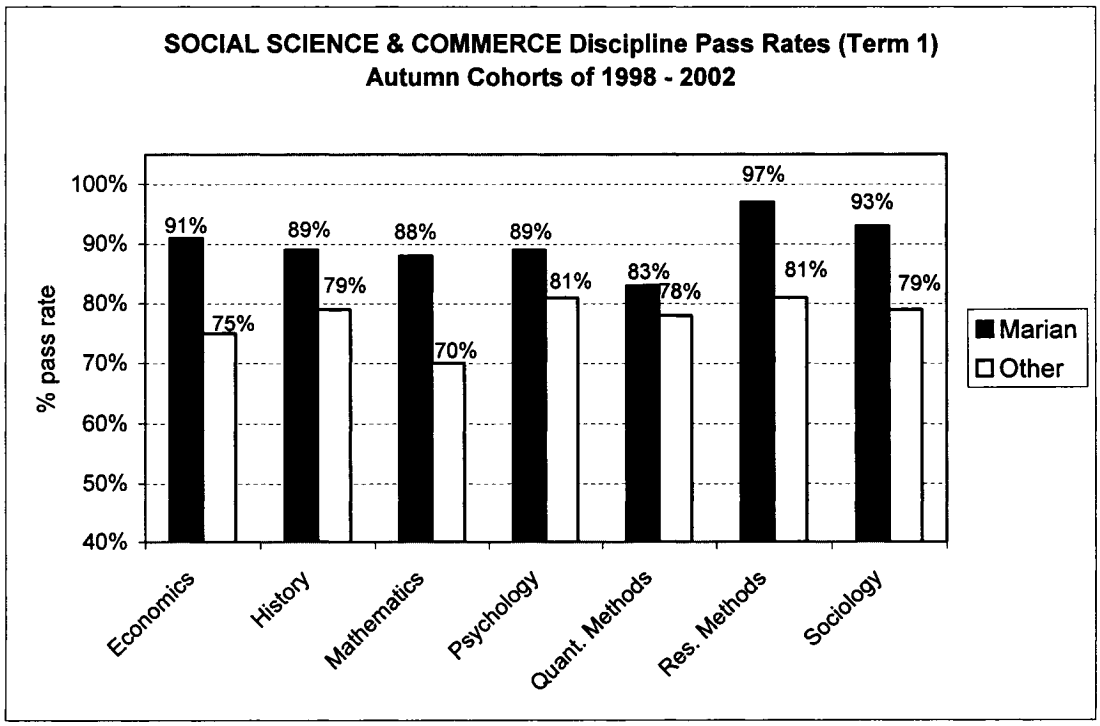
CHART 6A-4



(Source: PSEP reports by SRAM)

Note: "Other" refers to close to 50 colleges in the SRAM, SRAQ, and SRAL réseau. Comparison is for disciplines in the specific education component of the Science Program.

CHART 6A-5



(Source: PSEP reports by SRAM)

Note: "Other" refers to close to 50 colleges in the SRAM, SRAQ, and SRAL réseau. Comparison is for disciplines in the specific education component of the Social Science Program.

INDICATOR B PERSEVERANCE: (PROGRAM RETENTION)

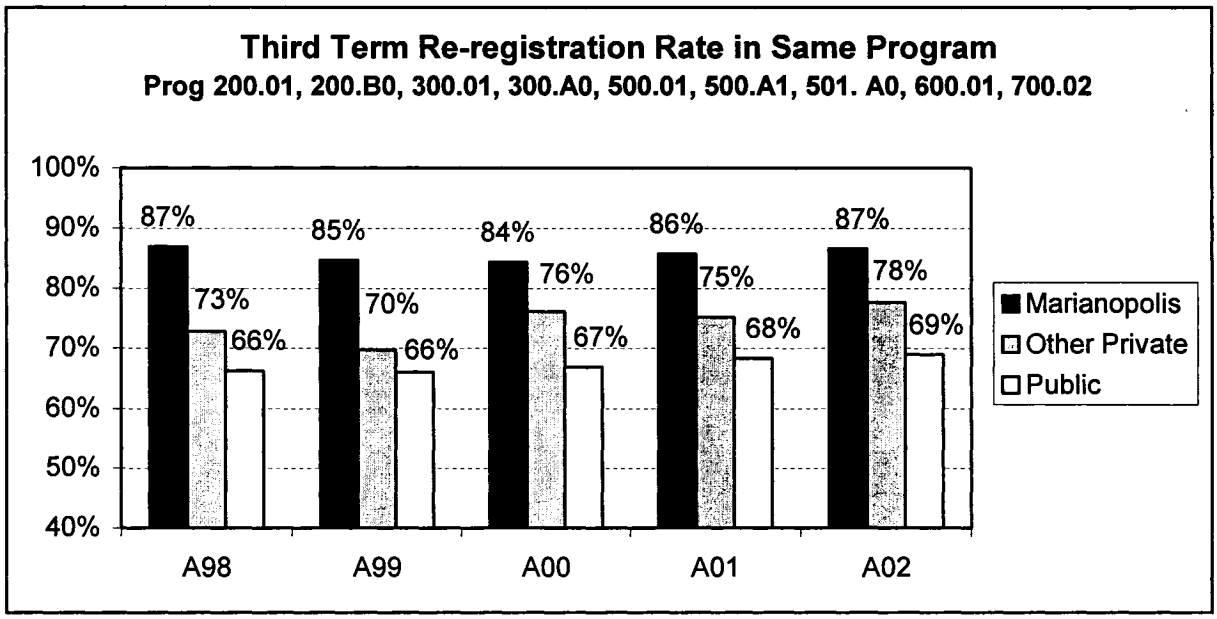
This indicator is examined for the total college enrolment, as well as separately for each program. For each cohort Table 6B-1 lists the enrolment, the mean secondary average, the percent of students who registered at Marianopolis in the same program in the third semester, as well as the percent of students who registered at Marianopolis in a different program.

TABLE 6B-1 Third Semester Registration at the same College

	MARIANOPOLIS				OTHER PRIVATE COLLEGES				PUBLIC COLLEGES			
Aut Cohort	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Reg in Same Pgm	Reg in Other Pgm	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Reg in Same Pgm	Reg in Other Pgm	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Reg in Same Pgm	Reg in Other Pgm
1998	816	82.4	86.9%	4.6%	1,363	79.5	72.8%	7.1%	25,141	77.0	66.3%	11.5%
1999	877	83.8	84.7%	3.5%	1,334	80.2	69.7%	7.6%	23,856	78.3	66.1%	11.4%
2000	835	83.6	84.4%	4.8%	1,666	77.2	76.2%	6.2%	24,789	78.0	67.0%	10.9%
2001	881	83.5	85.8%	5.1%	1,604	74.8	75.2%	5.8%	24,266	77.9	68.3%	11.3%
2002	785	83.5	86.6%	4.8%	1,513	79.3	77.7%	5.6%	23,924	77.0	69.0%	11.1%
Totals	4194	83.4	85.7%	4.6%	7480	78.1	74.5%	6.4%	121976	77.6	67.3%	11.3%

(Source: CHESCO reports V2005)

CHART 6B-1



(Source: CHESCO V2005 reports)

TABLE 6B-2 Third Semester Registration Rates of Students in Acceuil (081.01)

MARIANOPOLIS

Aut Cohort	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Same Pgm	Other Pgm
1995	64	74.9	0.0%	93.8%
1996	19	81.0	0.0%	100.0%
1997	20	83.3	0.0%	95.0%
1998	22	82.2	0.0%	90.9%
1999	0	NA	NA	NA
Totals	125	78.5	0.0%	94.4%

OTHER PRIVATE COLLEGES

1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Same Pgm	Other Pgm
54	63.8	0.0%	33.3%
43	65.1	0.0%	39.6%
47	67.8	0.0%	59.5%
51	66.5	0.0%	55.0%
34	68.6	5.9%	52.9%
229	66.2	1.8%	47.6%

PUBLIC COLLEGES

1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Same Pgm	Other Pgm
4679	65.5	0.4%	52.1%
5,296	67.1	0.4%	51.9%
3,876	68.6	0.4%	53.6%
3,921	68.4	0.5%	55.5%
4,127	69.6	0.7%	52.6%
21899	67.7	0.3%	43.1%

(Source: CHESCO reports V2000)

INDICATOR C GRADUATION RATES

This indicator is examined for the total college enrolment, as well as separately for each program (with the exclusion of Science-Music, which is a three-year program, and Acceuil, which is a transitional program). For each cohort, Table 6C-1 lists enrolment, the mean secondary average for the group, and the percent of students graduating within the prescribed two-year period in the same program. Chart 6C-1 provides a visual representation of the same information in bar-graph form.

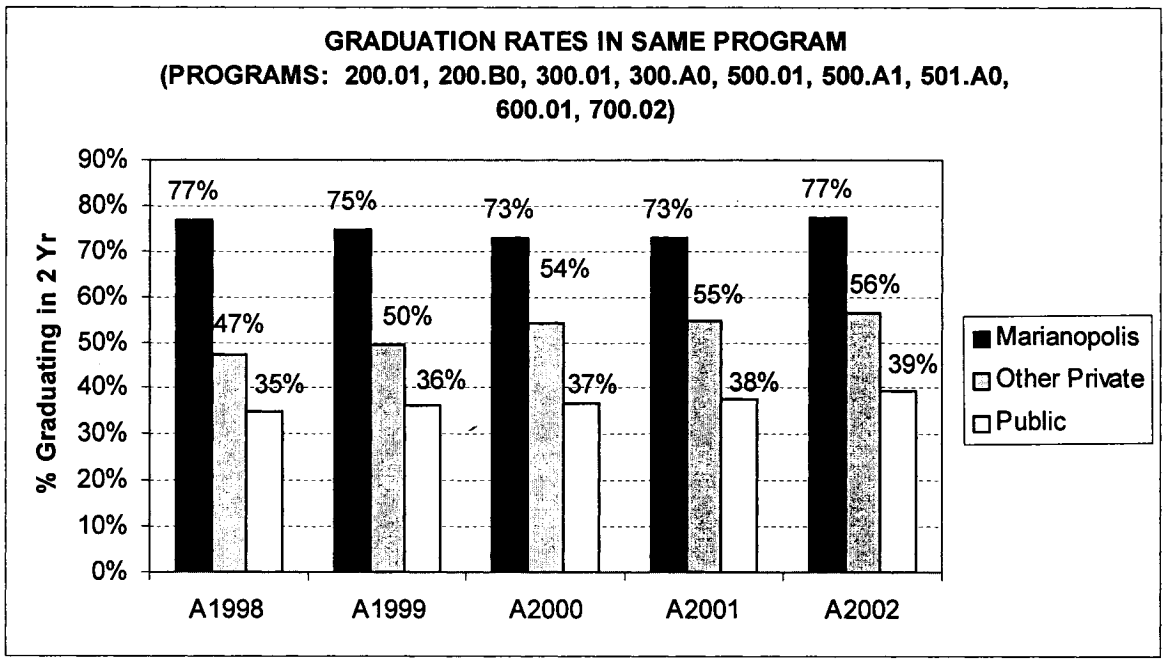
TABLE 6C-1 Graduation Rate within Two Years in the Same Program

	MARIANOPOLIS			OTHER PRIVATE COLLEGES			PUBLIC COLLEGES		
Aut Cohort	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Grad. within 2 yrs	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Grad. within 2 yrs	1st Term Enrol	Sec Avg	Grad. Within 2 yrs
1998	812	82.4	77.0%	1366	79.4	47.1%	25106	77.0	35.1%
1999	865	83.7	74.7%	1330	80.2	49.5%	24296	78.4	36.3%
2000	833	83.5	73.1%	1,672	80.3	54.3%	24,116	77.5	36.6%
2001	838	83.4	73.0%	1,615	80.2	54.6%	24,182	77.9	37.6%
2002	933	83.2	77.2%	1,526	79.3	56.2%	25,477	77.2	39.3%
Totals	3,926	83.4	74.7%	7,457	79.9	52.5%	119,568	77.5	36.4%

(Source: CHESCO V2005 reports)

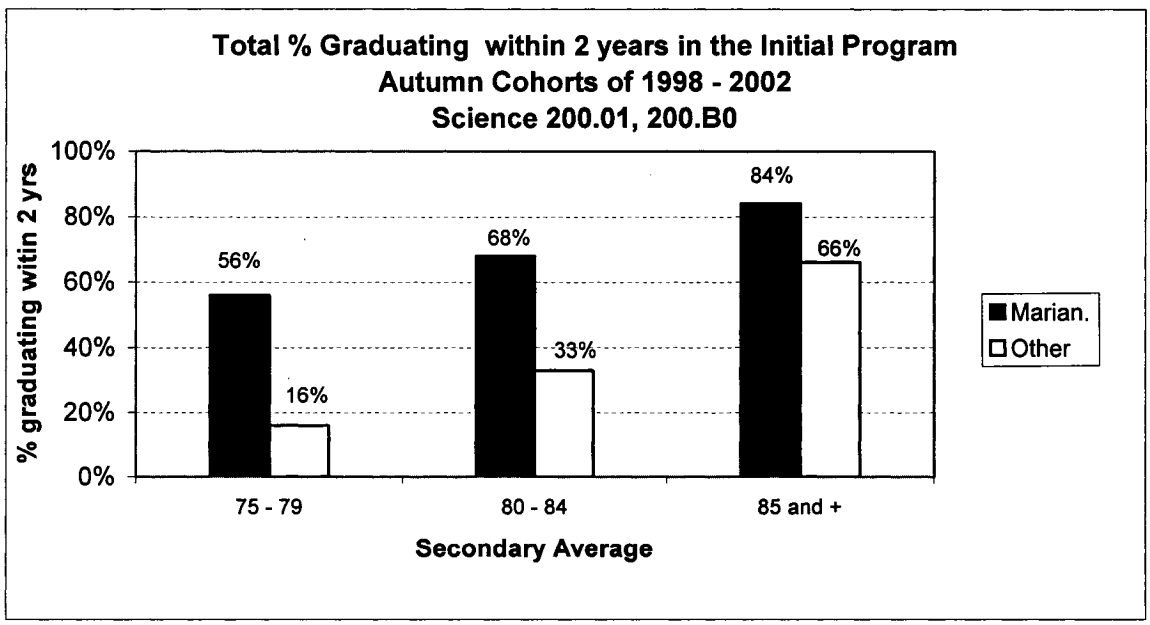
Programs: 200.01, 200.B0, 300.01, 300.A0, 500.01, 500.A1, 501.A0, 600.01, 700.02

CHART 6C-1



(Source: CHESCO V2005 reports)

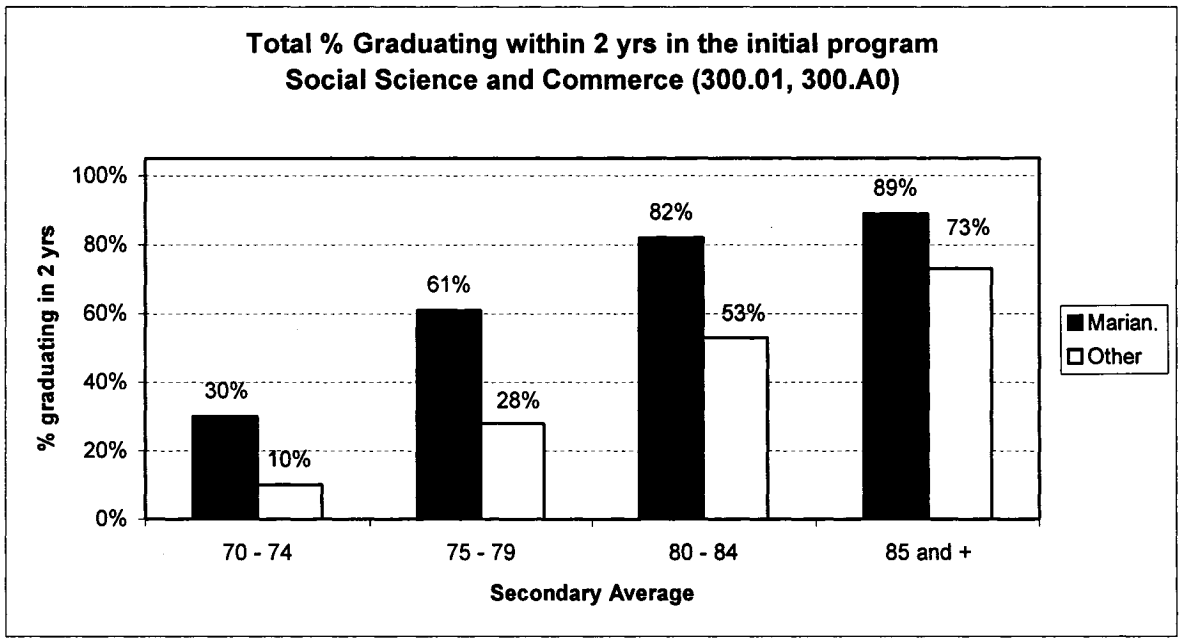
CHART 6C-2



(Source: PSEP reports provided by SRAM)

Note: "Other" represents close to 50 colleges in SRAM, SRAQ, and SRAL.

CHART 6C-3



(Source: PSEP reports provided by SRAM)

Note: "Other" represents close to 50 colleges in SRAM, SRAQ, and SRAL.

INDICATOR D ENROLMENT STABILITY

This indicator refers to enrolment patterns in the two large-enrolment programs (Science and Social Science), to determine if enrolments and admission standards have been stable during the 1998-2002 period of observation. Because some colleges also offer specialized Science and Social Science programs such as the International Baccalaureate program, as well as the double diploma combined with music, statistics were compiled to include all of these. Of these specialized programs, only the Science-Music program is offered at Marianopolis.

TABLE 6D-1 Enrolment Patterns in the Various Science Programs

Autumn Cohort	Reseau Enrol. in all Sci Programs	Reseau Sec Avg in all Sci Prgrms	Marian. Enrol. in all Sci Programs	Marian. Sec Avg in all Sci Programs	Marian Sci Enrol as a % of Reseau Sci Enrol.
1998	10,188	83.5	417	87.2	4.1%
1999	9,780	84.5	450	87.7	4.6%
2000	9,571	84.6	423	87.9	4.4%
2001	9,384	84.4	448	87.9	4.8%
2002	8,794	83.7	428	87.3	4.9%

Source: CHESCO reports V2000)
Note: Marianopolis offers programs 200.01, 200.B0, and 200.11 but not 200.10. Comparisons are for Science (200.01, 200.B0); Science with International Baccalaureate (200.10); and Science-Music (200.11)

TABLE 6D-2 Enrolment patterns in the various Social Science & Commerce Programs

Autumn Cohort	Reseau Enrol. in all Soc Sci Programs	Reseau Sec Avg in all Soc Sci Prgrms	Marian. Enrol. in the Soc Sci Program	Marian. Sec Avg in the Soc Sci Program	Marian Soc Sci Enrol as a % of Reseau Soc Sci Enrol.
1998	14,407	73.7	329	77.4	2.3%
1999	14,230	75.1	351	79.6	2.5%
2000	13,339	74.8	336	78.7	2.5%
2001	13,135	74.7	367	78.6	2.8%
2002	13,391	74.1	288	78.8	2.2%

(Source: CHESCO V2005 reports)
Note: Marianopolis offers programs 300.01, 300.A0 only, and not 300.10 or 300.11. Comparisons are for Social Science (300.01, 300.A0); Social Science with International Baccalaureate (300.10); Social Science-Music (300.11)

D. THE TWELVE ATTRIBUTES OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation (CCAF) sets out 12 attributes of organizational effectiveness against which auditors are expected to report:

1. *Relevance*: The extent to which a program makes sense in light of the problems or conditions to which it is intended to respond. Information about this attribute could lead to confirmation, amendment, or elimination of a government program or service.

2. *Appropriateness*: The extent to which the design of a program or its major components, and the level of effort being made, are logical, given the specific public policy objectives to be achieved. Information on `appropriateness' could lead to the pursuit of alternative program delivery strategies, such as contracting out.

3. *Achievement of results*: The extent to which public policy objectives and program results have been achieved.

4. *Acceptance*: The extent to which the constituencies or customers, for whom a program or line of business is designed, judge it to be satisfactory.

5. *Secondary impacts*: The extent to which other significant consequences–either intended or unintended, and either positive or negative–have occurred.

6. *Costs and productivity*: The relationships among costs, inputs, and outputs.

7. *Responsiveness*: The extent to which a program, function, or organization is positioned to adapt to changes in such factors as markets, competition, available funding or technology.

8. *Financial results*: The matching of and the accounting for revenues and costs, and the accounting for and valuation of assets, liabilities, and equity.

9. *Management direction*: The extent to which the objectives of an organization and its component programs or lines of business, are clear, well integrated and understood, and appropriately reflected in the organization's plans, structure, delegations of authority, and decision-making processes.

10. *Working environment*: The extent to which the organization provides an appropriate work atmosphere for its employees; provides appropriate opportunities for development and achievement; and promotes commitment, initiative and safety.

11. *Protection of assets*: The extent to which important assets - such as sources of supply, valuable property, key personnel, agreements, and important records or information - are safeguarded so that the organization is protected from the danger of losses that could threaten its success, credibility, continuity and, perhaps, its very existence.

12. *Monitoring and reporting*: The extent to which key matters pertaining to performance and organizational strength are identified, reported, and carefully monitored.