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KNOWLEDGE BUILDING PREDICTORS INHERENT IN THE GRADUATE  
ADMISSION PROCESS: CHANGING FRAMEWORKS AND REFORM  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERS IN EDUCATION

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

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WITH A MAJOR IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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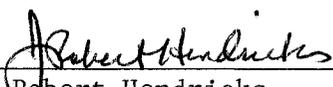
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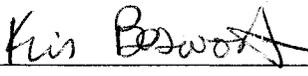
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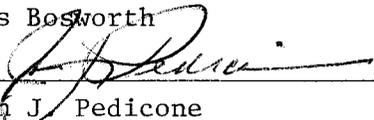
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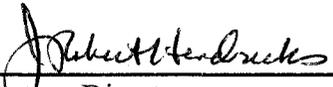
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## Dedication

With the achievement of my doctorate comes the honor of being the first Rose woman in my family to complete an Ed.D. Multi-generational influences have accompanied me throughout the process of completing this goal and have in many ways kept me strong when the odds were significantly against me.

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to the family members who have reminded me of the steadfast and true characteristics that have defined many generations of the Rose family. To my mother Beverly, the spiritual presence of my father Frank, and to my brother Frank and sister Nancy, your long-distance love and support have guided me more than you could imagine. This dissertation contains elements of each of you.

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## ABSTRACT

The leadership challenge addressed in this study focused on the policies and practice currently used in making college admission selections for graduate students and the criterion used to make these decisions using narrative and standardized application data. The research question analyzed this occurrence by searching for the best predictors of academic success that emerged from a group of women applicants in a Master of Arts in Psychology program taken from a private, adult-oriented University in Southern California.

The research study randomly selected 50 graduate applications and applied grounded theory methodology to identify standardized and narrative trends to predict academic success. Using a framework provided by a 1989 GRE Board Research Report published by the Educational Testing Service, exploratory characteristics were applied to the applications. A comparison of the resulting themes to the candidates' progression in the graduate program occurred at the point of the first significant benchmark in the program, which was the advancement to candidacy. Throughout the study, the evolving data was applied to current leadership theory and policy reform concepts in higher education.

This study revealed that the standardized and narrative application information provided limited corroboration of the ETS characteristics. Themes emerged, but due to the narrative prompt, little specificity occurred. In looking at predictors of academic success in graduate study in psychology, the following general clusters of themes emerged from the study: knowledge building predictors, diversity

and cross-cultural predictors, learning opportunities predictors, and career planning and development predictors. If admission reform becomes an institutional value, graduate colleges will be confronted with four significant tasks: first to identify institutional objectives and predictors to be reflected in the application; second, to analyze the predictors in terms of the knowledge building skills which prospective students should possess; third, to select or develop simulations appropriate for the study of each applicant; and fourth, to encourage women for whom there is institutional fit and a reasonable probability of academic success to pursue graduate work.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

American higher education institutions, from the very first, were created to serve the societal needs of a changing nation, yet never before have they been so closely implicated in the general welfare and progression of society (Kezar, 2001). During the past decade, higher education has boasted growing prosperity and success while striving to be true to the sociological, political, demographic, and economic challenges of our day. Universities are being pushed out of their traditional role as teachers of postsecondary scholars and pulled into the role of educators throughout the lifespan. Today forces of change never before confronted by leaders in higher education challenge the traditional modes of ensuring attention to these public purposes. The contemporary challenges include rapid advances in technology and its effect on pedagogy, the sudden expansion of virtual education, new providers of higher education, and major demographic shifts as students become not only more numerous but older, more goal oriented and more mobile (Newman, 2000).

As a result of this societal phenomenon, the past few years have yielded several reform efforts and trends in college admission criteria that continuously challenge academic leaders to examine what specific requirements are necessary for the candidate to amass prior to application, with debates regarding affirmative action, early entrance decisions, and SAT relevance the most current (National Association for College Admission Counseling [NACAC], 2003). College attendance patterns of students have changed dramatically over the past two decades and demonstrate a shift

from the traditional path taken to achieve goals in higher education (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). Current statistics reveal that the importance of class rank and grades in making graduate admission decisions is declining, and the importance of test scores as a single measure is increasing (NACAC, 2003). Standardized scores and multiple measures for admissions are part of a socially significant dialogue that includes all leadership levels in the academy from admissions personnel, students, and parents, to faculty and executive administrators.

There is a growing interest in restructuring the academic admissions process to incorporate research and vision that no single admissions model is the panacea for all who apply for a graduate college education (Hartnett & Willingham, 1979). Primary tasks for leaders in institutional assessment focus groups include the objective of witnessing strategic change in educational environments. The belief exists that these environments are change-oriented and innovative and that leaders are capable of invention and pioneering new ideas (Fullan, 2001, Sergiovanni, 2000). One of the primary means to influence innovation includes environmental and experiential influencers such as high-stakes admission testing and narrative measures contained within the admissions application. These influencers impact the opportunities in higher education available for women, who traditionally have been underrepresented but now comprise more than half the enrollments in institutions nationwide at the undergraduate level and approximately 30% at the graduate level (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2003).

Educational leaders who are successful in navigating through uncertain educational times must be skilled in the use of contemporary models of change. Transformational leadership involves an awareness of, and a method of, sorting through environmental uncertainties in a way that will ultimately bring clarity to the stakeholders. Michael Fullan, in his book *Leadership in a Culture of Change* (2001), reminded us that change cannot be managed. The change process can be best understood by shifting leadership thinking to better understand the change process that emerges as a result of complex environmental influences. In the case of this study, the intended outcome of change application strategy is to influence policy and chart a new course for educational reform.

Levels of hostility in educational environments can often result when dramatic policy change occur within the organizational structure, as demonstrated by the recent University of California decision to drop the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) as an undergraduate admission requirement by 2006 (Atkinson, 2001). The increasing accountability demands of college and universities, coupled with the continuous activity of assessment and accreditation oversight, create an open system that educational leadership researchers Emery and Trist (1965) described as one of “relevant uncertainty,” in that consequences that flow from leadership decisions result in actions that become increasingly unpredictable. This impacts the values of higher education and calls upon leaders to reform decades-old value systems and procedural thinking through the lens of assessment. This lens, however, is a cumbersome yet limitless process of social and statistical inquiry, perfectly suited for

American colleges and universities.

Two admission influencers described earlier, standards and high-stakes testing, are intricate concepts that drive the philosophy of undergraduate and graduate programs in all American institutions and fuel policy change. A blending of standardized test scores and life experience predictors could provide enough entry information to make an acceptable decision, but eliminate other factors such as score limitations, exceptions to individual academic histories, humanistic circumstances, and predictors of academic success coupled with professional applicability. This is demonstrated when women enter in growing numbers professional preparation graduate study areas such as psychology. Graduates must be prepared to contribute to the reform and practice missions of the profession, accomplished in contemporary American society by a culturally diverse and qualified group of applicants (Ireland, 2001, Newman & Peterson, 2002). To achieve this goal, the restructuring of a college admissions procedure will require critical rethinking of the basic structure of institutional policy and futuristic visions that will invite and support change that is revolutionary in design. Because of the numerous stakeholders involved in higher education, it is a dynamic leadership challenge.

The restructuring efforts faced by leaders in higher education associated with the institutional review of admissions requirements and other constructs of higher education in the United States can be traced to the early part of last century as historically higher education shifted its focus to assessment and learning outcomes for students throughout the lifespan (Council on Adult and Experiential Learning

[CAEL], 1998). This shift has continued to hold the interest of higher education: accrediting agencies, academic and administrative personnel, and the public at the student, parent, legislative, and state agency levels (Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC] Guidelines, 2000). The objective of the review of educational policy overall has not changed. There is an on-going desire to determine, describe, and implement quality in the educational processes in higher education and to analyze predictors of academic success for achieving the mission and goals of that purpose within individual institutions or systems. Institutions of distinction that embrace these ideas exhibit a commitment to a unifying theme representative of generally held educational values, the integrity to exclude activities inconsistent with institutional values, and excellence in achieving their overall purpose (Townsend, Newell, & Weise, 1992). In short, colleges and universities that are unafraid to disturb the equilibrium and focus on the benefits of change from a perspective of building knowledge through diverse learning communities are leaders in administrative and academic innovation. This, of course, ultimately can enhance the student's retention, degree persistence, and individual learning experience.

### Conceptual Framework

The general conceptual focus of this study is the identification of predictive characteristics in graduate admissions for women candidates with the generalized outcome of future admissions reform and improved access to enter professional study disciplines such as psychology. The applied nature of this framework may result in

further scholarly inquiry and formal leadership theory associated with future admissions reform in America. From the viewpoint of the researcher, the theoretical rationale is imbedded in the position that standardization in the graduate admission process is a means by which institutional quality can be measured and supportive resources obtained. However, standardization as a predictor of students' success in graduate education has not been established without equivocation, although leaders have reformed admission standards to offer educational services to people with nontraditional backgrounds (Brink, 1999). This paradoxical thinking becomes the nexus of public policy and historical context that determines what and how higher education fulfills the expectations of society.

Admission policy formation and acceptance criteria are a result of an institution's commitment to integrity and an assessment of learning expectations that involves every level of the organization. All accredited American institutions of higher learning are governed by a set of standards prescribed by the regional accrediting body that regulates policy. This provides a conceptual framework that leads to demonstrations of integrity within the experiences of students who are admitted and thus meet their educational goals. This progressive movement from admissions to graduation is continuously reviewed in accordance with accreditation guidelines and societal trends, providing opportunity for educational leaders to reframe and reform current practice. One cannot analyze the complexities of the academic admission process without considering the various contexts of

contemporary accreditation standards, institutional values, and policy mandates that influence it.

At the core of the educational accreditation process is the notion to establish academic markers such as admissions, which allow the institution to demonstrate its adherence to standards that measure quality and to validate and affirm the commonly agreed-upon standards of quality externally (WASC, 1992). The most important objectives of accreditation are the performance guidelines meant to encourage institutional improvement through continuous self-study and evaluation, provide assurance that an institution appears to be substantially accomplishing its educational objectives, and to ensure that an institution is meeting minimum accrediting standards. The profound breadth of these goals and objectives form the conceptual framework of the generally recognized and accepted criteria for the process of admission. Although distinctive in application, the goals of the American admission processes are broadly aligned with functions of accreditation, and the conceptual viewpoint includes one of institutional accountability. The leader's quest for quality via the vehicle of admissions policies, which traditionally combine elements of both standardized and narrative measures to identify predictive academic success, becomes the emerging goal of this study.

### Purpose of the Study

As a part of this on-going curiosity regarding the connections between institutional policy, institutional values, and accountability, this project researched the

issues surrounding the current American graduate college admission procedure with particular emphasis on institutional standards, entrance requirements, and the professional socialization predictors of graduate students who are women. As the analysis unfolded, characteristics of successful graduate students were incorporated into a rubric for deeper analysis and applied to further analysis on retention and academic persistence.

From the standpoint of why students participate in graduate educational endeavors, learning, even self-directed learning, rarely occurs in isolation from the world in which the learner lives and as such becomes an additional purposive inquiry. Learning is intimately related to an individual's life experience and affects access, retention, and persistence within academia (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The differences in career selection and the willingness to tackle advanced study seem to derive from societal influences and embedded patterns of previous behavior. Those specific characteristics of self-identity, the creation of public selves, and the perception of the gender stereotype are not necessarily internalized but, rather, act as an external behavior constraint. The purpose of this study will be to identify and discuss these predictors and better understand the span of influence on American graduate education. Future reform efforts in continuing to attract adult learners who are women should include more sensitive and comprehensive selection measures to better uncover intellectual achievement and aptitude for advanced studies. These comprehensive selection measures should be applied in addition to the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and Miller's Analogy Test (MAT), or other admission criteria

currently used throughout American university systems to provide a more predictive admissions decision based more on multiple predictive measures than any singular criterion. Once a set of criteria is established, leadership theory will be applied, and a reformed admission protocol can be designed to achieve this objective.

### Research Questions

The following problem statement formed the direction of the research study:

What are the best predictors of academic success contained in standardized and narrative graduate application packages? How might academic leaders reform existing admissions procedures and propose alternative measures of retention and persistence as a result of this study? Conclusions in this study were achieved by analyzing the common elements that have traditionally been a part of the American graduate university admissions process and exploring the effect on and linkage to academic success for adult learners who are women. Implications for leaders and new directions in graduate admissions were explored. The research focused on the process of admission including standardized criteria and narrative information that is used in the administrative review of an applicant's file and impacts selection decisions and sets administrative policy in higher education. Characteristic predictors of women who typically apply to professional graduate programs in psychology were examined, selected from a private university that used both standard and narrative criteria to determine admission status. An application of the emerging predictors was applied to coursework achieved at the time of advancement to candidacy within the

psychology graduate program. Issues of institutional accountability, leadership characteristics, and organizational change were interwoven throughout the project.

The following additional questions shaped the resulting research question: Given the importance of standardized and narrative information to current university admissions practices, could this analysis result in the development of improved selection criteria for women who enter graduate study in psychology? Key sub-questions considered included what combination of admission requirements can assist institutions in selecting and retaining quality graduate students? How might the admissions process be improved to enhance the socialization and suitability of women who wish to pursue professional graduate study in psychology? What is the influence of change theory on leadership activity as a possible result of the study? What is the influence of issues of retention and persistence on the graduate admissions processes for women in American colleges and universities? In sum, the question that illustrated the problematic nature of traditional admissions policies was whether or not a revised set of admission standards influenced by the principles of successful knowledge building would best impact student access, retention, persistence, predict academic success, and prepare women for professional service once the program requirements were met.

### Significance of the Study

This project is significant because of the scarcity of collected information on significant reform efforts in graduate admissions criterion designed to attract and

retain women learners in professional graduate studies (Enright & Gitomer, 1989). Authors Daniele Flannery and Elisabeth Hayes, in their recent book *Women As Learners (2001)*, began by reflecting on the overall lack of mainstream research on women as adult learners and the need for the formation of some basic assumptions to guide future policy. The timeliness of this investigation cannot be understated and can be directly applied to current admissions practice at similar institutions. The collection of primary information, as well as the sequential narration of the dialogue and debate about the evolution of admissions, is of value in considering and critiquing the policy and practices of American graduate admissions. Overarching issues such as institutional effectiveness and leadership challenges create a stimulating backdrop for admission change poised at the edge of a new era. As a result, leaders continually find themselves questioning traditional screening and selection mechanisms used in making acceptance decisions.

Although the literature on graduate admissions, particularly in journals and noted publications of higher education, has grown over the last several years, there appears not to be a substantive evaluation of the comparison and discussion of narrative and standardized test admissions predictors of academic success for women who enter graduate study in psychology. Nevertheless, there is an abundance of criticism of the admissions process from academic leaders, students, policy makers, and other institutional representatives (Baird, 1979). The contribution of this study is to move the dialogue and subsequent reform efforts forward and recommend a

platform for further study, review, and analysis, both in application and theory, of the graduate admission processes in American higher education.

### Limitations of the Study

Although the use of qualitative research has “become an increasingly important model of inquiry for the social sciences and applied fields such as education” (Cherry, 2000, p. 54), there is still a concern that it lacks some of the criteria and rigor of quantitative research and in the case of narrative information in particular, may be seen “as a less desirable form of inquiry than either experiments or surveys” (Yin, 1994, p. 218). The problem of confidence in findings and lack of a bank of explicit methods is present and requires researchers to continue to develop a set of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying conceptual data. Qualitative researchers must be comfortable in working within ambiguity and with data that could be statistically inconclusive.

Another limitation is the nature of the institution selected and the admissions records that were analyzed in the study. The university that was studied fell within a domain defined by the specific characteristics of a private institution with off-campus locations, non-research-oriented educational programs, and serving traditional and adult learner populations. The women who applied for graduate entrance in the Master of Arts in Psychology program were only from the off-campus programs and were identified as having applied during the first two years of the newly organized off-campus structure throughout the State of California. No specific age group or

ethnicity was selected for the study; rather, applicants were selected from the time frame in which the reorganization of the university first took place. As such, the data and conclusions, although capable of capturing broad patterns and themes, may not intrinsically be considered representative of other types of institutions of higher education that serve women candidates for graduate degrees in psychology and, therefore, can only be generalized to any individual graduate program.

### Operational Definitions

The culmination of this project will present a contextual, yet focused, illustration of specific admissions phenomena that analyze specific predictive trends in higher education for the group selected. The review of the literature, which includes a survey of graduate admissions studies, graduate testing, retention, and persistence, provides a historic context of current admission practice and reform in higher education. Modern leadership models are defined as related to the study, with predictive implications for future leadership activity. This study further brings the issues and questions about admissions processes to the present day so an accurate description of the debate and dialogue is available for use in future research. The scope of the research project provides the components and intellectual curiosity that frames the resulting inquiry and activity.

Each of the graduate psychology applications filed by female candidates analyzed was distinct, though it shared a common definition and response to the admission requirements requested by the university selected for the study. In addition,

there was recognition that institutions with off-campus centers or distance education delivery systems posed a special circumstance to developing admissions criteria. Given this, as the logical extension of this awareness unfolds—these and other similarly composed institutions develop the technical modalities available to deliver higher education programs nationally and globally—what then may be the implications for future admission processes and institutional policy making? Each of the applications included in this analysis of admissions policy applied to women graduate candidates presented interesting aspects for review of the admissions process generically and in light of distinguishing characteristics. The analysis also reviewed the constructs of institutional accountability and the demonstrations of personalized education within the framework of graduate admissions and accreditation standards.

Throughout this study, the following terms will be used.

GRE: Graduate Record Exam

GPA: Grade Point Average

MAT: Millers Analogy Test

SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test

ETS: Educational Testing Service

WASC: Western Association of Schools and Colleges

A detailed background operational definition is necessary to provide a thorough understanding of the research rationale behind the selection of the graduate institution for this study. This researcher selected a private university with a main campus in Southern California for this study because it served an increasingly adult

population throughout California and Washington, and had a 40-year history of off-campus program delivery. The selected institution was a 140-year-old independent institution of liberal arts and professional training whose mission was to “provide personalized education of distinction that leads to inquiring ethical and productive lives as global citizens” (Chapman University Graduate Catalog, 2002). The mission was described through central commitments to personalized education, spiritual growth and moral education, and a liberal arts core curriculum, fostering independent and critical thinking, reflection on personal values and ethics, and a lifelong passion for learning in its students and graduates. The university self-described as an institution that had developed core values such as caring for the whole person, instilling a sense of community, and traditions of commitment to peace and social justice, service and volunteerism, and ethical and responsible citizenship. These core values and traditions were linked to and integrated with a belief system that included commitments to graduate and professional education that provided a solid foundation of knowledge for fully educated persons in a modern society and global world.

The university was also defined by its historic covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and found expression through awareness of diverse religious, spiritual, and ethical traditions. The historic roots of the university were traced to Hesperian College, which was founded in 1860 and later merged with several other institutions and the California Christian College in Los Angeles. In 1934, the institution was renamed in recognition of its most generous benefactor, C.C. Chapman, a pioneering Orange County businessman and church leader. The college

moved to its present campus in Orange, California, in 1954. In September 1991, the college was renamed with a new University structure and expanded its commitment to an innovative undergraduate curriculum and professional and graduate programs (Chapman University Undergraduate Catalog, 2002).

The university at the main campus in Orange, California was comprised of the Wilkinson College of Letters and Sciences, the Argyros School of Business and Economics, the School of Communication Arts, the School of Education, the School of Film and Television, the School of Music, the School of Law, University College (which includes 15 off-campus locations and is the focus of this study), and the Department of Professional Studies. The student body on the Orange campus included approximately 2,900 full time equivalent undergraduate students and 1,025 full-time-equivalent graduate students. Nearly 40% of the undergraduates were residential students. Another 2,700 full-time-equivalent undergraduate and graduate students were enrolled through 15 off-campus Academic Centers administered under the newly formed University College, the majority of which are graduate students. A full-time faculty of 272 members (Orange 224, University College, 48) was supplemented by part-time instructors and guest lecturers, and a favorable 14:1 student-faculty ration made possible small classes and espoused attention to individual students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels (Chapman University Catalog, 2002).

The last decade at the university selected for this study had been marked by dramatic growth and institutional progress. In 1994, the university embarked on a

capital campaign that raised over \$190 million. The university's main campus featured new facilities such as Argyros Forum, Beckman Hall, and the Kennedy School of Law, offering the latest educational and technological resources and state-of-the-art meeting rooms and classrooms. Many changes occurred in the off-campus programs, with each University College campus facility having been upgraded during the past five years. An increased endowment supports 19 chairs, 10 professorships, and 4 centers for special studies, none of which existed two decades ago and all of which were located on the main campus in Orange. Progress had been made in the past decade in student selectivity and retention and academic quality, measured by the university's own indicators and the *US News and World Report* annual rankings. In 1990-91 this institution ranked 92 out of 112 schools in student selectivity. By September 2001, it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 127 schools (U.S News and World Report, 2001). The university's six-year graduation rate had increased from 34% to 58% in the past 10 years, and its freshman-to-sophomore retention rate had increased from 69% to 83%, making it 8<sup>th</sup> out of 127 schools in this category. In 1990-91 the university's academic reputation, ranked by other university presidents, provosts, and admission officers, was 66 out of 112 colleges and universities. In 2001, this university ranked 19 out of 127 schools, again as reported by *US News and World Report*.

Despite these growth factors, the university continued to face significant challenges. As a result of the most recent Western Association of Schools and

Colleges Reaffirmation Visit from 1997-98, the following five concerns were raised at the conclusion of the visit:

1. Steps need to be taken by the university to develop a clearer academic vision that integrates and gives appropriate priority to graduate programs and the Academic Centers (now combined in University College).
2. Plans need to be developed to focus on educational effectiveness and the development of student learning outcomes at both the Orange campus and in the Academic Centers of University College.
3. An action plan is needed for library development that goes beyond the development of a new facility to considerations of student learning and educational effectiveness.
4. A diversity plan that provides for a more coherent institutional approach consistent with the university's own commitments is needed.
5. The university's position regarding the need for continuation of its self-imposed moratorium on new graduate-level programs must be articulated.

Of particular interest to this study are Items 1 and 2 because they provide institutional definition to the focus of this study. The off-campus College of Life Long Learning, first established in 1957, was changed in August 2000 into a vastly changed University College structure. A central activity during the restructuring was the decentralization of University College into 15 Academic Centers in three regions, each administered through an Associate Dean. As a result, the College was in a unique position to define institutional purpose, explore integrity issues, and create an

organization committed to learning and improvement through strategic thinking, planning and commitment to learning and improvement. Little research has been done on the admissions policies for adult learners and the impact of traditional admissions criteria on the overall institutional mission of personalized education. This organizational structure created a divided administrative and perceptual structure that was intriguing to study.

For graduate admission at the university, applicants must submit evidence of eligibility for admission, including a completed application form listing all institutions attended, an application fee of \$40.00, official transcripts from all institutions previously attended, and any additional evidence of eligibility required by the specific graduate program. More specific admission criterion for the Master of Arts in Psychology are included later in this section. Upon meeting the graduate eligibility requirements, applicants may be classified into one of three admission classifications: (1) regular admission, (2) provisional admission, or (3) conditional admission. The classifications are defined as follows:

**Regular Admission.** An earned baccalaureate with a minimum of 36 graded upper-division credits from a regionally accredited institution. A 3.0 admission grade point average calculated over the most recent 60 semester (or 90 quarter) credits completed toward a baccalaureate degree; this may include an average of up to 15 graded semester credits of graduate level coursework that are applicable to a graduate degree program completed at another accredited institution. The graduate level coursework must have been completed prior to consideration for admission, or a 2.5

admission grade point average and a satisfactory score on an accepted graduate admissions examination, or a 3.5 admission grade point average calculated on an earned advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution.

**Provisional Admission.** An earned baccalaureate degree that must include 36 upper division credits from a regionally accredited institution. A 2.5 admission grade point average calculated over the most recent 60 semester (or 90 quarter) credits completed toward a baccalaureate degree; this may include an average of up to 15 graded semester credits of graduate level coursework that are applicable to a graduate degree at another accredited institution. The graduate level coursework must have been completed prior to consideration for admission. Provisional admissions to the Master of Arts in Teaching or credential programs require a minimum admission grade point average of 2.75. In addition, all specific program requirements must be met. A letter of agreement signed by the student acknowledging admission in provisional standing and the requirement of meeting regular admission within one semester or two terms. Students in provisional admission are permitted to enroll in a maximum of 12 credits of coursework for graduate credit, including prerequisites. Provisional admission is not granted to students who have completed 12 credits or more in residence.

**Conditional Admission.** Conditional admission may be granted to applicants who are near final completion of the baccalaureate degree at the university at the time of application. The requirements include a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in the last 60 graded semester (or 90 quarter) credits earned toward the baccalaureate

degree. Certification by the degree-granting institution that the baccalaureate degree can be completed at the conclusion of the semester or term for which conditional admission has been granted. The baccalaureate degree must be completed and posted prior to achieving regular admission status, and fulfillment of all specific program admission requirements for regular admission must be met. A final graduate admission classification is determined upon completion of the baccalaureate degree based on graduate admission policies. Students who have been granted conditional admission and who wish to earn graduate credit concurrently with meeting the remaining requirements for the baccalaureate degree are permitted to enroll in coursework for graduate credit provided they are within 12 semester credits of completing the baccalaureate degree. Students who complete course work but who do not complete the admission application process will be permitted to use only 12 credits of completed coursework toward a degree program. (Chapman University Catalog, 2001-2002).

In addition to the university graduate admissions package, the Psychology Department at the university developed supplemental steps for entrance to the Master of Arts in Psychology program. These included a graduate departmental application, an autobiographical statement, a statement of intent, three letters of recommendation, and a signed ethical and professional responsibility statement (see Appendix A). The autobiographical guidelines required the applicant to write a three to four typed page narrative and included the following items:

-Include childhood, family, and (if applicable) marital data and values derived from these experiences in relation to your choice of a career in counseling.

-Incorporate two or three relevant experiences that have helped to shape your development and personality.

-Discuss how you arrived at this point in your career development. Include any relevant professional experience.

The local Academic Campus program manager and a full-time faculty member reviewed all materials and conducted the entrance interviews. Applicants were provided information regarding the Board of Behavioral Sciences and Marriage and Family licensure criteria for the State of California. The Master of Arts in Psychology provided the first step toward a professional license to practice therapy in the State of California. Finally, all candidates for admission received a current copy of the Business and Professions Code of California, which provided the standard for the professional practice of psychology within the state. To meet the standard, professionally accredited graduate degree programs must include the following elements:

- Provide an integrated course of study that trains students generally in the diagnosis, assessment, prognosis, and treatment of mental disorders.
- Prepare students to be familiar with the broad range of matters that may arise within marriage and family relationships.
- Train students specifically in the application of marriage and family relationships, counseling principles, and methods.

- Encourage students to develop those personal qualities that are intimately related to the counseling situation such as integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion, and personal presence.
- Teach students a variety of effective psychotherapeutic techniques and modalities that may be utilized to improve, restore, or maintain healthy individual, couple, and family relationships.
- Permit an emphasis or specialization that may address any one or more of the unique and complex array of human problems, symptoms, and needs of Californians served by marriage, family, and child counselors.
- Prepare students to be familiar with cross-cultural mores and values, including a familiarity with the wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds common among California's population, including, but not limited to, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans.

In April 2003 University College proposed a policy restructuring the graduate admissions process based on the institution's membership in the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning which had published the following fundamental standard regarding admission processes focusing on the adult learner: "The institution uses an inclusive, non-competitive admissions process to determine the best educational match for the adult learner" (CAEL, 2002 p.6). The university selected for this study had proposed a philosophy that the prospective graduate student in University College must demonstrate his or her readiness to succeed in graduate-level academic coursework by satisfactorily fulfilling one of four admission options. Standards for

provisional and conditional admission remained as in previous catalog years. All graduate admissions options listed below required an earned baccalaureate degree with a minimum of 36 upper-division credits from a regionally accredited institution. Specific program requirements must also have been met through the individual departments.

**Option 1.** A 3.0 grade point average (GPA) calculated over the most recent 60 semester hours (90 quarter) credits completed toward a baccalaureate degree; this may include up to 15 graded semester units of graduate-level coursework that are applicable to a graduate degree program from another accredited institution.

**Option 2.** A GPA between 2.5 and 2.99 and a satisfactory score on an accepted graduate admissions exam such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT). The program set acceptable admissions tests and scores.

**Option 3.** A 3.5 GPA calculated on an earned advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution.

**Option 4.** Submission of a portfolio of evidence that showed adequate preparation for graduate studies. The portfolio contained: writing samples that showed graduate-level communications and analytical skills, a detailed resume showing professional development and achievements, awards, professional recognition, letters of reference from persons who could attest to the applicant's

ability to do graduate level work, and a letter of explanation detailing the reasons the student believed he or she was a good candidate for graduate study in the discipline requested. If the portfolio met substantive approval of the reviewers, the applicant may have been invited for an interview. The reviewers forwarded their recommendation to the University College admissions committee. The decisions of the University College admissions committee were final.

University College proposed this graduate admissions change effective in Fall 2003, although it faced review through multiple shared governance committees prior to final approval. During a recent briefing by this researcher, the administrative team at University College showed heightened interest in using the results of this research study to further the committee discussions of this policy and identified the Psychology Department as one of the first pilot departments to apply the new admissions framework. As an active member of CAEL and a recent participant in CAEL's pilot project for institutional effectiveness resulting in membership in a coalition of adult-focused learning institutions, University College, under the new Dean's leadership, was anxious to take the steps necessary to identify itself as an institution that was forward thinking in the area of holistic admissions reform.

Although the Master of Arts in Psychology application package had become more robust and comprehensive, there were no scoring criteria for the autobiographical statement to extract the desired characteristics that could be matched to the principles of practice described above. Faculty or the psychology program manager located at each campus location reviewed the narrative attachments of the application package;

however, the standardized graduate test criterion continued to be the primary means by which candidates were admitted, both at the main campus and in University College. This was contrary to the stated value and mission of the University and provided an opportunity for graduate admission reform to begin specifically as a pilot with the Master of Arts in Psychology program with applicants who were women, which constituted more than 75% of the applicant pool in that program. Critical dialogues will continue among the University stakeholders to address this protocol in the future.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last decade American higher education has faced escalating costs, critical state budget crises, uneven demographics, faltering revenues, and questions regarding institutional integrity and stewardship (Johnstone, 2002). As a result public confidence has eroded, and universities now face increased challenges in such areas as faculty quality, campus infrastructure, reductions in access, and in the social and economic mobility that has been historically expected from high education. These challenges produced fears that institutions may no longer serve society's needs for either a trained work force or a competitive technology. Reform agendas for higher education have included institutional productivity, research regarding questions of access and retention, and gender equity issues as applied to adult learners.

In California, where the university that was the focus of this study is located, the education master plan had two primary goals: (1) to provide every family with the information, resources, services, and support it needed to give every child the best possible start in life and in school and (2) to provide every public school, college, and university with the resources and authority necessary to ensure that every student received a rigorous, quality education that prepared him/her to become a self-initiating, self-sustaining learner throughout the lifespan (California Master Plan for Education, 2003). Educational leaders were tasked to begin the work necessary to reform educational policy beginning first with the level of the learner, and then on the

organizational contexts that were necessary for the learner to excel. Here, state policymakers monitored indicators of student success questions relating to graduation rates, shortfalls in academic preparation, and improving the in-state transfer mechanism (Chief Executive Officers of Community Colleges Report 2003-2004). In states like California, racial diversity in the classroom is a desired outcome, and educational leaders needed to develop a mechanism and process that promoted diversity through the admissions procedure.

Because colleges and universities have distinct identities, missions, and organizational structures, sound admissions decisions can be made only in the individual institutional context, although the impact can be global. There are several thousand higher education institutions in the United States. Some are large public universities, others small private colleges; some are highly specialized, others offer a liberal arts education; some are co-educational, some are all-women's, some secular, some faith-based, some two year, some four year and graduate, and all have varying missions (The College Board, 2003). The role of admissions personnel is to understand understand the institution, its mission, and its goals. The ultimate goal of the admissions process is to know enough about the applicants to make sound judgments about which candidates will enhance the integrity, the accountability, and the mission of the institution. As the role of university admission officers has changed and adapted to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse population, colleges and universities must also develop other resources to support and retain the increasing

number of adult students specifically, while focusing on learning productivity and professional preparation.

Particularly for women, the transition into professional graduate studies can be especially stressful due to the many personal responsibilities they have to consider: family, career, personal health, and financial influences (Edwards & Person, 1997). Most major American institutions of higher learning have an adult education program or distance learning educational delivery program designed to attract the adult who is interested in completing an educational goal started years earlier or begin to train in a new discipline. Because of the growth of women participating in higher education during the past 30 years, there has been a dramatic change in the way they are received as scholars (Lewis-Klein, 1998).

There is evidence to suggest that there are obstacles for women in all areas of the university including curriculum, access to services, mentorship, and program persistence. Contemporary feminist learning theory has challenged the invisibility and marginalization of women's experience in the process of building knowledge and opened up the perspective that leaders can treat women's ways of being and knowing as valuable in their own right (Flannery & Hayes, 2000). A recent study of graduate admission practices viewed the task of graduate schools as encompassing four obligations:

First, to decide as definitely as possible what their objectives are; second, to analyze these objectives in terms of prerequisites which prospective students should possess; third, to select or develop techniques appropriate for the study

of each applicant for admission; and fourth, to encourage only those to pursue graduate work for whom there is reasonable probability of success. (Brink, 1999, p. 47).

Metaphorically, just as leaders have considered the changes facing the non-traditional graduate student who is female, American higher education is undergoing unprecedented organizational and institutional change as it moves through a new millennium. Changing social norms and roles for women, combined with other social and economic factors, have led to a tremendous growth in the number of adult women who are participating in formal educational programs and professional licensure or training programs. Questions about cost, accountability, and practicality of a degree joined profound concerns about the implications of technology, a knowledge-intensive economic system, and the expanding global borders of higher education and professional training. In the midst of this turbulent picture, there remains a large reservoir of support by the public for higher education. Graduate degree completion affirms the traditional goals of preparation for work and life, access to and the need for a degree, and the contributions of higher education to community and country. However, there is a need to strategically develop more reliable methods of selecting graduate students. Beyond the traditional indicator of undergraduate merit as the single indicator of success in graduate work, other factors, such as perseverance, resiliency, and life experience, can predict academic success and retention throughout graduate studies (Brink, 1999).

Beyond the scope of the individual graduate applicant, institutional support varies (American Council of Education 1994). The primary concern is that the cost of a graduate education will become prohibitive due to international and economic factors that are currently impacting state and federal funding. Fiscal concerns can result in impacted access—a major component in achieving the American dream of a graduate degree. Many community leaders want high academic standards met and for graduates to be well prepared as they enter the work world. More than ever, Howard Bowen's (1977) observations ring true: "If greater recognition were to be given to the development of interpersonal skills and of ability to work with things—as well as the ability to deal with abstract knowledge—higher education would be broadened still further and would serve an increasing percentage of the population" (p. 316). Institutional leaders want a more accountable system, one that reliably produces graduates with the skills and competence promised in college catalogs, supports useful research, and worries about faculty productivity (American Council of Education 1994). Academic leaders saw this as perhaps an omen that more federal regulation would be enacted to curb costs, ensure access, and produce accountability, all of which begin with the admissions process. Others posited that the best defense against this kind of governmental action was a continued self-review and institutional accountability for stated visions, beliefs, and goals, resulting in responding to change in a calculated and inventive way.

Assimilation into the complex academic milieu and affirmation of one's culture and individual identity are essential elements in meeting graduate program

objectives. California, where the institution selected for this study as well as the majority of off-campus locations resided, was a rapidly diversifying state. In 1990, 34% of the state's public school students were Latinos, in 2000 the figure increased to 43%, and by 2010 it is projected to be 52%. Issues of ethnic and underserved students and admissions continued to be a major concern to the University of California system and, further, were evidence of how race was factored into admission decisions to increase the diversity of the state's most elite schools. Gender related discussions of student access, persistence and retention are a part of this continuing debate.

Over the course of the last two decades, the women's movement has prompted an extensive reevaluation of the various gender-related aspects of all our social institutions (Ireland, 1996). Higher education was not exempt from these important and relevant evaluations. Reform agendas for higher education began to include gender equity discussions as they applied to adult learners. Even as the role of university admissions officers has changed and adapted to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, colleges and universities must develop resources to support and retain the increasing number of adult students. As a result, cultural changes and support aimed at the adult learner allowed greater access for women to return to school. This opportunity included the development of evening programs, accelerated semester schedules, and distance learning formats. At one time women were excluded from higher education entirely, yet women currently account for 56% of all undergraduate students and 30.4% of graduate students, with

significant numbers entering the field of psychology as was noted earlier (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2002).

Two key psychological assumptions hold particular relevance to women's intellectual development: (1) periods of stability and transition within the adult years and (2) issues of identity and intimacy throughout the lifespan (Bierema, 1999). When women apply to undergraduate and graduate programs in any academic setting, they bring multiple layers of knowledge to their formal educational experience. It is not always easy to measure the predictable success of women applicants based on the data presented in an application package, because theories of typical adult development and the meeting of life goals have traditionally focused on male subjects. In her book, *The Mismeasure of Women*, Carol Tavris (1992) raised important questions regarding the assumptions that framed early adult development theory. This set the stage for questioning the learning approaches and professional development goals of adult women.

Once a critical mass of women entered education, researchers began asking different questions. Why, they wondered, is it so desirable for an academic career to be uninterrupted by experience, family life, and outside work? So what if women's life paths were less linear than men's? Wasn't this way of structuring one's life as logical as, and more humanly beneficial than, the straight-up-the-ladder model? Shouldn't administrators be worrying about the deficient education of male students, so woefully unweathered by real life? And why, as psychologist Carol Gilligan argued to great acclaim, do we focus

so much on the importance of separation from parents, instead of on the continuing affectionate bond that is the norm almost everywhere in the world, the bond that women promote. (p. 86)

Further correlations were evident between academic environment and the recruitment and retention of women students in higher education settings (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). When the innovative book *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986) was released, it resulted in new and interesting conversations regarding women's professional contributions and personal learning challenges. Based on the work of Carol Gilligan and others in the early 1980s, this book chronicled the patterns of knowing and seeking knowledge that were particular to women in ways that transcended feminist and developmental theory. This researcher believes that by using grounded theory applications to address questions in admissions, similar patterns could emerge. Admissions counselors and educational leaders could enhance services for women by integrating knowledge about women's identity formation and the gendered nature of learning contexts into the selection and retention process, thus incorporating previous developmental and learning style research in an active manner.

Academic institutions have often created barriers to women's participation, including institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers (Ekstrom, 1972). Institutional factors that excluded women from participation in education included admission practices, financial aid practices, institutional regulations, types of curriculum and services adopted, and faculty and staff attitudes. Situational barriers

that deterred women from meeting learning objectives included family responsibilities, financial need, and societal pressures. Dispositional barriers included a woman's fear of failure, attitude toward intellectual activity, role preference, ambivalence about educational goals, level of aspiration, passivity, dependence, and inferiority feelings.

An awareness of the collaborative, connecting, and transformational nature of women's educational experiences can assist leaders in developing meaningful support mechanisms as women seek degree completion (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Women's presumed orientations toward human relationships have been linked to characterizations of women as reliant, subjective, intuitive, and affective (Flannery, 2000). The emphasis on connectivity and relational influencers for women can be translated into collaboration, support, and affiliation as learning skills needed in graduate school.

This understanding of gender as an influence on adult education could assist practitioners in providing access and support for women who have decided to return to graduate professional study throughout the lifespan. Beyond the research that supported a woman's quest for connected learning, educators can demonstrate their commitment to different educational goals and purposes by focusing on content learning, personal development, and social change within the academy (Hayes, 2001). Content learning would include the idea that prior learning influenced current educational activities and that gender can influence the specified knowledge brought to the educational environment. With an orientation toward personal development,

educators can be sensitive to the belief systems that have influenced women and explore the challenges of academic rigor embedded in those beliefs.

If academic leaders seek to promote social change, these same gendered beliefs can be reconstructed and transformed in the educational setting. In *Women as Learners*, Hayes and Flannery (2000) looked at this transformation as a phenomenon whereby women redefined the structures of meaning so that they were more inclusive and discriminating. These ideas provided a foundation for admissions reform as new application criteria could be developed to gather baseline data and encourage simulation to demonstrate readiness to succeed in professional graduate programs. Because of the increasing number of women entering the field of psychology, attention is given to the characteristics that are inherent and create intellectual motivation. The identification of these characteristics can strengthen academic success and provide guidance assistance throughout the selected academic program.

#### Student Access, Retention, and Persistence in Higher Education

The college admissions process entails judgment by admissions professionals based on experience in the context of the particular institution's mission. For that reason, there can be no universal standard of access for higher education. The models for admissions decision-making are as varied as the institutions themselves. This section reviews the history and contemporary climate of standards, high-stakes testing, and admissions trends as they impact access, retention, and persistence in graduate education.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 was intended to expand opportunity for postsecondary education, especially for low-income and minority students who were traditionally underrepresented in colleges and universities. Every five years, Congress reauthorized HEA, and amendments were often added that changed the scope of funding for student financial aid, for state-federal partnerships, and for institutional support. The next reauthorization has been scheduled for debate during the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress in 2003-2004.

The eroding nature of public confidence toward higher education allowed for a reframing of the questions asked early in the modern era, i.e., how the public relies on what determines academic quality and standards and how these are defined at each institution (Altbach, et al. 2001). Leaders in university environments must ensure the many essential characteristics of higher education, civic engagement, scholarship, applications of research knowledge and the enhancement of culture, are maintained and further enhanced (Newman, 1999). Our country's rapidly changing demographic profile is continuously reflected in the composition of our college and university campuses. Admissions departments are tasked with providing the opportunity for all to access a university education, regardless of multiple levels of socioeconomic factors evident in modern American society.

American higher education has been skillful in adapting to the changes in the external environment. Higher education has been able to achieve initial historical access to higher education from the training of soldiers during the Civil War to the development of a diversified community college system in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Altbach,

et al., 2001). The complexity of this system in America characterized this notion and led to a continuing discussion of widespread access to this institutional framework. Although institutions of higher learning continued to hold an honored societal status in our nation, there were still social and cultural barriers that resulted in a lack of needed access to higher education and all the resulting personal and economic benefits a college degree can offer. This was especially evident in the arena of lifelong education, where current evidence has suggested that more Americans tended to take the initiative and return to educational environments during an economic downturn to seek ways to become skilled and competitive through numerous training options (Eisenberg, 2002). For women entering into the professional academic arena later in life, these socialization barriers can be particularly challenging.

Access to graduate education, particularly for minorities and adult learners, captured the concern of admission officials, professors, and other educational leaders over the last two decades (Sanoff, 2003). As our country continued to face multiple economic and international challenges, access to graduate education was riddled by complex policies and on-going public debate. The fundamental question of whether existing standards are too high, too low, or accurate cause institutions of higher learning to continuously provide means by which statistical admissions data can demonstrate accountability to overall institutional visions and core beliefs. Central to this question is the accuracy of the specific constructs in predicting whether an applicant can successfully complete the requirements of a graduate degree. A traditional dossier that included transcripts, letters, and standardized measures did not

necessarily constitute a defensible basis for making an admissions decision (Sampson & Boyer, 2001). Adult learners have very different profiles from the stereotyped traditional student. Most often adult learners were defined by the categories they represented: female, married, raising children, working or unemployed, retired, commuter or part-time students (Edwards & Person, 1997). In addition, they represented an array of diverse ethnicities not found in higher education several decades ago (Allen, 1993).

A recent report of the Task Force for Graduate and Professional Admissions (2003) in Florida tackled this question of diversity access by considering the entire admission process from the first point of inquiry through graduation and beyond . The results were guided by two major themes: first, decentralized admissions procedures remained critical in order to attract and enroll talented students, and second, a campus-wide committee should assist the colleges in fulfilling these goals. The group further recommended the adoption of a holistic process with less emphasis on quantitative indicators and on-going analysis of the impact on initial access of graduate students to the university. The results became institutionalized in practice and became part of the state's educational value system.

Access, and ultimately institutional accountability, must be seen against the backdrop of an American higher education that is wrestling with major new challenges such as these. It follows then that those challenges demand a new type of leader. "U.S. society is increasingly knowledge-intensive and dominated by advanced technologies; higher education institutions must provide the skills necessary

for students to compete in the global marketplace” (American Council on Education, 1995, p. 5). Does higher education achieve this necessary result? What is the philosophy behind the admissions process and how does it succeed at the institutional level in terms of student predictors of performance and professional preparedness? The debate regarding predictors such as standards, admissions testing and institutional assessment served as the foundation for the necessity to study the goals of graduate retention and persistence from new perspectives.

A search on graduate retention and persistence yielded little more than individual institutional profiles on program-specific benchmarks while in school. The majority of the studies focused on undergraduate study. However, there were some trends regarding attrition and the causal factors that influence graduate student persistence. Most graduate programs are largely voluntary, often with the student role as one of several responsibilities that compete for time and attention. Adults who enter graduate school usually have pragmatic, focused reasons for participating and will leave graduate school if they feel their needs have not been met. Further, the female graduate students in Hagedorn’s (1993) study benefited from contact with students and faculty and wanted to participate in institutional activities. However, family issues were an obstacle, as well as marriage, which increased the probability of leaving graduate work to 83%. These factors influence policy and reform opportunities and motivate discussions on the impact of life choices on academic access and retention.

To increase the retention and persistence of female graduate students, the following research outcomes provide direction:

- Pre-enrollment counseling to establish expectations, give a sense of the university community (Cullen, 1994).
- Personal attention; staff willing to listen; assistance with personal and financial problems (Smith & Bailey, 1993).
- Managing the culture of the institution; recognizing adult anxiety about school (Smith & Bailey, 1993).
- Flexible, convenient scheduling and frequent contact with faculty (including electronic methods) (Hagedorn, 1993).

The conclusion was that retention requires leadership to guide efforts, develop flexible structures to appeal to all learners, and continue to affirm that all university personnel affect student persistence.

### Review of Graduate Admissions

America's rapidly changing demographic profile is continuously reflected in the composition of our university campuses. Admissions departments are tasked with providing opportunity for all to access a university education, regardless of multiple levels of socioeconomic factors. It seems, however, that these efforts continue to be disproportionate. Although institutions of higher learning continue to hold an honored societal status in our nation, there are still groups lacking the needed access to higher education and all the resulting personal and economic benefits a college

degree can offer. This is especially evident in the arena of adult education, where current evidence suggested that more Americans tend to take the initiative and return to educational environments during an economic turndown and seek ways to become skilled and competitive through professional training options (Eisenberg, 2002). Issues of access, economic feasibility to return to school, and direct applicability to one's career emerge.

Historically, admissions decisions were based on two paradigms: one was seeking institutional fit based on selectivity criterion, and the second was the belief that there was an interdependent relationship between a university or college and the individual characteristics and skills of the applicant. There continues to be one universally relevant standard for admissions in that institutions look for a "fit" with the traits the candidate brings to the process, as well as determining whether a student has the ability to complete the course of study based on the presenting application information.

When adult learners begin the process of school selection, they are often faced with a system that caters to younger applicants. They tend to approach the admissions process from a consumer perspective and shop for schools that will provide supportive resources as well as financial value. As more adults returned to traditional college campuses, graduate admissions officials were reviewing undergraduate transcripts and standardized scores that could be decades old, coupled with the need for a passing score on a graduate entrance examination such as the GRE or the MAT. Evidence suggested that high-stakes testing measures such as these may

have begun as a noble effort to open up opportunity for all people to obtain a college degree, but excessive dependence on these tests has created an admissions hierarchy that has gained in momentum and strength through the history of higher education, impacting adult students and restricting access in an inequitable manner (Guinier, 2001).

As the numbers of adult learners who returned to the college environment increased, the obvious controversy for educational leaders was how to develop effective admissions procedures for adult learners that would attract the most adequately prepared student, including quantitative and qualitative measures beyond standardized intelligence scales (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2003). Universities established admissions policies that are intended to ensure that entering students possessed the requisite skills, background, and knowledge to successfully pursue the study to which they applied. American colleges and universities admission processes have typically included a separate protocol for undergraduate and graduate programs. Three general types of administrative offices usually determined the admissions process on any given campus: a central admissions office for the entire university, the dean of the school who may confer with the head of a department, or a committee whose members may confer with department heads (Brink, 1999). Although persons unfamiliar with them sometimes categorize admissions criteria as either objective or subjective, the distinction is rarely clear, according to a recent study by The College Board (2001). While academic standards are the most important factor in most admission decisions, other factors have become

increasingly important at many institutions. Private as well as public institutions espouse value attributes such as leadership, participation in extracurricular activities, community activities, motivation, resiliency, and initiative. Many studies have been done to research multiple measures in admission, recognizing that reliance on any single metric would eliminate qualified candidates from consideration (Educational Testing Service, 1989-2000).

Several key studies conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) during the past 20 years have begun this process. In looking at the role of testing in graduate admissions, specifically the GRE and other graduate-level indicators, the goal of the ETS studies was to identify characteristics that contributed to success in many graduate programs. The following section from one journal article illustrated the foundation of this study, as well as the study conducted by this researcher:

The limitations of graduate school admissions tests in the face of the complexity of the graduate education process have long been recognized. Consequently, research to improve understanding of the nature of success in graduate school and of the characteristics of successful students has been conducted. The Graduate Record Examination Board has sponsored much of this research. For example, Hartnett and Willingham (1979) explored the criterion problem in the context of graduate education. In addition to traditional administrative criteria such as grades and progress toward the degree, they discussed the importance of other indicators of success, including evidence of professional accomplishment and specially included measures.

Other research has been directed toward describing the characteristics of successful students (Powers & Enright, 1987; Reilly, 1976; Tucker, 1985) or toward developing tests or inventories that measure a wider variety of student characteristics (Baird, 1979; Conrad, 1976; Crooks, Campbell & Rock, 1979; Donlon, Reilly & McKee, 1978; Frederiksen & Ward, 1978). Much of this work, however, has been concerned with specific aspects of performance and not designed to formulate a comprehensive picture of the qualities that contribute to success. Thus, the problem as we see it is the absence of an integrated overview of factors that contribute to success in graduate school and their relative importance, how such factors contribute to success, and how such factors are related to each other. Our goal is to work toward a more comprehensive description of what contributes to success in graduate school and to consider methods of substantiating this description. (Enright & Gitomer, 1989)

The result of the research conducted at ETS (1989) was the development of benchmark characteristics that could emerge from the graduate application and result in intentional simulations or other activities to potentially identify the applicant's increasing approximation to professional behavior. A connection can be made to the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Golberger, and Tarule (1986) in *Women's Ways of Knowing* where the characteristics of received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge were identified.

Other studies conducted during the same twenty 25-year period by ETS included validity studies based on a restructured GRE with particular attention to adult students (Swinton, 1987), the development of an inventory of documented accomplishments for graduate admissions (Baird, 1979), and finally an analysis of the criterion problem of measuring success in graduate education (Hartnett & Willingham, 1979). More specifically to the field of psychology, a study was conducted to research admissions test scores as predictors of career achievement in psychology (Schrader, 1978). The results of this study suggested that the relationship between test performance and career achievement was not likely to be high when studies were based on highly selective groups. However, the results indicated that more research is warranted, especially if larger samples and identified characteristics are utilized within the admissions process.

An important factor of admission consideration relevant to this study was the changing nature of the field of psychotherapy and the increasing number of women who were entering graduate school seeking professional training in marriage and family therapy overall. Men and women once entered the field of psychotherapy at an almost equal rate; however, the past 15 years have seen a drastic shift. Statistics clearly show that women are entering the psychology profession in huge numbers at the same time that the incoming number of men is on the decline (Philipson, 1993). As women continue to take on the professional training necessary to conduct therapy, certain specific skill sets, which could be identified by the admissions process, are needed. These predictors would assist with retention, program persistence, and

professional “fit” as women are faced with the rigor of psychological practice. These identified skills would further reduce the unqualified student from placement in the program, and reduce the stigma of psychological experience as a means by which successful therapists develop.

### Trends in Standardized Testing

At the core of admissions reform is the issue of standardized testing and achievement of a pre-determined level of merit for admissions. In his book *Standardized Minds* (1999), Peter Sacks began by saying

Most Americans take standardized mental tests as a rite of passage from the day they enter kindergarten. Gatekeepers of America’s meritocracy—educators, academic institutions, and employers—have used test scores to label people as bright or not so bright worthy academically or not worthy. Some, with luck, are able to overcome the stigma of poor performance on mental tests. But others do not. (pp.10-11)

There is a fear in exploring one’s own intelligence without the verification of a perceived expert, such as a college professor. This is often the case with women learners who are navigating the college admission process after numerous years away from the rigor of the classroom. Consequently, the role of testing in education is being radically reevaluated at present (Allen, 1993).

This is an exciting time to research and apply the history and debate surrounding standardized testing and college admissions. The College Board, which

owns the Scholastic Aptitude Test, has shown skill fending off critics who attacked the SAT specifically, and intelligence testing in general as discriminatory, invalid, superficial, and limited in measuring human intelligence (Tavris, 1992). As a result, educational leaders have opened the issue wide for critical review and close scrutiny. The proposal by University of California President, Richard C. Atkinson, to drop the SAT as an undergraduate admissions requirement sparked debate across academe and has resulted in numerous journal articles published in *The Chronicle for Higher Education* (2001, 2002) that provided a rich foundation by which academic leaders can respond.

Many educational leaders believed that the debate should not stop there; other challenges resulted to activate deep inquiry into the entrenched status of university admissions, including other intelligence tests such as the Graduate Record Exam. The emerging problem with the use of many tests was one of a mismatch between the purposes for which the tests were originally designed and the purposes for which they were currently being used. Still others (e.g., Cohen & Bachelor, 2001) believed that although admission tests were not perfect, they are the best measure we had and that efforts should be made to reform intelligence tests in total and develop standardized testing that would better suit contemporary American universities. In some form, the need to sort by achievement and ability will always be a sociological and economic necessity, worthy of continued research.

Taking on a review of standardized testing is a daunting task, deeply embedded in a review of classic intelligence theory. Charles Spearman, one of the forefathers of mental measurement, wrote in 1927, “An accurate measurement of everyone’s intelligence would seem to herald the feasibility of selecting the better endowed persons for admission into citizenship, and even for the right of having offspring” (p.327). Methods of sorting people based on intelligence factors would render justice and maximum societal efficiency, so thought Spearman and Francis Galton (1934) who viewed IQ as a natural evolution of the human species. Alfred Binet built upon these ideas and developed the first intelligence test comprised of 30 tasks or subtests that increased in difficulty and measured a general knowledge base. This exam was Americanized by Lewis Terman in 1916 at Stanford University and was developed to further link intelligence tests and early achievement tests with the modern practice of tracking young children into various academic environments. This became the cornerstone of American thinking regarding intelligence testing and has been institutionalized ever since (Sacks, 2000). Almost from the beginning, questions were raised as to the relevance of intelligence testing compared to the factors of poverty and family income, effects of neighborhood environments and race, and other cultural influencers, yet no other intelligence test was created to provide similar results.

Terman’s (1916) on-going research on intelligence became the foundation of Princeton professor Carl C. Brigham’s (1923) work on Army testing and his classic book, *A Study of American Intelligence*. His conclusions regarding the intelligence of

foreign-born versus American-born people at the end of his extensive study cited the “clearly foreign-born are intellectually inferior to the native born” (p.215). These findings provided the solid buy-in necessary to allow Brigham the opportunity to take Terman’s vision of the widespread use of intelligence testing and implement it. After Brigham completed his tenure as an Army psychologist, he returned to Princeton University’s admission office, where he extended his research to include the sorting and selection of young men for college. This resulted in the creation of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the first large-scale college standardized admission exam, which included two parts, verbal and mathematical, each scored on a 200-800 scale. The SAT II was later developed to incorporate subject-specific test categories and measures 17 subjects, with students usually taking at least three specifically selected sections for college entrance at the undergraduate level (MacGowan, 2002).

Six years after his data had begun to generate quotas and demonstratively sort the immigrants from the native-born Americans, Brigham (1934) had a deep change of heart and recanted two significant aspects of his research. First, he recognized that a test score could not be qualified as a single measure of innate intelligence and had measured instead familiarity with American language and culture (Sacks, 2000). It is worthy of note that Brigham initially questioned his finding almost 80 years ago, yet lasting reform in high-stakes testing as it applies to admission policies is still obscure.

This mistrust in intelligence testing has been the foundation of many debates and fostered reform movements since Brigham’s (1934) confession that the SAT would be unable to holistically measure individual intelligence. However, the die had

been cast, and the testing movement gained momentum, fueled too often by politics and power than by strictly educational concerns. In the 1940s, the University of California became the first major public university to require the test (Gose & Selingo, 2001). The SAT, with multiple choice questions and systematic scoring, was seen as the great equalizer, a test that would assist in the selection of future leaders. University admissions viewed the recruitment of potential undergraduate students with high SAT scores as a quantitative method to improve an institution's reputation, and also to compare students who came from high schools of widely varying quality. Currently, roughly 1.3 million high school seniors take the test, providing annual revenues of more than \$200 million to testing services (Hendrickson, 2001).

Numerous reactions have occurred due to the debate sparked by President Atkinson in his February 2001 proposal to drop the SAT and replace it with new admission tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. UC faculty had reviewed other admission tests on the market and had found no suitable substitute. However, they suggested a three-hour core exam be developed by either the College Board or the Iowa City-based ACT, Inc. (Selingo, 2002). Yet other academics maintained that the SAT was still the best predictor of readiness to learn at the college level. In a related study, 18 states that attached high-stakes education decisions to testing result, such as the SAT, were examined. In the analysis of the data collected, it was revealed that the correlation between high-stakes testing and student learning was negligible. "While a state's high stakes test may show increased scores, there is little support in these data that such increases are anything but the result of test preparation and/or the

exclusion of students from the testing process” (Olson, 2002). On June 27, 2002, the College Board trustees voted to add a handwritten essay to the SAT, while dropping the analogy section. In addition, higher-level math questions were added, thus boosting the top score to 2400, in an attempt to address the concerns raised by the UC President.

As a result of the focus of the past two years on the SAT, other entrance examinations have been scrutinized, and the overall issue of what the role of standardized tests are in the college admission process have been argued further. Developers of the ACT see the latest assault on the application of SAT scores as an opportunity to expand the applicability of the ACT to the college admission process with regard to achievement rather than aptitude. Critics, such as the Students Against Testing, feel that both tests fail to demonstrate academic readiness. Both determine parental income more accurately than predict student success. Both continue to be biased against females, blacks, and Latinos, value superficial test-prep and coaching programs in order to succeed, and are used by some colleges and universities as the single factor in determining whether students are admitted ([www.nomorettests.com](http://www.nomorettests.com),2002).

This background information at the undergraduate level was useful in comparison with graduate standardized testing, because it created a pattern of ambiguity that supported the researcher’s theoretical premise of the need for specified reform. At the graduate level, the Graduate Record Exam, produced by the Educational Testing Service, measures verbal, analytical, and quantitative knowledge,

providing a predictor of academic performance at the masters or doctoral level. Similar arguments as narrated earlier in this chapter have been applied to the validity and cultural aspects of this exam; however, the majority of graduate programs do consider comprehensive versus singular factors in determining the admissibility of students. Statements of intent, academic work, life experience, letters of recommendation, personal interviews, and other exceptional elements influence the decisions of admissions committees. Still, Peter Sacks (1999) in *Standardized Minds* maintained that

At the same time that graduate education may be viewed as the necessary credential for success in the American economy, the Graduate Record Examination has evolved into a formidable gatekeeper in to the world of graduate studies. Graduate programs are typically far more selective than undergraduate ones, and the GRE almost always plays a decisive role.

The GRE has deeply penetrated American graduate education. One study of 7,000 graduate programs figured that more than six in ten programs required the GRE, and almost seven of ten graduate programs in the health sciences mandated the test. Further, the GRE typically carries enormous, even pivotal weight in admission and financial aid decisions. It is common for admissions committees to sort prospective graduate students on the basis on rankings according to an index of undergraduate grades and GRE scores. A cutoff point for the index is established, either explicitly or tacitly, below which applications are rarely considered. Only applicants making the

numerical cutoff receive the luxury of having their application even read, for either admission or for graduate fellowships. (pp. 275-276).

The limitations of graduate school admissions tests in the face of the complexity of the graduate admissions process have long been recognized. As a result, the Graduate Records Examination Board has conducted much of the recent research in this area. Current assessment approaches include the influence of specific characteristics of successful performance and more flexible methods of testing.

Hartnett and Willingham (1979) explored the criterion problem in the context of graduate education. In addition to the traditional administrative criteria such as grades and progress toward the degree, they discussed the importance of other indicators of success, including evidence of professional accomplishment and specially developed measures. Other research has been directed toward describing the characteristics of successful students (Powers & Enright, 1987; Reilly, 1976; Tucker, 1985) or toward developing tests or inventories that measure a wider variety of student characteristics (Baird, 1979; Conrad, 1976; Crooks, Campbell & Rock 1979; Donlon, Reilly & McKee, 1978; Frederiksen & Ward, 1978). Much of this work, however, has been concerned with specific aspects of performance and not designed to formulate a comprehensive picture of the qualities that contribute to success. Thus, the problem as we see it is the absence of an integrated overview of factors that contribute to success in graduate school and their relative importance, how such factors contribute to success, and how such factors are

related to each other. Our goal is to work toward a more comprehensive description of what contributes to success in graduate school and to consider methods of substantiating this description. (Enright & Gitomer, 1989)

Access to graduate education, particularly for minorities and for adult learners, has captured the concern of admission officials, professors, and other educational administrators over the last two decades. As described earlier, the fundamental question of whether existing standards are too high, too low, or just right cause institutions of higher learning to continuously provide means by which statistical admissions data can demonstrate accountability to institutional visions and core beliefs. Central to this question are the specific constructs innate to issues such as which entry prerequisites are meaningful or accurate in predicting whether an applicant can successfully complete the requirements for a graduate degree, beyond presenting standardized scores.

#### Influences of Educational Biographies on Graduate Admissions

Exploring personal stories and other forms of situational knowledge is a common experience for women who pursue higher education (Gilligan, 1982). Educational biography is a logical approach that is gaining in research significance in assisting adult learners to qualify what they already know, how and why they learned in the past, and what motivates them to pursue new educational opportunities (Donaldson & Graham, 1999). Writing about one's life can release deep reservoirs of self-knowledge that can assist in building awareness of specific influencers such as

family, work, and community. Narrative assessment provides data that will contribute to the intent of this study in common characteristics of qualitative research which include

- Research oriented toward the natural world
- Awareness through the use of multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic
- Contribution to a focus on content integral to the social world
- Encouragement of systematic reflection of presenting data
- Demonstration of exquisite sensitivity to personal biography as a method of experiential learning
- Fostering flexibility in the development of an emergent quality of themes associated with key concepts
- Reliance on sophisticated reasoning that is multifaceted and interactive, resulting in research that is fundamentally interpretive.

(Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

Narrative research provides the participant with multiple opportunities to develop an individual heuristic process that is fundamental to the emergence of themes and patterns that lead to theory and social change. Personal insight and tacit knowledge supported the idea that knowledge was a product of a deeper understanding that was sometimes unarticulated and was derived from experience. By writing about experience, a culture is defined and allows the researcher to view social phenomenon holistically. Because of the historic imprint of intellectual sorting and

standardized testing, the emergence of narrative research has been slow and systematic.

Pierre Domince explored these ideas intensively in his book *Learning From Our Lives* (2000) and fully defined how the use of educational biographies made early inquiry connections with adult learners. He wrote:

Educational biography may be used in various ways in training programs for adult learners, as is already the case at the University of Geneva in Switzerland and at Columbia University in New York. Each application must of course be appropriate to the specific social environment. Moreover, as I have also been describing, adults' reflections on their life experiences offer an opportunity to explore new paths of research, including participatory research. Participants become partners, and research itself becomes an educational process that helps these partners discover how research can become part of a transformative learning process. (p. 172)

Personal narratives that are written around focused questions provide examples of how experience is socially constructed and negotiated through an individual's lens. Through the feminist movement of the past two decades, women have been encouraged to use language through narrative inquiry to explore life histories fully, using methodology, deconstructive language, and discourse analysis (Christian-Smith & Kellor, 1999). Viewed as embodied and historicized narratives of experience, these approaches have potentially powerful pedagogical and reform

implications for recognizing and working across socially formed differences such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Narrative statements can help researchers see how long-established processes of knowledge formation in education are either supported or thwarted as a developmental tool for women who begin graduate studies, thus supporting the idea of appropriate professional “fit” as described in Chapter 1.

Narrative data are especially insightful for women who are entering graduate programs in psychology. Career performance variables could be identified at the onset of the admissions process to establish academic directions and provide intellectual placement with faculty and agency internship. Educational biographies give academic leaders the opportunity to interpret and better understand the process of adult motivation. In addition, narrative statements assist women graduate students in discovering their own educational needs through interpreting their life experiences, instead of assuming that the requirements of a graduate psychology program are equivalent to their individual needs. Using the information gathered from narrative research combined with specific standardized measures can provide the female graduate student another tool by which she can chart her own educational experience, as well as add to the accountability goals of the institution.

#### Institutional Assessment, Accountability, and Leadership for Change

Those in a leadership position in higher education have the power and skill to become social architects and continue the visionary work necessary to create and

implement reform in higher education, while working within this complex societal tapestry. Maxine Greene (1996) reminded leaders that passion can be defined as the power of possibility, to include vision, strength of character, and change. She further reminded leaders that there was no “one-size-fits-all” absolute truth and that education was a process that included social, political, and historical conditions, as well as the reality that was present at that given moment (Greene, 1996). To attempt to synthesize the issues presented in this research on admissions any other way than one grounded in continual deep inquiry would negate those elements that define our humanity, which makes leadership a passionate and worthy endeavor.

Leadership theory provides a means by which the formation of a unifying vision resulting in strategic change can begin. Warren Bennis (1970) encouraged leaders to first define the ways in which they are change agents for their organizations, looking at assumptions, roles, intervention behaviors, and normative goals. Attitudes, perceptions, and values of all group members influence the distinct culture by which objectives are achieved. In university environments, this culture is multifaceted and distinctly defined within the mission statement and is demonstrated by learning outcomes and student satisfaction measurements. During the past two years since the formation of the University College organizational structure used for this study, administrative teams and focus groups have begun the work necessary to solidify the future vision of the institution.

It is proposed in this research project that beginning with a reformed admission protocol, which contains a carefully crafted application process of

narrative, standardized, and interpersonal measures, aspects of an individual's future graduate study success can be reinforced. To reach that goal, reform needs to occur from the core of the unique organization that is higher education, the mission of the university applied to practice. William Torbert (1989) in his chapter "Reform from the Center" reminded leaders that often problems were supposedly solved by keeping them as far removed as possible, which resulted in making problems in education that much worse. The continued use of the GRE and other singular methods of graduate admissibility illustrate this behavioral dynamic. With the delineating factors of standardized scoring and limited application information, graduate applicants continue to be frustrated with a traditional system of college entry that no longer fits or values life experience or accurately measures ability or aptitude (Sacks 2000). The first step in this process of reform is to engage in self-study that for institutions of higher education becomes active through assessment and the study of accountability.

Admission policy formation and acceptance criteria are a result of an institution's commitment to integrity and an assessment of learning that involves every leadership level of the organization. All accredited American institutions of higher learning are governed by a set of standards prescribed by the regional accrediting body that regulates policy and provides an organizational framework that leads to demonstrations of integrity within the experiences of students who are admitted and persist to meet their educational goals. This progression from admissions to graduation is continuously reviewed in accordance with accreditation guidelines and societal trends, providing opportunity for educational leaders to

reframe and reform current practice. One cannot research the complexities of the academic admission process without considering contemporary accreditation standards and commonly used learning outcomes assessments that drive policy formation.

Assessment in institutions of higher education is dictated by demands for accountability by legislators, university trustees, and accrediting agencies. Assessment measures are being constructed to impact all areas of the academy, from admissions to graduation standards. Banta and Lund's (1995) book *Assessment in Practice: Putting Principles to Work on College Campuses* developed by the American Association for Higher Education proposed 10 reflective principles relevant to this discussion of student assessment and reform indicators:

- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment works best when the program it seeks to improve has clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Assessment works best when it is on-going, not episodic.
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
- Through assessment educators meet responsibilities to students.
- Assessment is most effective when undertaken in an environment that is receptive, supportive, and enabling.

In combination with these active principles of assessment, accreditation serves as a distinctive American innovation to assure quality in higher education. The principal of peer review is central to the function of accreditation, reflecting the belief that those within the academy are best able to evaluate the quality of higher education institutions. In recent history, however, the challenges of defining quality in higher education have become significantly more complex and have come under increased scrutiny during accreditation reviews. A distinctive feature of the governance of American higher education is the scope of local control over education, with the responsibility to charter colleges and universities resting with individual states. Most nations assume accountability for authority over education at the ministerial or cabinet level. The U.S. Department of Education plays a valuable national role in education, yet it is the individual states and the U.S. Congress that have the power to approve the establishment of institutions of postsecondary education and higher learning and appropriate tax dollars for support. This governance bedrock is the fundamental character that has given rise to the variety of

institutions that exist in the United States and accounts for the lack of national standards for quality and content in educational programming (Altback et al., 2001).

In the early 1960s the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education developed a national agenda focused on the six regional accrediting agencies. It listed five major roles/functions that institutional accreditation should serve:

- To foster excellence in postsecondary education through the development of criteria and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness.
- To encourage institutional improvement through the process of continuous self-study and evaluation.
- To assure the educational community, the general public, and other agencies, that an institution has clearly defined and appropriate educational objectives.
- To provide assistance to developing institutions.
- To protect individual accredited institutions against encroachments that might jeopardize their educational effectiveness or academic freedom (WASC, 2001).

As a result of these factors accreditation standards are in the process of reform, to provide a greater focus on educational effectiveness and student learning. For example, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the agency that accredits the institution selected for this study, has reorganized the accreditation

process around two core commitments, institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. These two commitments provide the foundation for self-study documents and site visitations (WASC, 2001). As accreditation standards continue to change, evidence of these and other standards must be evident within the campus culture.

Under the category of educational effectiveness, standards target the systems by which higher education can evolve as a reflective learning organization. These include several concepts that apply to reform movements in university admission policies. Improvements in student learning must be systematic and regular, reinforce a climate of inquiry throughout the institution, reflect the input of stakeholders and an awareness of the distinct characteristics of its students, identify key dimensions of performance that include student learning, and be based on standards of evidence that prominently feature educational results (WASC, 2001). Other specific accreditation admission standards typically apply to transfer credits, credit for prior learning, and the award of academic credits. Of particular interest to this researcher are the statements on diversity that support definitions of affirmative action and admissions policy.

Regional accreditation commissions concur that quality and diversity have come to be profoundly connected in pursuing goals that are explicit in the mission statements of colleges and universities themselves: goals of expanding knowledge, educating capable citizens, and serving public needs. *Diversity* is a term that is used to refer to the admission and enrollment of students from various

geographic regions and socioeconomic backgrounds, described fully in the beginning sections of this chapter. Beginning in the 1960s, *diversity* was a term to describe students from historically underrepresented ethnic groups, who often were the first to attend college in their families. Currently diversity also applies to the composition of faculty, staff, administration, and board of trustees of all American colleges and universities. The connection between diversity and quality are of obvious concern to accreditation officials as institutions are routinely visited to assure adequate representation from different ethnic groups, support and foster a diverse academic community, and recognize group affiliations and differences (*WASC Handbook*, 2001).

There is an expectation that a climate of respect for a diversity of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives is fostered on each university campus and that there is demonstration of a continuous engagement in the issues raised by diversity. As a result, accrediting agencies encourage colleges and universities to respond to the following critical activities regarding the application of the concept of diversity:

- Institutional mission and purpose should be reexamined.
- Institutions should seek and achieve diversity within their student bodies, faculty, administrative staff, and governing boards.
- Each institution will work toward an appreciation of diversity as an outcome of graduate education and consider all forms of diversity as they impact the educational process.

- In addressing the need for a co-curricular environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of students, the variety of students already enrolled at the institution should be addressed.
- Institutions should assess the strength and weakness of efforts to make diversity integral to its plans for institutional improvements (*WASC Handbook*, 2001).

Numerous parallels can be drawn between inferred and implied demonstrations of diversity on a college campus. Accrediting commissions will continue to collect the evidence necessary to initiate supportive recommendations to the administrative and academic functioning of the institution.

Whatever the institutional rank or position on the U.S. News edition of *America's Best Colleges Guide*, accreditation is a way to define a collection of institutions that forms a community of higher education and to ensure there is a perceived and real linkage between accreditation and basic quality that remains generally accepted by both higher education and its constituencies. There has been a growing effort in the past by many institutions to seek specialized accreditation, including the field of psychology. Even as professional or specialized associations make inroads into the arena of accreditation and academic quality, often the overall impact of specified academic processes is neglected. As a result, accreditation practices have begun to shift activities to respond to the current educational culture which include the following:

- Increasing diversity of institutional types, with significant changes occurring within traditional institutions; the development of single-purpose institutions in wide ranges of disciplines; and the expansion of profit-centered enterprises into higher education.
- Development and growth of online and distributed learning within traditional institutions and the development of institutions wholly or primarily organized to provide educational services in a distributed environment.
- Increased scale and complexity of institutions, where the majority of students served in higher education attend large, complex, multipurpose universities. The focus of accreditation review grows more critical at these institutions, but traditional frameworks of accreditation have become more cumbersome and less effective at these institutions.
- A shift toward effectiveness and performance indicators beyond inputs and resources as the organizing basis for defining and evaluating quality.
- Higher expectations for the performance of graduates, leading to calls for increased attention to evidence of student learning.
- A burgeoning focus on the diversity of learners and learning needs in American higher education, along with the increased globalization of curricula, programs, and student populations.

- Higher mobility of students between institutions, changing patterns of institutional attendance, and the de-institutionalization of learning settings leading to a decline in institutional impact and control over the educational experience and curricula of students.
- Concern over the rising costs of higher education and recognition that higher education is a major factor in economic growth and productivity, resulting in an emphasis on the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness in institutional performance.
- The increased impact and workload caused by federal regulations that affect accreditation processes and all institutions of higher education, (*WASC Handbook*, 2002).

How will institutional assessment under the direction of a skilled educational leader help accelerate admissions reform? It can be argued that reform should begin in the way institutions assess the growth of students as they progress through a degree program, with benchmarks built in along the way to encourage student self-reflection, self-critique, self-correction, and self-renewal. Strategic planning, self-study surveys, focus discussion groups, standards committees, and accreditation visits all provide rich data for reform proposals. Yet, some would further argue that this history of educational reform has been marked with examples of consistent failure to become institutionalized into permanent policy (Pogrow, 1996). The goal of assessment should be to bring about a synergetic collective of representative members of the institution and hold open discussions and strive for

group consensus, with the final goal of the establishment of collective priorities that are consistent, quantifiable, measurable, and directly connected to the institutional vision (Shapiro & Nunez, 2001).

In the final analysis, it is evident that assessment has a range of meanings originating from its dictionary definition “to sit beside.” Assessment measures must be part of an institution’s culture in order to move toward some of the changes based on the evolving role for women who enter graduate programs discussed throughout this chapter. The ties to institutional accountability are obvious. Academic leaders must present assessment activities to stimulate scholarly reflection on a campus’s collective educational endeavors. It must likewise provide information that will allow the quality of educational offerings to be improved. As opposed to considering assessment to satisfy outside agencies, assessment must focus on objectives that reach beyond compliance with accreditation standards to uncover the internal motivators of institutional curiosity and thus create lasting change in administrative systems. This begins with admissions.

It seems that the current admissions standards, high-stakes testing, and assessment criteria provided in this section could continue to be used by leaders as control measures to systematically quantify and qualify students using emerging methodology. An alternative could be a reformed graduate application protocol that contains methods to capture skills and abilities obtained throughout the lifespan and use them to excite, recruit, and motivate the learning experiences of graduate students. Darling-Hammond (1994) provided hope for new directions by urging

leaders to recognize the influence of testing on admission design, curriculum development design, and implementation in the organizational structure. She wrote

Given the knowledge now available for addressing diverse learning needs, and the needs of today's society for a broadly educated populace, the goals of education and assessment are being transformed from deciding who will be permitted to become well educated to helping ensure that everyone will learn successfully. (p. 12)

It was stated earlier that institutions of higher education are in a continuous cycle of change, responding to both external and internal variables that influence policy and institutional accountability. The nature of the response identifies that nature of the institution's commitment of change and quality.

Continuously improving organizations have formal processes to encourage both internal and external beneficiaries to identify problems. They dare to do so only because they are willing to listen and they have equally substantive processes to solve problems and prevent their recurrence. They are committed to improving quality. (Chaffee, 1992, p. 34)

Should the research contained in this project result in recommendations about fundamental issues necessary for the institution to improve, said recommendations must become part of the organizational structure and priorities. These are not intended to be short-term responses or responses not linked to the mission of the university. Because of this, academic leaders will face numerous consequences for

constructivist change as a result of this cognitive shift based on individual institutional response to the conclusion of the study.

In a chapter within the book, *In Defense of American Higher Education*, Jules B. LaPidus (1998) described the progression of graduate education in America in the following manner:

By the late 1950's going to graduate school was not just a matter of pursuing scholarly interests, it was also a good career decision. During the last 50 years of the twentieth century, American graduate education continued to grow both in numbers and in prestige. By the end of the century, the American approach to graduate education was serving as a model for much of the world. Doctoral production had risen to well over 40,000 each year, and the number of master's degrees approached 400,000 annually. But while the numbers are impressive, they do not reflect the many changes that took place in every aspect of graduate education during this half century. In particular, the changing relationship between graduate education and careers and the advent of distance technology, mediated through the Internet, are causing a shift in the way graduate education is perceived by students, the education and the business communities, and the public at large. (p. 129)

Strategically planning for continuous improvement requires first a consideration of what the institution is doing internally and offering externally and, second, the creation of effective processes to work on solving problems and improving quality motivated through effective leadership. Part of responding to the

changing environment is the way people live and in how, when, and where they work and further their education. By identifying and analyzing whether any change in the institution, process, structure, or mission occurs following proposed graduate reform efforts, this commitment to quality, both internally and externally, can be measured and applied to institutional issues of access and retention of future graduate college candidates.

To facilitate change, leaders must accept that within the action of change lays demonstrations of realignment, negotiating, conflict and grieving past practices. Organizational theorists Bolman and Deal (1997) reminded leaders that there were ways of easing the difficulties of transformation to include monitoring and measuring core values, encouraging rituals, anchoring vision embodied in metaphor and symbols, and investing ceremonies to keep stakeholder spirit high. Change always disrupts existing roles and produces confusion and uncertainty. The quality of the leader may be affected by the degree to which he/she is able to control the variety of variables that confront them. Whether the leadership style is transactional or transformational, constructivist or authoritarian, responsibility is a common thread. The continuous struggle to understand the purposes, structures, and impact of administrative and academic policy becomes a secondary issue, as leaders turn to the unique personality traits they possess to create this organizational foundation. These traits cause administrators to be responsible for facilitating the change and growth of those around them. Once leaders understand that the most they can do for anyone else is work on themselves in this symbolic way, the reciprocity unfolds.

There are several theories to support the idea that leadership is reciprocal and serves to facilitate change through constructivist methods, which is easily applied to the ideas surrounding future admission reform efforts. Linda Lambert (1995) completed significant research which implied that constructivist leadership included the development of complex cognitive structures including schematic knowledge. The ideas contained in Lambert's research are aligned with the characteristics defined by women's ways of knowing described earlier in this chapter. Educational leaders and university stakeholders work in collaboration to identify patterns of formal and informal knowledge, which in turn uncover predictors of academic success. Lambert wrote

The theory of leadership needs to incorporate criteria that involve all adults in the learning and leading process, create a culture in which reflective and interactive learning can take place, involve structures that allow for conversations from which meaning and knowledge can be constructed, and encourage professionals to seek collective meaning and collective purpose grounded in their practice. (p. 15)

In short, leaders encourage individuals, provide room for growth, give the reflection needed to address change, and reward critical problem solving.

The contemporary theory of constructivist leadership centers on relationship development and the awareness of individual histories, energies, emotions, and thoughts and could provide the cognitive ingenuity necessary to initiate change in the graduate admissions arena. Administrators generate

information as they interact with one another, collect data from admissions documents, share that information, and then modify that information to meet a finite need, which could be applied to research in admission reform targeted toward a specified professional area such as psychology. It is a given that relationship building is central to the role of the leader and can enhance the following activities:

- Evoke potential in a trusting environment.
- Reconstruct or “break set” with old assumptions and myths.
- Focus on the construction of meaning.
- Frame actions that embody new behaviors and purposeful intentions (Lambert, 1995).

The potential for action is exciting and suggests that an outcome of this type of leadership direction could be to demonstrate that students are fully served through policies, practices, and a wide range of learning experiences, culminating in the quality of the overall educational experience. Admissions portfolios as proposed by the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning to use an inclusive, non-competitive admissions process to determine the best educational match for the adult learner could soon be realized across American institutions with a purposive application (CAEL, 2002). Leaders using a constructivist approach can further agree that developing theories that identify human abilities will need thorough measurement criteria and extensive experimentation in the higher education environment. Clusters of abilities can be identified through research that predicts

academic success and is contained within the application protocol to meet this objective.

It is not an overstatement to describe higher education with such words as *transition*, *crisis*, or *change* as institutions respond to foundation-cracking variables in the global context such as those described in the preceding chapters. In the face of such trends, higher education is reacting internally and externally using all aspects of its collective resources to respond and move forward into an evolved context. For graduate students who are women, this can translate into a discriminating sense of consumerism that must be done prior to the final selection of a graduate program. Quality fits into this very complex culture of change not only because there is increased public interest from student participants, but from employers who are increasingly more aware of and involved in the goals of higher education. The platform for either praising or criticizing higher education is squarely built on the characteristics and resulting public perceptions of quality and academic effectiveness. Individual planks on the platform include such variables as admissions, student outcomes, accreditation, and institutional accountability, all of which are fodder for the public policy debate.

Controversy and procedural modification in university policy, particularly in the area of graduate admissions, have generally been without an overarching theoretical or conceptual environment. The developing context of this project includes historical awareness and admission reform that occur through the application and evolving nature of higher education. When graduate institutions admit graduate

students who are either inadequately prepared or unsuited for graduate work, injustice is done not only to the students but to society as well. The challenge for educational leaders is constant.

This injustice is particularly true for psychology and other professional disciplines that serve the human psyche. Intellectual characteristics coupled with personality traits and patterns within one's life experience can help admissions officers make a qualified determination as to which candidates are suited for a particular academic discipline, as long as it is tooled in such a way as not to become cumbersome or further lengthen the application process. Using an emphasis on emerging predictors, the assumption is that women have had different life experiences than men and that those differences matter in the selection of an academic program (Farnham, 1987).

The pursuit of a college education often stems from the recognition that a college degree affords both economic leveling and social mobility more than any other distinct factor. There is work to be done to provide equitable and deeply meaningful future learning opportunities for women who enter professional study in psychology. Communities of learners are interconnected, and relationships deepen in this way. It is the responsibility of leaders to persistently construct meaning within a context of shared and created educational experiences, framed within institutional standards and accountability. Leaders who come to the field of education with a sense of ethics and vision can become vulnerable when influenced by both external and internal environmental factors and must learn to balance these factors in

academic reform efforts. It is important to remember that emerging leaders need to expose and examine emerging docile vulnerabilities contained within them and within the organization they serve and invite others to do the same. Administrative leaders in academia should examine the ethical and visionary constructs in conjunction with the environmental and cultural factors that surround them. In that way, reform efforts are authentically developed and can sustain the challenges of time.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

The purpose of this section is to describe the research methodology used in this study. A qualitative method, grounded theory, has been selected to allow for a more comprehensive exploration of the admissions phenomena, thus allowing for individualized application and insight. Qualitative research designs typically have the following characteristics, as compiled by Marie C. Hoepfl in her 1997 article

*Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Education Researchers:*

- Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe, and interpret settings as they are, maintaining what is called empathic neutrality.
- The researcher acts as the human instrument of data collection.
- Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis.
- Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.
- Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.
- Qualitative researchers pay attention to the idiosyncratic as well as the pervasive, seeking the uniqueness of each case.

- Qualitative research has an emergent (as opposed to predetermined) design, and researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or product of the research.
- Qualitative research is judged using special criteria for trustworthiness.

The advantages of qualitative methods include an emphasis on flexibility and understanding, with a relative instead of an absolute perspective. Qualitative methodologies are ideal for creating meaning and significance of a social phenomenon, with a valued objective and independent outcome possible.

The purpose of this project, as stated in the first chapter, is to research and analyze the best predictors of academic success contained in standardized and narrative graduate applications. This information has traditionally been a part of the American graduate university admissions process. Of particular interest in this study is the effect on and linkage to academic success for women who enter the field of psychology. The research focuses on the process of admission including standardized criteria and narrative information that is used in the administrative review of an applicant's file. How this research impacts selection decisions and administrative policy in higher education is carefully considered. Characteristics of adult women who typically apply to professional graduate programs in psychology, selected from a private university in California that used both standard and narrative criteria to determine admission status were examined. Implications for leaders as a result of this study are discussed, and future reform directions are proposed to address the changing culture of graduate admissions in American institutions of higher education.

Central to any understanding of the knowledge base a candidate brings to graduate school are the qualities of mental models individuals have about a discipline and about concepts or phenomena within that discipline (Getner & Stevens 1998). Embedded within this research purpose are the predictors that emerge from admissions data. One of the most striking changes in master's-level programs in the last 30 years has been the growth of practice-oriented graduate degrees, which now constitute roughly 85% of all such degrees awarded (Johnstone, 1992). Most master's degrees are freestanding, are not based on any specific undergraduate major, and are designed for direct employment. Graduate programs have also changed in delivery format, now offering everything from traditional college semesters to accelerated terms (as is the case at the institution selected for this study) to a variety of on-line and distance options, or a combination thereof. Graduate programs in psychology typically lead to a post-graduate licensure requirement for those who wish to go into private psychotherapy practice. Therefore, this project actively conducted a systematic analysis of the facts and characteristics of the selected population and provide a detailed picture of the graduate admissions phenomenon as a means of pinpointing areas of needed improvements in graduate admissions protocols.

### General Design of the Study

The research design of the study is based on the grounded theory method developed by Dr. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967). Grounded theory is a design which “systematically observes a behavior or social process and to identify

trends and patterns that suggest a tentative theory about the patterns” (Cherry, 2000, pg. 53). This process of using emergent strategies results in constant comparisons which reveal patterns that suggest a tentative theory in that each application package is compared to the next, yielding insights and key patterns with each additional inquiry. Although grounded theory is primarily an inductive process, it also uses deduction by making continuous and specific comparisons that provide deeper levels of related patterns within existing data sets.

Adding more detail to the design elements of this study, Cherry (2000)

listed 11 steps for conducting grounded theory study:

- Literature review
- Selection of parameters of study
- Collection of data
- Comparison of patterns of the first case with those of the second case, etc.
- Development of working hypotheses as common patterns emerge across interviews
- Formulation of additional questions and modification of questions based on analysis
- Continuation of theoretical sampling
- Review of relevant literature when patterns appear to stabilize
- Linking of relevant literature to the empirically grounded hypothesis

- Testing of theoretical formulations derived from preceding steps
- Revision of theoretical formulations as needed to fit empirical patterns in each subsequent step

The use of grounded theory is guided by the research questions and conceptual framework that allow the researcher to focus on informative admissions data that might not otherwise be available using a statistical measure. Grounded theory emphasizes causal relationships, including elements that include phenomena, causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action strategies, and consequences (Glaser, 2003). Questions studied are action or change-oriented and examine a basic social process from the perspective of human interactions. The phenomena and expansive context of admissions predictors and women's academic characteristics fit this design definition.

Grounded theory is by no means exhaustive or aimed at resolving all of the issues and questions about graduate admissions, predictive indicators, or women's educational characteristics. A simple comparison of each candidate's undergraduate GPA, standardized entrance examination scores (GRE, MAT), and a survey of coursework completed since admission was applied to the subjective rubric formed to predict further possible learning outcomes. It is evident that current standardized instruments can sample parts of an individual's knowledge base. It also is evident that standardized instruments that assess the rich organizational aspects of that knowledge, including features of individual mental models, are not presently in use. Inferring relationships between discipline-specific concepts, building new knowledge,

and accessing knowledge in problem-solving contexts are all a function of having well-organized knowledge and well-developed mental models (Johnson-Laird, 1983). This project used grounded theory analysis of admissions packages that included both narrative and standardized data as “a form of inquiry that does not depend solely on ethnographic or participant-observer data” (Yin, 1994 p.54). Using information from the literature review to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 1994) and using the process of constant comparisons to better organize the raw data into meaningful sets of events and recurrent themes (Cherry, 2000), the project advanced the level of inquiry of the processes and the results they obtained at certain higher educational institutions, both specifically at the institution studied and in a larger context. There was also an attempt to view the landscape of the near future, given the type and level of change that occurs when offering higher education in less traditional modalities.

The nature of Barney Glaser’s (1967) grounded theory met these essential criteria. The design of this study and the data collection process that was guided by the conceptual framework and research questions presented earlier allowed for an ever-developing entity that defines qualitative method. Grounded theory is especially useful in research questions raised within the social sciences. The mechanics of emerging concepts coupled with continuous parallels to the literature create a synthesis of thought and a goal of contributing theory of knowledge at the conclusion. The grounded theory study works through overlapping phases that have specific characteristics: data collecting, note taking, coding, memoing, sorting, and writing. In addition, the five analytical phases of grounded theory building are research design,

data collection, data ordering, data analysis, and literature comparison (Pandit, 1996).

This approach assumes that theory can be formulated from consistent concepts that are evident in the presenting raw data. According to Glaser's colleagues Corbin and Strauss (1990):

Theories can't be built with actual incidents or activities as observed or reported; that is, from "raw data." The incidents, events, happenings are taken as, or analyzed as potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels. If a respondent says to the researcher, "Each day I spread my activities over the morning, resting between shaving and bathing," then the researcher might label this phenomenon as "pacing." As the researcher encounters other incidents, and when after comparison to the first, they appear to resemble the same phenomena, then these, too, can be labeled as "pacing." Only by comparing incidents and naming like phenomenon with the same term can the theorist accumulate the basic units for theory (p.186).

This methodology is useful when exploring a dynamic process like admissions and understanding the nature of the resulting changes. In fact, Glaser (as cited in Haig, 1995) maintained that "the strategy of comparative analysis for generating theory puts a high emphasis on theory as process: that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product". This perspective allows for the freedom to look for constant new ideas and newly discovered elements of synthesized knowledge.

### Study Population and Sample Selection

As was described in Chapter 1, the university selected for this study had demonstrated that admission reform was a value central to the institution's mission and vision resulting from both recent accreditation reviews and reorganizing all of the off-campus administrative structures. Grounded theory is particularly useful in research that seeks to examine deeply a social phenomenon based on presenting information. With the formation of the newly organized University College, now entering its third year of structure in California, the selected university was positioned to use the research as a result of this study and select activities that would result in an admissions protocol for adult learners.

To identify the study population, permission was obtained from the Dean of University College to use random graduate admissions applications for female candidates in the MA Psychology program collected from the off-campus sites for this secondary data analysis. The Registrar's Office was contacted, and the study elements were described to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The files were selected from August 2000 to August 2001 from among candidates who had been admitted to the graduate program in psychology. The selected sample marked the beginning of the new University College structure and was coincidentally at the same time the new University College Dean was hired to take the leadership role in implementing the new organizational structure and begin the work on admission reform.

From the initial pool of 150 randomly selected graduate applications, 50 were selected (every 3<sup>rd</sup> complete application package). Each selected sample contained a

graduate application, entrance GPA, entrance standardized score, statement of intent, and autobiographical statement. Each application in turn was investigated and coded in light of the core questions regarding graduate admissions, institutional accountability, and ideas presented earlier in this chapter using the tools available through grounded theory.

### Data Collection Instruments

Research activity in grounded theory begins with a research question as the primary instrument to guide the data collection, coding, memoing, and synthesis activities. The questions best suited for grounded theory research are those which are action or change oriented and examine a basic social process the perspective of human interactions. The researcher's task is to understand what is occurring within the research situation and how each element of the study interfaces with others. The three basic elements of grounded theory include concepts, categories, and propositions and are presented in Table 1, which was used as each application was coded against the previous application:

Table 1 The Process of Building Grounded Theory

Phase	Activity	Rationale
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN PHASE</b>		
Review of technical literature	Definition of research question	Focuses efforts
Selecting cases	Definition of a priori constructs	Constrains irrelevant variation and sharpens external validity
	Theoretical, not random, sampling	Focuses efforts on theoretically useful cases
<b>DATA COLLECTION PHASE</b>		
Develop rigorous data collection protocol	Create case study database	Increases reliability and construct validity
	Employ multiple data collection methods	Strengthens grounding of theory by triangulation of evidence
Entering the field	Qualitative and quantitative data	
	Overlap data collection and analysis	Synergistic view of evidence
	Flexible and opportunistic data collection methods	Speeds analysis and reveals helpful adjustments to data collection

Table 1 *Continued*

<b>DATA ORDERING PHASE</b>		
Data ordering	Arraying events chronologically	Facilitates easier data analysis. Allows examination of process
<b>DATA ANALYSIS PHASE</b>		
Analyzing data relating to the first case	Use open coding	Facilitates easier data analysis. Allows examination of process
Theoretical sampling	Use axial coding	
Reaching closure	Use selective coding	Develops concepts, categories, and properties
	Literal and theoretical replication across cases	Integrates categories to build theoretical framework
	Theoretical saturation when possible	All forms of coding enhance internal validity and confirms, extends, and sharpens theoretical framework
		Ends process when marginal improvement becomes small
<b>LITERATURE COMPARISON PHASE</b>		
Compare emergent theory with extant literature	Comparison with conflicting frameworks	Improves construct definitions and therefore internal validity
	Comparison with similar frameworks	Also improves external validity by establishing the domain to which the study's findings can be generalized.
(Pandit, 1996)		

The method of grounded theory works through several overlapping phases in that the data collection, note taking, coding, and memoing occur simultaneously from the beginning of the research study, thus identifying patterns that are “grounded” from the presenting data. A coding worksheet was developed by the researcher (see Appendix B). Active sorting of data occurred as patterns emerged and natural categories were formed.

What was attractive about data collection in grounded theory for this researcher was Glaser’s fundamental belief regarding research: that it fits the situation and that it helps the people in the situation to make sense of their experience and to manage the situation better (Dey, 1999). Grounded theory has only begun to be used in the arena of adult education; however, it seems well suited in its focus on generalization theory from data collected in the field (Babchuk, 1996). Grounded theory offered a qualitative method for this study because it provided a means by which the results could be immediately put to practice in the knowledge that emerged from the research, with an eclectic blend of literature to support the ideas that developed.

#### Data Collection Procedures

The first step of the study was to be to obtain permission from the Dean of Chapman University College to collect 50 random graduate applications from adult women candidates for the Master of Arts in Psychology program. Application files were selected from those that had complete documentation (application, transcripts,

standardized scores, statement of intent, autobiographical statement, letters of recommendation, psychology department application) from a pool of 150 applications within the first year of University College's new organizational structure in August 2000. All candidates had been admitted in the MA Psychology program; the institution did not archive the complete packages for students who were not admitted. No additional interviews or observations were conducted with the applicants selected; all research is presented based on pre-existing application documents as a secondary data analysis. Information on completed courses was available through the university Registrar's Office. The selected documents provided a stable source of data and were grounded in the admissions protocol of interest to the researcher.

The second step of the study was to code each application as appropriate using the key words and themes that initially emerged by analyzing each element of the application package sentence by sentence. Using the elements of grounded theory, categories in the form of a rubric were developed, and specific notes were made as each application was reviewed in comparison to the previous one. In addition identified competencies from an ETS study conducted by Mary K. Enright and Drew Gitomer in 1989 that explored descriptions of successful graduate students was applied to the categories. Permission was obtained by ETS to use these categories for this specific research. It is important that these graduate student competencies be fully described in the following section, reprinted by permission of Educational Testing Service, the copyright owner. Following this section, a proposed rubric, which included each of these guiding principles is introduced.

### *Communication*

The essence of communication is the ability to share one's ideas, knowledge, and insights with others. The goal of communication forces an individual to organize and apply numerous skills. One must be able to reason from different viewpoints, follow appropriate communication protocols, and tailor the communication to the audience. In addition, one must be able to comprehend and respond to the communications of others. Communication can be formal or informal, written or oral, spontaneous or planned.

Communication is not unidirectional. Students need to be able to solicit and use criticism in the course of developing ideas. They need to learn how to benefit from having their ideas confronted so as to move on to better formulations on the basis of criticism.

### *Creativity*

Traditionally, creativity has been assessed in terms of the ability to produce an unusual number of ideas or to generate novel ideas, but it has many other connotations. These include curiosity and intellectual playfulness or rebelliousness. Intellectual playfulness or rebelliousness refers to the ability to recognize that facts, concepts, and theories can be subjected to criticism, revision, modification, and reinterpretation. Thus, creativity also requires a domain model that permits this sort of intellectual playfulness. Creativity is possible in connection with almost any problem-solving task in graduate

school. Whether one is planning research or interpreting data, one can proceed in relatively creative or in more prosaic ways.

### *Explanation*

Explanation is the giving of a reason or cause for some phenomenon or finding. The class of skills is critical in the interpretation and analysis of any research, either one's own or someone else's. Explanation can involve divergent production of alternative hypotheses, evaluation of competing hypotheses, or development of an argument that supports an explanation that needs to be communicated. Explanation can also be important in the development of self-knowledge that can influence student decision making. Explanation obviously requires developed reasoning skills. Among the more traditional ability and achievement dimensions, various aspects of reasoning are particularly important. Some of these aspects include analogical thinking in a broad sense, the ability to develop a logical chain of argument, the ability to use the appropriate argument structure or logic structure of one's field, and the ability to defend one's ideas.

### *Motivation*

Successful students are characterized by commitment, involvement, and interest in their work. Motivation may be demonstrated by persistence in working on problems, by enthusiasm and excitement about work, by pursuing problems or assignments beyond the minimum required, and by attending non-required colloquia and professional meetings. The problem of evaluating

applicants' motivation often centers on assessing their interests, which should be of an appropriate degree of specificity (neither too broad or too narrow) and consistent with what the department has to offer. A history of productivity or independent achievement in any area may be evidence of independent, self-activated scholarship.

### *Planning*

Planning refers to the development of a procedure to reach some goal. Planning is involved in such diverse activities as designing a research experiment, organizing a paper or presentation, devising a solution to a mathematical problem, or making career decisions. Planning often includes identifying problems or formulating topics in a manageable way, devising strategies to answer questions, deciding what kinds of evidence are needed to resolve a question, and anticipating likely problems or criticisms. Planning is not just a preparatory activity that occurs at the beginning of an undertaking. Rather, it is an ongoing, interactive process. Planning must be flexible and responsive to new data, ideas, and perceptions.

### *Professionalism*

Professionalism refers to skills in successfully accommodating to the social conditions of a particular field. Included here are social skills, knowledge of the communication channels and the power structure of the field, and practical knowledge. For graduate students, social skills are reflected in the ability to relate to faculty, to reach out to them, and to treat them as colleagues and

equals. Knowledge of the communication channels and power structure of the field includes knowing how to find relevant research and the most recent unpublished reports, which conferences to attend, what professional societies to join, and which journals to read regularly. Finally, practical knowledge involves understanding what is being rewarded by the environment and adapting to it. In short, the student needs to develop a model of the profession that is consistent with the mental models possessed by successful professionals. Many indicators of a student's professional savvy emerge in graduate school. His or her professional social skills are evident in their participation in informal seminars, such as discussions with visiting speakers. Joining professional societies, reading the appropriate journals, and attending and participating in conferences are also good indicators.

### *Synthesis*

Every domain has an extensive knowledge base that needs to be mastered. Mastery is not simply the accretion of discrete facts but the organization of this information into complex knowledge structures. For the purposes of this study, synthesis refers to those skills that facilitate the development of expert domain knowledge structures. Well-synthesized knowledge signifies a firm grasp of the subject area, an understanding of major theories, and a mastery of the content and skills of a field. However, synthesis also implies the capacity to function with a degree of independence, to be able to manipulate knowledge creatively, and to apply available skills under appropriate

conditions. Learning must involve more than just rote accumulation of facts and research skills. As knowledge is acquired, students have to be able to organize it and then reorganize it to make inferences. Thus, synthesis may be evident in a creative restructuring of knowledge in an area, in the identification of new problems to be investigated, or in the development of new approaches to old problems (Enright & Gitomer, 1989).

A worksheet for analyzing these factors using the grounded theory methodology is included in Appendix B. The areas provided for the establishment of themes and emerging concepts regarding the application data that were a part of the study. Throughout this step of note-taking, the literature was consulted as relevant. For example, the authors of the GRE Research Board Report concluded that simulation experiences may help to identify discipline-specific predictors of academic success but concluded that little applicational research of the findings had been conducted in the field. In their concluding remarks, Enright and Gitomer made the final observations:

In my discussions with graduate faculty, we tried to identify critical skills associates with scholarly and professional competence that is not currently assessed by graduate admissions tests. However, we attempted to develop recommendations about a research approach that would foster the empirical definition of these skills in such a manner that feasible methods of assessing them might eventually be developed. The definition of the competencies that graduate students are expected to develop and the tasks they are expected to

accomplish will make it easier for undergraduate programs to prepare students appropriately, will better inform potential graduate students about the nature of graduate education, and will permit both graduate students and graduate faculty to better assess both student progress and program effectiveness (p.29).

The concept of simulation was explored as a thematic result as the study progressed, and it was reviewed in the concluding chapters of the dissertation.

The third step in the research study was to code each graduate application using the worksheet in Appendix B. Each application was constantly compared to the previous application, noting any theoretical ideas that emerged. Categories and properties were created to describe a theme or variable that was uncovered during the coding. Coding is a means by which constant comparison can be reached through open, axial, and selective notations as each application is compared with others in the sample group. Coding families according to Glaser (1978) can include numerous clusters of concepts. The following apply to this study:

- The Six Cs: causes, context, contingencies, consequences, co-variances, conditions.
- Process: Staging, phases, progressions, passages, transitions, steps.
- Degree: Limit, range, intensity, extent, amount, possibility.
- Dimension: Elements, divisions, sector, portion, segment, aspect.
- Strategy: Tactics, mechanisms, techniques, goal attainment.
- Interactive: Reciprocity, interdependence, co-variance.

- Identity-Self: Self image, self concept, self-worth, self-transformation.
- Cutting Point: Boundary, turning point, division, benchmark.
- Means-Goal: End, purpose, anticipated consequences.
- Cultural: Social norms, social values, social beliefs.
- Consensus: Agreements, contracts, opinions, conflict, conformity.
- Mainline: Socialization, recruitment, stratification.
- Theoretical: Scope, integration, relationship to data, utility.
- Representation: Descriptive, prescriptive, evaluative, conceptualizing.
- Scale: GPA, standardized exam, credits completed.
- Basics: Social and structural, learning styles, psychological process.

As this process continued, characteristics and core categories emerged with greater frequency and were connected to the previous cluster of categories. Any identified connection between categories was recorded in memos. Memos are written and re-written as concepts emerge. Credibility in this process is created as thematic saturation occurs – in other words, internal validity is established as the themes replicate and develop into characteristic patterns. Core categories must be central to the theme of the project, must reoccur frequently, and must add a dimension to the overall conceptual framework. Memos added the relationships that connected the categories and assisted in bringing forward the concealed informational themes within the data. In this case, this included the predictors from the conceptual framework suggested by the ETS study as well as those emergent characteristics. This step

continued until all selected graduate applications were coded, each including numerous memos recorded on a database.

The fourth step was to begin to sort the memos based on the conceptual framework on the preliminary worksheet (communication, creativity, explanation, motivation, planning, professionalism, and synthesis) and begin to form an outline from which to prepare the final narrative report, discussion, and emergent theory. It was at this point that the literature was again reviewed as relevant to the theoretical framework that was developed.

The fifth step of the research protocol was to identify the themes and patterns that emerged through the graduate application comparison and coding worksheet and then organize, analyze, and synthesize the data for the final conclusion and recommendation chapters of the dissertation. The rigor of the study was ensured through verifications of credibility of the raw data, transferability to the constructual framework presented at the start of this chapter, and confirming the applicability with the participating institution.

The sixth step was to take the resulting rubric and compare it to progress made by the candidates in the graduate program. A benchmark within the program, the advancement to candidacy, was used to measure individual academic retention, progression, and persistence. Further, an analysis of the GPA of each student at the advancement of candidacy was considered as the study was concluded.

The final step was the identification of possible reform outcomes using contemporary leadership theory, as well as a discussion of simulation activities to identify the predictors of success within the graduate application process.

#### Analysis Procedures

The rubric that described the elements of graduate admission, narrative, and standardized predictors with ideas presented for possible future reform was developed to conduct the analysis of the project. Grounded theory methodology was chosen specifically for this project to allow free exploration of the processes of admission from both a narrative and a standardized perspective. A private liberal arts university with external campus locations designed to serve the needs of the adult learner was selected as an institution that had demonstrated an interest in graduate admission reform through projected policy change in Fall 2003. Characteristics identified in an 1989 GRE Board Research Report were selected to begin the qualitative review of applications, with permission granted by the Educational Testing Service, the copyright owner.

Each application was individually reviewed and coded continuously during the analysis as simultaneous activities. Data were examined line by line with codes attached to the emerging themes. The themes were connected to the literature reviewed as each application was compared to the previous one. After the initial coding was completed, similar codes were grouped together and labeled to identify the broader themes those codes represented. All themes were subject to revision,

elaboration, or deletion throughout the study. The resulting data were embedded in a discussion of the impact on contemporary leadership and the introduction of possible scenarios for admission reform.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter begins to give substance to the initial research question while continuously drawing from the themes presented during the first three chapters. Data are presented, and an age-old and elegant question that has characterized doctoral research will be addressed: So What? This project answered that question by pointing out the foundational tenants of graduate admissions and the multiple issues that surround them. It consciously and thoroughly examined the narrative and standardized predictors that influenced institutional admissions decisions and examined a topic that has currency and impact on leadership within higher educational practice. It clearly named and analyzed findings by framing an itinerary to acknowledge and prepare for leadership action.

To understand the processes, the qualitative method of grounded theory was employed to raise questions regarding the process and outcomes with the goal of discovering explanations that could serve as a foundation to understand some of the dilemmas and concerns about both the nature of graduate admissions and how leaders of higher education institutions interact with these challenges. The benefit of grounded theory is that it allowed the researcher to move from an inductive process to a deductive process and then back to an inductive process. The quantitative idea of “emergence,” so prevalent in grounded theory literature, is actually suspended while empirical evidence is collected to determine the validity of the theory. This constant comparison method allows for the generation of theory from method. A grounded

theory method is never right or wrong; it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability, and readers are asked to judge its quality according to these principles.

### Data Organization

Fifty applications were randomly selected from a pool of 150 candidates who had applied within the first year of the newly formed University College structure. Each candidate completed a graduate application package, including a university application, Master of Arts in Psychology application, autobiographical statement, statement of intent, three letters of recommendation, official transcripts from all universities attended, and a \$40.00 application fee. In addition, if the entry undergraduate's GPA fell under the 3.0 limit, an entrance exam (GRE, GMAT, or MAT) was required prior to completing 12 credits of coursework. The prompt for the autobiographical statement was as follows:

Autobiography Guidelines: The following guidelines are provided to assist you in the writing of your personal autobiography. Your admission to the Master of Arts Degree program in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT)/Counseling is contingent on the quality and timely completion of this autobiographical requirement.

Your personal autobiography must be at least three-four typed pages in length and conform to the following guidelines:

- a. Include childhood, family and (if applicable) marital data and values derived from these experiences in relation to your choice of a career in counseling.
- b. Incorporate two or three relevant experiences that have helped to share your development and personality.
- c. Discuss how you arrived at this point in your career development. Include any relevant professional experience. (Chapman University Graduate Catalog, 2002).

All identifying factors were removed from the selected applications, and they were assigned a sequential number. Each application was extensively coded using the activities of grounded theory, and each was compared to the applications reviewed prior. This was an extensive, time-consuming process because each application was coded line by line in a way that allowed for instinctive reaction, individually memoed and sorted according to characteristic categories, and then applied to the rubric that contained the theoretical descriptive factors as well as the larger categories from the ETS study, to include communication, creativity, explanation, motivation, planning, professionalism, and synthesis. In addition, the coding families typical of grounded theory were applied as relevant key words emerged from the narrative data.

Approximately 90 minutes were spent applying the selected coding clusters to each individual application, with additional notes compiled as various themes emerged.

Three separate analyses of each application were completed, until it seemed that all major themes emerged. The final data were recorded on the first predictor worksheet.

A second rubric worksheet was developed to add the qualitative benchmarks of GPA from the initial application. At the advancement of candidacy stage for those who advanced, comparisons could be drawn between the emerging predictive factors and academic success. The advancement to candidacy was a board review that took place prior to the start of the practicum stage of the graduate program. According to the university selected, the functions of the advancement to candidacy committee were:

- To review the student's academic status with respect to fulfilling required course work in a satisfactory manner;
- To provide information and counsel to the students in matters pertaining to his or her academic progress and plans;
- To ascertain whether significant gaps exist in the student's knowledge and/or understanding of the subject field;
- To assess the student's academic, ethical, and psychological readiness; and personal suitability to engage in the profession of counseling; and
- To assess the student's readiness to begin the practicum. (Chapman University Graduate Catalog, 2002)

As the themes emerged, a continuous literature review and grounded theory procedure were used to cluster the ideas into categories and begin the task of identifying the emerging themes. A rubric was developed to provide an explicit scheme for classifying the predictive language into themes that varied as each

application was compared to the one before it. The strength of the rubric was that it provided a means by which complex ideas could be examined efficiently. In this case, holistic coding produced a global description of the emerging predictors, as well as the identification of sub-factors worthy of additional analysis. Throughout the process, the aim of the research was to analyze the admissions processes and the narrative and standardized predictors to determine the impact of the predictors on student success. Relevant literature was applied as intellectual intrigue surfaced with the themes, which are interspersed throughout the data analysis and interpretive chapter. The aim of grounded theory is not to produce absolute truths but instead to generate theories and hypotheses as a direct result of the emerging conceptualization.

### General Descriptive Results

Two descriptive rubrics will provide the descriptive results of the study. The first is the Graduate Application Predictor Rubric described earlier in this chapter that includes the characteristics from the ETS study, the grounded theory coding categories, literature themes, and synthesis. The second rubric is the standardized information provided from the initial application, to include entrance GPA, admission categories, undergraduate prerequisite deficiencies at the time of admission, as well as the data from the advancement to candidacy benchmark. Both are presented as separate rubrics, to provide for an honest and authentic viewing of the data as it was compiled.

To provide a more thorough explanation of the categories in the Graduate Application Predictor Rubric, the following additional descriptors are provided for each category:

### **Applicant Number**

-Randomly assigned for the 50 selected applications.

### **Guiding Principles**

-Taken with permission from the GRE Board Research Report, April 1989  
*Toward a Description of Successful Graduate Students.*

-The principles were developed by six graduate psychology faculty selected by ETS who judged the importance of various analytical reasoning skills in graduate performance. Of the seven identified competencies, the two that were the most important to the faculty focus group included “creativity” and “motivation”. These characteristics were assigned to each application based on the memoing and coding activities of grounded theory.

Communication

Creativity

Explanation

Motivation

Planning

Professionalism

Synthesis

### **Coding Open and Selective**

-Each line of the narrative contains a condition, phenomenon, strategy, and consequence to identify and code according to the coding clusters selected for this study. Coding involves constant questions and must follow these criteria:

-must be central

-reoccur frequently

-connections with other categories should come quick and richly

-completely variable

-is also an indication of the dimension of the problem

-clear and grabbing implication emerges for formal theory

-Categories and properties were created to describe a theme or variable that was uncovered during the coding. Coding is a means by which constant comparison can be reached through open, axial, and selective notations as

each application is compared with others in the sample group. Coding families according to Glaser (1978) can include numerous clusters of concepts. The following coding clusters were selected for this study:

- The Six Cs: causes, context, contingencies, consequences, co-variances, conditions.
- Basics: Social and structural, learning styles, psychological process.
- Consensus: Agreements, contracts, opinions, conflict, conformity
- Cultural: Social norms, social values, social beliefs.
- Cutting Point: Boundary, turning point, division, benchmark
- Degree: Limit, range, intensity, extent, amount, possibility.
- Dimension: Elements, divisions, sector, portion, segment, aspect
- Identity-Self: Self image, self concept, self-worth, self-transformation.
- Interactive: Reciprocity, interdependence, co-variance.
- Mainline: Socialization, recruitment, stratification
- Means-Goal: End, purpose, anticipated consequences.
- Process: Staging, phases, progressions, passages, transitions, steps.
- Strategy: Tactics, mechanisms, techniques, goal attainment.
- Representation: Descriptive, prescriptive, evaluative, conceptualizing
- Scale: GPA, standardized exam, credits completed.
- Theoretical: Scope, integration, relationship to data, utility.

### **Constant Comparisons, Theme, and Constructs**

-This category allows for application-by-application comparison to identify multiple phenomena and deconstruct and then reconstruct elements of the narrative as themes emerge. This category is used to order data and understand linkages by generating propositions and making comparisons.

### **Theoretical Sampling From Literature**

-Compares emergent theory with appropriate literature. This connection to literature improves construct definitions, and therefore internal validity of the study results. The literature review also improves external validity by establishing the domain to which the study's findings can be generalized.

### **Synthesis**

-Provides an overall thematic assessment of the emergent concepts and overarching ideas.

### **Emerging Predictors**

-Concluding themes, hypothetical clusters of predictors that emerge as a result of concluding analysis of all categories combined.

To illustrate and clarify the process and procedure of the research analysis of each applicant, one candidate was selected to profile in detail the steps described in the previous section. The candidate selected was a 30 year old female, who had been admitted in the MA Psychology program on 6/24/02. Her undergraduate GPA was 3.5 and she was admitted unconditionally. This candidate met the benchmark of Advancement to Candidacy on 11/18/03 and had completed 54 credits at the time of advancement.

In the narrative information submitted this candidate wrote a brief Statement of Intent and responded to the autobiographical prompt. Each category is described below, including the final coding comments with illustration from the narrative text:

#### **Guiding Principles**

E (Explanation), S (Synthesis), M (Motivation)

“My goal is to become a marriage and family therapist and to someday have my own practice. Also, I have gone through some of the problems that people may be facing in their lives and I might be able to relate to their feelings and help them work through them and move on.”

#### **Coding Open and Selective**

Process-staging, progression, passages, transitions, steps.

Identity-Self-Self-image, self-concept, self-worth, transfer

Cutting Point-Boundary, turning point, division, benchmark

“Growing up, I didn’t have a normal childhood. However, I was always well cared for. I was surrounded by people who loved me and would do anything to make sure that I was happy. I believe that people are who they are because of their life experiences and the way they deal with them. I am the type of person that I am today

because of some of the things that I went through and how I was able to deal with them.”

### **Constant Comparison, Theme, and Constructs**

-From psychological incident comes anger and action.

“I don’t think I had the best childhood in the world, and I certainly don’t think that I had the worst. I had problems, but I worked through them and now I think that I am a better person because of what I went through. From talking to friends and reading books, I’ve noticed that many people blame the problems in their lives on their childhood experiences and they don’t bother to work through them so they can move on. I believe that the type of person you are is not necessarily a result of what happened to you in your childhood, it is the way in which you deal with what happened to you.”

### **Theoretical Sampling From Literature**

-Stability, selection of college due to access and convenience.

“I would like to attend Chapman University for my Masters of Arts in Psychology for two main reasons: First, Chapman University has an excellent reputation, I know people that are currently in the undergraduate program and they are very happy with the classes and the level of knowledge that the instructors pass on to the students. Second, the classes are offered at Vandenburg Air Force Base in the evenings. I am in the Air Force and stationed at Vandenburg, so it will be very convenient for me to attend classes after work.”

### **Synthesis**

-Help people as she was helped.

“Once my mother went into rehab, it was strange because she had always been the strongest person in my life. She was my hero, not an addict. I was confused and in a way I felt let down, but more so, I felt like I let her down. I felt like I should have been there for her, like I should have recognized that she needed help, I should have helped her. Now, because of this experience, I believe that it will be easier for me to recognize when people are having problems and hopefully I will be able to help them work through them.”

### **Emerging Predictors**

-Service, helping others, graduate school as a passage.

“I want to be a therapist so I can help people deal with their problems and ultimately become better people because of them.”

This case example is provided to assist in understanding the three descriptive tables and place the analysis and concluding recommendations in context. The Graduate Application Predictor Rubric, the standardized application data table, and the Applicants From the Study Who Advanced to Candidacy tables are presented to bridge to the various thematic conclusions narrated in Chapter 5. Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the conclusions and recommendations were developed by the researcher and included personal reflection, values, and beliefs that emerged from the application data.

Table 2

Graduate Application Predictor Rubric

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**	Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
1	E, C, M	Cutting point, identity-self, process, strategy	"Reports" – early primary caregiver, no shame	Adult learning themes-access, convenience	Desire to help people	Seeking knowledge & skills
2	P, Pr	Basics, goal, means, theoretical	-Unemotional "reports"	Logical, scriptive narrative-selfless giving	Psychological process as key to decision making	"Service," need undergrad experience represented in grad work
3	E, M, S	Cutting point, identity-self, process	-From psychological incident comes anger and action	Stability, selection of college due to access & convenience	Help people as she was helped	Service, helping others, grad school as a passage
4	M, P	Means-goal, process, theoretical	-Reports passion for field, psych. Belief that therapy was weak	Parental motivation to be independent	School selected for access, unsure of professional fit	Professional motivation, school selected for reputation
5	C, E, M	Cutting point, degree, identity-self, process	-Reported spiritual quest, academic struggle	Influence of culture, women's transitions	Significant psychological experience, brings motivation	Skills needed of empathy & sympathy
6	C, E, S	Cutting point, dimension, mainline, means-goal	Reporting life events – family struggle, - no therapy	Family trauma, resiliency, economic challenges	Persistence, brief and unfocused in using psychological terms	Helps others through her own life work, second career
7	E, M, P, S	Cutting point, identity-self, means-goal, scale	Professional goal-reports numerous hours of therapy	Descriptive language, authoritarian parents	Resiliency and resolution	Career focus, professional achievement
8	M, S	Identity-self, means-goal, representative	-Evaluate and heal from her past – reports	Submissive, little experience with therapy	Academic expectation, instrument for change	Multicultural, spiritual skills
9	C, Cr, E, P	Means-goal, process, strategy, theoretical	-Reflective statement -early empathy	Symbolic language, childhood provided framework	Wants more flexibility & control	Professional goals, skill sets needed
10	E, P, S	Consensus, means-goal, process, scale	-Therapy at a young age, learned about supportive care	Strong narrative ability, empathy, intelligent	Understands the benefit of speaking to someone	No previous work in therapy

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process  
 Consensus Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity  
 Cultural Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs  
 Cutting Point Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark  
 Degree Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility  
 Dimension Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect  
 Identity-Self Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer  
 Interactive Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance

Mainline Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification  
 Means-Goal End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences  
 Process Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps  
 Representation Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing  
 Scale GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed  
 Strategy Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment  
 The 6 C's Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences  
 Theoretical Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

Table 2, *continued*

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**	Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
11	C, Cr, E, M, S	Cutting point, dimension, identity-self, the 6 C's	Honest reflection of historical & personal values	Believes her experiences are related to field	Respects need for credentials in field, courage	Wants skills, professional quality & certification
12	E, Pr, P	Basics, consensus	Life experiences showed connection, understanding	Brief reports, little experience in the field	Resilient and can bounce back from anything	Person who can offer help
13	Cr, M, S	Interactive, process, scale, theoretical	Strong evidence of thoughtfulness	Benefits of life experience	Academics and physical educational independence	Positive counseling experience, connection with art and nature
14	E, M	Degree, process, strategy	Shallow, little detail or reporting, reports in economic terms	Interested in discoveries about psychology	Wants to learn more about self, business background	Professional skill building
15	E, M, S	Basics, cultural, means-goal, process	Extensive experience with a client, lifelong learning	The impact of past conflicts, need for control	Enterprising, family trauma	Multicultural emphasis, personal development
16	E, M	Consensus, degree, identity-self, scale	Personal Therapy, life challenges, reported	Social service experience, connection with others	Strong character, strong therapist	Professional motivation, skills
17	C, E, S	Cutting point, mainline, process	Adult learning themes, defining needs according to others	Visual impairment, develops resiliency, strong emotional upbringing	Development of a psychological perspective	Personal therapy and challenges result in learning about potential
18	P	Basics, degree, process, scale	Reported like a resume	Inner strength and determination to succeed	The importance of an excellent work ethic	Professional needs, promotion
19	M, P	Cutting point, mainline, process	Small private school environment wanted for graduate study	Lifespan influences, innate understanding of psychology	Social, self-confidence, family, peace keeper	Lifespan learning, readiness as equated to emotional health
20	E, M, Pr	Consensus, degree, process	Professional report, traditional family structure, unusual	Influence of communication and persistence on study	Wants to make a positive contribution to mental health of families	Specific career goal

\*Guiding Principles C = Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

Table 2, *continued*

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**	Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
21	E, M, P	Means-goal, process, the 6 C's	Sees grad school as an instrumental step	Out of conflict comes resiliency	Strength, empathy, charisma as factors	Skill acquisition, professional progression
22	E, M, P	Cutting point, process, scale	The need to love and express love authentically	Midlife changes and return to therapy	Transformation, benefits of aging relative to learning	Learning opportunities throughout the profession
23	P	Process, scale	Simple "report" based on reputation of school	Unknown variables, impact decision to return to school	Strength, endurance, persistence	Professionalism
24	E, M, P	Cutting point, process, strategy	School will accommodate working adults	Connecting experience to knowledge	Providing others with tools to make difficult times easier	Focused career objective
25	P, Pr	Basics, scale	Volunteered in psychology, very little reporting	Sees self as talented in working with people	Professional motivation, weak motivation	Cultural and professional influences
26	E, P	Basics, degree, process, scale	School was attractive due to proximity and convenience	Connection to social service, open communication	Strength of interpersonal relationships occurs through communication	Reflective of personal professional career growth
27	C, E, M, S	Cutting point, identity-self, interactive, scale	Family trauma as a means of understanding therapy	Pain and guilt provide clarity	Endurance and persistence	Skills needed, lifelong
28	E, Pr	Degree, process, scale	Military & communication will help her in working as a therapist	Living an open and investigative life aids in therapy	Personal philosophy develops as one ages	Career planning, development
29	E, E, P, Pr, S	Basics, interactive, means-goal, the 6 C's, theoretical	We each have a threshold for amount of emotional pain	A sense of connection with less fortunate	Therapy as a catalyst for change and growth	Growth through life opportunities
30	E, P, Pr	Mainline, process, representation	Religious emphasis – unsure of discipline motivation	Coming from a successful marriage will result in developing as a therapist	Strength from religion creates consistency	Learning opportunities based on historic factors

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process  
 Consensus Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity  
 Cultural Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs  
 Cutting Point Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark  
 Degree Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility  
 Dimension Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect  
 Identity-Self Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer  
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 Strategy Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment  
 The 6 C's Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences  
 Theoretical Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

Table 2, continued

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**	Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
31	E, M, P, Pr, S	Means-goal, process, strategy, theoretical	Brief, simple reporting, highly organized	Care-giving models, nurse in previous career	Seeking knowledge skills, train in to do therapy	Work and experience relevant to the field
32	E, Pr, S	Basics, identity-self, representation, strategy	Convenience of program, a business background	Values of cooperation, respect	Wants to pass state exam	Skill set needed, goal oriented
33	E, Pr	Interactive, means-goal, process	Working with care giving once her own children were grown	Implement counseling into teaching	Helping families as a paraprofessional	Skills needed to help children
34	E, E, M, P, Pr, S	Interactive, means-goal, process, strategy,	Life trauma results in a healthy perspective	Solid coping skills as a result of past difficulties	Help people, developed empathy	Professional goal, personal fulfillment
35	M, Pr, S	Degree, means-goal, process	Reported, military family, traveled, value of education	Prevention models, needed as relationships develop	Enhance well-being through support, counseling, & education	Cultural influence, professional portrayal of clinical cases
36	E, M, P	Degree, means-goal, strategy	Differs from others refers to a life as a process	Rebalancing therapy	Long-term "nature" of helping others	More knowledge in treatment skills
37	C, M	Consensus, dimension, identity-self	School selected for accelerated rate, unhealthy family dynamics	Social standard lifestyle	Socialization themes	Skills needed to be licensed
38	E, P	Process, scale, strategy	School selected for personalized attention	Life experience in psychology creates career interest	Wants to have an impact on the world through counseling	Skills needed to meet goals
39	E, M, P	Cutting point, identity-self, means-goal	Reports belief that it is necessary to work together to solve issues	Strengthen bonds between people	Family is central to a caring relationship	Learning opportunities, professional goals
40	E, M, S	Cultural, identity-self, process, scale	Encouragement emerges from trauma, reports	Non supportive families and abuse, depend on self	Prepare families for brighter days ahead	Learn specific counseling techniques

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

Table 2, *continued*

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**	Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
41	E, P	Means-goal, process, representation	Reporting of strong & supportive family, school, reputation, convenience	Care-giving and nurturing as therapist traits	Family background set foundation for being a great listener	Connecting knowledge, learning opportunities come from adversity
42	E, M, P	Cutting point, means-goal, process, theoretical	Evaluating the past helps to understand the present	Understands impact of counseling on well being	Best way to conquer fear is by embracing it and looking it in the face	Professional skill set
43	C, E, M, P, Pr, S	Cultural, degree, means-goal, process	Report, service-oriented, advocate for children	Being obedient and compliant does not lend itself to a happy life	Life experience, ethnic background, & education are motivating	Sees the need for professional licensure, cultural influences
44	C, E, P	Consensus, degree, process	Desire to help others, working towards being non-judgmental	Open family structure, mental illness, & labeling	Communication as value to increase relationships	Wants specific strategies, life has limitless possibilities
45	E, P, S	Cultural, degree, process, strategy	School selected for reputation and flexibility	Overcoming adversity through faith	Compassion for others in distress	Perseverance through adversity creates strength
46	E, P	Interactive, mainline, process	Written like a testimonial, numerous reasons for pursuing grad work	Success as a result of human interaction	Knows a career in psychology will take hard work and determinism	Wants to improve standard for other families
47	C, E, Pr	Cultural, mainline, means-goal	Selected school for proximity and convenience, report of family dynamics	Values of respect, honesty, and basic goodness of people	Grew up watching people help one another, religious influence	Explore other career options
48	E, S	Identity-self, mainline, process	Reputation of school, strong lessons of diversity	Working adult learning styles, importance of family and friendships	Discipline, education, and love as values, development of empathy	Wants licensing qualification
49	C, E, M, Pr	Means-goal, process, the 6 C's	Diversity within the family structure, need for boundaries and tolerance	Anxiety as a motivation to pursue therapy	Influence of religion on resiliency, need for balance	Working with people and protecting their rights, career progression
50	E, M, P, Pr, S	Basics, cultural, cutting point, strategy	Working adult theme, family trauma, father was alcoholic	Issues of abandonment influences self concept	Building self-esteem helps with skills as a therapist	Professional goals, self-fulfillment journey

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process  
 Consensus Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity  
 Cultural Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs  
 Cutting Point Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark  
 Degree Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility  
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Mainline Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification  
 Means-Goal End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences  
 Process Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps  
 Representation Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing  
 Scale GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed  
 Strategy Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment  
 The 6 C's Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences  
 Theoretical Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

Table 3

No	Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term	# of Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
1	08/07/02	C	ADRE	2.896					
2	11/19/01	E	ADRE	3.000		03/29/01	B	42	3.192
3	06/24/02	C	ADRE	3.574	2	11/18/03	E	54	3.805
4	03/26/02	B	ADRE	3.229	3				
5	05/29/02	B	ADRE	3.382	2				
6	04/28/03	B	ADRE	3.294	1				
7	08/26/02	D	ADRE	No data					
8	08/20/02	D	ADRE	3.987					
9	11/05/01	E	ADRE	3.117		03/26/03	B	30	3.600
10	02/18/02	A	ADRE	3.520	4				
11	08/28/02	D	ADRE	3.986					
12	12/26/01	E	ADRE	3.159	2	03/06/03	A	27	3.930
13	01/04/02	A	ADRE	3.633	2	07/22/03	C	48	3.943
14	01/07/02	A	ADRE	3.408	4				
15	05/01/02	B	ADRE	3.388	5				
16	09/06/01	D	ADRE	3.346		01/22/03	A	40	3.100
17	08/24/01	C	ADRE	3.991		10/26/02	E	33	3.890
18	11/19/01	E	ADRE	3.178		12/18/02	E	39	3.656
19	07/17/02	C	ADRE	3.128	2	10/29/03	E	48	3.693
20	04/03/02	B	ADRE	3.488					
21	05/29/02	B	ADRE	3.075					
22			ADRE						
23	02/27/02	A	ADRE	3.065		05/28/03	B	33	3.482
24	08/28/02	D	ADRE	3.744					
25	06/28/02	C	ADRE	3.457					
26	04/18/02	B	ADRE	2.765	4				
27	05/09/02	B	ADRE	3.260	5	10/30/02	E	63	2.355
28	08/26/02	D	ADRE	3.001					
29	09/28/01	D	ADRE	2.675		06/08/03	C	51	3.293
30	11/07/01	E	RDRE	3.876		08/07/02		15	3.940
31	03/20/02	B	ADRE	3.942					
32	08/22/02	D	ADRE	3.574	2				
33	10/17/01	E	ADRE	3.167	1				
34	04/10/02	B	ADRE	3.981					
35	07/31/02	C	ADRE	3.598					
36	03/18/02	B	ADRE	3.253	1	04/15/03	B	53	3.878
37	08/27/02	D	ADRE	4.000					
38	01/25/02	A	ADRE	3.463		05/07/03	E	18	3.766
39	09/18/02	D	PSCO	3.258	3				
40	10/09/02	E	ADRE	3.260	2	11/13/03	E	33	3.545
41	04/01/02	B	ADRE	3.014		05/28/03	B	30	3.920
42	05/01/02	B	ADRE	3.595					
43	09/04/02	D	ADRE	3.237					
44	09/03/02	D	ADRE	3.138					
45	04/03/02	B	ADRE	3.183					
46	05/01/02	B	ADRE	3.071					
47	09/18/02	D	PADE	3.691					
48	03/18/02	B	ADRE	3.301		04/15/03	B	39	3.869
49	05/29/02	B	ADRE	3.166		08/26/03	C	33	3.890
50	06/04/02	C	ADRE	3.904	3				
<b>Average UG GPA:</b>				<b>3.384</b>	<b>Average GPA at Candidacy</b>				<b>3.618</b>

ADRE: Admitted regular  
 PADE: Pending decision  
 RDRE: Re-Admit Regular  
 PSCO: Pending AC complete

2001  
 Term A: January 8 – March 10  
 Term B: March 19 – May 19  
 Term C: May 28 – July 29  
 Term D: August 6 – October 6  
 Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002  
 Term A: January 7 – March 10  
 Term B: March 18 – May 19  
 Term C: May 27 – July 28  
 Term D: August 5 – October 6  
 Term E: October 14 – December 15

Table 4 Applicants from the Study that Advanced to Candidacy

	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis		Emerging Predictors
2	P, Pr	Basics, goal, means, theoretical		-Unemotional "reports"	Logical, scriptive narrative-selfless giving	Psychological process as key to decision making		"Service," need undergrad experience represented in grad work
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term	#Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
11/19/01	E	ADRE	3.000		03/29/01	B	42	3.192
3	E, M, S	Cutting point, identity-self, process		-From psychological incident comes anger and action	Stability, selection of college due to access & convenience	Help people as she was helped		Service, helping others, grad school as a passage
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term	#Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
06/24/02	C	ADRE	3.574	2	11/18/03	E	54	3.805

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE Admitted regular  
PSCO Pending AC complete  
PADE Pending Decision  
RDRE Re-admit regular

2001  
Term A: January 8 – March 10  
Term B: March 19 – May 19  
Term C: May 28 – July 29  
Term D: August 6 – October 6  
Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002  
Term A: January 7 – March 10  
Term B: March 18 – May 19  
Term C: May 27 – July 28  
Term D: August 5 – October 6  
Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
9	C, Cr, E, P	Means-goal, process, strategy, theoretical		-Reflective statement -early empathy	Symbolic language, childhood provided framework	Wants more flexibility & control	Professional goals, skill sets needed
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
11/05/01	E	ADRE	3.117		03/26/03	B 30	3.600
12	E, P, Pr	Basics, consensus		Life experiences showed connection, understanding	Brief reports, little experience in the field	Resilient and can bounce back from anything	Person who can offer help
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
12/26/01	E	ADRE	3.159	2	03/06/03	A 27	3.930

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE Admitted regular  
PADE Pending Decision  
PSCO Pending AC complete  
RDRE Re-admit regular

2001  
Term A: January 8 – March 10  
Term B: March 19 – May 19  
Term C: May 28 – July 29  
Term D: August 6 – October 6  
Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002  
Term A: January 7 – March 10  
Term B: March 18 – May 19  
Term C: May 27 – July 28  
Term D: August 5 – October 6  
Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
13	Cr, M, S	Interactive, process, scale, theoretical		Strong evidence of thoughtfulness	Benefits of life experience	Academics and physical educational independence	Positive counseling experience, connection with art and nature
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
01/04/02	A	ADRE	3.633	2	07/22/03	C 48	3.934
16	E, M	Consensus, degree, identity-self, scale		Personal Therapy, life challenges, reported	Social service experience, connection with others	Strong character, strong therapist	Professional motivation, skills
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
09/06/01	D	ADRE	3.346		01/22/03	A 40	3.100
17	C, E, S	Cutting point, mainline, process		Adult learning themes, defining needs according to others	Visual impairment, develops resiliency, strong emotional upbringing	Development of a psychological perspective	Personal therapy and challenges result in learning about potential
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
08/24/01	C	ADRE	3.991		10/26/02	E 33	3.890

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE	Admitted regular	2001	2002
PADE	Pending Decision	Term A: January 8 – March 10	Term A: January 7 – March 10
PSCO	Pending AC complete	Term B: March 19 – May 19	Term B: March 18 – May 19
RDRE	Re-admit regular	Term C: May 28 – July 29	Term C: May 27 – July 28
		Term D: August 6 – October 6	Term D: August 5 – October 6
		Term E: October 15 – December 16	Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
18	P	Basics, degree, process, scale		Reported like a resume	Inner strength and determination to succeed	The importance of an excellent work ethic	Professional needs, promotion
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
11/19/01	E	ADRE	3.178		12/18/02	E 39	3.656
19	M, P	Cutting point, mainline, process		Small private school environment wanted for graduate study	Lifespan influences, innate understanding of psychology	Social, self-confidence, family, peace keeper	Lifespan learning, readiness as equated to emotional health
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
07/17/02	C	ADRE	3.128	2	10/29/03	E 48	3.693
23	P	Process, scale		Simple "report" based on reputation of school	Unknown variables, impact decision to return to school	Strength, endurance, persistence	Professionalism
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
02/27/02	A	ADRE	3.065		05/28/03	B 33	3.482

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE Admitted regular  
PADE Pending Decision  
PSCO Pending AC complete  
RDRE Re-admit regular

2001  
Term A: January 8 – March 10  
Term B: March 19 – May 19  
Term C: May 28 – July 29  
Term D: August 6 – October 6  
Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002  
Term A: January 7 – March 10  
Term B: March 18 – May 19  
Term C: May 27 – July 28  
Term D: August 5 – October 6  
Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
27	C, E, M, S	Consensus, cutting point, identity-self, interactive, scale		Family trauma as a means of understanding therapy	Pain and guilt provide clarity	Endurance and persistence	Skills needed, lifelong
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
05/09/02	B	ADRE	3.260	5	10/30/02	E 63	2.355
29	E, E, P, Pr, S	Basics, interactive, means-goal, the 6 C's, theoretical		We each have a threshold for amount of emotional pain	A sense of connection with less fortunate	Therapy as a catalyst for change and growth	Growth through life opportunities
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
09/28/01	D	ADRE	2.675		06/08/03	C 51	3.293

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\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE Admitted regular  
PADE Pending Decision  
PSCO Pending AC complete  
RDRE Re-admit regular

2001  
Term A: January 8 – March 10  
Term B: March 19 – May 19  
Term C: May 28 – July 29  
Term D: August 6 – October 6  
Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002  
Term A: January 7 – March 10  
Term B: March 18 – May 19  
Term C: May 27 – July 28  
Term D: August 5 – October 6  
Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
30	E, P, Pr	Mainline, process, representation		Religious emphasis – unsure of discipline motivation	Coming from a successful marriage will result in developing as a therapist	Strength from religion creates consistency	Learning opportunities based on historic factors
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
11/07/01	E	RDRE	3.876		08/07/02	15	3.940
36	E, M, P	Degree, means-goal, strategy		Differs from others refers to a life as a process	Rebalancing therapy	Long-term “nature” of helping others	More knowledge in treatment skills
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
03/18/02	B	ADRE	3.253	1	04/15/03	B 53	3.878

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\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE	Admitted regular	2001	2002
PADE	Pending Decision	Term A: January 8 – March 10	Term A: January 7 – March 10
PSCO	Pending AC complete	Term B: March 19 – May 19	Term B: March 18 – May 19
RDRE	Re-admit regular	Term C: May 28 – July 29	Term C: May 27 – July 28
		Term D: August 6 – October 6	Term D: August 5 – October 6
		Term E: October 15 – December 16	Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
38	E, P	Process, scale, strategy		School selected for personalized attention	Life experience in psychology creates career interest	Wants to have an impact on the world through counseling	Skills needed to meet goals
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
01/25/02	A	ADRE	3.463		05/07/03	E 18	3.766
40	E, M, S	Cultural, identity-self, process, scale		Encouragement emerges from trauma, reports	Non supportive families and abuse, depend on self	Prepare families for brighter days ahead	Learn specific counseling techniques
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
10/09/02	E	ADRE	3.260	2	11/13/03	E 33	3.545

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\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE Admitted regular  
 PADE Pending Decision  
 PSCO Pending AC complete  
 RDRE Re-admit regular

2001  
 Term A: January 8 – March 10  
 Term B: March 19 – May 19  
 Term C: May 28 – July 29  
 Term D: August 6 – October 6  
 Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002  
 Term A: January 7 – March 10  
 Term B: March 18 – May 19  
 Term C: May 27 – July 28  
 Term D: August 5 – October 6  
 Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis	Emerging Predictors
41	P, E	Process, means-goal, representation		Reporting of strong & supportive family, school, reputation, convenience	Care-giving and nurturing as therapist traits	Family background set foundation for being a great listener	Connecting knowledge, learning opportunities come from adversity
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
04/01/02	B	ADRE	3.014		05/28/03	B 30	3.920
48	E, S	Process, identity-self, mainline		Reputation of school, strong lessons of diversity	Working adult learning styles, importance of family and friendships	Discipline, education, and love as values, development of empathy	Wants licensing qualification
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term #Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
03/18/02	B	ADRE	3.301		04/15/03	B 39	3.869

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
Cultural	Social Norms, Social Values, Social Beliefs	Process	Staging, Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Steps
Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE	Admitted regular	2001
PADE	Pending Decision	Term A: January 8 – March 10
PSCO	Pending AC complete	Term B: March 19 – May 19
RDRE	Re-admit regular	Term C: May 28 – July 29
		Term D: August 6 – October 6
		Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002
Term A: January 7 – March 10
Term B: March 18 – May 19
Term C: May 27 – July 28
Term D: August 5 – October 6
Term E: October 14 – December 15

Applicant No.	Guiding Principles*	Coding Open Selective**		Constant Comparison, Theme, & Constructs	Theoretical Sampling from Literature	Synthesis		Emerging Predictors
49	C, E, M, Pr	Means-goal, process, the 6 C's		Diversity within the family structure, need for boundaries and tolerance	Anxiety as a motivation to pursue therapy	Influence of religion on resiliency, need for balance		Working with people and protecting their rights, career progression
Admit Date	Term	Admit Status	GPA	Pre-requisite Deficiency at Admissions	Date Advanced to Candidacy	Term	#Units at Candidacy	GPA at Advancement
05/29/02	B	ADRE	3.166		08/26/03	C	33	3.890

\*Guiding Principles C= Communication; Cr = Creativity; E = Explanation; M = Motivation; P = Planning; Pr = Professionalism; S = Synthesis

\*\*Coding Families

Basics	Social & Structural, Learning Styles, Psychological Process	Mainline	Socialization, Recruitment, Stratification
Consensus	Agreements, Contracts, Opinions, Conflict, Conformity	Means-Goal	End, Purpose, Anticipated Consequences
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Cutting Point	Boundary, Turning Point, Division, Benchmark	Representation	Descriptive, Prescriptive, Evaluative, Conceptualizing
Degree	Limit, Range Intensity, Extent, Amount, Possibility	Scale	GPA, Standardized Exam, Credits Computed
Dimension	Elements, Divisions, Sector, Portion, Segment, Aspect	Strategy	Tactics, Mechanisms, Techniques, Goal Attainment
Identity-Self	Self-Image, Self-Concept, Self-Worth, Transfer	The 6 C's	Causes, Context, Contingencies, Co-Variations, Conditions, Consequences
Interactive	Reciprocity, Independence, Co-Variance	Theoretical	Scope, Integration, Relationship to Data, Utility

ADRE Admitted regular

PADE Pending Decision

PSCO Pending AC complete

RDRE Re-admit regular

2001

Term A: January 8 – March 10

Term B: March 19 – May 19

Term C: May 28 – July 29

Term D: August 6 – October 6

Term E: October 15 – December 16

2002

Term A: January 7 – March 10

Term B: March 18 – May 19

Term C: May 27 – July 28

Term D: August 5 – October 6

Term E: October 14 – December 15

### Results as Applied to the Research Question

Central to the application of the study results to the primary research question was the overarching leadership challenge of how to integrate a description of successful graduate students into a comprehensive theoretical framework that would facilitate the evaluation of graduate student achievement as well as prediction of success while in graduate school. Continuous questions emerge as to what cluster of skills and prerequisites was necessary to determine the development of new skills while in graduate training, with a specific focus on professional training programs like psychology. Coupled with this analysis, leaders continue to question how best to assist graduate students with the development of presenting skills and how these identified skills can assist a student while in academic pursuit.

The presenting research question was What are the best predictors of academic success contained in standardized and narrative graduate applications. Grounded theory allows for evolving qualitative clustering of concepts, with little or no emphasis on specific quantitative factors. The results that emerged from the narrative data provided a variety of interesting applications. Themes emerged, but due to the narrative prompt, little specificity occurred. The researcher attempted to place the data into the established categories using grounded theory, which did not reveal clear parallels to the seven ETS characteristics. Instead, general clusters of traits developed that are listed below and provide for additional research. In looking at predictors of academic success in graduate study in psychology, the following general clusters of themes developed:

**Knowledge Building Predictors** Central to any understanding of the knowledge base is the quality of mental models individuals have about the proposed area of study and about concepts or phenomena within the field of practice. Although the applications routinely narrated the typical values associated with work in psychology (empathy, caring, beginning counseling skills, ethics), there was little or no indication of undergraduate scientific training in psychology that would apply to preparedness for graduate work. The narratives were void of the broad theoretical and research bases of psychology, although the majority of the applicants indicated that increasing their skill base was a primary reason for graduate study. This could be a result of the autobiography prompt, which did not address elements of knowledge building but rather asks for personal reasons for choosing psychology. The choice for additional discipline knowledge grew from personal experience, traumatic life events, and family dynamics. From the ETS study, the characteristics implied here included communication. The applicants demonstrated an informal communication trend, with a more generic pattern of responses that did not reflect psychology-specific skill foundations. An example quote from the narratives that illustrated this trend was “I chose this program after looking at several others because it was the most thorough. I believe this school will give me the experience and expertise in the marriage and family therapy field.”

**Diversity and Cross-Cultural Predictors** A small group of the applications reflected the importance of diversity and cross-cultural issues in psychology. Applicants noted that psychology students should understand behavior and

experience that may or may not transcend geographic boundaries. Although cultural sensitivity, social norms, and beliefs as related to culture were evident, specific values regarding diversity and cross-cultural concepts relative to study in psychology were not described. The ETS characteristics here include synthesis and explanation. Synthesis was demonstrated by a relative demonstration of applying skills under various life experience conditions. Explanation was evident through the coding that indicated the giving of a reason or cause for some phenomenon or finding. An example quote from the narratives to illustrate this trend was “I learned from my parents that compromise and trust are two of the most important things for a marriage to succeed. Compromising with my husband on raising our child is key to his success in life as well as the success of our marriage.”

**Learning Opportunities Predictors** The majority of the applicants reflected that psychology education was based first in life experience, experienced in undergraduate studies, and continued through graduate study and beyond. The applicants reflected the immense range of learning opportunities and experiences available to psychology majors, including internships, service learning, and other methods of non-traditional approaches. Only two applicants cited specifically the need for licensure and the importance of regulations for those who practiced therapy. The narratives cited a need for more thorough guidance at the undergraduate level with regard to the realities of careers in psychology. The ETS characteristics included here were creativity, planning, and synthesis. Creativity surfaced through the comparison of applicants who developed a pattern of expressing intellectual curiosity;

however, of the guiding principles, creativity was the least evident. Planning, on the other hand, was very prevalent in the narratives which suggested a heavy emphasis on goal achievement and devising strategies to complete the selected graduate program. Synthesis in this cluster of learning opportunities referred to the majority of the applicants who viewed psychological life experience as a turning point which precluded the decision to study psychology as a means to restructure knowledge. An example quote from the narratives that support this trend is “Working on and earning my Master’s degree in psychology will take my interest and experience to the next level, where I would be able to offer more help and support to the population I work with now, or with any population that I choose to work with in the future.”

**Career Planning and Development Predictors** The statement of intent data from all applicants revealed that the candidates desired to pursue realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings. This was evident by the narratives used to describe decision strategies, lifespan processes, and psychological self-assessment in formulating career choices. The majority of the applicants cited a specific career path or supplementing current positions as the motivating reason for returning to graduate study. The ETS characteristics included here were motivation, professionalism and synthesis. In this cluster of predictors, motivation referred to the excitement expressed by the candidates in describing their reasons for returning to graduate school. The narrative data did not, however, show motivation as a cognitive commitment to the discipline or increasing involvement in professional activities,

other than career progression. Professionalism here referred to the theme that emerged in the narrative data that the applicants were seeking practical and applicable knowledge in the field. Finally, synthesis here referred to the belief described in the majority of the applications that licensure in psychology was necessary for achieving successful career development. An example quote from the narratives that illustrated this trend is “My career goals are to become a licensed marriage and family therapist with my focus on grief counseling and working with families with seriously ill and handicapped children. Having a son who has a degenerative, genetic disorder that shortens his life span has put me in a position of understanding what these families need.”

#### Analysis of Trends

Once the cluster of predictors was identified, constant comparison and conceptual trends provided a critical link to the synthesis of the data and the comparison to the second rubric that contained the GPA and admission information. As the analysis progressed, it was evident that the connections between the two sets of data were limited.

One particularly interesting trend was the number of students who completed the Advancement to Candidacy benchmark at the time the study was concluded. Only 19 of the 50 applications reviewed reached the benchmark, and all but 1 with a GPA of over 3.0. A review of the 19 narrative candidates who advanced was analyzed for any unusual or emerging predictor grouping. More than half had the

guiding principles of “explanation” and “professionalism” assigned to the files upon the final coding. This trend could indicate that those applicants who were able to develop an argument, show reasoning skills, and exhibit the professional social skills necessary to succeed in psychology were more likely to persist in the program

Through the course of this study, one can begin to understand the complex issues commanding reform and the multiple variables that can create perhaps the “highest stake” of all regarding access to higher education and the identified admission predictors that can influence academic success. Societal, economic, and moral change can only occur through the vehicle of education, be it formal or informal. Educational communities, specifically higher educational communities, have a tremendous chance to expand human awareness, to embrace the humanistic educational tasks which incorporate elements of being, doing, having, and knowing as never before in our history. The quandary continues to be how to measure the expanse of human knowledge to provide an intelligence profile worthy of tracking and selecting academic placement in America’s institutions of higher learning that is derived from narrative information and standardized criteria. Theorists, educators, students, and philosophers must assist with the fusion needed within contemporary leadership practice with an eye on reform possibilities.

An initial task as a result of this study for leaders in institutional reform with the objective of strategic change is the belief that educational environments are change-oriented and innovative, and that leaders are capable to invention and pioneering new ideas (DiBenedetto, 1997). One of the primary factors to influence

innovation includes environmental influences such as admissions testing and other institutional policies. Leadership involves an awareness of and a method of sorting through environmental uncertainties in a way that will ultimately begin change in the behaviors of the stakeholders.

It is argued based on this study that reform should begin in the way institutions assess the growth of students as they acquire knowledge through persistence toward an academic degree. Benchmarks should be continually analyzed along the way to encourage student self-reflection, self-critique, self-correction, and self-renewal that are connected to the initial admission data. Strategic planning activities, self-study, surveys, focus discussion groups, standards committees, and accreditation visits all provide rich data for reform proposals. College and university campuses are complex environments that are constantly striving to change in response to dynamic environmental forces. The goals of reform should be to bring about a synergetic collective of representative members of the institution and hold open discussions and strive for group consensus, with the final goal of reform being the establishment of collective priorities that are consistent, quantifiable, measurable, and directly connected to the institutional vision (Shapiro and Nunez, 2001).

Although not an impossible task, it takes time to discover and strengthen these critical links and implement change in the educational environment. A reliance on traditional standardized data continues in the majority of postsecondary educational environments. The result of this study encourage such critical reform discussions to experiment with new models.

Another general concept to emerge from the study can best be described as the influence of choice on admissions and potential academic success. Because of the vast range of educational environments available, much of it extremely consequential, it can become overwhelming for students as they pursue graduate studies. It was evident from this study that the candidates primarily selected the institution based on accessibility, reputation, and class scheduling. None of the narratives cited the university's reputation for studies or research in psychology as the deciding factor. Studies have shown that increasing options for students does not necessarily increase the predictors of success; conversely, the opposite may be true (The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2002). Greater choice increases the burden of gathering information to make a wise decision, increases the likelihood that people will regret the decisions they make, increases the feelings of missed opportunities, and increases the chances that people will blame themselves when their choices fail to live up to expectations (Schwartz, 1997). In this case, choice is a concept for future policy goals that institutions should consider. Choice also factors into discussions about institutional quality and equalizing tuition levels across sectors. Choice conditions are a part of the admissions process and influenced the final selection of some of the application materials studied in this project to the extent that convenience, proximity, and program reputation were cited as the primary reason to select the university.

The pursuit of a college education stems from the recognition that a college degree affords both economic leveling and social mobility more than any other single factor, as was evidenced in this study. All of the candidates indicated that they

wanted to move ahead in their career field or begin private practice after graduation. All applicants stated they wanted a career in some form of therapeutic practice; none was interested in moving in a research direction.

It is the responsibility of leaders to persistently construct meaning within the context of shared and created organizational experiences. In the applications reviewed, there was no indication that the university administration would do anything with the statement of intent or the autobiographical statement except to review them for clarity and to ensure that no glaring psychological difficulties emerged. The motivation to undertake educational initiatives that address issues of access, admissions, and educational success may rightly stem from beliefs in democracy and commitments to justice. Leaders are then tasked with attempting to meet the needs of all students by implementing educationally sound programs and practices which benefit all students. As Edwards and Peasons (1997) noted:

“Access is finally not about the needs of one or another group competing for scarce resources. It is rather about purposeful and effective designs for supporting all students’ educational achievement. As such, it is an integral component of the mission and the purpose of the institution, and essential to whether our institutions are or will be positioned to educate all students for full participation in the economic, social, and civic domains of a diverse society.”  
(p.50)

Together, future leaders in academia can examine the ethical and visionary knowledge-building predictors that will result in great institutional change beginning

with the gateway process to academic pursuit the admissions protocol. To begin this work, the following initial recommendations are made as a result of this research analysis and will be discussed in length in Chapter 5. These recommendations were formed as a result of the researcher's reflection on the themes which emerged from the progression of the study, particularly the "synthesis" category and the application to current literature on admissions:

- Design admissions criteria that begin with institutional values. Use language that will promote critical self-analysis in the questions that are asked on the application. Provide orientation materials and expectation statements to allow each applicant to explore individual strengths.
- Develop admissions simulations that reflect an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Work to achieve admissions criteria that have clear and explicit purposes that are discipline specific.
- Design simulations that focus on projected learning outcomes and also on life experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Engage stakeholders from across the university environment when reforming admissions protocol. In psychology, this could mean a consensus of the models or structures that describe the interrelationships or concepts and systems within the discipline of psychology.
- Create admissions requirements that illuminate knowledge-building evidence that candidates can demonstrate such as creativity,

professionalism, communication, planning, motivation, explanation, and synthesis.

In conclusion, although there are several reform directions suggested as a result of this study, the data collected indicate a limited amount of useful information to assist student services personnel in the selected university to create responsive processes for candidates as they progress through the graduate program in psychology. The narrative information was void of any evidence of critical detachment and self-reflection needed to pursue scholarly studies. The writing prompt for the autobiographical statements elicited more of an emotional response related to personal experience than an opportunity to present oneself as a professional who had thoughtfully considered the rigor and expectations of graduate study. Other than the characteristic of “explanation” which was revealed from the majority of the narratives, little evidence evolved that would support the other elements of skills necessary for study success. Few consistent emergent themes were formed between the narrative information and the standardized scores, and few conclusions can be drawn from the GPA at the time of advancement.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

This chapter summarizes the purpose of the study, describes the findings obtained from the research sample, and connects the results to the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 2. It concludes with a summary of the research findings and recommendations for future research and opportunities for reform.

#### Review of the Purpose and Hypothesis

The conceptual focus and purpose of this study was the identification of predictive characteristics in graduate admissions for women candidates with the generalized outcome of future admissions reform and improved access to enter professional study in disciplines such as psychology. The applied nature of this framework resulted in directions for further scholarly inquiry and formal leadership theory associated with future admissions reform in America. The theoretical rationale was imbedded in the position that standardization in the graduate admission process is a means by which institutional quality can be measured and supportive resources obtained. Standardization as a predictor of students' success in graduate education has not been established without equivocation, although leaders have experimented with reformed admission standards in order to offer educational services to people with nontraditional backgrounds (Brink, 1999). This paradoxical thinking became the nexus of potential public policy as related to the outcomes of this study and lead to

discussions of the historical context that determines what and how higher education fulfills the expectations of society.

As a part of this on-going curiosity regarding the connections between institutional policy, institutional values, and accountability, this project researched the issues surrounding the current American graduate college admission procedure with particular emphasis on institutional standards, entrance requirements, and the professional socialization predictors of graduate students who are women. Questions and considerations of institutional access, persistence, and retention surfaced as the data were synthesized and the results were revealed. As the analysis unfolded, characteristics of successful graduate students were incorporated into a rubric for deeper analysis and applied to further analysis on academic persistence, academic choice, and the leadership activities that influence institutional policy.

The following problem statements formed the direction of the research study: What are the best predictors of academic success contained in standardized and narrative graduate application packages? How might academic leaders reform existing admissions procedures and propose alternative measures of retention and persistence as a result of this study? Conclusions in this study were achieved by analyzing the common elements that have traditionally been a part of the American graduate university admissions process and explored the effect on and linkage to academic success for adult learners who are women. Implications for leaders and new directions in graduate admissions were explored. The research focused on the process of admission including standardized criteria and narrative information that is

used in the administrative review of an applicant's file, impacts selection decisions, and sets administrative policy in higher education. Characteristic predictors of women who typically applied to professional graduate programs in psychology were examined. They were selected from a private university that used both standard and narrative criteria to determine admission status. An application of the emerging predictors was applied to coursework achieved at the time of advancement to candidacy within the progression of the psychology graduate program. Issues of institutional accountability, leadership characteristics, and organizational change were interwoven throughout the project. The hypothesis that developed indicated that a reformed admissions protocol that incorporated both standardized and narrative factors and identified specific predictors would provide useful guidance and influence persistence and retention of graduate students in professional graduate programs.

#### Research Design, Sample, and Instrumentation

The research instrumentation of the study was based on the grounded theory method developed by Dr. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967). Grounded theory is a design which "systematically observes a behavior or social process...to identify trends and patterns that suggest a tentative theory about the patterns" (Cherry, 2000, p. 53). This process of using emergent strategies resulting in constant comparisons revealed patterns that suggested a tentative theory in that each application package was compared to the next, yielding insights and key patterns with each additional inquiry. Although grounded theory is primarily an inductive process, it also uses deduction by making continuous and specific comparisons that provide

deeper levels of related patterns within existing data sets.

Once the research methodology was established, the protocol and procedure was reviewed by two professional colleagues at the institution where the researcher currently worked before the analysis began. The College Research Officer and the Director of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Department discussed the methodology and reviewed a test case applicant to insure procedural compliance.

From the initial pool of 150 randomly selected graduate applications, 50 were selected (every 3<sup>rd</sup> complete application package). Each selected sample contained a graduate application, entrance GPA, entrance-standardized score, statement of intent, and an autobiographical statement. Each application in turn was investigated and coded in light of the core questions regarding graduate admissions, institutional accountability, and other ideas presented in Chapter 2, using the tools available through grounded theory. The emerging predictors were identified in a conceptual rubric. In addition, a second rubric provided a synopsis of the standardized information requested on the initial application, as well as at the time of advancement to candidacy. Finally, a third table was developed to extract the 19 candidates that achieved the Advancement to Candidacy benchmark from the original 50 files analyzed.

The use of grounded theory was guided by the research questions and conceptual framework that allowed the researcher to focus on informative admissions data that might not otherwise be available using a statistical measure. Grounded theory emphasized causal relationships, including elements that include phenomenon,

causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action strategies, and consequences. The research questions for study were action or change-oriented and examined a basic social process from the perspective of human interactions (Labaree,2000). The phenomenon and expansive context of admissions predictors and women's academic characteristics fit this design definition.

### Interpretation of Results

This study has illustrated the overarching concept that there are a wide variety of ways to make admissions decisions, and each institution has a unique mission and institutional goals and must develop admission policies and procedures that address those goals. This research indicated that an improved understanding of the elements of success would have several implications for students and educational administrators.

1. First, in contrast with the static evaluations of students that occur prior to graduate school acceptance and at various benchmarks of the graduate school process, it may be possible to assess student growth dynamically on a number of critical skills to include communication, creativity, explanation, motivation, planning, professionalism, and syntheses.
2. Second, improved understanding of performance would increase the probability that assessment results would have instructional value throughout the selected graduate school program.

3. Third, understanding skill development and designing both instruction and assessment based on this understanding can have profound effects in making graduate education even more accessible for women.

The accurate predictors of academic success that were proposed in the ETS study and applied to the research sample were not thoroughly identified. An attempt was made to apply the seven characteristics to the narrative sample, with limited results. Instead, alternatives are suggested in the following paragraphs to address simulation and other forms of assessment to address the emergent themes from the analysis of the standardized and narrative application data.

Testing that uses assessment of learned competencies only as predictors of later success, without instructional implications for improvement, does not benefit those who have not had the opportunities to develop certain skills. In this case, simulations that describe typical vignettes in psychology could be developed to closely identify the level to which the skills currently exist at the time of admissions and thus plan accordingly for relevant instructional activities. As discussed within the GRE Board Research Report used for this study, simulations can test the development of skills and the characteristics that are needed to solve real-life issues associated in this case with the psychology discipline.

In addition, simulation testing provides an organizational frame for thinking about the nature of graduate education, the characteristics associated with success in graduate school, and important tasks to be accomplished in graduate training. In psychology, simulations should be developed to measure cognitive functioning

through multiple measures, to include case study and vignette analysis at the point of admissions to better identify the core characteristics of communication, creativity, explanation, motivation, planning, professionalism and synthesis.

Little research has been done on the application of simulation testing at the entry level of graduate study. Although the literature revealed that organizational complexities would need to be defeated prior to widespread application, there are several hopeful prospects for considering a framework of incorporating a simulation exercise within the application protocol. First, it can help to clarify the variables that contribute to graduate study success. Secondly, simulation case study analysis can be used to assess existing standardized measures further. Third, data derived from admission simulation activities can assist in the development of more efficient and applicable entrance examinations, either globally or discipline specific. Finally, application guidelines can reflect the goals and mission of the institution as relevant to uncover learning characteristics. Possible future assessments could focus more on the guidance needs of the newly admitted graduate students, rather than presenting intelligence quotients. Additionally, simulation exercises at admissions would make an important contribution to the communication among the institutional stakeholders and stimulate discussions regarding policy reform. In short, the result of this framework to identify early competencies will better inform potential graduate students about the nature of graduate work and the realities of the profession, as well as provide faculty and administration within the discipline with a better tool to measure student progress and program effectiveness.

### Discussion of Graduate Admission Reform

The importance of educational reform is the source of numerous initiatives in educational environments. The motivation to reform existing policy can be tied to several factors to include impatience with a current system, having goals that are ambiguous, settling for minimum standards, and competing demands among the various decision makers. Conversely, reform efforts can result in significant institutional growth. Advantages include a more universal recognition of the problems associated with the policy, an understanding that no one model fully addresses the issue, that research provides relevance and purpose, that better communication and institutional support can develop, and the recognition of the profound necessity for change. Despite these positive factors, difficulty exists in engaging in the strategic planning in higher education that is necessary for reform efforts to be long lasting. Because of the organizational structure of higher education, which focuses on academic freedom and other factors, often decision-making is made on historic practice instead of futuristic predictors (Cohen & March, 1986). This “loose coupling” between administrative problems and outcomes can result in decisions that yield less-than-optimal effectiveness.

The preliminary findings of this study suggested that the program-specific objectives that each admissions office seeks to implement should be explicitly affirmed or revised periodically. The application used in this study did not facilitate the collection of highly accurate data regarding professional appropriateness for work in psychology. Instead, the narrative information focused on personal events

that challenged the applicant, and the relationship between traumatic events and personality development. It is recommended that the institution selected for this study should assess, and adjust where necessary, the program's ability to respond to the needs of the students they choose to accept. This might be done in the context of an institutional self-study in preparation for accreditation reviews or in the development of strategic plans or other major campus-wide projects. At many institutions of higher education, the trustees or other governing boards issue admissions objectives. More commonly, faculty committees, deans, and/or the Provost or the President are charged with responsibility for providing annual guidance about admission requirements. It is proposed that the most useful requirements are those that describe the desired characteristics of the incoming class in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Although sometimes embedded in the overall admissions objectives described in the previous paragraph, it is important to have strategic discussions among all key constituents to include students, alumni, faculty, and administrators that are continuous and symbolically interactive. From these groups, specific qualities can emerge specifying what the institution seeks in its new students, both individually and as a group. The challenge here is being realistic and delineating both individual and group qualities that can be discerned during the review process. The resulting admissions criteria must be appropriate within the context of the institutional mission and goals, admission objectives, and the desired individual quality as appropriate to the academic discipline. Admissions criteria include standardized

application components and other lists of factors that are then discerned from a careful reading of an applicant's file.

A general application of the results of this study was identified as an intrinsic value in university admissions practice overall, and can be described as one of fairness. A fair admissions process should provide all applicants an opportunity to present relevant information about themselves, should not permit personal prejudice or favoritism to influence decisions, and should ensure that admissions criteria and evaluation guidelines are applied uniformly and that all applicants to a particular program are considered on an equal footing. In this study, the narrative prompt seemed to assume that the level of personal trauma experienced by the candidate was correlated to their suitability for practice in psychology. One of the challenges that the admissions community faces is how to better inform the public about the legitimate need to have the flexibility to create a student body that supports broad institutional goals, in fairly obtained and applicable personal information.

A solid admissions process needs to be validated periodically. This might entail traditional correlation studies to determine whether the admissions factors used are positively related to students' academic performance. Given that most institutions often seek other desired outcomes, other methods of validating admissions criteria, including studies of parallels between narrative reports and standardized data, should be sought. As evidenced in this study, graduate schools are confronted with four obligations: first, to decide as definitely as possible what their objectives are; second, to analyze these objectives in terms of the prerequisites that

prospective students should possess; third, to select or develop techniques appropriate for the study of each applicant for admissions; and fourth, to encourage those for who there is reasonable probability of success to pursue graduate work. Because the consensus of this study indicated that knowledge-building characteristics about past accomplishments is the best predictor of academic success, it seems plausible to believe that such measures can continue to be constructed and validated at the graduate admissions level.

An additional conclusion of this study as it relates to graduate admission reform included a discussion of the issues of persistence and retention as they applied to adult students who pursue graduate study. The sample studied revealed that more than half of the applicants studied had not yet advanced to candidacy, had taken a break from graduate studies, or chose not to continue in the program. One theory could be that working adults have a more difficult time persisting due to the multiple roles of adulthood. Persistence is the result of a complex set of interactions that occur over time. For the candidates reviewed, returning to school was a positive decision; thus, the assumption would be that retention and persistence behaviors would be strong. In this study there was a strong indication that persistence was a function of the fit between a student's motivation and academic ability and the institution's academic and social characteristics. One of the activities resulting from this study would be to interview the candidates as to when and why they chose to discontinue the program, take a break from graduate studies, or delay advancing to candidacy. Applying Astin's (1993) work on graduation rates and the relationship to

student characteristics could also be interesting to research with the sample used in this study.

The admission process has evolved in significant ways over the past few decades. Institutions have broadened the criteria they consider beyond traditional academic measures. More institutions require essays than just a few years ago. This research project began with an inquiry into standards predominantly used in higher education to make admission decisions. Standards refer to a specific expectation or level of performance that an institution or program establishes for student learning. Standards are the point of comparison against which to judge the actual evidence of student learning once it is collected. For individual students, standards imply the levels of performance that students must have attained to complete their programs successfully. At the level of institutions and programs, standards imply the overall levels of attainment embodied in learning goals or similar statements of intended learning outcomes. Standards, in short, are the way institutions and programs make sense of evidence of student learning outcomes in terms of the goals for learning that they have established. It is incumbent upon institutions and programs to communicate not only what they want students to learn, but also at what level student performance must be in order to be judged successful.

Academic standards have increased, and students have risen to the challenge and are taking more rigorous programs. Competition has increased, and the entire admissions process has shifted earlier in the academic calendar than it was a decade ago. More change is inevitable. The increase in high school graduates projected for

the next two decades, changing demographics, funding shortages in both secondary schools and higher education, and technological changes that make it so much easier for students to apply to many more institutions than ever before are just some of the other factors that will pressure admissions to reinvent itself once again.

In conclusion, the term *institutional fit* refers to the level of compatibility between an academic environment and the applicant (Tinto, 1986). The right institutional match is determined by the student's level of commitment and involvement within the campus community. This study concluded that it is imperative that graduate admissions begin to build this relationship through concise counseling at the beginning of the admission process, followed by the formation of retention partnerships throughout the successful completion of the graduate program.

#### Implications for Leaders in Education

It was stated at the beginning of this research project that leadership involves an awareness of, and a method of, sorting through the environment in a way that will ultimately bring clarity to the stakeholders. During a recent convocation speech, Dr. William Wenrich (2004) provided a snapshot of how institutions of higher education would remain competitive during the next decade. According to Wenrich, competitive universities have the following characteristics:

- Confident but scared
- Quality driven
- Learner/learning focused

- Time-based competitive
- Service fanatic
- Technology empowered and empowering
- Innovation dedicated
- Collaboratively oriented
- Geographically unrestricted
- Access committed

From this study, important leadership awareness emerged that the process of building relationships is intertwined in each of these characteristics, which influences and transforms policy in educational environments. Transformation, in and of itself, suggests the internalizing of new forms, systems, thinking, and practices. Such an approach is different from the discussion earlier in this chapter regarding reform, which tends to be satisfied with re-fashioning of existing systems, thinking, and practices. A transformative, reflective approach to educational leadership is a habit of mind, a capacity or standpoint on which leaders can rely when making decisions in a subjective context. In this study, the idea emerged that admissions in higher education seemed to mirror some of the larger societal issues such as diversity, access, and equity. Leadership theory addresses these concepts and continues to create processes that put rhetoric into productive change. Leaders who choose to reflect actively on the issues surrounding admissions transform rhetoric in a way that honors the other institutional stakeholders and allows for

prospective graduate students to be viewed beyond the numerical information presented at admission.

The evidence from this study supported the premise that the purpose of leadership development in higher education is to enable and encourage faculty, students, administrators, and other staff to change and transform institutions so they can more effectively enhance student learning and development, general knowledge-building skill sets, serve the community, and empower graduates to be contributing members of society (Astin & Astin, 2001). Although the institution selected for this study made advances in admission innovation through the development of a portfolio criterion, analysis needs to be on-going and consistent to modify the admission process overall. Throughout this process, leadership values related to cultural change and innovation must be demonstrated.

It is further suggested that as a result of this analysis, transformative change in admissions must include a group of stakeholders within the institution who work together to foster change and transformation. This constructivist perspective, as discussed in Chapter 2, assumes that the leadership group will function according to certain principles and values and those individual members of the group exemplify certain qualities and values that contribute to the effective functioning and successful decision making of the group. These qualities include collaboration, shared purpose, respectful disagreement, division of labor, and the creation of a learning environment.

Reform in educational environments is a continuous part of contemporary practice and is often limited by leadership experience and personal bias. In this study the researcher was aware of her own individual leadership patterns and characteristics that assist in motivating, maintaining, and articulating meaning and purpose as new ideas are developed. This self knowledge certainly influenced the admissions reform ideas and conclusions and will be further used to apply the findings to practice. The responsibility of the individual leader proposed here is great; constructivist and transformational leaders not only make major changes in educational organizations, they also evoke fundamental changes in the basic political and cultural systems of organizations (Tichy & Ulrich, 1984). A deep understanding must be possessed, either intuitive or learned, of organizations and their place both in society at large and in the lives of individuals. In educational environments, the actions of reflective leaders who can articulate their own beliefs and values frame and shape the context of action in such a way that the stakeholders within that context are able to use the meaning generated as an empowering motive for their own action and understanding of the issue.

Educational leadership is demonstrated in a complex paradigm that reflects how constructively and effectively an organization manages on a day-to-day basis. The graduate application researched in this study and the mission of institution that was selected did not show a strong correlation in the data that was collected from each applicant. To encourage this process relative to admission reform, leaders are encouraged to take risks, work with those in the institution who want to make

change, pay attention to the cultural indicators, and be aware of the political influencers.

#### Study Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Qualitative methods are especially useful for the study of social processes, particularly those processes that occur over time. For this study, grounded theory was applied to the applications collected to decipher the practices, episodes, encounters, roles and relationships that emerged from the standardized and narrative data. Although this method was useful in revealing patterns and generating hypotheses related to the sample of 50 graduate applications, there are limitations in generalization to other similar graduate programs.

The writing prompt that focused on personal experience in the application materials and self-reflection provided little parallel to the ETS characteristics. Further qualitative studies are susceptible to reliability and validity issues, although in this study a purposive sampling based on knowledge of those being studied and a review of literature related to the central research question were used to minimize these occurrences.

Additional research using a multiple regression approach or other correlational methods is recommended to draw a more conclusive parallel between the ETS characteristics and the narrative information provided in each application package. This could also provide an opportunity to use specifically designed simulation activities to draw out the ETS characteristics in a defined and applicable manner to the discipline. Colleges and Universities with similar application

requirements should be compared to this study for a wider application of the conclusions and suggested recommendations.

### Conclusion

I have worked in American institutions of higher learning for more than 20 years as a faculty member and administrator. I have had numerous experiences advising, teaching, assessing, and guiding adult learners and traditional students who have decided to work toward an academic goal. I have gained confidence in my ability to detect students who may require additional assistance or supportive services to navigate through the numerous traditional administrative and academic necessities resulting in a college degree. Over the years, I have cultivated the reputation as a fair, humanitarian administrator, enabling me in my current position of Dean to participate in decision making at the most influential level of change within my institution. These activities have included several in the area of university admissions that over time became a growing area of personal interest. Examples of experience contributing to this academic curiosity included the following: evaluations of narrative transcripts to determine whether a student would enter as a regular, provisional, or probationary student; chairing a standards committee that was the final authority on academic petitions for exceptional admission; and assisting academic departments in determining divisional admission requirements that would specifically address their subject area.

Following the wisdom of Thomas Sergiovanni (1992, 2000) and other critical visionaries, I believed that my position within my professional learning community

would allow me to demonstrate and further develop a practice of moral leadership that would assist in the evolution of higher educational practice through the lens of shared values, beliefs, and commitments (Sergiovanni, 1992). I have been optimistic that some of the policies we were developing under our shared governance structure would lead to cutting-edge services to the diverse student population served in our district. Some of this optimism has faded in the reality of administrative practice, which motivated me to understand more about current admission policies as they relate to access, persistence and retention for lifelong learners.

My graduate studies showed me that there are numerous paradigms to follow when studying leadership in higher education. My interest from the beginning was to understand not only the perceptual and theoretical frameworks of leadership, but also to directly apply theory to my own career path, while modeling the advantage of lifelong learning to my children and the students with whom I came in contact each day. From this interest emerged the interest in women who enter graduate school to study psychology, which was similar to my own path. I believed that there were some parallels between my personal graduate admissions process and the leadership path I elected to take in higher education. Women who engage in leadership positions in academia fall into predictable patterns of functioning according to popular research. Caught between historical rhetoric and the contemporary trend for career self-analysis, women bring perspectives of gender, beliefs, assumptions, and personal experience to any appointed position of power. Skills are developed to assist in all aspects of decision making: from the most mediocre to subjectively global, often

within the same day. This is a similar finding to the women's stories that emerged in this study.

These distinct layers of knowledge-building skills intertwine to produce an influence that continues to transcend popular feminist literature and provide a new area of inquiry that should move forward from the recommendations described here. The layers include a study of leadership, gender, and the role conflict that continues to exist in executive positions in higher education and were further demonstrated through the course of this research study. Women who engage in academic pursuit, as found in those in leadership pursuit, demonstrated concepts of persistence and resiliency.

Over the course of the last two decades, the women's movement has prompted an extensive reevaluation of the various gender-related aspects of all our social institutions. Important discussions of access, persistence, and knowledge building in higher education are not exempt from these important and relevant evaluations. Reform agendas for higher education are now beginning to include gender equity discussions as they apply to adult learners. Even as the role of admissions counselors changes and adapts to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, colleges and universities must develop resources to support and retain the increasing number of adult students. As a result, cultural changes and support aimed at the adult learner have allowed greater access for women to return to school. At one time women were excluded from higher education entirely, yet women currently account for 56% of all undergraduate students and 56.4% of graduate students, with

significant numbers entering the field of psychology, as was noted earlier (Baez 2003). Women make up 42.1% of all students who enroll in professional programs, including extended education and distance learning programs.

Two key psychological assumptions hold particular relevance to women's knowledge-building development, to include periods of stability and transition within the adult years and issues of identity and intimacy throughout the lifespan (Bierema, 1999). When women apply to undergraduate and graduate programs in any academic setting, they bring multiple layers of knowledge to their formal educational experience. It is not always easy to measure the predictable success of women applicants based on the data presented in an application package, because theories of typical adult development and the meeting of life goals have traditionally focused on male subjects.

Although all women students are at risk for experiencing the negative effects of an inequitable academic environment, these patterns can have serious consequences to the ability to build skills that assist in academic success. It is not unusual for women students to participate less frequently, attend class less often, have lower career and professional aspirations, and manifest lesser levels of intellectual self-confidence. Further correlations are evident between academic environment and the recruitment and retention of women students in higher education settings (Hayes & Flannery 2000). When the innovative book *Women's Ways of Knowing* was released, it resulted in new and interesting conversations regarding women's professional contributions and personal learning challenges

(Belenky et al., 1986). Based on the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) and others in the early 1980s, this book chronicled the patterns of knowing and seeking knowledge that were particular to women in ways that transcended feminist and developmental theory. The five epistemological categories used in the interviewing protocol that resulted in a revolutionary knowledge of women's learning styles included the following:

- **Silence.** A position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority.
- **Received Knowledge.** A perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even producing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own.
- **Subjective Knowledge.** A perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited.
- **Procedural Knowledge.** A position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge.
- **Constructed Knowledge.** A position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing.

The author recognized that these categories were not absolute and felt that there were no "pure" categories by which women's unique knowledge building could

adequately be captured. He (or she) also believed that similar categories could be found in men's thinking and that future researchers might have different findings based on the subjective nature of the study (Gilligan, 1982).

The findings of these studies can be applied to the concluding commentary regarding this project. The purposes of this research study were to raise awareness, incorporate new language in a way that would minimize the "gender postering" in previous research, and instead focus on patterns of behavior, beliefs, and values that would promote predictive understanding and growth for learners who are women. This researcher believes that in using grounded theory applications to address questions in admissions, similar patterns emerged. Admissions counselors and educational leaders could enhance services for women by integrating knowledge about women's identity formation and the gendered nature of learning contexts into the selection, guidance, and retention processes, thus incorporating previous developmental and learning style research in an active manner.

The influence of gender, role demands, role strain, and support systems provide opportunity for further examination of academic services necessary for women who return to higher education. Many women have reported constant overload, frequent role conflicts, and inadequate support (Home, 1997). Adult women learners may not be able to estimate the time needed to consult faculty, conduct library research, or prepare papers, in combination with other variables such as child care, family obligations, and financial strain. The confines of time may detract from learning and create stressors based on a traditional academic system. In

addition, academic institutions often create barriers to women's participation, including institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers (Ekstrom, 1972). Institutional factors that exclude women from participation in education include admission practices, financial aid practices, and institutional regulations, types of curriculum and services adopted, and faculty and staff attitudes. Situational barriers that deter women from meeting learning objectives include family responsibilities, financial need, and societal pressures. Dispositional barriers include a woman's fear of failure, attitude toward intellectual activity, role preference, ambivalence about educational goals, level of aspiration, passivity, dependence, and inferiority feelings.

An awareness of the collaborative, constructive and transformational nature of women's learning can assist leaders in developing meaningful support mechanisms as women seek degree completion based on a set of presenting predictors at the time of admission. Women's presumed orientations toward human relationships are linked to characterizations of women as reliant, subjective, intuitive, and affective (Flannery, 2000). The emphasis on connectivity and relational influencers for women can be translated into creativity, collaboration, motivation, and affiliation as possible learning skills needed in graduate school.

This understanding of gender as an influence on adult education can assist practitioners in providing access and support for women who decide to return to graduate professional study throughout the life span. Beyond the research that supports a woman's quest for connected learning, educators can demonstrate their commitment to different educational goals and purposes by focusing on content

learning, personal development, and social change within the institutional environment (Hayes, 2001). Content learning would include the idea that prior learning influences current educational activities and that gender can influence the specified knowledge brought to the educational environment. With an orientation toward personal development, educators can be sensitive to the belief systems that have influenced women and explore the challenges of academic rigor embedded in those beliefs. If academic leaders seek to promote social change, these same gendered beliefs can be reconstructed and transformed in the educational setting, most naturally during the application process. In *Women as Learners*, Hayes and Flannery (2000) looked at this transformational learning as a phenomenon wherein women redefine the structures of meaning so that they are more inclusive and discriminating. These ideas provide a foundation for admissions reform as new application criteria could holistically gather baseline data both from standardized and narrative methods, coupled with case study simulation to demonstrate readiness to succeed in professional graduate studies and the numbers of women returning to the university increases.

The challenges of meeting the needs of today's graduate population require sensitive, flexible, and creative responses from leaders in higher education. Graduate student demographics are as diverse as their lifestyles, values, and professional motivations. If higher education is to respond effectively to these students, traditional admissions policies and procedures need to be revised and extended. Focusing attention of graduate student knowledge-building predictors provides a critical link

not only to retention and persistence issues, but to student satisfaction and professional confidence as well. Supporting graduate students from the moment of entry into graduate studies provides a unique opportunity for collaboration between leaders who have not always worked together – graduate admissions advisors, academic deans, and student service personnel. Sharing responsibility for facilitating the success of graduate students, these professionals should be able to cooperate in creating a positive framework for future response to newly admitted graduate students. This research study affirmed that it is becoming increasingly apparent that neither the standardized record nor narrative profiles are adequate single factors for admitting students to graduate school. The reform and institutional improvement of selective admission processes involve more than an accumulation of information concerning applicants; it includes the reflection of the mission and goals of the institution. If the approach to admission reform concluded here is sound, graduate schools will be confronted with four significant tasks: first, to identify institutional objectives and predictors to be reflected in the application; second, to analyze the predictors in terms of the knowledge-building skills which prospective students should possess; third, to select or develop simulations appropriate for the study of each applicant; and fourth, to encourage women for whom there is institutional fit and a reasonable probability of academic success to pursue graduate work.

APPENDIX A  
GRADUATE APPLICATION PACKAGE




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Graduate Admission Requirements for  
Chapman University  
Master of Arts in Psychology

- \$40.00 Application Fee
- Official Transcripts from all universities attended
- Completed Chapman University College Application
- Completed Master of Arts in Psychology Application
- Autobiographical Statement
- Statement of Intent
- Three Letters of Recommendation
- Ethical Statement
- Achieve an undergraduate grade point average of 2.5 or better in the last 60 graded semester credits (or 90 quarter hours) earned prior to the baccalaureate degree. Applicants with a GPA of 3.00 or better do not need to take the standard admissions tests. Applicants with a grade point average between 2.50 and 2.99 are required to submit scores from one of the following standard admissions tests:
  - Graduate Record Examination (GRE):* Achieve a minimum score of 900 on the General Test (verbal and quantitative subsections) or score at or above the 60th percentile on the Graduate Subject Test in psychology.
  - Miller's Analogies Test:* Achieve a raw score of 57.
- Please note: Students coursework may not exceed credits. Regular Admission Status must be obtained prior to start of third term.*



**AUTOBIOGRAPHY GUIDELINES:** The following guidelines are provided to assist you in the writing of your personal autobiography. Your admission to the Master of Arts degree program in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT)/Counseling is contingent on the quality and timely completion of this autobiographical requirement.

Your personal autobiography must be at least three-four typed pages in length and conform to the following guidelines:

- a. Include childhood, family and (if applicable) marital data and values derived from these experiences in relation to your choice of a career in counseling.
- b. Incorporate two or three relevant experiences that have helped to shape your development and personality; and
- c. Discuss how you arrived at this point in your career development. Include any relevant professional experience.

If you have questions about other aspects of your application process, please consult your psychology faculty program manager.

**LETTERS OF REFERENCE:** Submit three letters of reference from persons actively engaged in college or university teaching and/or the practice of counseling/psychology, who are in a position to evaluate the applicant's academic and personal qualifications for the program.

**STATEMENT:**

Note that licensing and certification agencies typically have regulations denying licensure or certification to anyone who has been convicted of a felony, most especially one which reflects an offense which would be a cause for disciplinary action if committed by one already holding the license. Please contact the licensing board in the state you plan to license for clarification of how a conviction may affect licensing. This clarification should be done before the application for admission to this program is submitted.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_




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**PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Master of Arts in Psychology

 MFT                       Counseling

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PERSONAL INFORMATION:
*Full Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Social Security Number:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Gender:* M or F  
(optional, academic identification purposes only)
*Address:* \_\_\_\_\_

*City:* \_\_\_\_\_ *State:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Zip Code:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Telephone: Home* ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ *Business* ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

GRADUATE EXAMINATIONS:

GRE SCORES (if required): Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Quantitative \_\_\_\_\_ / or

GRE Psychology Test \_\_\_\_\_

Millers Analogies Test \_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT OF INTENT: Type a personal Statement of Intent emphasizing Education/Professional goals and objectives. Include any prior academic or experimental background towards achieving these goals. (use additional page if necessary)




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## ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

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Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location/Center: \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I, the undersigned student, have read, understood, and have received a copy of the Chapman University Division of Psychology Policies and Procedures. I understand that my program and/or requirements may be altered only on written request and that any changes must be approved by the Program Manager/Faculty, Program Chair, and Associate Dean. I agree to adhere to the procedures as outlined and understand that any appeal of action under these policies and procedures must be made to the Division of Psychology through the Program Manager/Faculty.

As a student in a program leading to service in one of the mental health professions, I agree to abide by the ethical standards of the profession and understand that violation of these standards may result in probation/dismissal from the graduate program.

*Ethical Principles of Psychologists*  
*American Psychological Association, 1992*  
<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code.html>

OR

*American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2001*  
*AAMFT Ethics*  
<http://www.nbcc.org/ethics/NBCCethics.htm>

OR

*California Association of Marriage, Family Therapists*  
*CAMFT*  
<http://www.camft.org>

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Manager/Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(A signed original copy of this page must be filed with the University Graduate Office.)

# Chapman University

## Graduate Application

*Office of Graduate Admission • Argyros Forum, Room 304 • One University Drive • Orange, CA 92866 • (714) 997-6786 • FAX (714) 997-6713*

### ORANGE CAMPUS APPLICANTS ONLY:

NOTE: This form is for the use of United States citizens or resident aliens only. Foreign students must use special forms which are available from the Orange campus Office of Graduate Admission.

Semester for which you are seeking admission:  Fall  Spring  Summer 199\_\_\_\_\_ 200\_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan to attend Chapman as a  full-time (9 credits) or  part-time (3-6 credits) student?

### ACADEMIC CENTER APPLICANTS ONLY:

Please submit your application directly to the center you wish to attend.

NOTE: Academic Centers are not authorized to accept applications.

Academic Center Location and # \_\_\_\_\_

Term for which you are seeking admission: Term # \_\_\_\_\_, 199\_\_\_\_\_ 200\_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Application fee: \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification:

RA(CC)(CH)(CG)

PRO(V)(CC)(GE)

NO(G)(GJ)(GE)

### PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

last first middle

Name which may have previously appeared on academic records \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number  -  -   Male  Female

(optional, academic identification purposes only)

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

(month/date/year) city state or country

United States citizen?  yes  no If no, country of citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

Current Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

number and street

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No. (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

area code area code

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address \_\_\_\_\_

number and street

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No. (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

area code area code

May we contact you at your business number? \_\_\_\_\_

### FINANCIAL AID:

Are you planning to apply for any type of financial aid?  yes  no

*Chapman has an extensive financial aid program and you are encouraged to apply for tuition grants and loans. To receive any type of financial aid you must be admitted to a graduate program and enrolled in at least 6 credits per semester at the Orange campus or half time for two consecutive terms at the Academic Centers. To apply for aid, you will be required to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which is available at the Chapman University Financial Aid Office, (714) 997-6741.*

**ACADEMIC HISTORY:**

List below all colleges and universities you have attended regardless of whether you finished a degree program; include any credential programs attempted or completed.

Request official transcripts from ALL baccalaureate institutions attended including ALL post-baccalaureate graduate course work and advanced degrees. The transcripts must be sent directly from the college or university to the Office of Graduate Admission if you are applying to the Orange campus or to the Academic Center to which you are applying.

\*Note: Applicants to the joint specialist credential programs and MA Teaching programs must request two (2) sets of transcripts.

NO ACTION CAN BE TAKEN ON AN APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION UNTIL ALL TRANSCRIPTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

<i>name of institution</i>	<i>location (city, state)</i>	<i>area of study</i>	<i>dates attended</i>	<i>degree awarded</i>

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:**

On a separate sheet, please write your statement of intent. Explain your reasons for wishing to attend Chapman University. Discuss your career goals and how you believe achieving a graduate degree at Chapman will assist in attaining your goals. A resume or history of your professional background may be submitted with the application. In the statement of intent, include any past experience related to your intended degree program that may not be reflected in your resume.

*MA Film Studies:* Please include a statement of intent describing the nature of the film scholarship that you are interested in pursuing, and submit a writing sample (10 to 20 pages) that reflects scholarly abilities.

*MFA Film and Television Production:* Please include a statement of intent describing the film, television, or multimedia project you intend to produce for the thesis project and submit a portfolio or work in any field that shows creative promise.

*Ed.S. School of Psychology and MA Counseling (school counseling emphasis):* Please write a three or four page autobiographical statement outlining life experiences that have shaped your approach to working with children and youth and how you have arrived at this point in your career development.

*Teaching Credentials:* Please explain what teaching means to you and why you think you would be or are successful in this profession.

*MA Education (curriculum and instruction):* Please describe your career path over the past ten years and explain why earning an MAE is important to you at this time. Candor will be appreciated.

*MA Education (educational administration):* Please explain why you feel you are ready to make a commitment to study leadership and administration at this time.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

In addition to submitting a copy of your resume, please provide the following information about your current and past employment.

<i>employer</i>	<i>dates of employment</i>	<i>title</i>

## DEGREE PROGRAMS:

Please check the program for which you are applying.

- School of Business and Economics
- MBA (831)
  - Executive MBA (837) (Please request a separate application)
- College of Lifelong Learning
- Master of Health Administration (MHA) (761)
    - Certificate, Health Care Management (762)
    - Certificate, Gerontology (763)
  - MS Human Resources (741)
    - Certificate, HR (951)
  - MA Criminal Justice (861)
  - MA Organizational Leadership (745)
    - Certificate, Organizational Leadership (950)
  - MA Career Counseling (787)
    - Certificate, Career Counseling (991)
- School of Communication Arts
- MFA Creative Writing (894)
  - MA English
    - Teaching Literature and Composition (895)
    - Literature (892)
- School of Film and Television
- MA Film Studies (772)
    - MFA Film and Television Production
      - Production (774)
      - Producing (775)
      - Screenwriting (776)
      - New Media (770)
- Wilkinson College of Letters and Sciences
- MS Food Science and Nutrition (841)
    - Certificate, Quality Control and Assurance (949)
    - Certificate, Food Science (932)
    - Certificate, Food Technology (934)
    - Certificate, Nutrition (941)
  - MA Psychology
    - Marriage and Family Therapy (854)
    - Counseling (852) (Academic Centers outside of California)
  - MFT (827) (Please request a separate application)
- School of Law
- Juris Doctor (Please request a separate application)
- School of Education
- Public Schools Credentials:
- Single (Secondary) Subject Credential (994)
  - Multiple (Elementary) Subject Credential (993)
  - PPSC School Counseling Credential (996)
  - Professional Clear (990)
  - CLAD (975)
- MA Education
- Curriculum and Instruction (782)
  - Reading Education (784)
  - Educational Administration (783)
    - Administrative Services Credential
      - Preliminary Tier I (995)
      - Professional Tier II (976)
  - Instructional Technology
  - Ed.S. School Psychology (717)
    - with PPSC and PPSF credential (996) (997)
    - with PPSF credential (997)
  - MA Teaching (elementary education) (784)
  - MA Teaching (secondary education) (795)
- MA Counseling
- School Counseling Emphasis (785)
  - Professional Counseling Emphasis (AZ only) (792)
- MA Special Education (786)
- Please check one credential program option only. You may apply for the master's degree option in addition or by itself.\*\*
- Dual Specialist Credential(s) – LEVEL I
- Multiple Subjects and Mild/Moderate specialist (900)
  - Multiple Subjects and Moderate/Severe specialist (901)
  - Multiple Subjects with both specialists (902)
  - Single Subjects and Mild/Moderate specialist (903)
  - Single Subjects and Moderate/Severe specialist (904)
  - Single Subjects with both specialists (905)
- Specialist Only Credential(s) – LEVEL I
- Mild/Moderate specialist (906)
  - Moderate/Severe specialist (907)
  - Both Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe specialist (908)
- Credential(s) type – LEVEL II\*
- Mild/Moderate specialist
  - Moderate/Severe specialist
  - Both Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe
- \* The LEVEL II Specialist credential requires completion of LEVEL I before applying. All Specialist candidates must eventually complete both the LEVEL I and LEVEL II programs.
- \*\* Note: A master's degree in special education does not qualify its holder to teach in California public schools – an Education Specialist teaching credential is required.
- Courses only (701)

## LETTERS OF REFERENCE:

Two letters of reference are required from individuals familiar with your academic or professional abilities.

## Exceptions:

All programs listed below require three letters of reference.

MA Film Studies

MFA Film and TV Production

MA Psychology (MFT)

Teacher Education Programs require three recommendation forms.

Please list below the names of the people you have asked to provide references.

1.	3.
2.	4.

**GRADUATE EXAMINATIONS:**

Those masters program applicants whose GPA is less than the 3.0 required to be admitted for regular admission must submit scores from one of the accepted graduate examinations.

— Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT),  
Millers Analogies Test (MAT), or Praxis Series Education Examinations —

Some degree programs require a standard admission test to be admitted into their particular discipline. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog or individual program brochure for information on required examinations.

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information furnished on this application is accurate and complete. I agree that, if admitted, I will abide by the rules and regulations of Chapman University as contained in the current Graduate Catalog. If there is a dispute between me and the university, the appropriate catalog will be used as the arbitrating medium. I also understand that it is my responsibility to obtain the current Graduate Catalog before or after being admitted to the university.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if the information given in this application can be used for Chapman University directory purposes.

**OPTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

The purpose of this inquiry is to assess the effectiveness of the university's recruitment efforts and to facilitate selection of a diverse student body. Since the university does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnic origin, the answer to these questions will not influence the university's decision on admission.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Ethnicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander (O)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (C)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan (N)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> African American (B)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Latino/Hispanic (S)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-ethnic (M)</li> </ul> <p><b>Marital Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Single (S)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (M)</li> </ul> | <p><b>How or where did you first hear of Chapman?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Graduate/Professional Fair or Forum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information Session</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Referred by _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chapman Graduate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Academic Center</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement (please specify) _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> www/internet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peterson's Guide</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</li> </ul> | <p><b>Religious Preference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disciples of Christ (25)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protestant (75)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish (50)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic (15)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moslem (62)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist (12)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|

**ORANGE CAMPUS APPLICANTS:**

Please return this form with your Statement of Intent and the required non-refundable application fee of \$40.00 to:

Office of Graduate Admission • Argosy Forum, Room 304  
One University Drive • Orange, CA 92866  
(714) 997-6786 • FAX (714) 997-6713  
[www.chapman.edu](http://www.chapman.edu)

**ACADEMIC CENTER APPLICANTS:**

Please return this form with your Statement of Intent and the required non-refundable application fee of \$40.00 to the Academic Center you wish to attend.

*Chapman University considers all applicants without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable state or federal civil rights law.*

<p>Academic Center Checklist (Office Use Only)</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Application (if necessary)	<input type="checkbox"/> Transcripts
<input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Intent	<input type="checkbox"/> Autobiographical Statement (if necessary)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Test Scores (if necessary)	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa (if necessary)	<input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Reference
<p>Academic Center Official Signature _____</p>		<p>Date _____</p>

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