

Department chairs and interpersonal conflict: A narrative inquiry

by

Audrey Evelyn Ayers

B.S., North Georgia College and State University, 1998

M.S., Kansas State University, 2019

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2023

Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in every part of life and institutions of higher education are not immune to experiencing interpersonal conflict. Department chairs hold a key position between upper administration and the rest of the faculty and staff within the department, all while still teaching classes. The purpose of this research study is to explore the interpersonal conflict of department chairs at public, research one universities. The research questions guiding the study are how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution, and how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The methodology is narrative inquiry using qualitative data collection and narrative analysis, eliciting the stories of the participants. There were six participants, made up of three males and three females, from three different universities, in three different regions and representing varying disciplines. Each participant was interviewed three times, using 45-minute, semi-structured interviews tailored to elicit narratives and stories related to different aspects of conflict and conflict resolution. All interviews were hand-transcribed and coded using first cycle coding methods and second cycle coding methods resulting in themes including department chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional, as reaching other departments, as “dripping down” to students, department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as talking, listening, and asking questions, department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input, and department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring outside the department. Future research areas include expanding the study to private universities and community colleges as well as exploring individual definitions of conflict and varying conflict resolution efforts based on the conflict source.

Department chairs and interpersonal conflict: A narrative inquiry

by

Audrey Evelyn Ayers

B.S., North Georgia College and State University, 1998

M.S., Kansas State University, 2019

A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2023

Approved by:

Major Professor
Susan Yelich-Biniecki

Copyright

© Audrey Ayers 2023.

Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in every part of life and institutions of higher education are not immune to experiencing interpersonal conflict. Department chairs hold a key position between upper administration and the rest of the faculty and staff within the department, all while still teaching classes. The purpose of this research study is to explore the interpersonal conflict of department chairs at public, research one universities. The research questions guiding the study are how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution, and how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The methodology is narrative inquiry using qualitative data collection and narrative analysis, eliciting the stories of the participants. There were six participants, made up of three males and three females, from three different universities, in three different regions and representing varying disciplines. Each participant was interviewed three times, using 45-minute, semi-structured interviews tailored to elicit narratives and stories related to different aspects of conflict and conflict resolution. All interviews were hand-transcribed and coded using first cycle coding methods and second cycle coding methods resulting in themes including department chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional, as reaching other departments, as “dripping down” to students, department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as talking, listening, and asking questions, department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input, and department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring outside the department. Future research areas include expanding the study to private universities and community colleges as well as exploring individual definitions of conflict and varying conflict resolution efforts based on the conflict source.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	x
List of Tables	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Dedication	xiii
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
Rationale for the Study	1
Problem Statement.....	3
Statement of Purpose and Research Questions.....	4
Overview of Methodology.....	4
Methodology, Methods, Data Collection.....	4
Limitations and Delimitations of Study.....	7
Conceptual Framework and Terminology	7
Terminology.....	10
Role of the Researcher	11
Organization of the Dissertation	11
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	13
Department Chairs as Administrative Leaders	13
Position of Significance	14
Studies from the Faculty Perception	17
Journey to Department Chair Position.....	18
Universities as Systems.....	19
Academic Department as Subsystem.....	20
Hierarchy and Holism	22
Interpersonal Conflict	24
Conflict	24
Conflict in Organizations	25
Conflict at Universities	28
Conflict in an Academic Department.....	28
General Systems Theory	33

Holism.....	34
Understanding Subsystems	36
Hierarchy.....	36
Systems Theory in Educational Leadership.....	38
Summary	41
Chapter 3 - Methodology	42
Research Questions	42
Methodology Selected	42
Methodology	43
Critiques of Narrative Inquiry.....	47
The Researcher.....	48
Study Participants	49
Procedures Followed.....	50
Data Analysis.....	55
Trustworthiness.....	72
Ethical Concerns	75
Summary	75
Chapter 4 - Findings.....	76
Participant Demographics.....	76
Participant Interview Settings.....	77
Chair.....	77
David.....	78
Paul	80
Deborah.....	81
Helen	82
Humboldt	83
Identified Themes	85
Themes Answering Research Question 1 “How do Department Chairs at Public, Research One Universities Describe their Lived Experiences with Conflict within the University Institution?	88
Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional.	88

Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which can Come from the Upper Administration	90
Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being that which come from within the department's faculty or staff.	103
Chair Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that Which Comes from the Students	118
Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which Reaches Outside the Department.....	123
Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which Reaches Upper Administration	124
Chairs Describe their Experiences in which Conflict Reaches Human Resources	127
Chairs Describe their Experiences in which Conflict Reaches Other Departments ...	130
Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which "Drips Down" to the Students.....	132
Themes answering Research Question 2 "How do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution?"	140
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Listening, Talking, and Asking Questions.....	141
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input.....	152
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input from Seasoned Department Chairs	153
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input from Other Departments	155
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input Through One's Faith and Self-Reflection	158
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Referring Outside the Department	159
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Referring to Policies and Procedures.....	160
Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Creating Policies to Address Conflict	162

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Referring to Other Entities	166
Summary	168
Chapter 5 - Discussion	170
Discussion of Findings.....	172
Research Question One: How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their experiences with conflict in the university institution?	172
Research Question Two: How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their role in conflict resolution in the university institution?	175
Conceptual Framework	176
Department chairs as administrative leaders.....	176
Universities as systems	179
Interpersonal Conflict	182
General Systems Theory	184
Additional Discussion of Findings.....	185
Implications	188
Significance of Study.....	191
Limitations	191
Recommendations for Future Research	192
Conclusion	194
References	197
Appendix A Statement of Informed Consent.....	222
Appendix B Interview Questions.....	225
Appendix C Structural Codes	226
Appendix D Appendix D In Vivo and Process Codes	228
Appendix E Second Cycle Codes	243
Appendix F Mind Map on Faculty.....	246
Appendix G Mind Map About Research Question 1.....	247
Appendix H Mind Maps About General Ideas	248
Appendix I Mind Map About Students.....	249

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 <i>Conceptual Framework</i>	7
Figure 3.1 <i>Snowball Recruitment Process</i>	50
Figure 3.2 <i>Interview Environment Sketch</i>	57
Figure 3.3 <i>Attribute Codes</i>	59
Figure 3.4 <i>Mind Map</i>	69
Figure 3.5 <i>Mind Map to Make Sense of Previous Mind Maps</i>	70
Figure 4.1 <i>Main Themes and Sub Themes</i>	86
Figure 5.1 <i>Conceptual Framework</i>	177

List of Tables

Table 3.1	<i>Parent Demographics</i>	52
Table 3.2	<i>Multiple Interview Focuses.....</i>	53
Table 3.3	<i>Structural Codes</i>	60
Table 3.4	<i>In Vivo and Process Codes</i>	62
Table 3.5	<i>Second Cycle Coding Examples</i>	65
Table 4.1	<i>Organization of Stories by Participant and Sub Theme Within the First Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Experiences With Conflict as Being Multi-Directional</i>	89
Table 4.2	<i>Organization of Stories by Participant and Sub Theme Within The Main Theme- Chairs Describe Their Experiences With Conflict As That Which Reaches Outside The Department</i>	124
Table 4.3	<i>Organization of Stories By Participant In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Experiences With Conflict As That Which "Drips Down" To Students</i>	132
Table 4.4	<i>Organization of Stories By Participant In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Role In Conflict Resolution As Talking, Listening, and Asking Questions</i>	142
Table 4.5	<i>Organization of Stories By Participant and Sub Theme In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Role In Conflict Resolution As Seeking Input</i>	153
Table 4.6	<i>Organization of Stories By Participant and Sub Theme In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Role In Conflict Resolution As Referring Out</i>	159

Acknowledgements

My first acknowledgment is to my major professor, Dr. Susan Yelich-Biniecki, for guiding me through this journey, for listening to me when non-school related stressors were overwhelming, and for shaping my understanding of research and writing. Thank you for devoting hours and hours to reviewing my writing and meeting with me over and over again.

My second acknowledgment is to my six participants who were willing to share emotional stories, stories of stressful memories, and stories of leadership. Thank you for trusting me with your stories. I hope you feel honored, validated, and understood.

My third acknowledgment is to my committee members who provided outstanding suggestions and feedback. Thank you for the time you devoted to reviewing my writing and providing me with guidance along the way.

My fourth acknowledgment is to my smart friends, who walked the path of doctoral work in front of me so that I could follow in their footsteps: Dr. Courtney Hoffhines, Dr. Jessica Williams, Dr. Sarah Murray, Dr. Christina Love, and Dr. Jewel Alvis. Thank you for all your friendship and mentorship along the way. I am so proud of all of you and can't wait to join the throng of strong women scholars.

My fifth acknowledgment is to my sister Margie Johnson who has walked the road of graduate school beside me. Thank you for walking with me through this very difficult educational journey. Look at us! We're doing it!

My sixth acknowledgement is to all the encouragement, support, and help from my amazing network of friends: Jennifer Particini, Lesley Dillon, Boyd Plessl, Tammy Patterson, and Andrea Gilman.

My last acknowledgment is to Jesus. Thank you.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children Nathaniel Ayers, Amanda Ayers, William Ayers, and Matthew Ayers. It is an absolute joy and blessing upon blessing to be your mom. I love you so much. To my “extra” kid Gavin, it is a joy and blessing to be your second mom. I love you too.

To my husband Charles Ayers, thank you for the support you gave me.

To my mom, Cheryl Hughes, thank you for being my mom and for loving me. I am so proud of you writing the book on Caretaking for Parkinson’s Disease.

To all the women who get pregnant before they intended to.

To all the moms who are in the trenches of parenting little ones, the late nights of feedings and diaper changes, potty-training, bed-time routines.

To all the moms who are in the trenches of parenting school-aged kids with homework time, bullying at school, making lunches or taking forgotten lunches.

To all the moms of tweens and teens who cry over the hurt feelings, the emotional outbursts, the withdrawn children, the talking back, the first crushes, the awkward questions, the talks about changing bodies, the fear of self-harm.

To all the moms of kids who are graduating high school and about to leave home and experience the world of college or work but still want to come home and eat rice krispy treats.

To all the moms of kids in college who don’t know what their kids are doing right now, are worried about iffy choices, worried their child might drink from the wrong cup, worried about parties, grades, roommates.

To all the moms of kids who are graduating college and don’t know what they’re going to do or are about to get married or start a new career.

To all the moms whose job description of “mom” keeps changing.

To all the military spouses who are alone. Again.

To all the military spouses who are independent and strong but are sick of it.

To all the military spouses who are entering retirement and finding their place.

To all the retired military spouses.

To those who feel unseen.

To those who feel unworthy.

To those who feel unloved.

To those who feel not enough.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Conflict is inevitable in every part of life and institutions of higher education are not immune to experiencing role conflict, work-family conflict, and interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict can be defined as “warring [of] individual personalities” (Hearn & Anderson, 2002, p. 50), a “struggle between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, and or goals” (Watson et al., 2017, p. 252), or two or more persons with incompatible objectives, activities, or goals (Deutsch, 1973; Hocker & Wilmot, 2018; Kreisberg, 2012). Researchers have conducted studies on interpersonal conflict between faculty members (Dee et al., 2004; Hearn & Anderson, 2002), online faculty and administration (Sellani & Harrington, 2002), students and faculty (Brockman et al., 2010), and faculty with staff (Dee et al., 2004; Florenthal & Tolstikov-Mast, 2012), but much less research, especially qualitative research, has been conducted on interpersonal conflict between department chairs and faculty or administration (Sullivan, 2019). The purpose of this research study was to explore the interpersonal conflict of department chairs at public, research one universities. This research is significant as department chairs are an integral position in the university as a liaison between faculty and upper university administration (Gigliotti, 2021; Gmelch & Burns, 1993).

Rationale for the Study

Interpersonal conflict can be detrimental to the future success of a university for several reasons. The first reason interpersonal conflict can be detrimental is the future success of a university is contingent on the attraction of students (Kusku, 2003), as students are attracted to universities with positive, healthy cultures (Del Rey & Romero, 2004; Elliot & Healy, 2001; Kusku, 2003; Nishii et al., 2000; Van Vught, 2008). To build a positive, healthy culture,

universities must build a sense of community (Biggs, 1981; Florenthal et al., 2009) through positive working relationships in a work environment (Florenthal et al., 2009).

The second reason interpersonal conflict can be detrimental to the future success of a university is interpersonal conflict can impact the success and retention of faculty. Organization members who experience conflict report a weak organizational culture which can affect their sense of community which influences their attitude toward completing their work tasks (Biemiller, 2008; Florenthal et al., 2009; Fuller et al., 2006; Martin, 2002, Volkwein & La Nasa, 1999;). Therefore, a strong sense of community and university culture can impact the productivity of faculty and a stronger, more positive organizational culture will then be displayed by the members of that organization (Martin, 2002; Meyerson, 1991; Schein, 1992). Faculty are more likely to stay in their position if they are satisfied in their work (Jong, 2019) and are more likely to resign when they feel a lack of respect and lack of open communication within the department (Bucklin et al., 2014). Therefore, a positive, strong sense of community, culture, and environment of a university creates an attractive organization for faculty and student retention (Del Rey & Romero, 2004; Elliot & Healy, 2001; Nishii et al., 2000; Van Vught, 2008).

Department chairs hold a leadership role within the department in addition to their responsibilities for publishing, interpreting communication between upper administration and faculty, and fulfilling the teaching and academic responsibilities (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989). Department chairs hold influence and power due to their decision-making role, but also exert emotional energy in maintaining positive departmental relationships (Al-Omari, 2007; Cowley, 2019), making promotion and tenure decisions (Bautista, 2018), sometimes losing camaraderie due to assuming a supervisory role in the same department where they once were contemporaries (Smith et al., 2012), taking the conflict personally (Gmelch & Burns, 1993), and keeping the

department fiscally relevant to the university (Wolverton et al., 1999). “The department chair is at the heart of the tension between the academic core of teaching and research in a loosely coupled system and the tightly coupled mechanistic managerial core” (Gmelch & Burns, 1993, p. 3). More recently, the role of department chair has been noted to be “caught between diverging interests of faculty and administration” (Gigliotti, 2021, p. 1). Often department chairs are the highest administrative position while still also faculty, meaning department chairs still instruct classes in addition to the administrative duties they fulfill. Floyd (2016) refers to this position of part-administrator, part-faculty as an academic middle manager. Department chairs can develop a stronger, more positive sense of community and supportive culture through their leadership (Watson et al., 2019) which can positively impact retention of faculty and students (Nerad & Miller, 1996) and retaining students affects the financial security and success of universities which can affect the overall success of universities (Kusku, 2003).

Problem Statement

Department chairs hold an important administrative position and make about 80 percent of the day-to-day decisions (Gmelch, 1993), and experience interpersonal conflict with both administration and faculty (Gigliotti, 2021). There is extant literature on department chairs (Berdrow, 2010; Czech & Forward, 2010; Gmelch & Burns, 1994), but fewer empirical studies on department chairs and their experiences with interpersonal conflict (Hearn & Anderson, 2002) with even fewer being qualitative (Sullivan, 2019), and no studies the researcher could find that studied the narratives of department chairs with interpersonal conflict. The volume of literature on department chairs supports the importance of the choice of participant in this study and the dearth of qualitative literature and narratives of department chairs supports the need for this study.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research study was to explore the interpersonal conflict for department chairs at public, research one universities. For this study, interpersonal conflict was defined as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018, p. 21). The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution?
2. How do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution?

Overview of Methodology

This section will discuss the methodology, methods, and data collection of this research study.

Methodology, Methods, Data Collection

The methodology of this study was narrative inquiry using qualitative data collection and narrative analysis. Narrative inquiry was chosen as the methodology to answer the research questions about the lived experiences of the department chairs because humans are able to make personal and social connections with their lived experiences and organize them into narratives, or stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this research study, the stories of department chairs’ lived experiences of departmental conflict were studied. Narrative inquiry allowed the researcher to analyze the stories of the department chairs and explore how they make meaning of their experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017) in addition to being “a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 18).

The sample consisted of six department chairs from three public, research one universities, in three different regions (the West Coast, the Midwest, and the East Coast). Determining a sample size for qualitative research studies is dependent on the theoretical framework, resources, and types of data to be collected (Patton, 2002). Exact numbers of sample sizes range from one participant (Becker, 2012), up to 15 (Bertaux, 1981), five to 25 (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015), and 12 – 60 (Adler & Adler, 2012). Kuzel (1992) allows for the homogeneity of the population, suggesting six to eight participants is sufficient. The participants came from a variety of disciplines and colleges within the universities and their diverse experiences which added to more complete analysis. The decision to recruit from multiple disciplines was intentional to deepen the data from various disciplines (Trammel & Gumpertz, 2012).

The data collection methods included three 45-minute semi-structured interviews carried out over five weeks. There were three interviews to increase rigor and credibility in the study by implementing triangulation of the participants stories and data at one time compared with stories and data collected at subsequent times (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), to establish rapport in the first interview by asking open-ended broad questions, to use the subsequent interviews to probe and dig deeper in the questioning, and to focus the angle of interview questions differently in each of the three interviews. Gawlewicz (2015) used multiple interviews with participants and noted that some participants were more willing to reveal thoughts and feelings in subsequent interviews than in an initial interview. In the pilot study to this study, the researcher noted that in the second and third interviews the participant returned to some of the same stories he told in the first interview to illustrate different points, elaborate on the stories with more details, and reveal motivations behind the stories. In an analytic memo, the researcher reflected on the mannerisms of the participant growing increasingly more comfortable as the interviews progressed. Greater

rapport and comfort with an interviewer increase the authenticity of the data given by the interview participant (Bacq et al., 2019; McGregor & Fernandez, 2019) which increases the credibility of the data. The focused angles of the three interviews were to ask questions about personal conflict faced by the participant in the first interview, questions about acting as a mediator, neutral, or third party by the participant in the second interview, and questions about experiences in which the participant noticed positive or negative impacts on the department due to conflict in the third interview. The data gathered was in-depth, which is “easily accomplished as narratives usually provide thick descriptions” (Butina, 2015, p. 191). The in-depth data allowed me to analyze and sift through the stories of conflict the participants experienced personally, experiences in which the participants acted as a mediator, neutral party, or third party; and descriptions of how the participants viewed their roles in conflict resolution.

The study involved multiple interviews with each participant which lengthened the data collection and analysis to approximately two months. The researcher conducted three 45-minute interviews with participants over a five-week period. Data analysis started after the completion of the first interview and continued throughout the remainder of the data collection process and culminated after the coding and interpretation process. The coding process had several levels of coding ranging from the most general to more specific during each level (Saldana, 2021), resulting in a thematic analysis of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data analysis was represented using a narrative analysis and selections from the participants’ narratives. The IRB form requested one year for the length of the entire study.

This study pushes the boundaries of narrative inquiry as a methodology in that some of the findings of this study are structural and process oriented. Pairing the methodology of narrative inquiry with General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) built an unexpected structure

to the participants' narratives, and in turn, the findings of the narratives. All participants were employed by university systems and the bureaucratic structures they entail, the participants were asked questions about their experiences within the structured systems, and the narratives were viewed through the lens of systems theory which acknowledges the interconnectivity and interdependence of the structured systems and hierarchical structure within the systems. Therefore, some themes and sub themes in the findings will be more structural in nature.

Limitations and Delimitations of Study

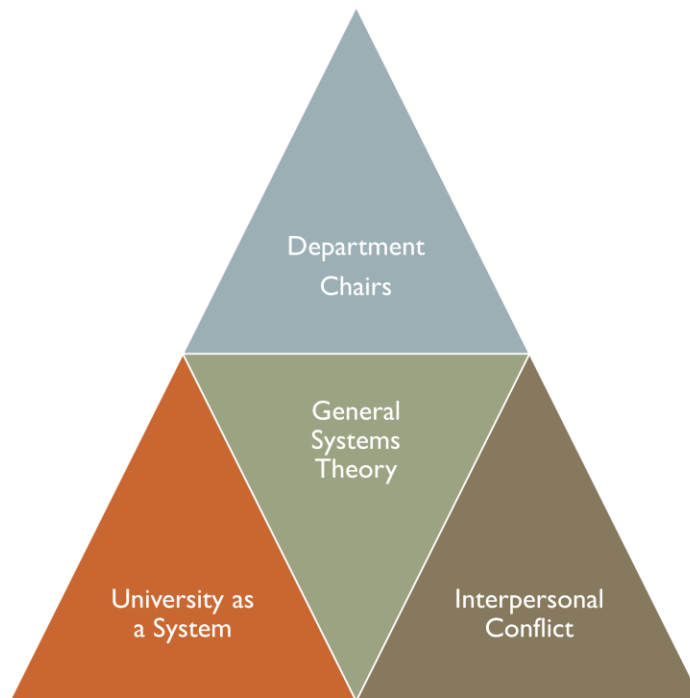
There were natural limitations of the study and delimitations that the researcher imposed on the study. The natural limitations of the study are the race, age, gender, and other demographic descriptors of the participants, and the choice of final participants based on the department chairs who were generated through the snowball sampling. The researcher focused on the stories of the participants (Kim, 2015).

Conceptual Framework and Terminology

This section of the chapter will explore the overarching social constructivism paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and lower-level theory of General Systems Theory. It will also give an overview of the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) which is viewing department chairs as administrative leaders experiencing interpersonal conflict in an academic department as a system through the lens of General Systems Theory by Bertalanffy (1968).

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework



Note: General Systems Theory is the center piece of the conceptual framework because it touches each of the other pieces of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework of this study includes department chairs as administrative leaders, the university as a system, interpersonal conflict, and General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968).

Department chairs were chosen as the participants due to the crucial position they hold as well as the significant impact departmental conflict plays in their responsibilities (Berdrow, 2010) and their stress (Gmelch, 1999). The university, and academic departments within, are identified as systems in historic literature (Bertalanffy, 1968) as well as more recent literature (Shaked, 2022) as universities include system components such as a common purpose or function, interconnected elements, and functions (Meadows, 2008). Using the final piece of the conceptual framework Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (1968), discussed more below, this study used General Systems Theory as a lens through which to study the lived experiences of department chairs with interpersonal conflict. General Systems Theory allowed the researcher to view the

academic department as a system within the larger system of the university, the interconnectedness of the hierarchical systemic elements, and the system as a whole.

The term systems thinking was coined by Jay Forrester in the 1960s as it applied to computer-based programming but was developed into open systems theory or General Systems Theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968. Bertalanffy studied the predictability of the closed systems of chemistry and how it was not applicable in biology as the environment of the biological organism had to be considered. Closed systems are not influenced by factors outside the system and therefore exhibit predictable patterns of behavior. Conversely, open systems can be impacted by other factors and therefore do not exhibit predictable patterns of behavior (Bertalanffy, 1968).

Bertalanffy (1968) suggested future research apply General Systems Theory to studying humans, but it was Fred Emery who first applied it to social science in 1981 as he focused on organizational relationships and the organization environment as both open systems, yet simultaneously linked together forming a third open system (Emery, 2000). Peter Senge (1991) developed the idea of systems theory further, into a way of thinking about solving larger problems in the modern world by no longer thinking strictly linearly but thinking larger and from multiple perspectives and dimensions, thereby creating the term systems thinking. Systems thinking became a way to look at the whole and still look at the individual parts. Systems theory was applied to solving management problems by Peter Checkland (1999) whose research about individuals in an organization found that the reactions were unpredictable due to individual biases based on perspective. In Meadows (2008), universities are discussed as systems at length and Shaked and Schecter (2020) clearly identify a gap in literature of research using systems theory in educational leadership. Kreisberg (2012) additionally posits “thinking about systems

and conflicts jointly enhances the study of both social systems and social conflicts” (p. 151). Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by using systems theory in research about higher education leaders, department chairs, and interpersonal conflict.

Terminology

For clarity of terminology this study used the following definitions for terms:

Adjunct Faculty: “persons whose primary professional employment lies outside the university with appointments to contribute their knowledge and skills to enhancing academic programs” (Langenberg, 1998).

Conflict: something that “exists whenever incompatible activities occur” (Deutsch, 1973, p. 42).

Conflict management: Recognizing conflict and handling it using communication strategies to minimize the damage (Pood & Glenn, 1981; Watson et al., 2017)

Conflict resolution roles: Persons who use “options for addressing conflicts, offered as an alternative to formal judicial grievance or hearing board procedures. The options include negotiation, conciliation, mediation, and fact-finding” (National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR), 1994).

Department chair: An academic scholar who simultaneously makes decisions as an administrator and interprets communication between the administration and faculty of a university (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989).

Faculty: “Members of unclassified service who have the professional expertise and the responsibility for the major university endeavors of teaching, research, and other creative activities, extension, directed services, and non-directed services”

Interpersonal conflict: “An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018, p. 3).

Public research one universities: Public, not private, doctoral universities with very high research activity (Carnegie Classifications, 2023)

Subsystem: Smaller systems containing elements, interconnections and a function or purpose found within a larger system (Bertalanffy, 1968; Meadows, 2008)

System: an organized, purposeful set of interconnected elements (Meadows, 2008)

Role of the Researcher

The researcher has a bachelor’s degree in education and taught in K-12 schools for several years. During those years, the researcher experienced and observed conflict in multiple different facets and forms. The researcher has also taught multiple leadership classes and conflict management classes in a position for a military service organization for several years. Recently, the researcher worked at a public four-year university in the Midwest during which time, the researcher earned a master’s degree in adult learning and leadership and a graduate certificate in conflict resolution. The researcher observed numerous incidents of conflict between faculty members and the department chair. It was this experience that prompted this study’s research focus.

Organization of the Dissertation

This study begins with a discussion of the literature on the concepts within the conceptual framework: universities as systems, interpersonal conflict, and General Systems Theory, followed by the literature on narrative inquiry in the related fields, and finally, a gap in the literature is identified. The chapter after the literature review addresses the methodology.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature on department chairs as administrative leaders, universities as systems, interpersonal conflict, and systems theory connecting them as the conceptual framework for this study. Historical and seminal literature will be reviewed as well as more recent literature. The review will begin with literature on the history of department chairs, the significance of their position, studies from the perspective of faculty members, and the journey to the position of department chair. Following the literature on department chairs is the literature on universities as systems including the academic department as a subsystem, hierarchy, and holism. Following the literature on universities as systems is the literature on interpersonal conflict including conflict in organizations, conflict at universities, and conflict in the academic department. The final section of the literature review is on General Systems Theory including literature on the history of the theory, holism, understanding subsystems, hierarchy, and systems theory in the field of educational leadership. The chapter ends with a summary.

Department Chairs as Administrative Leaders

The role of university department chair first emerged at Harvard University in 1739 but was not duplicated until 1826 by the University of Vermont and shortly thereafter, in 1837, by the University of Wisconsin (Al-Omari, 2007). Early literature on the department chair was informational and descriptive (Notes and News, 1950; Schroeder, 1802) until the arrival of literature in the middle of the 20th century which began studying issues for department chairs such as publishing (Siegfried & White, 1973), gender (Gleason, 1971; Kimmel, 1974), role conflict (Carroll, 1974), nepotism (Pingree et al, 1978), and addressing the dearth of literature on department chairs (Burlingame, 1979). This dearth is still acknowledged as Gmelch et al. (2017)

noted, “with the exception of a few empirically based books in the last few years, the attention chairs receive in the literature is primarily anecdotal” (p. 3).

Position of Significance

The role of department chair is the critical position between administration and faculty at universities and colleges (Al-Omari, 2007) as the role straddles the roles of both scholar and manager (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017). Floyd (2016) uses the term academic middle manager to express the key position a department chair holds as the middleman between upper administration such as university president, provost, and deans with the faculty, staff, and students that report to the chair.

With 80% of all administrative decisions being made at the department level (Gmelch, 1999) the department chairs play a “crucial role in ensuring program and institutional viability” (Wolverton et al., 1999, p. 1). The department chair’s role in faculty promotion and tenure, program evaluation, budgetary and resource management, hiring, and firing directly impacts the success and growth of the department and university (Brinkley-Etz Korn & Lane, 2019). Tucker (1981) developed a list of tasks and duties for the department chair which included department’s climate enhancement, student development, faculty development, communication/representation, operations/administration, and catalyst/innovation. Within the responsibility of climate enhancement, Berdrow (2010) includes the responsibilities of building department culture, crisis and conflict management, monitoring the daily life of the department, and leading department meetings. Under the topic of student development, Berdrow included the responsibilities of advising, conflict mediation, and outreach and under faculty development the responsibilities of mentoring the faculty, supporting faculty scholarship, and supporting faculty teaching. Under the topic of communication/representation, Berdrow included the responsibility of being the link

between the department and outsiders through communication, representing the department within in and outside of the college, and managing the flow of information within the department. Under the topic of operations/administration, Berdrow found the department chair is responsible for the department's budget, evaluation, recruitment and hiring, reports, resource allocation and scheduling, student administration, and management of staff.

Lastly, department chairs are responsible for leading the departmental implementation of the college's mission, mobilizing departmental resources, linking the faculty internally as well as externally, and stimulating the curriculum (Berdrow, 2010). Jones (2011) conducted a study on the needs for future department chairs which resulted in identifying more leadership needs than management and tasks, but Riley and Russell (2013) warned a few years later, that the role of department chairs in the future would grow more complex.

In addition to the success and growth of the department, the department chair is also tasked with creating a positive workplace for faculty, staff, and students (Paape et al., 2021). In a case study of department chairs from a large research university in Canada, Cowley (2019) asserted the "participants in this study emphasized the significance of relationship-maintenance and building through emotional self-management" (p. 10). Additionally, the study discussed the balance of relationship-building and objective tasks assigned to department chairs which supports Bautista's (2018) findings of department chairs promoting social and community well-being.

Department chairs may identify promoting a positive workplace as one of their responsibilities (Bautista, 2018), but in studying the causes of stress Gmelch and Burns (1993) cited collegial confrontation, facilitating faculty involvement in conflict resolution, and resolving collegial differences as three stressful pressures of department chairs. Gmelch and Burns (1993)

continued their research about department chair stress three years later and found interpersonal conflict was the cause of over 40 percent of the stress saying, “it is interesting to note that the stress does not necessarily result from the conflict per se...as much as confronting peers” (p. 267). Wolverton et al. (1999) also studied stress in department chairs, comparing American with Australian department chairs with one of the implications for future department chairs in both America and Australia to improve their interpersonal skills to apply to interpersonal conflict. More recently, Armstrong and Woloshyn (2017) used an interpretive qualitative study with 10 department chairs at a medium-sized Canadian university exploring tensions of the position of which two of the major findings were managing people and themselves.

Gmelch and Miskin (1993) identified one of the major challenges for department chairs is to “understand the strategic planning process for creating a productive department” (p. 12). Williams, et al. (2013) completed a qualitative study of 24 department chairs at a medium-sized university in which they sought to look for strategies to help with uncivil behaviors in the department. They completed semi-structured interviews in which they asked about strategies used by the department chairs in their experiences with interpersonal conflict. The findings gave suggestions of seeking other allies within the faculty, ignoring the problem, and even encouraging the faculty member with uncivil behavior to find a job elsewhere. These findings support the concept of department chairs actively seeking conflict resolution with their faculty and its impact on the job satisfaction of the faculty (Roach, 1991).

Gmelch and Seedorf (1989) assert “the department chair must act as administrator, interpret between the administration and faculty, and fulfill the academic role simultaneously” (p. 2). Department chairs hold a leadership position which requires administrative duties such as managing budgets and logistics, but the position also requires human resource duties such as

conflict management, hiring and firing, and promotion (Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016). Floyd (2016) uses the term academic middle managers to describe department leaders. Armstrong and Woloshyn (2017) studied this complex role of department chairs in their qualitative study of 10 department chairs at a medium-sized Canadian university. The participants outlined three areas of challenge to their dual role having to manage the position, manage the people, and manage themselves.

Studies from the Faculty Perception

Brown and Moshavi (2002) conducted a quantitative study of 70 department chairs from land grant universities in the United States finding department chairs using transformational leadership behaviors were positively associated with faculty satisfaction. Thompson (1999) also studied the faculty perception of department chairs' leadership but from the perspective of power, specifically types of power from French and Raven's (1959) taxonomy of coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, and referent power. The findings were that faculty perceived their department chairs as having legitimate and referent power more than coercive, expert or reward power. Both the findings from Brown and Moshavi (2002) and Thompson (1999) support the findings from Roach's (1991) quantitative study of faculty that when department chairs use strategies to build relationships with the faculty, the faculty rate the department chairs higher and are more satisfied with their jobs.

In a recent study of 783 department chairs from the 14 Big Ten universities, Gigliotti (2021) researched the ways covid impacted the complexity of their role as departmental leaders. The department chairs reported being met with intense challenges with communication, addressing gossip, and mitigating misinformation. The department chairs also specified the need for more training to better support the faculty, staff, and students. This need for additional

conflict resolution training was echoed in Person and Yao's (2021) narrative inquiry of 29 female engineering department chairs regarding their leadership training before taking the role as department chair.

Schmidt and Yelich-Biniecki (2023) state, "administrators of adult education programs have very different jobs from those who teach in adult education programs. As such, additional skills are required" (p. 44). Gmelch et al. (2017) asserted the additional skills are needed for the role of department chair, for the leadership and administrative roles, but are often minimally offered or not at all. Findings from Wolverton et al. (1999) also suggested new training for department chairs in interpersonal skills, change management, and communication skills.

This study did not research the types of training or lack of training received by department chairs; however, the researcher acknowledges the lack of specific skills training is mentioned in the literature. Gmelch and Seedorf (1989) suggest the department chair role is unique "because the chair often comes to the role untrained" (p. 2). Wolverton et al. (1999) included the need for new training for department chairs in interpersonal skills, change management, and communication skills. Person and Yao (2021) found the need for additional training in conflict resolution for department chairs which was also found in Gigliotti (2021).

Journey to Department Chair Position

The journey to the position of department chair and the responsibilities of department chairs differs across institutions (Smith et al., 2012). Some department chairs are appointed to their position, others apply and are hired into the position, and others are rotated into the position for a set length of duty before being rotated out again (Smith et al., 2012). Berdrow (2010) asserted the rotating into and out of the position is typical, however the specifics of role appointment vary by each department and institution. In a 1993 study, Gmelch and Burns found

more than two thirds of department chairs saw the role as a short-term position and expected to return to the role of faculty even though the return to faculty is often filled with challenges (Chu, 2022; Mills, 2006; Seedorf, 1991).

Universities as Systems

In this study, the researcher used General Systems Theory as the lower-level theoretical lens in studying the lived experiences of academic department chairs at public, research one universities, therefore the section lays the foundation of literature supporting the idea of viewing a university, and academic department, as a system. This section will explore seminal works identifying the university as a system and more recent works supporting the idea of an academic department as a system.

The overarching topic of education has been identified as having wickedly difficult problems which might be best suited to be studied using a systems theory approach. The term wicked problem was introduced to describe a systemic problem which was not well-defined, had numerous issues involved, competing views, confusing, and sometimes coupled with an even more challenging solution than the initial problem (Churchman, 1967). In his seminal work on General Systems Theory, Bertalanffy (1968) recognized the problems of education could be studied using systems theory which was further echoed extensively by Meadows (2008). Senge (1991) also asserted systems thinking should be the lens through which schools must be studied due to the large number of intertwining systems, functions, and people. More recently, Shaked (2022) acknowledged the importance of viewing education as a system by educational leadership graduate students due to the complex issues at multiple levels and involving multiple groups of people. Checkland (1994) asserted the use of systems theory to view complex issues involving people and hierarchical issues.

Having a working definition of a system is imperative before delving into the literature on how a university or academic department is like a system. This study uses the definition of a system from Meadows (2008) as an organized, purposeful set of interconnected elements and functions. The purpose of a university is “to the advancement of knowledge and scientific inquiry” (Board, 2018, para. 14). The elements are students, staff, faculty, chairs, deans, and administrators as well as courses, programs, departments, colleges, schools. “In the university system, interconnections include the standards for admission, the requirements for degrees, the examinations and grades, the budgets and money flows, the gossip, and most important, the communication of knowledge that is, presumably, the purpose of the whole system” (Meadows, 2008, p.14). In this statement, Meadows gives a glimpse to the interpersonal conflict seen in the interconnections between the elements in a university system, as it refers to gossip.

The elements within the university and academic department can be organized into a hierarchical structure, filled with interconnections which can be looked at individually or as a whole. Bertalanffy (1968) asserted the fundamental tenets of General Systems Theory to be hierarchy and wholeness, the latter being coined by Senge (1991) as holism. In this section, literature on the academic department as a subsystem will be reviewed as well as literature on the hierarchy of universities and holism seen in universities.

Academic Department as Subsystem

According to Bertalanffy (1968), larger systems, often referred to as supra systems, can contain smaller systems coined subsystems. The larger system of the university contains subsystems (Bertalanffy, 1968; Meadows, 2008) also consisting of elements, interconnections and a function or purpose. In this study, the subsystem of the academic department contains elements of the department chair, faculty, staff, and students in addition to interconnections of

relationships between those elements, as well as the function of purpose being the success of the department (Berdrow, 2010). Carrying the roles of administrator and leader, the department chair experiences the weight of making more than 80 percent of the decisions impacting the department (Gmelch & Burns, 1994). In addition to the stress of making such a huge percentage of the departmental decisions, department chairs also experience high amounts of stress and job dissatisfaction due to interpersonal conflict within the department (Gmelch & Burns, 1991; Gmelch & Burns, 1993) and the weight of the hierarchical position of department chair.

The function or purpose of the department is to advance knowledge to the students, as well as the success of the department itself (Meadows, 2008) which involves managing a budget and managing resources, requiring an administrative leader (Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016). “Leaders and administrators...handle logistics, put systems in place, communicate with various stakeholders, make decisions, build teams, and engage in many other preparatory endeavors” (Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016, p. 35). With less public money for higher education (Ehrenberg, 2011; Schulz, 2009), the academic department chair as the administrative leader “play[s] a crucial role in ensuring program and institutional viability” (Wolverton et al., 1999, p. 1).

The function or purpose of each element of a system or subsystem is equally as important to the success of the department as the function or purpose of the department (Meadows, 2008). A clash of purposes, whether of the function or purposes of a system or the elements of the system, can lead to systemic problems (Meadows, 2008).

The interconnections of the academic department, as in any system, if changed, can change a system dramatically (Meadows, 2008). “If in a university, the students graded the professors, or if the arguments were won by force instead of reason, the place would need a

different name. It might be an interesting organization, but it would not be a university” (Meadows, 2008, p. 16). Checkland (1994) purports the interconnections of the academic department, the social collectivity, allows an organization, the university department in this study, to achieve the purpose. Senge (1990) suggests leaders work with others inside complex systems, therefore department chairs as administrative leaders inside the complex system of the university must spend time investigating how the system works, what the elements are, and how they are interconnected so they can navigate the system (Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016).

Hierarchy and Holism

Within a university, “a structured organizational functioning is essential” (Kumar, 2021, p. 276) which includes certain hierarchical levels of administration, faculty, and students as well as a perceived hierarchy within the faculty. Faculty members perceive the highest level of the faculty hierarchy as being held by the tenured full-time faculty and the lowest level being held by adjunct faculty (Jolley et al., 2014; Wallin, 2004). In researching this perceived low status of adjunct faculty, researchers have uncovered issues of low pay, limited campus resources, and little job security (Christensen, 2008; Hoyt, 2012; Shayne, 2019). There are differing views on the effectiveness of adjunct faculty with some claiming a negative impact on the quality of the education (Umbach, 2007). Positively, adjunct faculty are not required to carry the extra-curricular responsibilities as the tenured faculty counterparts (Jolley et al., 2014; Langen, 2011; Wallin, 2004). With a recent trend of adding more adjunct faculty to university faculty (Curtis, 2014) and the expectation for the trend to continue (Monk et al., 2009) the rising number of adjunct faculty and fewer full-time faculty members shifts the research expectations and committee membership to the full-time faculty (AAUP, 2003). The added weight of research and committee membership to the full-time faculty creates added strain to the universities and

relationships between faculty in a department (Jolley et al., 2014; Langen, 2011; Wallin, 2004).

The relationship strain leads to interpersonal conflict within the department which is experienced by the department chair.

Another perceived hierarchical leveling is in gender inequality in higher education institutions (Aiston & Yang, 2017; Clauset et al., 2015; Duong et al., 2017). Some examples of sexism and gender inequality at universities are females being overlooked for promotion (Winslow & Davis, 2016), lower pay (Klein, 2016; Winslow & Davis, 2016), and harassment with bullying (Henning et al., 2017) which can result in more females experiencing burnout (Brabazon & Schultz, 2020). Gender inequality and sexism at universities decreases the department teamwork, negatively effecting the department (Krupa, 2021) and thus the department leadership (Henning et al., 2017).

Senge (1991) emphasizes the need for holism, “Unlike machines, living systems, such as your body or a tree, create themselves. They are not mere assemblages of their parts” (Senge et al., 2004, p. 5). An academic department is not a mere assemblage of faculty, students, staff, and a department chair, but instead a whole unit complete with interconnections, elements, and a purpose which must be seen as a whole to understand the impact to the whole system by what happens to one small part of it. In this study, the study was on the impact to the whole subsystem of an academic department within the larger system of the university when there is interpersonal conflict experienced by one element, the department chair. Holton (1995) asserted, “We need a culture that supports and acknowledges a systemic view of conflict, a view that acknowledges that conflict within one part of the academic has an effect on all other parts. As systems theory purports, change and conflict permeate the entire system” (p. 93).

Interpersonal Conflict

In this section, literature will be reviewed on conflict in organizations, conflict in universities, conflict between faculty, students, staff, and the department chair. The terms conflict and interpersonal conflict are used interchangeably throughout this section and the entire study. The term conflict is first defined, then literature is reviewed of conflict in organizations and universities as well as between individuals and groups.

Conflict

Hocker and Wilmot (2018) define conflict as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (p. 3). Parties who are not dependent on each other, who have no interest in the other, do not have conflict (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). The interdependence, or the interconnectedness, of the elements, of a system or subsystem such as the academic department, can lead to interpersonal conflict as well. The academic department cannot succeed with only the department chair, or the department chair and only one faculty member, or the department chair and one staff member. Instead, a department can succeed when these elements connect, hence the interdependence.

People within a department can perceive scarcity of resources such as budget funding or classroom availability, but Miller and Steinberg (1975) define a resource as “any positively perceived physical, economic, or social consequence” (p. 65). One intangible resource is power, which in the field of organizational conflict, is one of the most lacking in research (Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009). French and Raven (1959) developed the taxonomy of power including coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, and referent types of power. Coleman, Kugler, Mitchinson, and Foster (2013) conducted a quantitative study using a three-dimensional model on the effects of power

with conflict among a team and its members. The results supported the idea that the perception of power is a resource that can be seen as scarce and can result in conflict among a team or organization (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018).

Lastly, conflict can erupt when there is a perception that two or more individuals' goals are either incompatible or one individual is interfering with the goal of the other. An example of incompatible goals in a department might be the differing of policy or procedure whereas an example of interfering might be one faculty member not voting for tenure and promotion of another. In a qualitative study in Canada, department chairs reported being faced with conflict with other faculty on their promotion and tenure voting history (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017). The perception of whether or not the chairs voted for certain faculty members was held against them when they left their role as department chair and returned to the role of simply faculty. The department chair, faculty, staff, and students often perceive incompatible goals, compete over scarce resources, and perceive interference keeping them from achieving their own goals, causing large amounts of interpersonal conflict.

Conflict in Organizations

Conflict within organizations has been studied for many years. In his seminal work, Argyris (1957) hypothesized behaviors of individuals belonging to a formal organization who might experience conflict. The author suggested individuals within the organization may experience frustration which could result in aggression as well as the inverse that where aggression is shown, frustration most positively exists. Argyris (1957) continued by laying some blame on the organization itself stating, "the formal organization creates in a healthy individual, feelings of failure and frustration, short time perspective, and conflict" (Argyris, 1957, p. 77) and

concluded the only three possible reactions an individual could have would be to leave the organization, think less of the organization, or put up with the conflict.

Since the time of Argyris (1957) research has produced numerous studies and models, prevention training and resolution training (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Boulding, 1964; Follett, 1973; Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 2000; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Morgan, 1997). As researchers uncovered the significant amount of time, up to 40 percent of the workday, managers were spending dealing with conflict in their team or department, research on managing conflict in the workplace soared (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Deutsch et al., 2006; Lewicki et al., 2003; Thompson & Behfer, 2007). Dana (2005) made the significant finding that 80 percent of the struggles of a manager or employer could be traced back to interpersonal conflict among the employees.

Research has also produced studies on the field of conflict among smaller groups within larger organizations, specifically groups with the same function or purpose such as teams. Since systems, specifically academic departments, also have the same function or purpose, there is appropriate overlap and application of research on conflict in teams and conflict within an academic department.

De Dreu and Winegart (2003b) wrote a significant meta-analysis of conflict within teams in organizations being plagued with two major categories of conflict- task conflict and relationship conflict. Vrhovec and Markelj (2021) define task conflict as perceived differing views on how a task should be carried out and relationship conflict as the perceived differing views of two or more parties on personal issues. Amason (1996) initially discussed task conflict and labeled it as cognitive conflict in a study on team managers, finding this type of conflict could enhance some team members and their consensus in solving tasks. Additionally,

relationship conflict was labeled dysfunctional affective conflict and found to be detrimental to teams. Amason (1996) discussed personal criticisms were one of the telling descriptions to decide whether a conflict was considered relational. De Dreu and Winegart's (2003b) meta-analysis of task conflict versus relationship conflict in teams revealed a change in the opinions about conflict from the time of Argyris when conflict in an organization was viewed as negative and destructive to a view that task conflict can be constructive and possibly beneficial. They did not find that relationship conflict was viewed as positively, however, instead their findings suggested relationship conflict drove turnover and separation within teams.

Since De Dreu and Winegart's (2003b) meta-analysis, research has continued to study team, group, and system interpersonal conflict with de Wit et al. (2012) conducting a meta-analysis including the two categories of task and relationship conflict and adding a third category of process conflict. Process conflict can be defined as conflict regarding the processes within a team, organization, or system such as delegation, assignment procedures, or bureaucracy (de Wit et al., 2012). This meta-analysis also discussed the possibility of co-occurrences of the conflict categories and provided discussion on the impact of cultural context to group interpersonal conflict.

Hocker and Wilmot (2018) discuss a conflict spiral which can begin as a task conflict and grow into a relational conflict which can grow into another task conflict and grow even larger into another relational conflict. In an academic department, the conflict spiral might look like a faculty member not distributing a survey to students in time to meet a deadline placed by a program director (task conflict). The program director might not include the faculty member on a grant project which would look very good on the faculty member's resume (relational conflict). The faculty member might then purposefully wait until the last minute to submit a large amount

of paperwork for the program director to have to wade through quickly in order to meet a deadline (task conflict). In systems thinking, this spiral is referred to as a reinforcing feedback loop. The faculty member does something to upset the program director which causes the program director to do something to the faculty member, which causes the faculty member to do something to upset the program director. This reinforcing feedback loop continues unless something changes.

In this section, I reviewed literature which included categorizations of conflict such as task, relational, and process, as well as introducing the reinforcing feedback loop used in systems thinking. In the next section, I will discuss the literature surrounding conflict at universities.

Conflict at Universities

Conflict can be seen as good or bad, positive or negative and the varying opinions on the ontology of conflict often cause disagreements between academics (Findlen, 2000). Some faculty may discourage or avoid conflict, viewing conflict as negative and destructive, while conversely other faculty may encourage conflict as they view it as constructive. Looking at conflict as destructive, Holton (1995) stated, “We need a culture that supports and acknowledges a systemic view of conflict, a view that acknowledges that conflict within one part of the academic has an effect on all other parts. As systems theory purports, change and conflict permeate the entire system” (p. 93). In this section, literature is reviewed on conflict in the academic department, between faculty and staff, between faculty and students, between faculty members, and between faculty and the department chair.

Conflict in an Academic Department

In Hocker and Wilmot’s (2018) definition of interpersonal conflict, the parties in conflict with each other “perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in

achieving their goals” (p. 3). Kreisberg (2012) echoed that definition saying conflict is the perception of individuals with competing or incompatible objectives. In the system of an academic department, the persons share some goals for the success of the department but may have some competing or incompatible personal goals (Parson, 1951) such as tenure, promotion, teaching a certain course, or financial resources.

Bendermacher et al. (2017) asserted students’ learning is impacted by tension between faculty and staff. Graduate students are particularly impacted by the relationship with faculty (Barnes & Austin, 2009; Barnes et al., 2010), which can lead to their noncompletion of doctoral degrees (Barnes & Austin, 2009; Barnes et al., 2010; Council of Grad Schools, 2010; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Golde, 1998; Golde, 2005; Jacks et al., 1983; Maher et al., 2004; Smith, 1995), and their lack of preparedness for research and teaching (Gardner & Barnes, 2007).

Prospective students are drawn to universities with a culture which has a positive sense of community and working relationships (Biggs, 1981; Del Rey & Romero, 2004; Elliot & Healy, 2001; Florenthal et al, 2009; Kusku, 2003; Nishii et al., 2000; Van Vught, 2008). Students stay at universities because of their experiences, behaviors, and attitude (Bean, 2005), having positive feelings (Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002), feeling they belong (Hausmann et al., 2009), feeling the faculty and staff are approachable (Roberts & Styron, 2005), feeling satisfied with their advisors (DeLaRosby, 2017; Strayhorn, 2015), and having positive relationships with the faculty and staff (Axelson & Flick, 2011; Astin, 1993; Kuh, et al., 2005; Pascarella et al., 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1975; Zhou & Cole, 2016). Students have a greater change of persisting at a university to graduation when there is more contact with faculty (Roberts & Styron, 2010), when they feel positively (Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002), and when they are engaged with the faculty and staff (Roch, 2019).

Students are connected to faculty outside the classroom through advising (DeLaRosby, 2017; Roberts & Styrom, 2010; Strayhorn, 2015) and through interest groups or communities (Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002; Kuh, et al., 2005). Arellano (2020) identified faculty input as one of the key ingredients for student success at universities.

There has been less public money for higher education (Ehrenberg, 2011; Schulz, 2009) which has increased the number of adjunct faculty being hired (Curtis, 2014). Since 70% of a university's annual budget is made up of salaries and benefits (Monk et al., 2009) institutions turn to hiring adjunct faculty members to save money with a lower fee to pay per course and no added benefits are given (CAW, 2012). The trend of hiring more adjunct faculty is expected to continue (Monk et al., 2009) even though adding more adjunct faculty shifts the research expectations and committee membership to the full-time faculty (AAUP, 2003) in addition to the added strain for the universities to maintain management and development of the faculty (Jolley et al., 2014; Langen, 2011; Wallin, 2004).

Some of the same reasons given above for universities to increase the hiring of adjunct faculty are also reasons for adjunct faculty to be unsatisfied in their job. Some studies on adjunct faculty have revealed limited campus resources, low pay, and little job security (Christensen, 2008; Hoyt, 2012; Shayne 2019). There are also differing views on the effectiveness of adjunct faculty with some claiming a negative impact on the quality of the education (Umbach, 2007) and others finding the opposite (Bettinger & Long, 2010; Eng, 2005; Kemmerer 2014; Landrum, 2009).

Holton and Phillips (1995) asserted eight reasons for conflict between faculty and admin: the administrator position is a different career path than educator, faculty and administrators answer to different authorities, policy issues, local issues specific to institution and department,

lack of clarity on the assessment rubric and expectations, differences in feedback desires, power imbalance, and lastly, tension in the supervisor-subordinate relationship. Costantino and Merchant (1996) list six ways interpersonal conflict can show up in an organization: disputes (grievances and complaints), competition, sabotage (gossip), inefficiency and lack of productivity (deliberately decreasing output), low morale, withholding knowledge. In a seminal study of department chairs by Gmelch and Burns (1991), 60% of department chairs' job dissatisfaction is due to conflict with faculty. Findlen (2000) asserted conflict experienced by educators drains energy and leads to legal battles diverting resources of time and money from the overall purpose of the university.

The role of department chair as administrative leader as well as decision-maker and faculty member, has spurred research to study the role through the lens of leadership development. A recent dissertation study into the leadership development of 17 department chairs at a Canadian research university (Stawnychko, 2021) found leadership networks served as a type of leadership development training by encouraging self-reflection and developing new skills. The survey asked questions regarding the perceptions of the department chairs on both their beliefs of the importance of and the universities' prioritization of leadership development training for department chairs. The findings, though, discuss these beliefs as positive versus negative attitudes.

The pandemic of Covid-19, beginning in 2020, brought some unique challenges to the role of department chair. In a recent study of 783 department chairs from the 14 Big Ten universities, Gigliotti (2021) used surveys to research the ways covid impacted the complexity of their role. The department chairs reported being met with intense challenges with

communication, addressing gossip, and mitigating misinformation. The department chairs also specified the need for more training to better support the faculty, staff, and students.

Department chairs may also face conflict when faculty leave their position with the department. Mazur (2021) conducted a quantitative study on the high turnover of faculty from job dissatisfaction due to poor leadership from the department chair. The sample consisted of 146 full-time faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured, of which 46% had been employed at their current institution for more than 10 years. The more transformational a leader is perceived to be, the less likely a faculty member will leave and the more passive avoidant a leader is perceived to be, the more likely a faculty member will leave (Mazur, 2021, p. 65). Again, this study viewed the role of department chair through the lens of leadership theories as opposed to interpersonal conflict and systems theory. In this study, the department chairs may face faculty turnover, but the lens of interpersonal conflict and General Systems Theory may result in different findings allowing the researcher to see the impact of the interpersonal conflict on other parts of the system.

Conflict is an unavoidable reality within the academic department and can be defined as taking place between interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference from another party (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018). Conflict can be categorized into three types: task, relationship, and process. Conflict can be experienced by any of the elements of the academic department: the department chair, faculty, staff, or students. The problems of conflict among the academic department can be uniquely researched through the lens of interpersonal conflict and General Systems Theory.

General Systems Theory

General Systems Theory was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968 as he studied closed systems like those found in chemistry which espoused predictable patterns of behavior and open systems of biological organisms and their lack of predictable patterns of behavior. Bertalanffy described his theory as interconnectivity between smaller subsystems within a larger system and the impact of change on one smaller subsystem has on the larger system. The theory was initially designed from a living systems approach which uses an open system as opposed to a non-living systems approach which uses a closed system. Closed systems have predictability as the behavior of the individual parts of the closed system are not impacted by any other element. Open systems do not have predictable behaviors as they are constantly being impacted by other elements from other systems, therefore linking the systems to a larger system (Bertalanffy, 1968). Reese (2020) described a closed system as being like computer engineering, an expected result from designed engineering and an open system needing to be looked at from a holistic point of view to understand what type of result might occur. Checkland (1994) asserted the difference between closed and open systems as the difference between the hard system of engineering also and the softer systems of relationships and managing interconnections of people in organizations. Senge (1991) continued the work on systems theory and coined the term systems thinking emphasizing the importance of holism, viewing the system as a whole, as everything is connected.

Senge (2006) used the term learning organization to describe an “organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results, they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (p. 3). Systems thinking is one of the main

disciplines of the learning organization and whose key components are interconnected relationships, holism, multi-dimensionality (hierarchy), and patterns of interactions (Senge, 2006). The term learning organization can apply to any organized group of people sharing the qualities listed above, it does not necessarily apply to educational organizations or university institutions (Kiedrowski, 2006), however the classroom is seen as a natural learning opportunity and an organized group of learners with complex problems (McDermott et al., 2021).

Shaked and Schechter (2013) discussed the interchangeability of the phrases systems theory and systems thinking which will continue throughout this review. In this study, the academic department was viewed as an open system because it is made up of relationships and interconnections of people (Checkland, 1994), but Senge (2020) takes it a step further and posits systems thinking “is a way of seeing and thinking that honors profound inter-connectedness” (p. 57). Using General Systems Theory to study relationships and profound inter-connectedness allowed the researcher to focus on the impact of interpersonal conflict between certain people impacting other connections and relationships. In this section, the literature on holism, hierarchy, and subsystems as related to systems theory will be reviewed, followed by specific literature on educational leadership.

Holism

The importance of subsystems in addition to the components of systems become greater together than they are individually. Specifically, the arrangement of all those subsystems and system components creates meaning. Senge et al. (2004) explains holism this way:

Our normal way of thinking cheats us. It leads us to think of wholes as made up of many parts, the way a car is made up of wheels, a chassis, and a drive train. In this way of thinking, the whole is assembled from the parts and depends upon them to work

effectively. If a part is broken, it must be repaired or replaced. This is a very logical way of thinking about machines. But living systems are different. Unlike machines, living systems, such as your body or a tree, create themselves. They are not mere assemblages of their parts (p. 5).

Holism is a way of viewing the system in entirety including components both inside and outside the system. The holistic way of viewing the system, however, is not often feasible in research as the focus of the research studies is usually on only one viewpoint (Mlakar et al., 2013). Some Dialectical Systems Theorists challenge the feasibility of holism because human researchers come to studies with individual viewpoints, experiences, and perspectives. McDermott et al. (2021) include thinking creatively, engaging in self-reflection, and understanding the connections between people in their framework for learning to solve complex problems and thinking holistically. Thinking holistically contradicts reductionist theories which may encourage people to break problems down into smaller problems. By zooming out to a bigger, broader view of the problem, a holistic view of the problem, systems thinkers can “synthesize solutions that have qualities that appeal to the whole” (McDermott et al., 2021, p. 3).

Critics of General Systems Theory suggest applying it to the concept of holism can only be partially appropriate as it does not consider language or heuristics (Goldspink & Kay, 2007) so it can, therefore, not accurately represent the concept of wholeness. Instead, Goldspink and Kay (2007) posit grounding General Systems Theory in the theory of autopoiesis by Maturana and Varela (1980) which “embraces what we know about human cognition in a manner that is epistemologically and ontologically consistent with a complex systems view” (p. 5). By grounding systems theory in a theory that takes language into consideration, the authors suggest systems theory may be more appropriately represent the concept of wholeness. Other critics

suggest systems theory solutions may be ineffective when put in practice (Cavaleri & Sterman, 1997). General Systems Theory and hence, systems thinking, is still an appropriate choice to use as this study is an exploratory study and not researching effectiveness in putting solutions to practice. Furthermore, Senge (1990) addressed the critics of effectiveness and asserted that deeply embedded ideals, values, and habits can often interfere with learning practical systems thinking applications.

Understanding Subsystems

Where the principle of holism encourages researchers to view the system entirely, there is also a principle of understanding the subsystems (Conrad & Poole, 2005) which when combined are called the supra system. The subsystems must follow the rules and regulations of the supra system while often functioning as an individual entity. Each subsystem has its own individual strengths and weaknesses as well as vertical hierarchy and vertical dimension.

In this study, the supra system was the university, and the university department was a subsystem. The university department follows the rules and regulations of the university yet often functions as an individual entity. The components of the subsystem of the department are the department chair, faculty, staff, and students which contribute to the success of the subsystem and the success of the supra system (Bertalanffy, 1968). In this literature review, the academic department is referred to as a system and subsystem interchangeably.

Hierarchy

The hierarchy of the subsystem is another principle of General Systems Theory (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972) and Senge (2006) asserts that structure does influence behavior. A university department's hierarchy has vertical levels such as the department chair, program directors, faculty, and students, but there is also a horizontal breadth which includes adjunct faculty,

tenured faculty, staff, and graduate assistants; therefore, this hierarchy may influence the behavior of those people in the university. In an academic institution, the complex wholes are made up of smaller subsystems (e.g., departments, laboratories, library, sport units, NCC units, etc.) Thus, a structured organizational functioning is essential” (Kumar, 2021, p. 276). Within this structured organization there are certain hierarchical levels of administration, faculty, students but there is also a perceived hierarchy within the faculty with the highest level being tenured full-time faculty and the lowest being adjunct faculty (Jolley et al., 2014; Wallin, 2004). This perceived hierarchy with adjunct faculty being on the lowest rung can be seen in the low pay, limited campus resources, and little job security (Christensen, 2008; Hoyt, 2012; Shayne, 2019). With a recent trend of adding more adjunct faculty to university faculty (Curtis, 2014) and the expectation for the trend to continue (Monk et al., 2009) the rising number of adjunct faculty and fewer full-time faculty members shifts the research expectations and committee membership to the full-time faculty (AAUP, 2003) there are differing views on the effectiveness of adjunct faculty with some claiming a negative impact on the quality of the education (Umbach, 2007). The added weight of research and committee membership to the full-time faculty creates added strain to the universities and relationships between faculty in a department (Jolley et al., 2014; Langen, 2011; Wallin, 2004).

Another perceived hierarchical leveling is in gender inequality in higher education institutions (Aiston & Yang, 2017; Clauset, et al., 2015; Duong et al., 2017). Educational leadership has experience in trying to address this issue of gender inequality (Jayanchandran, 2015; Thebaud, 2015) as it impacts all those involved (Henning et al., 2017). Some examples of sexism and gender inequality at universities are females being overlooked for promotion (Winslow & Davis, 2016), lower pay (Klein, 2016; Winslow & Davis, 2016), and harassment

with bullying (Henning et al., 2017) which can result in more females experiencing burnout (Brabazon & Schultz, 2020). Gender inequality and sexism at universities decreases the department teamwork, negatively effecting the department (Krupa, 2021).

Systems Theory in Educational Leadership

The department chair holds a leadership role within the department which carries the weight of 80 percent of all daily decisions (Gmelch, 1993) and serves in a position which is “at the heart of the tension between the academic core of teaching and research in a loosely coupled system and the tightly coupled mechanistic managerial core” (Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 3). There was a surprising dearth of literature using systems theory in studies on the department chair, given the unique and critical position of the department chair withing the academic department. This study hoped to add to the literature on department chairs using General Systems Theory.

Organizations often face confusing, complex, and poorly defined problems, often referred to as wicked problems (Churchman, 1967) spanning multiple levels of hierarchy, which Checkland (1994) suggest are appropriate for using general systems theory. Bhola (2005) discussed the use of general systems theory to work against problems in all possible directions simultaneously, at all levels of hierarchy simultaneously. Systems theory allows administrative leaders to view problems within an organization from a holistic level and at points of intersection between each level and system rather than necessitating the limitation of focusing in only one area (Bhola, 2005). In this study, using systems theory to view problems in an academic department allowed the researcher to view the aspects of the problem from a holistic level and at points of intersection between each level and system.

Shaked (2022) studied the use of case studies to increase systems thinking for educational leadership graduate students, using Senge's (1991) systems thinking as the lens through which schools must be studied due to the large number of intertwining systems, functions, and people. Shaked (2022) describes systems thinking as having "two complementary meanings: on the one hand, it rises above the separate components to see the whole system. On the other hand, it considers each individual component as part of the whole system" (p. 196). It is the connectedness of each individual component, which also supports the use of systems thinking in this research study as the researcher looked at the individual components of conflict parties in the academic department, yet also looked at the connectedness between them and the rest of the university as a system. Through interviews, Shaked (2022) studied how using case studies can support the development of adopting a multidimensional view by graduate students in educational leadership. The multidimensional view is key in systems thinking due to different levels of hierarchy found in systems as well as looking at problem holistically. Shaked's (2022) study was designed to see if using case studies helped educational leadership graduate students learn how to think systematically. The findings support the idea that using case studies can indeed help graduate students develop a multidimensional view.

Burke et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of the multidimensional view and hierarchy concept of systems thinking in a study on management at the university level "determining how goals and objectives can be linked together across multiple committees and allows for a better synergy and integration of board efforts" (p. 25). Clauset et al. (2015) viewed the university institution as a system leading a quantitative study of institutional prestige impacting the placement of doctoral graduates. The study emphasized the hierarchical structure of the university institution in sexism, with the finding that women are hired at less prestigious

institutions regardless of the level of prestige of the institution from which they graduated. Examples of sexism experienced in the university system and academic departments can lead to interpersonal conflict such as harassment with bullying (Henning et al., 2017) and lack of teamwork (Krupa, 2021).

Norqvist and Ärlestig (2020) researched systems thinking in educational leadership, specifically the hierarchy in subsystems, and found differences in the perception of organizational leadership at the various levels of hierarchy. In this study, only one level of the hierarchy, the department chair, was interviewed, however in the lived experiences of the department chairs may contain narratives including sentiments by other elements of the department in various hierarchical levels such as faculty members, staff, or students.

Gurr et al. (2020) used systems thinking in education leadership to plan educational communities to meet specific community needs. In this application, they used the principle of subsystems, specifically areas of economic, socio-cultural, political, and technological context to formulate their framework for factors influencing schools planning. In this study, there were specific areas that also added context to the narratives told by the department chairs. Using systems thinking, the researcher was able to consider the idea of further subsystems that might be lying under the surface. The idea of subsystems present in universities was addressed by Buss (1975) who wrote on the university as a living system as its parts are interdependent and is comprised of subsystems within the larger system. Using Bertalanffy's (1968) systems theory, Buss (1975) predicted a shortage of academics in the future based on external forces impacting the internal open system of the university. Buss's (1975) study was an excellent example of applying Bertalanffy's (1968) General Systems Theory to an open system of a university. In this study, using General Systems Theory allowed the researcher to focus on the systemic impact of

interpersonal conflict as experienced by department chairs and told in their narrative lived experiences.

Summary

In this chapter, literature was explored in each of the four concepts of the conceptual framework- the academic department chair as an administrative leader, the university institution as a system, interpersonal conflict, and Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory. The department chair is in a crucial role of manager, administrator, leader, and faculty member who is faced with dealing with conflict regularly. The university can be seen as a system due to its levels of hierarchy, the multiple smaller subsystems nested inside the larger system of the university, and the complex, wicked problems the university faces. Interpersonal conflict is experienced by interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference from others. Interpersonal conflict can be categorized as either task conflict, relationship conflict, or process conflict. General Systems Theory has foundational tenets of levels of hierarchy, can be seen in a holistic view, and emphasizes the importance of subsystems within the larger system. Together, these four concepts create the conceptual framework for this study. The methodology will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of university department chairs with interpersonal conflict. Narrative inquiry was selected as the methodology for this study of the experiences of department chairs because “narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a keyway of writing and thinking about it” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.18). Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to analyze the stories of the participants to explore how the participants make meaning of their experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017).

This chapter will review the research questions, provide an overview of the selected methodology, discuss participant selection, and outline the data collection and analysis. The chapter will also provide a plan for addressing researcher biases and subjectivities as well as outlining the plan for trustworthiness and reliability.

Research Questions

There are two research questions guiding this study:

1. How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution?
2. How do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution?

Methodology Selected

Narrative inquiry was the appropriate methodology to answer research questions about the experiences of individuals and their stories (Bhattacharya, 2017). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest using narrative inquiry as the methodology in educational research, such as this study, because humans can make personal and social connections in education with their lived experiences and organize them into narratives, or stories. In this educational research study, the

stories of department chairs' lived experiences with interpersonal conflict at public, research one universities are being studied.

The conceptual framework of this study includes an ontology, epistemology, and lower-level theory of Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (1968) as well as other concepts of viewing universities as systems, interpersonal conflict, and the department chair as an administrative leader. Ontology answers the question about the nature of reality and epistemology answers the question about what counts as knowledge (Mason, 2018). The nature of reality in this study was constructed by individuals based on their experiences and perspectives and the ontological elements for this research project are stories and narratives (Mason, 2018). Lived experiences and stories of participants count as knowledge and are justified as the stories are experienced by the participants using memories and the retelling of the constructed stories. The researcher is a summoner of the stories and lived experiences, the gatherer of the stories and lived experiences, but also the person making sense and analyzing the stories and experiences.

Methodology

In this study, the research questions ask how public, research one university department chairs describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution and how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. These questions were answered using a qualitative approach, conducting interviews, and collecting reflective journals as data to analyze. The qualitative approach encompasses multiple methods and methodologies including ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry. The specific qualitative approach selected for this study was narrative inquiry, determined by the research questions asking about lived experiences and

stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kim, 2015). The following section reviews the history of the narrative inquiry methodology.

In 1988, two education researchers, D. Jean Clandinin, and F. Michael Connelly began developing the methodology of narrative inquiry, grounded in the work of John Dewey, Mark Johnson and Alasdair Macintyre, Clifford Geertz, Mary Catherine Bateson, Barbara Czarniawska, Robert Coles, and Donald Polkinghorne, as well as the disciplines of anthropology, organizational science, and psychology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly embedded themselves in school classrooms with teachers to observe, interview, and gather documents for their research. The researchers searched for a way to answer their research questions by connecting with the data to get a broader, whole-life, picture which drove them to begin asking the teachers for their stories. By listening to the individual teacher stories, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) were able to begin making the connections with the small bits of information they had collected and see the much larger lived experience. Their research questions determined the correct methodology. In this study, the research questions determined the correct methodology as narrative inquiry as the researcher sought to explore the stories of department chairs with interpersonal conflict.

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology which is centered around the studying of human experience through stories. Narrative inquiry is built on principles of John Dewey who posited that experience cause us to evolve from our past experiences into new experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Whereas quantitative research uses statistical data to reject or fail to reject hypotheses, narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology which uses human experiences to study the meaning making of the experiences by humans (Crotty, 1998).

Begun in the social sciences, narrative inquiry encompasses the study of the written story in texts as well as the told stories of oral history, life history, or of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Polkinghorne (1988) posits there are two types of narratives, explanatory narrative, and descriptive narrative. This research study used the explanatory narrative in which the narrator goes beyond the descriptive and attempts to make opinions regarding conclusions or correlations. The participants of this research study are academic department chairs, because their position allows them to see the administrative side of issues as well as still be faculty with direct connection with the students (Floyd, 2016). This position provides a breadth of knowledge that allowed the participants to offer more of an explanatory narrative (Kim, 2015).

According to Kim (2015) there are four considerations researchers should address in the design of their narrative inquiry study. The first is to be aware of the settings and surroundings of the participants and study. Clandinin & Connelly (2000) explain setting and surroundings as “place”, one of their three-dimensions of narrative inquiry, and stress the importance of understanding the setting of the story as well as the characters, the time in history, and the culture of the setting. In this study, the researcher considered the setting of the interviews as geographic location and modality, meaning in person or via Zoom online platform. The researcher also considered the setting as a broader term encompassing the academic department and the university. The researcher’s consideration materialized as the researcher being aware and mindful of the need for flexibility in the participants’ schedules with courses schedules and office hours; consideration also materialized as offering the participants neutral locations away from the university campuses to meet for interviews. Other ways the researcher’s consideration materialized were in choosing professional attire to wear to interviews, preparing for campus parking restrictions when traveling to campuses, and including the option for online modality to

limit exposure of the participant to onlookers. The researcher was aware the interview questions in this study were eliciting stories which needed to be kept confidential, therefore the researcher was insistent in allowing the participants to choose the setting for the interviews in which they would feel most comfortable and secure.

Kim's (2015) second consideration is using the ideas of "telling" and "living" as springboards when collecting data. Telling describes stories of experiences in the past and living describes stories taking place currently. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expand on the ideas of telling and living by suggesting the stories need a look backward and forward. Stories can include a look forward and backward as a participant "moves from a remembered past in one place to a present moment in another, all the while imaginatively constructing an identity for the future" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 55). Creswell (2007) addresses this fluidity of moving between telling stories from the past and living stories in the present, "narrative stories often are heard and shaped by the researchers into a chronology although they may not be told that way by the participant(s). There is a temporal change that is conveyed when individuals talk about their experiences and their lives" (p. 71). Ryan (2009) suggests time is not always unidirectional and that researchers should hold loosely to time. In this study, the participants fluidly moved through time as they expressed their experiences as department chairs. One participant began a narrative at a time ten years ago, then jumped to the present where she tried to make meaning of something that happened in the past saying, "I don't know. Maybe I was too easy on the guy back then." The participant jumped back to ten years ago, continuing the story, then jumped five years forward to the next part of the story without much of a warning. This back and forth was noticeable throughout her narrative and other participants' narratives as well.

Kim's (2015) third consideration is to be aware of and pay attention to temporality, social and personal conditions, and place. Being aware of temporality, social and person conditions, and place aligns with Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) suggestion to point the participant inward and outward, seen in asking participants about their feelings during a story, or their imaginations based on memories. In this study, the researcher offered probing questions about their feelings during a story or about a story. One participant conducted a deep self-analysis during one of her narratives, resulting in an "aha" moment for her. At one point she said to me, "Wow, I hadn't thought of that before."

The fourth is to be mindful of the self in the role of researcher, which is thoroughly discussed later in the chapter. Referencing these considerations and multi-dimensional place, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, "Being in this space is complex for the narrative inquirer because all of these matters are under consideration all of the time" (p. 56). The researcher kept reflective memos regarding thoughts and feelings before, during, and immediately after interviews.

Critiques of Narrative Inquiry

Some critics of narrative inquiry say narrative inquiry is not theoretical enough (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003), but Kim (2015) describes the important role of theory in narrative inquiry to be one of the larger gears in the engine of the methodology, along with practice. These gears fit tightly together and must work with each other all the while using the narratives, the stories of lived experience, as the lubricant that helps them turn (Kim, 2015). The narratives allow the theories to be developed during practice of research. Other critics charge the researcher with researcher bias, concerned with the observer's paradox which is the impact of the researcher on the data collected (Kim, 2015). Researchers can work to limit the impact of this paradox by

spending more informal time with the participants at the observation locations, developing rapport, to make the data collection feel more natural (Kim, 2015). In this study, the researcher interviewed each participant three times to develop rapport and make the interactions seem more natural. Researchers can also be observant of the moments before and after the recordings and any shifts in participant behavior, speech pattern, or inflexion, noting these changes in the field notes and reflecting later in analytic memos. The researcher in this study recorded moments before and after the formal interviews and captured nonverbal communication in transcription as well as in analytic memos.

The Researcher

The researcher was employed by a Midwestern research university for four years in a part-time position in which she observed a great amount of departmental conflict in her workplace. This observation led the researcher to be curious if the same departmental conflict impacted all students in the department as well. The researcher has completed an undergraduate degree in music education, a graduate degree in adult learning, and a graduate certificate in conflict resolution. To prevent these subjectivities from impacting the research or analysis, the researcher completed interview bracketing, kept copious field notes, reflection memos, and analytic memos. The researcher is defining bracketing interviews as interviews held between the researcher “with a non-clinical and non-managerial colleague or research associate [to] constitute a negotiated, supportive relationship, which serves as an interface between the researcher and the research data” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 86). The specific desire for bracketing interviews with the current study is for the researcher to be asked all the interview questions ahead of data collection, to uncover any poorly constructed, confusing, or biased phrasing (Tufford &

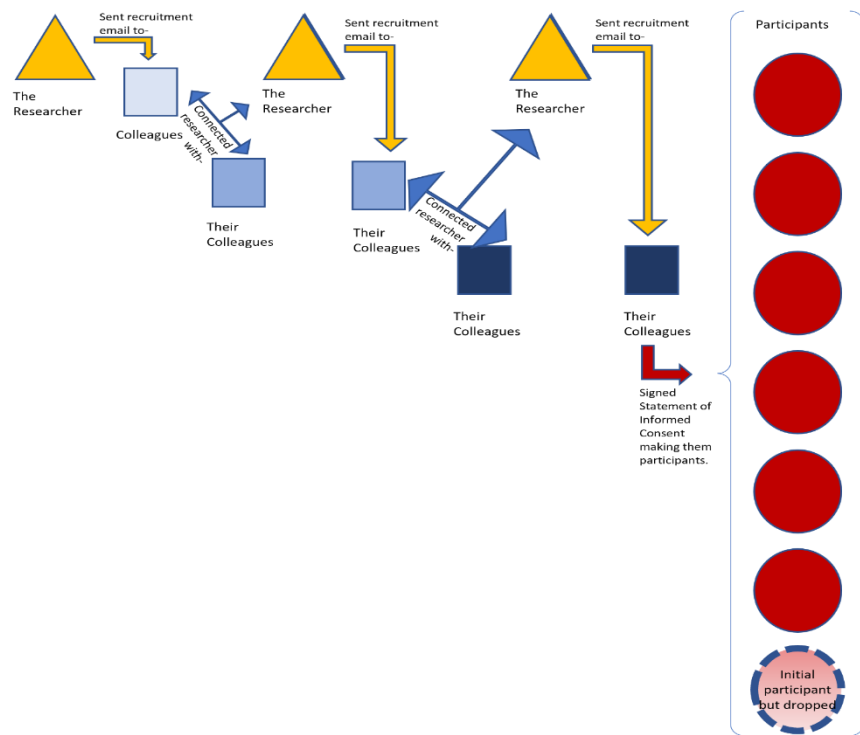
Newman, 2012, p. 86). During the bracketing interviews, the researcher augmented some wording in the interview questions as well as developed possible probing questions.

Study Participants

The participants for this study are department chairs from public, research one universities, a decision made due to the high level of research completed at research one universities and reputation of that level of university institution. Qualitative research seeks thick, rich data which “attempts to get beyond superficial description to see the richness of thought and purpose that might lie behind the action” (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 70). To attain thick, rich data, some qualitative researchers have fewer participants. I used a snowball sample process to recruit (see Figure 2), and the goal was to have between six and eight participants. This number was chosen to provide enough data with which to answer the research questions through analysis, but small enough to be able to complete the depth of analysis needed. Creswell (2013) posits using only a single participant and Bhattacharya (2017) suggests at least five participants. This study initially had seven participants who signed the Statement of Informed Consent but during the first interview, one participant dropped out of the study, citing concerns about confidentiality. Therefore, the final number of participants in this study was six (see Table 1). The six participants included three men and three women, representing three different public, research one universities from three regions of the United States—the West coast, the Midwest, and the East coast. One participant was from the field of fine arts, one participant was from the field of education, one participant was from the field of veterinary medicine, one participant was from the field of design, and two participants were from the field of science.

Figure 3.1

Snowball Recruitment Process



Note. The snowball recruitment process. The researcher sent recruitment email to colleagues who then connected the researcher to other colleagues who connected the researcher to additional colleagues. The researcher's initial email to any potential participants was the approved recruitment email. Potential participants became official participants upon signing the Statement of Informed Consent. One participant initially signed the Statement of Informed Consent but dropped out of the study during the first interview.

Procedures Followed

The researcher began the snowball sample by emailing colleagues who then extended the snowball sample reach. Each potential participant was sent the recruitment email which stated the purpose of the research, outlined the commitment of each, and announced each participant would receive a \$50 Amazon gift card at the end of the final interview. The email had the

statement of Informed Consent (Appendix A) attached which the participants were required to sign and present to the researcher before any data collection could begin. Seven participants responded through the snowball sample reach. Initially, seven participants signed the Statement of Informed Consent, however one participant withdrew from the study during the first interview. Therefore the final number of participants was six.

The researcher scheduled three semi-structured interviews, held in person or through Zoom online platform depending on the participant's availability and preference, with each interview treated as an "invitation to narrate" (Narayan & Georgie, 2012, p. 514). The researcher chose to have three interviews with each participant to build rapport which Grinyer and Thomas (2012) posited could happen with multiple interviews. The participants revealed more personal feelings and thoughts with the researcher as the relationship becomes more comfortable (Bacq et al., 2019; Gawlewicz, 2015; McGregor & Fernandez, 2019). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasize the need for the researcher to spend time with the participants, to "join the narrative

Table 3.1*Parent Demographics*

Pseudonym	Years as Department Chair	Field of Discipline	Race	Gender
Chair	5	Education	Black	Female
David	10	Fine Arts	White	Male
Paul	6	Veterinary Medicine	White	Male
Deborah	9	Sciences	White	Female
Helen	12	Design	White	Female
Humboldt	10	Sciences	White	Male

and become part of the landscape” (p. 77) to develop an intimacy with the participants which is an important part of truly understanding the multi-dimensions of their stories. Conversely, however, Goudy and Potter (1975) warn of becoming too close to the participants which could create potential bias in data collection or analysis. An additional reason for multiple interviews is each interview’s questions are designed around a theme (see Table 2). In the first interview, the questions were designed around the department chair and personal conflict experienced. In the second interview, the questions were designed around the department chair acting as a mediator, third party, or neutral party. In the third interview, the questions were designed to elicit stories from the participant about experiences with conflict positively or negatively impacting the

department. The researcher acknowledged this warning and did not socialize or interact with the participants outside interviews and predetermined communication.

Table 3.2

Multiple Interview Focuses

	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3
Interview Question Focus	Personal conflict experienced by participants	Experiences in which participant acted as a mediator, third party, or neutral party	Experiences with conflict impacting the department either positively or negatively
Specific interview question	“Could you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, about a time that you experienced interpersonal conflict as a department chair?”	“Could you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, about a time that you acted as a mediator, third party, or neutral party as a department chair?”	“Could you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, about a time that something which started as an interpersonal conflict ended up impacting your department positively/negatively?”

Each interview was 45 minutes in length; however, the participants’ stories were unpredictable and to allow the participants to freely tell their stories, the researcher did not interrupt or end the interview until the participant has completed their narration (Kim, 2015). The interviews were semi-structured so the researcher could be prepared to prompt if needed by the participants, but flexible in case prompting is not necessary (Kim, 2015). The researcher prepared some grand tour style questions (Appendix B) however, the aim of the researcher was to spend time listening and observing carefully during the interview. Kim (2015) warns of the power differential sometimes present during interviews with the researcher holding more power, however another aim of the researcher was to become unseen and allow the participants to

narrate their perspective and direct the story as the participants experience connections. The last question of each interview was completely open-ended asking the participant if there is anything else the participant would like the researcher to know.

Before any interview takes place, the researcher completed interview bracketing to prevent her subjectivities from impacting the data collection. The researcher is defining bracketing interviews as interviews held between the researcher “with a non-clinical and non-managerial colleague or research associate [to] constitute a negotiated, supportive relationship, which serves as an interface between the researcher and the research data” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 86). The specific desire for bracketing interviews with the current study was for the researcher to be asked all the interview questions ahead of data collection, to uncover any poorly constructed, confusing, or biased phrasing (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 86).

The day of each interview, the researcher captured the physical characteristics of the meeting place by sketch. Bhattacharya (2017) suggests sketching the physical attributes of an interview setting to capture the environmental factors of the data collection process. In the pilot study to this study, the researcher captured changing physical environments during subsequent interviews with the participant which was addressed in the analytic memos during data collection and analysis. In this study’s interviews, the researcher wrote notes about the background of all participants, whether the interview was face to face or via Zoom.

The interviews were held in person or through Zoom online platform depending on the participant’s availability and preference. Interviews held in person were at the desired location of the participant to ensure the comfort of the participant. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher sketched the interview location and environment in field notes, describing sights,

sounds, and other important information. Before the recordings began, the researcher greeted the participant and offered the participant to ask any potential questions or withdraw from the study.

In many methodologies, researchers use saturation to determine how much data needs to be collected, or should be collected, for there to reach a standard of quality research (Guest et al., 2006). Saturation is the point during research at which the participants have exhausted all possible answers and duplication of those answers is prominent (Kim, 2015). With narrative inquiry, however, there is a difficulty in defining a limit to the possible number of stories participants could tell, therefore, O'Reilly and Parker (2013) advise researchers to disclose this possibility within the limitations of the study. Therefore, in this study, the researcher is not aiming for saturation with the data collection, but instead aiming for the participants to feel like all the stories the participants wished to share were told. The researcher asked each participant at the end of each interview if there was anything else they would like to say or any other stories they would like to tell. Asking this question of each participant helped the researcher reach the point where the participants felt like all the stories they wished to share were told.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began during the transcription process as the researcher personally transcribed each interview including nonverbal cues. The researcher used Saldana's (2021) coding to develop a thematic analysis of the data. Coding was an inductive, iterative, comparative and on-going process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The researcher used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage process of thematic analysis in which the emphasis is to make critical decisions before the beginning of data analysis. Before introducing the six-stage process, a critical decision is to operationalize the terms code and theme. Saldana (2021) defines a code as a "word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a

summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 4). Saldana (2021) suggests a theme comes from a recurring pattern of thoughts, ideas, perceptions, or experiences, helps the researcher move towards analysis, and is the “outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself coded” (p. 198).

The first stage of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stage process of thematic analysis is to become familiar with the data. The researcher personally transcribed all interviews including nonverbal communication, listened to the interviews, read the interviews and “immerse [herself] in the data to the extent that [she] is familiar with the depth and breadth of the content” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Transcription took place as soon as possible after each interview to maximize the fresh memory and recall of nuances of the interviews. By transcribing the interviews word by word, letter by letter, sound by sound, the researcher immersed herself into the data for over 100 hours during transcription alone. The transcriptions were stored on the researcher’s password-protected external hard drive. The transcriptions and sketches of the interview environment mentioned earlier in the chapter, were uploaded to NVivo software for analysis as discussed earlier in the chapter. An example of the interview environment sketch can be seen in Figure 3. The transcriptions were sent to the participants for the first instance of member-checking. Member checks ensure correct transcription and accuracy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher provided participants a copy of each interview transcription and requested an accuracy check. Two participants responded to the member-checking with concerns of confidentiality. The researcher omitted some identifiable information in the transcripts and the participants approved. The remaining four participants approved the transcripts as well.

Figure 3.2

Interview Environment Sketch

Environmental sketch

Interview #1 Helen

I was in the basement in my home today, was also the first day back at work for both Helen and myself following the Thanksgiving break. This was the second interview of the day and I felt tired. I had sat all day during the interview with Paul in the morning and then the ETDR tutorial in the afternoon just before this interview began. My hands were sore with leftover arthritis soreness which started last night after I spent the day cutting snowflakes out of paper. I found myself wringing my hands quite a bit due to the soreness.

I was concerned that Matthew would come home in the middle of the interview and come down the stairs, so I found myself thinking about that instead of focusing on what Helen was saying. It was chilly in the basement too and I found myself also thinking about the space heater that was just out of reach, hoping that it didn't make the space too warm.

Helen was in her office, it looked like the sunroom from our Fort Benning house with lots of windows. She did not seem concerned that other people might overhear her talking. I picked up my laptop and showed around my room so she could see that no one was within earshot listening to her.

Note. The researcher sketched the environment of both the participant and the researcher, noting circumstances, thoughts, feelings, or concerns to keep aware of biases and subjectivities that might interfere with the researcher's state of mind during analysis.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) second stage of the thematic analysis process is the initial coding during which the researcher "work[ed] systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item" (p. 89). Saldana (2021) offers a "Generic" coding method list for researchers to use during initial coding:

1. Attribute coding (for all data as a management technique)
2. Structural Coding (for all data as a 'grand tour' overview)
3. Descriptive Coding (for field notes, documents, and artifacts as a detailed inventory of their contents)

4. In Vivo Coding and Process Coding (for interview transcripts as a method of attuning yourself to participant perspectives and actions) (p. 73).

The researcher followed the generic coding method list by first using attribute coding for all data, which includes descriptive information about the demographics of participants is usually noted at the beginning of the data set instead of throughout (Saldana, 2021). The researcher used attribute coding to code data by participant and by interview, thereby allowing the researcher to look at all data from one participant at a time and all data gathered during first interviews, second interviews, and third interviews at a glance (see Figure 4). The researcher chose to code the data by participant so she could read all the stories of the participant as one continual story. Narrative inquirers are aware narratives do not always follow a linear chronology, but sometimes jump around in time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By analyzing all the data from a participant as one long story, the participant was able to analyze the data for nuances that may not have been realized had the researcher only analyzed data by interview. One example of the nuances that may not have been realized is in the narratives told by the participant Helen. The researcher read all the data from Helen as one long narrative and by doing so was able to tease out a greater understanding of the chronology of her upper administration since in her stories she refers to several different people who held the position of administrator. Another example of the nuances that may not have been realized is with the narratives from the participant Deborah. The researcher was able to look at all of Deborah's stories as one long narrative and by doing so, was able to observe patterns of processing conflict.

Figure 3.3

Attribute Codes

Code	Files	References	first cycle coding method
Chair	3	3	attribute
David	3	3	attribute
Deborah	3	3	attribute
Helen	3	3	attribute
Humboldt	3	3	attribute
Interview 1	8	8	attribute
Interview 2	6	6	attribute
Interview 3	5	5	attribute
Paul	3	3	attribute

Note. A picture of the researcher's coding journal. The researcher used attribute coding (Saldana, 2021) to code data by participant and by interview.

The researcher chose to use attribute coding to organize the data by interview. Using attribute coding to organize the data by interview allowed the researcher to read all the participant data from each interview as one long narrative which allowed the researcher to analyze data by interview topic. An example of analyzing the data interview by interview topic is the second interview questions were designed to elicit experiences of the participants in which they acted as a mediator, neutral party, or third party in their role as department chair. The researcher read all the stories of participants in which they acted as mediator, neutral party, or third party, at one time and was able to observe similarities and differences within the stories. Using attribute coding to organize the data allowed the researcher to analyze all the data from participants by interview.

The researcher then used structural coding (see Appendix C) which uses topics of interest, often directly related to the research questions and is known to be suitable for interview transcripts (Saldana, 2021). Table 3 shows three examples of the structural codes used by the

researcher. The researcher coded excerpts using a structural code because the excerpts demonstrate descriptions of conflict as experienced by the participants.

Table 3.3

Structural Codes

Code	First cycle coding method	Excerpt 1	Excerpt 2
Conflict goes beyond university	Structural	Humboldt: I mean there was some damage that was done with this situation with the grad students, negative feelings got to the students, and I think some negative feelings still linger with some of the graduates and that's unfortunate. Because at least one of them has gone into academia and still carries a grudge against some of the faculty he felt were against them. I don't think they were. And he's had students ask him, "Where did you get your PhD?" "Is that a good place to go?" And from what I heard he said, "No, no, it's not." So, we get that kind of stuff. That kind of stuff goes on to the next generation and that's, that's difficult to accept, but it's there. So unfortunately, that kind of damage radiates beyond the department and the subject like our discipline is fairly small. And you don't want that kind of reputation.	
Conflict reaching outside the department	Structural	Chair: They were accepting of it. I mean, they just wanted clarity. I mean there were still those that wanted to operate in the way the college did outside of the new college, but it was more so, "we just need something to govern us by." And then, we got that	Deborah: Okay. So, when I got here, I decided the department was just in a terrible state. There was a lot of internal conflict that had gone on for decades, actually. It created a schism between faculty, it had a negative impact on the faculty

		something. College wise, in the college alone, there were some tough conversations, because some colleagues in other departments just didn't see that. So clearly, we had to vote on it. We got through.	and advisory council, it was just a mess.
Negative impact from conflict on department	Structural	Paul: [Conflict such as not turning forms in on time] necessitates conversations with the dean's office administration on how they were going to fund the position. Because when people go on sabbatical, the dean's office has to fund a replacement. I had a phone conversation, multiple conversations with the faculty member but then also with the person from the dean's office that handles the budget and the exec associate dean. And I think it required more of a time investment than it would have had it been submitted on time.	Humboldt: And other research 1 public universities have disbanded their departments and split them between the [two] sides. So, there's a long history of [conflict within the department causing the department to disband]. So, there's always been disagreements between the two sides of the department. And they often times double up when you talk about curriculum. So, we've had some of those over the years. How much math or how much science should our majors have to do.

researcher continued to follow Saldana's (2021) generic coding method list with descriptive coding of data for general topic coding, however, the bulk of meaningful coding came from In Vivo Coding and process coding (see Appendix D). The examples in Table 4 demonstrate

Table 3.4*In Vivo and Process Codes*

Code	First cycle coding method	Excerpt 1
Boiling under surface	In Vivo	David: You know, because the environment there, I mean, they're working as hard as they can but because...and it wasn't necessarily because it was a harsh environment for them, right? It's the ongoing, like boiling under the surface. Like all of these little internal conflicts, like you know, between faculty or faculty and leadership, and all of these conversations that are happening. They hear it. They feel it. They see it.
Created a schism between faculty	In Vivo	Deborah: Okay. So, when I got here, I decided the department was just in a terrible state. There was a lot of internal conflict that had gone on for decades, actually. It created a schism between faculty, it had a negative impact on the faculty and advisory council, it was just a mess.
Department rules	In Vivo	Deborah: And so, I tried to do that through, actually there's a step before that. So, I got here, the department didn't have a current department document which all the departments have to have. Which is, "here's our rules, here's how we do things." And so, one of the first things I had to do was to get a new department document passed by the faculty.
Affirming	Process	Chair: For me, my response was twofold. On one hand, there was empathy given to the faculty members in terms of trying to reaffirm, encourage them as viable members of our department.
Asking questions	Process	Humboldt: Yeah. I sit back and I think a little bit about what's, why is this person intentionally doing what they're doing. Why are they responding in this way? What do I know about the origin of this or the examples that I know this has happened before?
Avoiding	Process	David: And one of the ways we avoid it, I know one of the ways I avoid it is I took a 7:30am class.
Being aware	Process	David: And so, I had to be, I had to become hyper aware of the fact that, you know, I'm trying to advocate for my program

In vivo coding uses the verbatim words and phrases from participants as a code “prioritiz[ing] and honor[ing] the participant’s voice (Saldana, 2021, p. 106). Because narrative inquiry emphasizes the uniqueness of each participant’s story, “coding with their actual words enhances and deepens an adults’ understanding of their cultures and worldviews” (Saldana, 2021, p. 106). The researcher acknowledged that using In Vivo coding may have limited emerging themes from all participants as each participant used different verbiage. Narrative inquiry allowed the participants to tell stories in ways they made sense of their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly) which made their chosen verbiage impactful. The researcher embraced the participants’ telling of their stories as they made sense of their experiences by listening to the words chosen by each participant as they told stories. Many times, the participants would pause, sometimes even a lengthy pause, while they thoughtfully chose words to use for organizing their memories into verbalized thoughts and organized stories. The researcher chose to honor this effort and this intentionality of the participants by using their words through In Vivo coding. One example of the impactful verbiage of the participants was in the participant Humboldt’s narrative about conflict from faculty impacting students. Humboldt used the phrase “drips down” to describe the trickling down of conflict from the level of the faculty to the level of the students. Humboldt’s voice was heavy with emotion as he used the phrase “drips down” which led the researcher to honor the phrase with In Vivo coding. The researcher later continued the phrase in second cycle coding, to be discussed later in this chapter, and eventually it was used in themes as well.

Process coding was used to identify the actions mentioned by the participants, highlighting gerunds, words ending with -ing. Process coding is appropriate in this study as it can be a helpful tool in identifying interactions and actions between people. The researcher

observed in the participants' narratives that the verb tenses changed during the narratives, from past tense to present tense, as often time was not followed linearly (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). During the narratives, participants would begin a story in the past, jump to the present mid-sentence, return to the past at a different time, then sometimes even jump to the future as they discussed future plans. By using process coding, the researcher was able to sift through the narratives focusing on actions and gerunds which can be used with any chronological time. One example of the discovery from the sifting is the gerund "advocating." The participants David and Chair used this gerund often in their narratives. David used it as he discussed actions from his memories, "they were advocating for themselves", in the present, "I'm now advocating for my own programs", and in the future, "we'll continue to be advocating for our students." By using process coding for the gerund "advocating", the researcher was able to analyze the data across the time continuum which gave insight into the participant's experiences.

After the initial round of coding, the researcher used pattern coding, In Vivo, and eclectic coding as a second cycle coding methods (see Table 6). Pattern codes "are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (Saldana, 2021, p. 236). The researcher used eclectic, In Vivo, and pattern coding for second-cycle coding (Saldana, 2021). The researcher reread all codes and coded data, looking for coding opportunities possibly missed during the first cycle of coding. The researcher explored the use of eclectic codes by focusing on one first cycle code at a time. She reread the coded data, sat with the data, considered the research questions guiding the study, considered the participant who narrated the data, wrote reflective memos on thoughts and ideas about the data, and created second cycle codes. Many of the In Vivo codes from first cycle coding were continued during second cycle coding as they honored the intentionality of the participant who thoughtfully chose the verbiage,

and they gave descriptive depth to narratives told by other participants who conveyed similar depth of emotion yet used less descriptive terms or less concise terms to communicate a thought or idea. An example of the In Vivo coding was discussed earlier in this chapter of Humboldt's phrase "drips down" to students. He used this phrase to describe the trickling down of conflict from the higher hierarchical level of faculty to the lower hierarchical level of students. This phrase was coded In Vivo in the first cycle and was used as a second cycle code to merge several other first cycle codes such as "impacting students", "poisoned grad student culture", "students changed schedules", "grad student", and "undergrad students."

The third stage of Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis is to search for themes by examining all codes. The researcher worked to maintain flexibility during the examination of codes as Braun and Clarke (2006) warn, "ideally, there will be a number of instances of the theme across the data set, but more instances do not necessarily mean the theme itself is more crucial.... A theme might be given considerable space in some data items, a little or none in others" (p. 82). The researcher used mind maps (see Figure 5) to visualize the

Table 3.5

Second Cycle Coding Examples

First cycle Code	Second cycle code	Participant- First excerpt	Participant- Second excerpts
Seeking input	Conflict Resolution Efforts	Chair: And so, we had the conversation about it and actually, I mean, as a side note as a person of faith, I had to pray about the matter myself, because I didn't want to...I understood the delicacy of it. I didn't want to, I just needed to be at a place of objectivity to the extent possible. And to ensure that the decision made, or	David: if this problem gets set on my table, I'm not gonna sit there and create a solution just on my own.

		statements made, were fair and reasonable. And considerate because, again, I had to ensure...I had to minimize the damage that could be done because of faculty member's grievances with each other.	
Communicating	Conflict resolution efforts	Deborah: And there just didn't seem to be any way to explain to him well, no, they're overlapping but there are so many things that overlap. It's not like he's trying to steal anything from you. He's teaching it from this perspective, you're teaching it from your perspective. In fact, we're better off getting different perspectives on the same thing. There didn't seem to be any way to get him to accept that.	Helen: The person who I had to ask to open the doors and you know, stuff like that. I went down to her and was talking about something else. And I said, "oh by the way, we solved the problem about the rooms not being open when they were supposed to. We got ourselves some keys." And just said it that way. And she was like, "Oh!" And I said, "Well, yeah, now we can always get in. It won't matter if the people you assign to do it do it or not. We'll always be able to be in there when we need to be in there." And so, I don't think they liked that, but I was just like over it. And I didn't make a big deal of it. I didn't like say, "I decided to get keys because you're being an asshole." I just said, "We got keys for everybody, so now you don't have to worry much about us being locked out."
Advocating	Conflict resolution efforts	Chair: I advocate for you. I seek to help the department as a whole, the unit as a whole. It's a "we" it's an "our" effort and in my role, I just happen to be in the chair seat. Others just happen to be in the faculty seat, the dean's seat, the provost...the seat that they are occupying is the role that they are having to operate within.	David: Like if somebody had an issue with one of the big ideas I had, that it was never a personal affront through that process, it was coming from an advocacy of their area.
Being aware	Conflict resolution efforts	Humboldt: So, it put them in a difficult spot, and I could see that.	David: the idea that you can't eliminate conflict. It's, we're humans. That's not possible. But understanding how to, how to be empathetic, how to listen, how to communicate, and how to find the source of the conflict.

Troubleshooting	Conflict resolution	David: So, I might have an idea but if it's going to be a top-down approach, it's never going to be accepted as much as building that kind of consensus amongst your faculty and then they come up with that idea organically. And understand all perspectives of it and then bring that proposal forward.	Helen: And a long-time faculty member who just basically said, "you know I don't care whether she is happy or not. She has to do it our way." And I said, "I understand your perspective. I wish we could figure out a way for her to be comfortable here with the situation we have."
Compromising	Conflict resolution efforts	Deborah: And so that was a huge challenge to get everyone to agree to that. It took a great deal of time.	David: And so that was a huge challenge to get everyone to agree to that. It took a great deal of time.
Deal with the hint of conflict	Conflict resolution efforts	Humboldt: The other thing about conflict is trying to anticipate when a situation might be developing. A situation, you have to, you have to try to be perceptive and listen to what people say.	Deborah: I try to not, if I can see things happening, I try not to let things get to a point that it's conflict.
Willing to communicate	Conflict resolution efforts	Paul: And the conflict arose when the department manager had sought my input the way I suggested proceeding, but the reaction of the department manager was, "well, then, I'll just terminate this person" and that was completely not what I was suggesting, and it struck me that the manager was being extremely defensive. I was trying to engage in a conversation about what to do and it seemed like the person, the manager, was thinking I meant something else. And I was feeling, "God they must think I'm a dictator" that was not what I was intending.	Helen: And so, we would just communicate, and communicate and communicate every time we got locked out. And say just "Please do you know our schedule?"

interconnections of the codes as emerging themes. Mind mapping uses pictures, words, symbols, colors, and placement to convey relationships of concepts in a concrete manner (Buzan, 1993). Several mind maps began as scribbles on paper but were quickly transferred to the NVivo software which has a function that allows users to build mind maps (see Appendices F, G, H, and I). The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of department chairs with

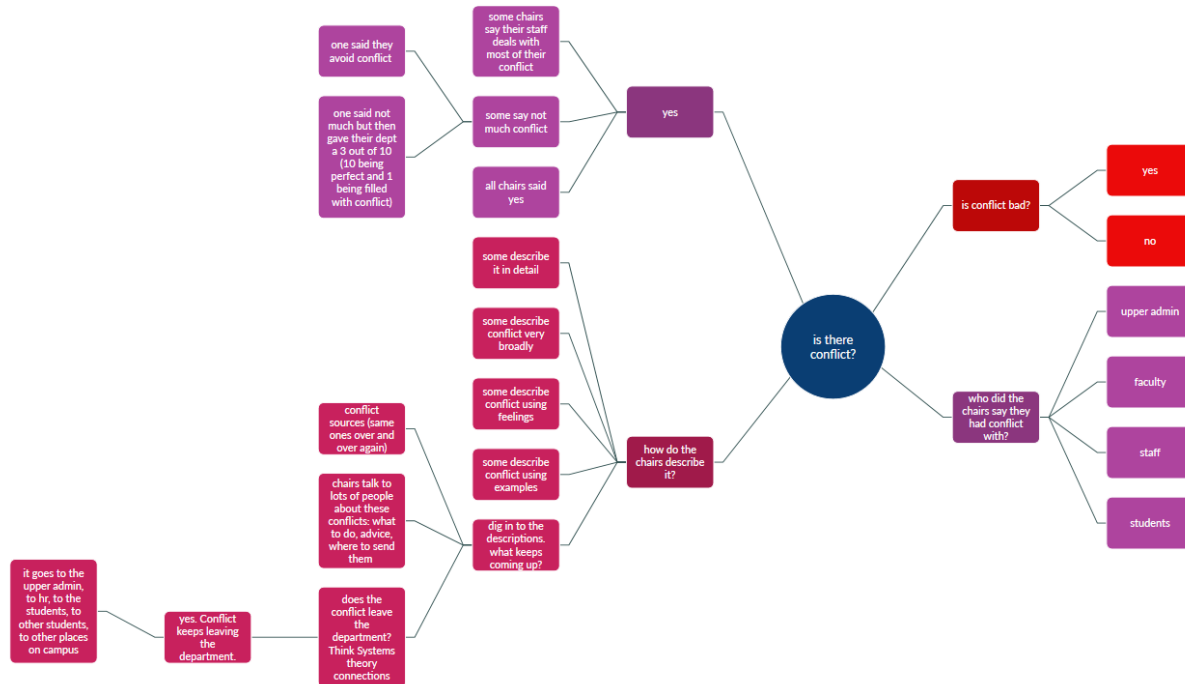
interpersonal conflict. Therefore, the main thought of this mind map was, “is there conflict?” The participants could have answered the first interview question, “Could you describe in as much detail as you can remember, the first time you experienced conflict as a department chair” with a statement that they had not experienced conflict as a department chair. All participants had stories of conflict as department chair, so this answer was unanimously affirmative. The researcher also explored the questions whether or not conflict is bad, with whom the chair reported experiencing conflict, and then the researcher explored the first research question which was how the department chairs describe conflict.

The fourth stage of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) approach to thematic analysis is to review the themes and subthemes. The researcher reviewed the mind maps (see Figure 6) created during stage three to search for themes as some themes may merge into each other, others might dissolve due to the determination that what was thought of as a theme is really just a recurring word or phrase (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analytic memos are also an important way of capturing emerging patterns in the codes and reasons for certain foregrounding that might take place in the iterative analysis process. Narrative inquirers may begin a research study with a desire to learn everything or as much as they can about a person, experience, or phenomenon, but the researchers must be aware, however, that selection and foregrounding naturally happen during the data collection, data

Figure 3.4

Mind Map

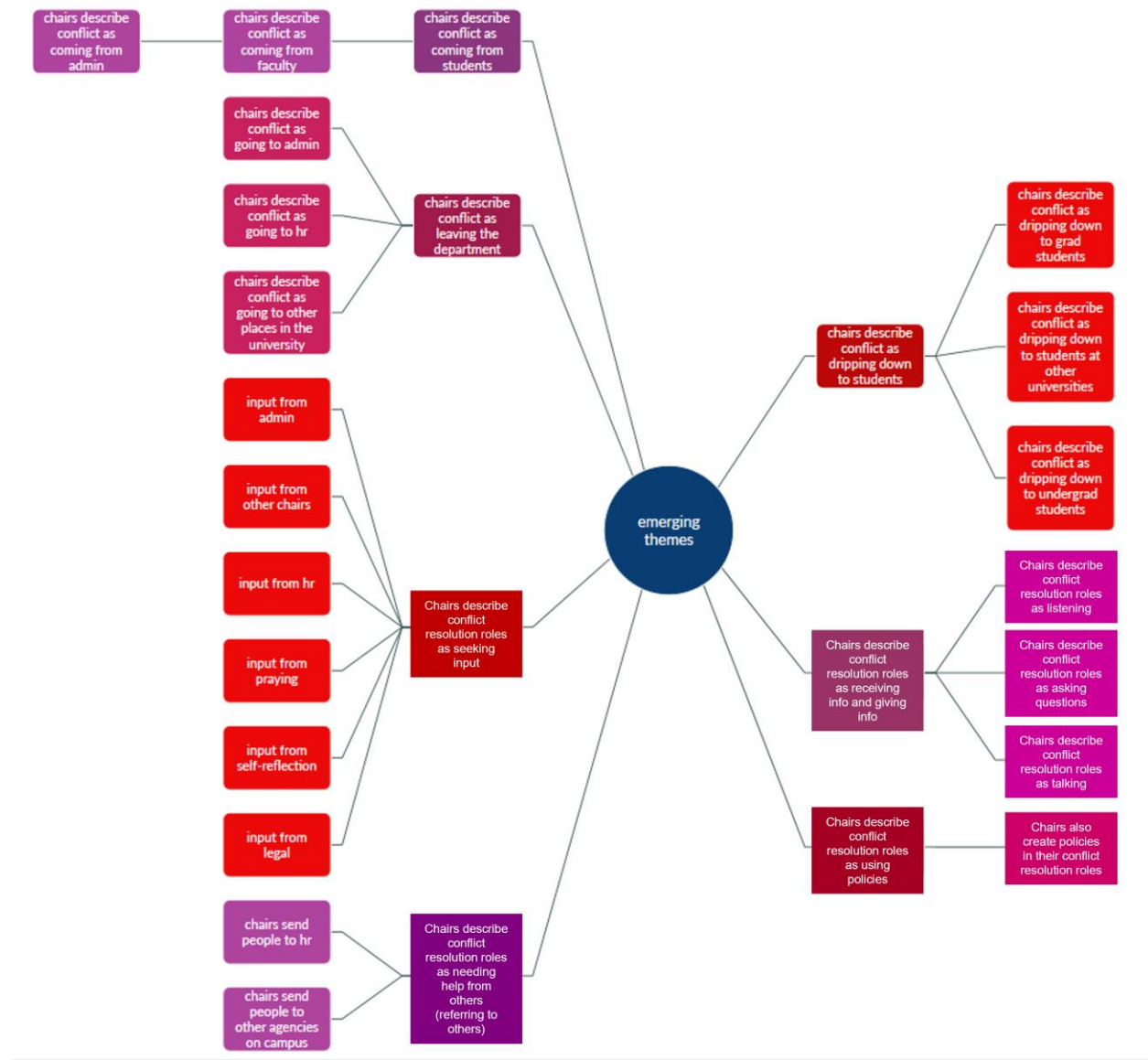


Note. The researcher used mind-maps to explore interconnections of codes to find emerging themes which answer the research questions.

analysis, and data representation. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warn “that selectivity takes place, but also that foregrounding one or another aspect may make other aspects less visible or even invisible (p. 93)” and as researchers “we sometimes choose with conscious awareness, at other times we choose without being aware” (p. 93). However, even with the possibilities of selection and foregrounding, researchers still must press on to tell the stories of the participants’ lives in the truest, most authentic ways. Lederach (2020) balances warnings of foregrounding

Figure 3.5

Mind Map to Make Sense of Previous Mind Maps



Note. The researcher used this mind map to explore information from prior mind maps which might be merged into other themes or themes which might dissolve. The researcher uses the abbreviation con res to stand for conflict resolution.

with the positive aspects of foregrounding as a way of bringing forward meaningful new ideas which can be springboards for action. Foregrounding is supported by the researchers' reflective

memos which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest “need to be routinely and rigorously kept” (p. 95). The researcher kept reflective memos throughout the data collection and data analysis process, one of which included the thoughts about keeping the stories of the participants as authentic as possible while bringing forward new ideas and balancing foregrounding and authenticity. Another challenge the researcher wrote about in the reflective memos was to include all participants’ points of view even when a few participants did not tell specific or detailed stories. The researcher still pressed on to tell the stories of the participant in the truest, most authentic ways.

It is important to note that not all participant stories had a beginning, middle, and end as expected from Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) assertion. Some stories were ramblings of disconnected moments or abbreviated observations which challenged the methodology of narrative inquiry and its expected thematic findings, replacing it instead with structural findings. Gill (2001) also used narrative inquiry as a methodology with systems thinking in education. Instead of considering a narrative’s structure to be beginning, middle, and end, Gill asserted systems thinking provides a construct for the narratives and narrative inquiry as a methodology facilitates the conversation. In this study, systems thinking provided a structure for the storytelling, which, for some participants, negated the need for the structure of beginning, middle, and end. This challenge to the expected structure of narratives, due to systems theory, also led to some themes and sub themes of the findings to be more structural and process oriented.

The fifth stage of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stages of thematic analysis to write about the themes and subthemes, and the last stage is to represent. The findings were written with the participants’ own literary expressions and care to protect the positionality of the

participants' words, actions, thoughts, and experiences. An example of this representation is the following story which is also found in Chapter four:

Humboldt shared a time he acted as a mediator between faculty members, he mentioned his approach to conflict resolution of suggesting the conflict partners talk and ask questions of each other saying:

And I had to be little bit of a go between, because the professor wanted to meet with all the full professor faculty in a setting and I said, "If you want to talk to them, I would suggest you schedule an appointment with them individually and sit down with them in a room. That's my recommendation. I'd be happy to talk with them, but I think a setting where we sit down with this person is not a productive way moving forward."

Humboldt again encouraged the faculty member to sit down with the rest of the faculty face to face, but additionally, he encouraged this meeting to be one-on-one instead of as a group and ask questions of each of them.

The representation demonstrates an effort to ethically re-present the participants' stories as Reimer, Standish, and Theissen (2019) state, "to share the language, to interpret the signs, to show the way, and to keep... on the path" (p. 241) of conflict resolution and transformation and generate meaningful research (Kim, 2015).

Trustworthiness

The researcher followed Tracy's (2010) eight criteria for excellent qualitative research which are worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. The topic of department chairs' lived experiences is a worthy topic to explore as department chairs hold a position which is responsible for 80 percent of the

administrative positions for the academic department (Gmelch, 1999). This study has rich rigor because there is a robust theoretical construct, the selection of the participants was appropriate, the data which was generated through interviews is appropriate and used a variety of data analysis techniques.

This study was designed to be sincere using reflective memos, analytic memos, the researcher's subjectivities and biases. Holmes (2020) suggests the researcher acknowledge objectivity instead of trying to eliminate it when using reflexive techniques and writing reflective memos. Reflective and reflexive memos "convert thought into a form that allows examination and further manipulation (Maxwell, 2013, p. 11). Tracy (2010) suggests "one of the most celebrated practices of qualitative research is self-reflexivity, considered to be honesty and authenticity with oneself, one's research, and one's audience" (p. 842). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest credibility and trustworthiness can also be strengthened using reflexivity.

This study was designed to be credible by "achieving internal consistency in the design, using strategies as researcher reflexivity" (Zeegers & Barron, 2015, p. 79). The researcher sought thick descriptions, peer debriefing, and member checks. Thick descriptions "attempt to get beyond superficial description to see the richness of thought and purpose that might lie behind the action" (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 70). Many times, during interviews, the researcher remained still and quiet when the participant completed a thought, allowed a lengthy pause of silence which many times prompted the participant to expand on their previous narrative, often using the extended space given as space to explore their thoughts on the narrative they shared, and sometimes drawing connections to other memories. An example of this pause was in an interview with the participant Chair. After Chair told a story, the researcher remained still and quiet for approximately 30-45 seconds, not jumping into another question. After the quiet, still

pause, Chair began speaking again, this time connecting her thoughts and feelings about the previously shared story with thoughts and feelings she was feeling currently. She then began a self-analysis and drew connections about her interpretation of the previously shared story when it happened in the past, with how she might interpret the story differently, were it to have happened in the current time. She began discussing some personal growth she had experienced between the time in which the story initially took place and the time at which she was retelling the story in the interview. This nuance of narrative inquiry would be missed if a different methodology was used in this study.

The researcher completed peer debriefing about the themes and subthemes that emerged. Peer debriefing is a process of “exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). The researcher tested emerging themes to defend the analysis. Member checks ensure correct transcription and accuracy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher provided participants with a copy of each interview transcription and requested an accuracy check. The participants also reviewed initial findings and provide feedback and edits which allowed the participants to validate the accuracy (Roulston, 2010b).

An additional way the researcher increased credibility and trustworthiness was the researcher familiarized herself with the duties and responsibilities of the department chair participants by conducting an environmental scan including documents found online such as the department chair handbook, faculty handbook, and other information from the participants’ universities regarding the positions on the universities’ websites (Creswell, 2011).

This study was designed to resonate by contributing to the literature on department chairs’ lived experiences. This study was designed to be coherent through connection between

the research questions, literature review, data collection, data analysis, findings, and representation of the data.

Ethical Concerns

Informed consent was obtained from the participants by the researcher at time of recruitment. In the initial recruitment email, a statement of informed consent was attached to the email which outlined the purpose of the study and commitment. At the beginning of each interview, the participant was asked to agree to participate in the interview and was given the option to decline answering any question asked. Additionally, the participants were reminded they may opt out of the research study at any time. The participants signed and delivered the informed consent to the researcher in person or via email before the first interview took place.

Summary

The methodology for this study was narrative inquiry which researches the lived experiences of participants, in this case department chairs. The researcher conducted three interviews with each participant formulating the data. The researcher analyzed the data using Saldana's (2021) coding procedures in multiple rounds of coding. The findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of department chairs at public, research one universities in the context of existing literature and the conceptual framework of this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the interpersonal conflict for department chairs at public, research one universities. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution?
2. How do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution?

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the demographics of the six participants, an overview of the interview settings with each participant, and then share narratives from the participants, organized into the 9 themes that emerged during data analysis. Three themes emerged answering the first research question of how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. Three themes emerged answering the second research question of how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution.

Participant Demographics

The six participants of this narrative inquiry included three males and three females, from a total of three public research one universities in three different states and three regions (West Coast, Midwest, and East Coast). I will introduce them by their chosen pseudonym, race, gender, field of discipline, and length of time as a department chair. Chair is a black female who has been a department chair in the field of education for four years. David is a white male who has been a department chair in the field of fine arts for 10 years. Paul is a white male who has been a

department chair in the field of veterinary medicine for 6 years. Deborah is a white female who has been a department chair in the field of science for 9 years. Helen is a white female who has been a department chair in the field of design for 12 years. Humboldt is a white male who has been a department chair in the field of science for 10 years. In the following section, I will give an overview of the interview settings with each participant.

Participant Interview Settings

In this section, I give an overview of the interview settings for each participant. This information was collected at each participant interview using an environment sketch through which I captured information related to the details of the setting and any observations of the interview.

Chair

Chair is a black female department chair in the field of education. We held all three interviews in person and at her request, interviews were not recorded with any digital device, but instead, a tape recorder. As I interviewed Chair in her university office, she was always dressed in very professional attire and greeted me formally, yet also warmly. I began the interview by asking which pseudonym she had chosen, as well as the desired pronouns to which she answered, “Chair and her/hers.” I operationalized the term conflict as is being used in this study and began asking the predetermined questions (see Appendix B). As I asked her questions, she listened intently, sitting on the front of her chair, with her hands clasped together yet resting on the small table at which we sat looking out a tall window at students passing by on their way to class. A few times, Chair asked clarifying questions before answering. Each answer was given with intentionally chosen words. Her answers were guarded and generalized. I found that my

predetermined interview questions would not be sufficient to elicit the narratives, so I had to use many probing questions.

In the second interview with Chair, I was greeted warmly again and ushered back to her office where we sat at the same small table overlooking the tall window. Chair sat back in her chair more during this interview as opposed to sitting on the edge of her seat with her hands clasped, as she had in the first interview. Chair did not ask any clarifying questions and answered with specific examples during this interview. I still asked probing questions to elicit more but I was eliciting more from the specific examples to get a larger view of the story. Chair was willing to expand on the story but continued to be intentional about which details she shared, and which details she held close to the vest. As Chair spoke during this interview, her demeanor was more relaxed which was demonstrated by her increase in laughter and vocal inflection. At the end of the second interview, we conversed casually for a few minutes before I left.

In the third interview with Chair, I was greeted warmly again and ushered back to her office where we sat at the same table overlooking the tall window one last time. Chair's posture changed several times during the interview from sitting back in her chair, to crossing her legs and resting her hands on her lap, to sitting forward in her seat. During this interview, I did not need to ask any probing questions as she shared specific examples from multiple perspectives, including several personal reflections and thoughts with feelings. As we concluded this interview, which was the final interview of all my data collection, she celebrated this accomplishment with me as we said our goodbyes.

David

David is a white, male department chair in the field of fine arts. We held our first two interviews via Zoom and our third interview in person in a neutral location. In our first interview,

I operationalized conflict as it is being used in this study then asked him for his chosen pseudonym and pronouns. He replied with the pseudonym David and requested he, him pronouns. During our first interview, David was in his office at the university, and he was dressed very professionally and seated formally at his desk. I operationalized the term conflict as it is being used in this study and started with the interview questions. David's answers were very descriptive, and he provided a large amount of institutional knowledge and context to his stories. His answers were guarded in that he did not give specific examples of personal interactions and additionally he provided a great deal of reflection on leadership. At the end of the interview, I gave the topic of questions for the second interview.

During our second interview, also via Zoom, David was in a more casual space and dressed casually. We greeted each other and then began the interview. David's answers continued to be guarded in not giving specific examples of interchanges between people. I used probing questions like, "So if you were to say, well let me tell you about this one time. What would be that one time?" David gave examples of real conflicts and again included a great deal of historical knowledge and context for greater understanding but did not provide specific interchanges. He took great care with choosing his words and his framing of different examples. At the end of the second interview, I provided the topic of questions for the third interview.

The third interview with David took place in person in a neutral space. David was dressed in his university casual attire, and we sat on opposite sides of a table. David alternated his posture between sitting back in his chair with his legs crossed to sitting on the edge of his seat with his hands clasped around a beverage on the table. I began asking predetermined questions and David provided his guarded, but detailed narratives. When I asked probing questions related to the students, his answers took a different turn. His answers became specific and more

conversational expressing his connection with the students. At the end of the interview, he talked at length about his leadership perspective on dealing with conflict and then he talked about his qualitative research background. When we completed the interview, I thanked David again and we left.

Paul

Paul is a white male department chair in the field of veterinary medicine. By his choice, we conducted all three interviews via Zoom. In our first interview, Paul appeared in his university office, casually dressed and we greeted each other and exchanged pleasantries. Paul is a reserved man, not very talkative, but speaking in a kind manner. I began the interview by asking for his chosen pseudonym and pronouns, which he responded within Paul and he/him. Then I operationalized the term conflict as being used in this study and proceeded with the questions. Paul listened intently with his gaze fixed off camera, concentrating. He replied with stories that answered the questions but were condensed and not overly descriptive. I began using probing questions to try to elicit specific examples or descriptions. Paul answered all my questions and was engaged in the exchange even though his responses remained condensed. As we finished the interview, I gave the topics for the questions in the next interview.

For the second interview, we again met via Zoom and exchanged greetings that were professional and kind, yet brief. Paul was again sitting in his university office and this time when he responded to my interview questions, he provided stories with a great deal of institutional knowledge and context. During one story, Paul included some self-reflections and feelings he had about some specific interchanges. Including self-reflections and feelings contrasted with Paul's stories in the first interview which did not include any reflections. I used a probing question which referred to the operationalization of the term conflict to which Paul provided

another story. At the close of the interview, after I gave the third interview question topics, Paul and I stayed on the Zoom for an additional few minutes and chatted. We said farewell until the third interview.

For the third interview, again meeting via Zoom, Paul was seated in his office university, but the camera angle was very different. This time the camera angle was not coming from his desk but instead from the opposite side of the room. I began asking my predetermined questions and Paul alluded to preparing the answers for this interview. He continued to be reserved in his storytelling, however in this interview, he gave specific examples. I still had to use probing questions to elicit more stories, however, Paul took time to consider his answers and if he had an example, he was willing to share it. Paul continued to be engaged and committed to participating. At the end of the interview, I thanked Paul for being a participant and we said goodbye.

Deborah

Deborah is a white female department chair in the field of science. For our first interview, we met in Deborah's university office and sat at her long conference table. She sat on the edge of her seat with her hands clasped around a beverage that was sitting on the table. We greeted each other and then I began the interview by asking for her chosen pseudonym and pronouns. She replied with the name Deborah and her/hers. I operationalized the term conflict as being used in this study and then asked my interview questions. Deborah spoke with warmth and clarity as she told stories with specific examples complete with expanded details. Deborah was willing to share self-reflections and her thoughts and feelings woven into her stories. Towards the end of the interview, Deborah brought up concerns she had about my qualitative research study. She expressed her research had always been quantitative, so she was unsure about my methodology, data analysis, and findings. We conversed about different aspects of the methodology and

research plan and drew our time together to a close when we looked at the time and realized Deborah had another meeting to attend. I quickly gave the topic of questions for the next interview, and we said goodbye.

The second interview with Deborah was via Zoom. Deborah was at home and was standing during our interview, as she gently shifted her weight back and forth from side to side throughout the interview. After a brief greeting, I began asking the interview questions. Once again, Deborah provided specific examples with great details and included her feelings and emotions with the stories. At one point, Deborah included details that she immediately addressed by asking for the opportunity to edit out identifying details to which I quickly agreed. Before saying goodbye at the end of the interview, I gave the topics of the questions for the third interview.

The third interview with Deborah was again in person in her university office, meeting at her long conference table. Deborah greeted me warmly and we conversed for a minute or two of pleasantries before diving into the interview. During the third interview, Deborah, again, provided detailed stories with specific examples. She referenced stories she had mentioned in earlier interviews and offered additional details and perspective to them. She was actively engaged during the interview process. At the close of the interview, I thanked her for participating and we said goodbye.

Helen

Helen is a white female department chair in the field of design. By her choice, we met via Zoom for all three interviews. For the first interview, Helen was in her university office, and she greeted me with a gregarious smile and excited tone of voice saying how interested she was in my research topic. Her enthusiasm continued for all three interviews, and she required very little

prompting in offering stories. I started the interview by asking for her chosen pseudonym and pronouns to which she replied with the name Helen and pronouns of her/hers. Then I operationalized the term conflict as being used in this study and began asking the questions. Helen dove right in and began telling stories using specific examples and vivid details. She gave her own personal background, revealing personal details and self-reflections. At the end of the interview, I gave the topics for questions for the next interview, and we said goodbye.

For the second interview via Zoom, Helen was again in her university office. She enthusiastically told story after story in response to my interview questions. I had no need to prompt or ask probing questions eliciting further details as she offered those details freely. She repeatedly expressed her intrigue in my research topic and included her leadership perspective and lessons learned along the way. At the close of the interview, I gave the third interview question topics, and we said goodbye.

For the third interview via Zoom, I asked the interview questions to which Helen gave in-depth answers with many details and her personal perspective. She shared her passion with leading people and during one story, she slipped and used the proper names of the people in her story. She quickly asked if that could be edited to which I promptly agreed. Helen continued her enthusiasm for the research topic and asked to see the research when it was done. At the end, I thanked her for being a participant and we said goodbye.

Humboldt

Humboldt is a white male department chair in the field of science. All three interviews were conducted in person in Humboldt's office on campus. During our first interview, I operationalized the term conflict as being used in this study then asked for his chosen pseudonym and pronouns. He replied with the pseudonym of Humboldt and the pronouns he,

him. Humboldt ushered me into his office to sit at a small table where we began the interview. As I set up the recording equipment, Humboldt expressed concern of my battery charge and offered for me to plug in a charge cord to one of his outlets. Humboldt listened intently to the prepared questions while sitting comfortably in his chair with his legs crossed, answered openly, and gave multiple examples for each question. During other stories, he shared feelings of empathy towards the characters in his stories. At the end of the interview, I provided the topic of questions which would be covered in the second interview.

At the second interview, Humboldt ushered me into his office, and we again sat at a small table and again, Humboldt expressed concern of my recording device battery charge. We had a short comical exchange over my remembering to charge the battery, then began the second interview. Humboldt again sat relaxed in his chair with his legs crossed and with a beverage in his hand, listening intently to my questions and nodding in understanding. He began telling the stories he had prepared, mentioning the amount of time he had put into thinking about his answers. During some of his stories he referred to the stories from the first interview and expanded on them with more details. At the end of the interview, I provided the topic of questions which would be covered in the third interview.

During the third and final interview, Humboldt ushered me into his office once more to sit at the small table and make the, now scripted, comments about my battery charge. We shared some small talk about the winter weather and then began the interview. Again, Humboldt had prepared answers and multiple stories to share from his experiences. Empathy was again weaved into his stories with humility, honesty, and self-reflection. At the end of this interview, I thanked him, and he expressed great interest in my findings.

This section introduced the participants, giving overviews of the interviews of each participant, based on the environment sketches taken at each interview. I included the setting of each interview as well as descriptions of interactions and behind-the-scenes conversations that were off the record. In the next section, the themes are identified.

Identified Themes

After thematic analysis and coding of the 18 participant interviews, analytic memos, reflective memos, and mind maps, three themes emerged in response to the first research question, how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the institution (see Figure 7). The first three themes are:

1. Chairs describe their experiences as multi-directional.
2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach outside the department.
3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to students.

Three additional themes emerged in response to the second research question, how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. They are:

1. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict resolution as involving talking, listening, and asking questions.
2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict resolution as involving seeking input.
3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict resolution as including referring out.

The themes were tested through peer debriefing.

Figure 4.1

Main Themes and Sub Themes

Themes answering Research Question 1 “How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the institution?”	
Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as multi-directional.	
1. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from upper administration.	
2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from faculty.	
3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from students.	
Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach outside the department.	
1. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach upper administration.	
2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach other departments.	
3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches human resources.	
Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to the students.	
Themes answering Research Question 2 “How do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution?”	
Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as involving talking, listening, and asking questions.	

Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as involving seeking input from others.

1. Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as involving seeking input from seasoned department chairs.
2. Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as involving seeking input from other department chairs.
3. Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as involving seeking input from one's faith and self-reflection.

Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as including referring out to other entities.

1. Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as including referring to policies.
2. Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as including creating policies to address conflict.
3. Chairs describe their roles with conflict resolution within the university institution as including referring to other resources.

In the next section, I will provide narratives from the participants' interviews which support the emerged theme. These themes were unexpectedly structure oriented and process oriented in nature. Grounded in General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) and paired with narrative inquiry as the methodology, the themes and sub themes point back to systems and bureaucratic structures from the perspectives of employees of the systems and bureaucratic structures. This can Some of the quotations are lengthy to provide rich, thick description of the conflict scenario and provide context for deeper understanding. In several instances, identifying details have been

omitted, with participant approval, to protect the identification and confidentiality of both the participant as well as the characters in their stories.

Themes Answering Research Question 1 “How do Department Chairs at Public, Research One Universities Describe their Lived Experiences with Conflict within the University Institution?”

In this section, I discuss the emerged themes from the data which answer the first research question which is how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. In analyzing the data, the researcher focused on how the participants described conflict. Synthesizing the narratives of the participants with the conceptual framework which included General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) as a lower-level theory, the researcher identified themes. The three themes which emerged are chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional, chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches outside the department, and chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to the students.

Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional.

The first theme, chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional, is descriptive of the origin of the conflict as described by the participants in their stories. In the first interview with the participants, the researcher asked questions about personal conflict experienced between the participant and others. In the second interview, the researcher asked questions about experiences of the participants in which they acted as a mediator, neutral party, or third party. In the third interview, the researcher asked questions about experiences of the participants in which they noticed either a positive impact on the department or a negative

impact on the department because of conflict. All stories from all interviews were analyzed and coded based on the origin of the conflict. Upon analyzing the codes, the theme of conflict is multi-directional emerged. The conflict sources, and sub themes, were upper administration, faculty members, and students (see Table 6).

Table 4.1

Organization of Stories by Participant and Sub Theme Within the First Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Experiences With Conflict as Being Multi-Directional

Participant	Main theme: Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional. Sub theme: listed below.	Number of stories
David	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from upper administration.	2
Helen	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from upper administration.	5
Chair	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from the faculty and staff.	7
Deborah	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from the faculty and staff.	1
Helen	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from the faculty and staff.	2
Humboldt	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from the faculty and staff.	3
Paul	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from the faculty and staff.	4
Humboldt	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which comes from the students.	4

Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which can Come from the Upper Administration

In David's first story, he discussed issues of scheduling and budget cuts coming from his upper administration. The following excerpt from David's interview is lengthy, however, the researcher maintained the excerpt in its entirety to honor the voice of the participant and include significant context to the story. David shared:

One of the issues we're running into right now is an imbalance in the way that our line schedule is structured. It's an imbalance of contact time. It's also an imbalance of equity and access to resources, to student contact hours, and equity within the department itself... And when we're working with one layer of administration higher, we're trying to figure out how to make this line schedule work. Well, we left it to the layer higher to settle the meetings and get everything together and there were some people left out of the conversation because it wasn't, because how it was designed and how it was created did not take into account all of the institutional, ah let's see how do I want to frame that...the institutional construction- how it was designed, how the line schedule... institutional knowledge is a good way to do it. To know how it was constructed, why it was constructed, why certain classes meet at a certain time and all of that because of two or three people who got left out, it turns into a massive email thread. And so, when we get to that point, some of the people in the meeting were taken aback. They were like, "we didn't realize this was going to cause such a stir." And because of my past experiences, I knew, yes, this was going to cause certain issues because there are things that needed to be, like I mentioned earlier, we needed to talk to a lot of different people prior to setting up the meeting.

David's department was relying on the upper administration to work out the schedule of courses and classrooms, which impacted several different departments, yet some of these other departments were not invited to the decision-making process. This conflict began with the upper administration and extended to David as the department chair.

David's second conflict with upper administration was in the second interview in which the researcher asked about experiences in which David had acted as a mediator, a third party, or a neutral party. David's story is situated as the upper administration and Board of Regents had changed the number of credits of one of the programs in David's department. The following excerpt from David's second interview is lengthy, however, the researcher maintained the story in its entirety to include the contextual information for this complex conflict. David shared:

This last time where I become that mediator is when they come back and they said, "Alright everybody has to get down to 120 credits." Well, at the time, we were sitting at 141 and we knew that there was no way we were going to get down to 120 credits. There's just no way we could get down to 121 and eliminate 21 credits from the program and be able to keep it viable... Myself between you know being able to be that middle person between the faculty and let's say, the studio division, or the faculty and the history and theory division. And so, having those conversations of, what we ended up doing was being able to say, "Ok, we talked with the [college], and we had to negotiate down where it was, alright, how are we going to count, can we count music history as a western heritage requirement." So, then it was going through and working through those, and working with, at that time the associate dean of academic affairs, you know, walking through that process, you know, but also understanding, figuring out ways we could use the current system that existed to assist with that process... So now it's like, how do we

eliminate 6 hours of music and so then it becomes a, you know, walking into faculty offices and saying, 'Now I realize you teach this course and you meet twice a week for an hour, but we're really going to have to offer this as a 1 credit course because it actually functions more like a lab, but you're still going to have to have the 2 hours of contact each week, but you're only going to get load credit for 1'... So now all of a sudden what you used to get 3 or 4 credits for on your load credit each semester not that's been reduced by 1 or 2 credits. So now, all of a sudden, they may be meeting twice a week and putting in all those hours preparing and giving feedback but they're only getting one hour of load credit on their overall scope.

In this conflict, the upper administration is simply carrying out the requirements of the Board of Regents, however the details David includes about issues with course load and load credit provide a glimpse into the impact of the requirements on the faculty and staff. This conflict began in the Board of Regents, extended to the upper administration, then David as the department chair, and the faculty members.

Helen shared about a conflict that rose in her department due to competing resources with her department's classroom spaces and the college that wanted to absorb them. The researcher chose to keep the extended length of the excerpt below due to the situation and context of the conflict, in addition to allowing the participant's voice to remain authentic. Helen shared:

So, our classrooms were really desirable. And we were asked to share, but the deal was, we put all our money in these rooms, so I want us to have first chance to schedule the classes when our classes need to be there. Well, the college decided they were going to start scheduling all the classrooms and those weren't going to be department classrooms and we weren't going to be responsible. So, they changed the locks on one of the rooms

first and then they said they were going to make sure it was open when classes were scheduled, and all this stuff and they couldn't do it. There was an 8:05 class and it was never open at 8:05. And so, we complained, "Well, it's okay that you changed the locks but now you've got to make sure that it's unlocked when it needs to be and locked again. So, you need to get that figure out." But it just kept happening. There's no one here to go ask for a key. The next thing I know is so when we were trying to work with them; get them to take responsibility seriously, and that was really a pain. And so, we would just communicate, and communicate and communicate every time we got locked out. And say just "Please do you know our schedule?" So, then they changed the lock on another room, a smaller room down on the second floor. And we didn't even get told either time that they were gonna change the locks. It just happened one night our key would work and then next morning it wouldn't. When they changed the second room, we were blindsided again, and they couldn't keep it open when it was supposed to be open and all this stuff. And I had a night class. My class started at like 5:30 and went until 7:30 or something like that. And they couldn't keep it open, and it was really bizarre because I'm a department [chair] and I didn't even have a key to my classroom. So, one night I just told the students, "I don't know where we can go because the other rooms have been locked now. So, let's go outside and chat." It was still nice weather, it was already nice weather, it was late February. "Let's go outside and chat and then we'll have to cancel tonight's class and I'll give you some instructions." Gahd. We just kept trying to get them to get it right and finally I just said, 'you know, this is ridiculous.' So, I called over to...and this was on top of another conflict I was having with the dean's office; every month there was a big conflict. So, I called over to someone who is in our HR, and she is

employee relations. It's her business to hear when people aren't getting along. So, I'll just call her and say, "You know I know I called you last fall about the decision they made blah blah. Here's another one. I don't even know what I'm supposed to do about it. Here's the situation. We're asking them to make sure the doors are unlocked when they're supposed to be for our classes. We don't know what the problem is, we don't know where the breakdown is, we don't know if they don't care or they don't communicate, but we can't live like this." And she goes, "I understand." And I said, "Can you do anything?" And she said, "well let me see." You know, she's really not effective. So, then I thought, well she's not gonna do anything, because she never has before. So, I thought I'll call an ombudsperson. And I said, 'you know I don't want to formally get an ombudsperson, I just want to get your advice.' I told him what was going on and he says, "Well is it still your space?" And I said, "well, technically it is still listed as our space until that changes and it hasn't changed yet. It's still on the university website." And he said, "well just ask for keys." And I was like, "oh yeah, I can still ask for keys because it's still my space." So, then I asked for keys and when we got them, which was pretty quick, we got keys for everybody in my department. That way anybody can get in that needed to. And after we got the keys, I went down to the budget person who I had to ask to open the doors and I said, "oh by the way, we solved the problem about the rooms not being open when they were supposed to be. We got ourselves some keys."

In this conflict, Helen shared significant pieces of the story including Helen's perspective that she had made a deal with upper administration to share the classrooms if they honored her request to allow her department to sign up to use the rooms first. Another significant piece of the story is Helen reported her students were unable to have class when the classrooms were locked.

Helen also reported she attempted to resolve the issue by complaining about the classrooms not being open, providing the course schedule to the people with the keys, and spoke to an ombudsperson in human resources for assistance. Helen expected to have access to the classrooms each time she held class but was unable to access the classrooms on many occasions. Additionally, the time of day that class was held was before the offices in which keys were held were open. This conflict, which was between upper administration and Helen extended and reached down impacting the students in Helen's class.

Helen told another story of a conflict which originated with her upper administration in which her dean asked all department chairs, including Helen, to create goals for their departments. Again, this excerpt is lengthy, however, the researcher was summoning stories from the participants, and as Helen told the following story, the emotions, context, and details included were significant to the analysis and the findings, therefore, the lengthy excerpt is appropriate. Helen shared:

My dean... asked us each as department [chairs] to create [goals] for our department. I didn't like it. I'm a soldier, I do the shit you ask me to... They asked us to submit our department's [goals] in writing in advance of the [leadership] meeting... So, we did that, everybody did that. And then we get to the meeting, and we're supposed to present our [goals] and get questions, and field questions. And nobody knew we were going to present and field questions. We just had to present our [goals] in writing. And what we learned; okay this is what we learned. We get to the meeting, and he says, "Well who would like to go first?" And we're all like, "What do you mean who would like to go first?" He says, "Well I want everyone to present their [goals]. We'll have 15 minutes for each of you and then we'll have question and answer time." So, you know me, being the

longstanding [chair], I'm bold and brave and I do shit. So I go, "I'll go first." So, I present my [goals] in about 3 minutes... But then the people from the dean's office, not even my colleagues who were equal to me, right? The people from the dean's office attacked me with questions. Like really weird, "Why would you do that? Why wouldn't someone else be better for this? Are you sure this is the right thing to do? Well, why didn't you do this? Why didn't you talk to blah" And I was like, WHOA. I just said, "Well, yes of course we're the right people to do this. We've been at this for 20 years; this is the next logical step." And you know, I just calmly answer their questions. But everybody else in the room was like "oh mother fuck" Right? I mean like, "What is this about?" [My friend] went next. And I think he went next because basically he just wanted to get it over with. And so, he went next, and they attacked him, and they did that all the way through the meeting... So, we got through all the groups, like all the people. And the meeting was over, and you could tell the room was just quiet and sad. And just awful. I mean it was- it felt like we all needed to go home and cuddle up with a soft animal with a cup of hot chocolate. I mean this was all that. Okay? So, instead of recognizing that we felt shitty, like all of us, my dean says, "This has been a really good meeting. This has really been helpful!" He was all charged up.

In this conflict, reported deep emotions she experienced, and she perceived others were experiencing as well. She calls herself "a soldier" and follows it up with how she defines that description, as "I do the shit you ask me to." Some significant pieces of the story are that Helen, acting as a "soldier" reported she completed the tasks she was given by the upper administrator, then she describes what happened next with the administration's reaction, as she experienced it,

and her perceptions of the environment and people around her. This conflict originated with the upper administration and extended to all the department chairs, including Helen.

Helen's third story about personal conflict between herself and upper administration involved a previous dean of the college from many years ago. Helen's story is about department chair meetings run by this dean at which the dean would allow department chairs to add topics to the agenda for the meeting, but if he did not like the topic or disagreed with the topic, he would behave in a certain way. Helen says:

Deans and department [chairs were invited] to his home for a "get-acquainted." And we sat in his family room or living room on these couches and chairs, and he peppered us with ethical dilemmas. At the time I thought, this is an interesting strategy to build a common understanding of where people are coming from. But here's what I learned, what he was doing was he was learning what we valued and what we would sort of "go to the mat for" and how we approached things so he could manipulate us and undermine us. That's exactly what he did. It was, now that I, with hindsight I can see what happened. It was just pure evil. He's a provost now. Totally manipulative. It was right after I got chosen to be the department [chair]. So, he inherited me as the department [chair], so he couldn't just decide that I couldn't be the department [chair]. And he started sabotaging me from the moment he found out who I was. While he was here, he would mansplain before I presented. He would let us put things on our agenda for the leadership every Tuesday and when I submitted a topic for the agenda for this session and I would give background information to support if it was needed or whatever. He would either introduce the topic with his take on how to understand what [I] was going to talk about or he would follow. And what he did when he did it before, was he made sure that everyone

knew not to agree with [me] because his position was as follows. Or he would follow my time on the agenda with his own “this is why that doesn’t matter.” And he was retaliatory. In one meeting when I was just bringing up an alternative way to understand something. He said, you know I could cut your budget.” It was just mean shit. It was just, I don’t know how to explain how bad he was.

In this story, Helen reports a detailed and complex conflict, beginning in the dean’s living room with a question-and-answer time, described by Helen as “peppering” with questions. She includes significant information about the dean being hired after Helen was hired as department chair, leading to sabotage, from Helen’s perspective, and threatening to cut her budget. This conflict originated from upper administration and extended to all the department chairs at the meeting.

The next three stories from Helen about upper administration were told during the second interview with Helen in which the researcher asked questions about experiences in which Helen had acted as a mediator, third party, or neutral party. Helen tells a story about a conflict involving one of her faculty members had with an administrator in which she served as a third-party in her role in the institution:

One of the associate deans was at the podium talking and my faculty, who was on the faculty council, asked a question and then she was going to ask a follow-up. The person at the podium, who is a male, talked over her. Like wasn’t going to let her ask her question, he didn’t want to hear her question, he didn’t want anyone else in the room to hear her question. That kind of man-talking over woman who’s too smart for her...And I just inserted myself and I said, “so and so, you need to let her finish.” He was MAD (*emphasis of participant*) at me. Because he is an associate dean and I’m just a

department [chair] and it was their meeting, and I wasn't even supposed to be there. But you know what happened after the meeting. My faculty member sent me an email that just simply said, "Thank you so much for standing up for me in that meeting."

In this conflict, Helen describes a situation in which she stood up for one of her faculty members who was attempting to speak at a meeting but was being talked over, as interpreted by Helen. This conflict began between the upper administration and one of Helen's faculty members but extended to Helen when she spoke up at the meeting and to all the other people in attendance at the meeting.

In the following story Helen told of conflict with upper administration in which she served as a third party, Helen was approached by a colleague who was a director of an academic program who had been approached by the dean's office about a reorganization of the programs.

Helen continued:

The dean's office called people in without telling them what it was about. And when they showed up, they said, "We want the [program] to decide today whether they'll be part of [the department in our college]." I mean they literally didn't have, there was no warmup there was no, "What do you think about?" "Could it be a benefit to..." It was just some bullshit thing. So, one, that's not how we reorganize things at our university. We actually have an appendix to our university handbook that tells how you start a reorganization. And you do not start it by the dean's office saying to the people in the unit, "We want you to change." So, the problem is that the faculty and staff that were in the meeting were all so taken aback that they started mostly being emotionally reactive. Sort of, "What are you talking about? What will happen to our jobs? How will blah blah blah work? Whose idea was this?" One of the people from the unit...made an appointment and came and

talked with me. And we talked for about an hour and a half. I just kinda had her debrief what happened, what was the chronology of it, what was the gist of it. And she told me all about it. And I said, “Well, you know, that’s not how we do things at our university.” I mean, the official thing is this. And I said, “I’ll print it out for you.” And I printed it out from the university handbook and handed it to her and I said, “If I was you, I would probably just take this back to my group and just say, ‘Hey, I learned this is what is supposed to happen’.”

In this conflict, Helen reported a faculty member, who was also a program director, was approached by the upper administration about reorganizing the program into another department. Helen perceived the program director felt like the upper administration was trying to catch her off guard or ambush her with decisions required to be made immediately and without thought and further consideration. This conflict began between the upper administrator and faculty member but extended to Helen.

The next story about conflict with upper administration was about budget restraints in her department. It is a lengthy quote which the researcher left in its entirety to honor the voice of the participant and provide the context as the conflict in addition to the emotions included by the participant. Helen spoke about her university making the decision to give all budget power to the deans instead of department chairs having control over their own departmental budget. Helen’s college is filled with a broad spectrum of departments, and a dean that Helen described as “ha[ving] no interest in knowing what we needed.” Helen reported the dean gave equal allocations of funds to all departments instead of assessing the needs of each department. Helen described one department as having such low funds they are not able to hire a new department

chair, faculty member, or advisor, juxtaposed with another department in her college with an overabundance of funds. She continued:

We have a dean that has no idea what our college is about. His department has only been in our college for [a short time]. And when they came to our college, they didn't learn who we were and become part of us, they just said this is bullshit. We're gonna change it. The new budget model at [our university] gives all the authority to the deans. Deans and the college budget officers make decisions about money, the decisions about space, and positions. There's no longer any kind of assurance that a department budget will be what it needs to be. Our dean at the time was a real bully. Our college was one of the most efficient, cost-effective colleges in the system. But because they let deans do whatever they want and our dean started us off on this thing where he said, "equal allocation of funding is fair." Not equitable. In other words, you know the little image of the guys on boxes by the baseball diamond. He had no interest in knowing what we needed. I kept saying, "Why don't we just try a zero-based budget" where all you get is what you need to pay the people who teach the classes and staff member or two or whatever we say is required and then after that you have to ask for it if you need it. Another unit is in a situation where they were unable to hire their replacement department [chair], faculty member, and an advisor/recruiter. So, they're down 3 whole people. We're not becoming more efficient in our college because we're not creating S.M.A.R.T. goals for everyone to meet so they get more money or so they don't meet so they lose a little money. We're not doing any budget changes based on achieving or not achieving goals. The group who couldn't hire the department [chair], faculty member, or hire an advisor/recruiter is having to work extra and harder not having the people they need. And one of our

departments performed the best under this system, they had so much money that they gave everybody who works for them- faculty and staff- a treadmill for under your desk. \$300 a pop...This is ruining our college morale...So if you get rid of all these programs that our college is saying aren't worthy, because they're more expensive than others in our college even though they're less expensive than the university average, then you're gonna hurt the Business department and Sciences departments in [other colleges] because that's where our students take their elective credits...I'm the only one who will speak out about these budget issues. And I am labeled a troublemaker. So, there's a lot of conflict at work right now and it mostly is me with our college leadership.

In this conflict, Helen describes herself as being labeled a troublemaker when she speaks out about budget issues she sees as a problem, originating from decisions made by the upper administration. A significant part of the story is when Helen reports if some of the more expensive programs in the college were to be dissolved, other departments in other colleges at the university would be impacted. The conflict began with the upper administration and department chairs but seems to be extended to all people in the departments who rely on monies from the budgets.

Both David and Helen shared multiple stories which describe their experiences with conflict as that which can come from upper administration, which is one sub theme of the main theme, chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being multi-directional. The next section includes stories which support the second subtheme is chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which can come from faculty members within the department.

Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as being that which come from within the department's faculty or staff.

Many of the stories shared by the participants were about conflicts that originated from the faculty or staff members in the department. Chair shared seven stories, Deborah shared one story, Helen shared two stories, Humboldt shared three stories, and Paul shared four stories of conflict that originated from faculty members.

In Chair's stories about conflict originating from faculty members, five of her stories were told during the first interview in which the researcher asked questions regarding personal conflict experienced by the participants. Two of Chair's stories were told in the second interview in which the researcher asked questions regarding experiences in which the participant acted as a mediator, a third party, or a neutral party.

Chair's first story was about her faculty members engaging with her in a way that she describes as, "a very tense kind of engagement." The conflict began shortly after Chair was hired. Chair continues:

This particular conflict has to do with our observations of faculty. And because it had not been done it was something that was not widely encouraged... And although we are a research 1 institution it was important for me to know who we were to espouse effective teaching and learning. And so, by being able to enact some kind of system where observations would occur, that was my introduction to a very tense kind of engagement where all were not initially on board but essentially it was approved... I just want to know what was happening and so when that level of intent became evident, I think the walls started to come down. Although not everyone led to that conclusion, but enough of the ones came to that conclusion and so now it's just a part of the department."

In this story, Chair reports some of the faculty in her department “were not initially on board.” Then reports she was able to explain to her faculty what her intentions were with the faculty observations, which helped her think “the walls started to come down” and the conflict seemed to Chair, to be dissipating. This conflict originated with the faculty members and extended to Chair as the department chair.

Chair told another story about a conflict she experienced between herself and faculty which involves the topic of tenure and promotion after some of her faculty members were not promoted:

There were faculty members who were not promoted to the rank of professor. They desired it with all intentions. They had prepared themselves in accordance with the guidelines of the university, but they did not get it... And I’m not sure the faculty understand that. So, they may see it like that. Because that might affect how they feel, like whether or not I supported them to the extent they feel like I should.

As Chair told the story, she sighed heavily as she talked about the faculty members not getting promoted to the rank of professor and more so, that they might not feel like she supported them. This conflict began with the faculty members and extended to Chair.

Chair told three shorter stories about faculty members who were upset with her shortly after she became the department chair:

1. The first faculty member who was upset with Chair, personally, made it seem like “it always appeared that whatever I did, it was never enough. Or the questioning about what I did or the motivations behind what I did. It could never just be enough. It always had to be, there must be some ill-intent, some self-serving intent behind it. It has to be, because it just could not be any other way.”

2. The third story was again about a faculty member who was upset with Chair personally. “So, one of the things that I do within the department is I highlight the successes of the faculty...I don’t have any favorites in terms of when I brag, I don’t choose who I talk about. “Let me know it and then I’ll show it.” But if you don’t let me know it, then I can’t show it. So, some conversations came up about whether I was highlighting some people over other people.”

3. The second story about faculty members who were upset with her was regarding a change in policy. “One of the issues that we were facing in our department had to do with the number of dissertations that faculty had to chair and how to deal with the load distribution. And whether they would receive compensation for it. Because prior policy...our faculty, if they graduated so many doctoral students, they received financial compensation and/or a course release for the year for the number of graduate students. Well, when [our college formed], because some of the former, those former set of experiences were at play, now the college says, ‘No, we can’t compensate you.’”

In all three stories, the faculty members originated the conflict. A significant factor in the first two stories is the conflict topics seem to be mundane and not outrageously unusual. In the first story, Chair describes actions and words by a faculty member who may not like Chair personally. In the second story, Chair reports from her perspective, it seemed like faculty members did not like something she was doing or something they believed she hadn’t done they wished she had done. In the third story, Chair reports what she saw as an unclear policy from the university which Chair perceived as upsetting to her faculty members. Additionally, Chair told all three stories during the first interview in which the researcher asked questions regarding experiences of the participant with personal conflict in their role as department chair.

In the second interview, the researcher asked Chair questions regarding her experiences serving as a mediator, third party, or neutral party to conflict. In two of Chair's stories, the conflict originated with faculty in her department. Chair shared the first story:

I remember I received a phone call from a faculty member who was very concerned about the remarks that another faculty member had made. And these remarks were quite profound and insulting for her. And she asked if we could have a session with the 3 of us... But I think it was more so the communication piece. I think the manner in which things were communicated were the, was where the gap was. From what I recall, they both understood the issue, but the manner in which it was communicated and then hence internalized were the distinctions. And I think once we started to see that and unpeel that piece of it, they both understood. And they were also clear, also in the midst of intensity at times, they were not trying to offend or hurt the other person and they would say that. But their concerns still needed to be addressed.

In this conflict, Chair perceived one faculty member as seeming to be insulted by remarks from another faculty member as insulting. This conflict originated between two faculty members and extended to Chair as the department chair who acted as a mediator.

In Chair's second story of serving as a mediator or third party, the faculty members were in conflict over a teaching schedule:

I'm aware of issues that may happen between faculty members...when we were dealing with just having faculty and their teaching schedule be addressed, who gets to teach what, how many of those classes do they get to teach, and a faculty member was not necessarily happy about the course assignments, and it was discussed at the faculty level and then it came to my attention. So in that case it was a one on one conversation that I had to have

to address it with regards to what the expectations are when we think about the in-unit teaching assignments that everyone has to sign or commit to... it also influenced the other assignments because if they weren't happy about their assignments and didn't want to teach it then we would have to identify another faculty member, an adjunct faculty member to teach the course.

In this conflict, Chair reported from her perspective it seemed like faculty members were unhappy with their course assignments and instead of discussing it with Chair directly, it indirectly "came to [Chair's] attention." This conflict originated with faculty, extended to other faculty, and eventually to Chair as department chair.

Deborah shared one story about a conflict which originated with a faculty member in the first interview in which the researcher asked questions regarding Deborah's experiences with personal conflict in her role as department chair. The researcher included the excerpt from Deborah's interview in its entirety to provide meaningful context as well as including the participant's authentic voice. Deborah begins the story:

So, I had one faculty member who, when I arrived... had a grievance against the university... that created a terrible situation within the department... in the end it was all for nothing because there was nothing illegal about what was done... But there was still a lot of tension. That tension has never really fully gone away. I tried everything.... And I tried everything I could to be supportive of the faculty member, to be fair, to treat him equally. [He] is passive aggressive. And it's taken me probably 6 or 7 years to realize what's going on. So, you know, you'll meet with him and just, butter dripping out of his mouth, he's just so sweet and whatever, and then the next thing you know, he's just aggressive. And it's never clear what the trigger is and what's going on- whether it's you

or something else. And it's not just me that he's like that with. He does it in faculty member meetings. So, over the past, well particularly the last 5 years, budget cuts have just been worse and worse and worse. But over the past 5 years, the problem is that the classes that he teaches have become less and less popular. And I allowed him to continue to teach some of his upper-level courses even when they were under-enrolled because they were important to him and his students. But in the last couple years, it's not just me, it's the dean's office saying, 'We can't do that anymore. We can't afford to do that anymore.' And that's like, oh, a slap in the face, you know? You're not teaching your graduate class; you're being punished to teach an intro class. That's how it's sort of perceived. Even when it's not like that. But in the last few years, I've had to talk to him in advance. And I try to document everything, so I try to talk to him in his annual performance evaluation and say, "look, if your classes are under-enrolled, we're gonna have to review this and we may have to cancel." But he doesn't hear that. So, push came to shove last year, and his class was under-enrolled. And I waited and waited until the very last minute because graduate students often enroll, like, the week before. So, I cancelled his class. Well, he went ballistic. I tried to point out that I had explained this was a possibility. But he accused me of undermining his research, his area of the department. I thought we had it all resolved. He went around me to the dean. Complained about me to the dean about how I was, you know, attacking him and his part of the department.

A significant part of this conflict is the multiple layers of conflict which took place over a period of many years. Another significant part of this conflict is the long list of characters involved with the conflict: the faculty member with the grievance, Deborah, the dean, and other faculty

members in the department. The conflict originated with the faculty member and the department before Deborah was hired as department chair, then extended to be conflict between the same faculty member and Deborah as department chair, reached upper administration, and the rest of the faculty who attend the faculty meetings in the department.

Helen also shared a story about a conflict that she had with a faculty member that began before she became department chair but was now erupting as a conflict between that previous faculty member and another faculty member. She begins the story referring to her previous personal conflict:

Here I was with the history that wasn't perfect with the person. And I was the boss now. And my colleague had come back from her sabbatical and was trying to navigate this relationship with a new faculty member who started her faculty position during the sabbatical and didn't really understand that the tenured faculty member returning was her superior. So, they got into it, like seriously into it in a conflict. And the younger person, the newer person was very vehemently complaining because she was being bullied and all this kind of stuff. She was vehement. And I said, you know, I don't see it that way, but I can understand that you might perceive that. So let me talk to the people over in the, at that time we had a nice department in the provost office that dealt with faculty positions and things like differences of opinion. It was great, we don't have that anymore. So, I asked the person that ran that service, she was an attorney and had a long-term experience in employment stuff, to see if she couldn't get them to talk about it to a resolution of some kind. Because I couldn't break out of that frame that she had me in; that I had her in. So, they tried but it was not successful. So, I just kept saying, "You know, there are people that think of our teamwork as a straitjacket that keeps you from doing what you

want to do. But I'd like for you to think about it as a life vest because we are here to support you even when it's tough and the water's deep and its choppy waves. We'll hold you up, you know, because we're a team." But I couldn't get her to take that on. So, in the end she had to leave; I did not reappoint her. She had made so many people so uncomfortable that I ended up having a faculty vote to not reappoint her. And it was bitter."

This conflict started between two faculty members when Helen was one of the faculty members then reemerged after Helen became department chair as and the other faculty member conflicted with someone else. Helen tried to serve as a third party, but the lingering effects from her own personal conflict with the faculty member possibly prevented a successful resolution of conflict the second time.

Helen shared a story about a conflict that she is experiencing currently with her faculty members, but in this story, Helen does not discuss a specific faculty member as the originator. Instead, Helen discusses some examples of general conflict originating in the faculty as they claim inequity of requirements between the different faculty members:

The one that is like plaguing me right now is that negative thing among some faculty in one discipline and they...I've just never seen people so competitive in the race to the bottom. And I mean this, I really mean it. I mean there are times that they literally act like who can do the least. And then they are very quick to say, "Well, if so and so needs more to do, she can take my [service responsibility]." And what's fascinating to me is the number of times they really don't like somebody so they offer to me, "If that person's not doing enough, then they should do something from [their] plate." You don't have any idea about what somebody's appointment is, or somebody's role is or what they're not

doing or what they're doing. They like, needle each other. They find a reason to be argumentative with each other. It is incredibly detrimental. It's also just so personal, there's not much you can do. I can intervene in things that aren't personal. If they have a disagreement on what we ought to do, I can intervene. If they [argue] in a public way, in a way I can observe, they mistreat someone, I can intervene. But when they do this sort of back room, between themselves, icky stuff, 6th grade girl? I just wanna go, "Wow. Really? How old are you?"

In this conflict, Helen reports some of her faculty members try to pawn off their responsibilities on other faculty members they perceive as less busy. This conflict begins among the faculty members but extends to Helen as the department chair.

Humboldt told a story about a conflict between faculty members that stemmed from a failed promotion vote in which Humboldt served as a neutral party:

I mean, there have been cases where a faculty member has gone for a promotion to full professor and the external letters suggested that that person was not quite there yet. And so, the tenured, the full professor faculty, of which I was one, had to communicate that to the person, who was upset understandably. And I had to be little bit of a go between, because the professor wanted to meet with all the full professor faculty in a setting and I said, "That's not...If you want to talk to them, I would suggest you schedule an appointment with them individually and sit down with them in a room. That's my recommendation. I'd be happy to talk with them, but I think a setting where we sit down with this person is not a productive way moving forward." And I told this person, because this is a part of our discipline's subject matter that, given my professional background, I'm not familiar with, "some of the external reviewers were not indicative

that you had the portfolio at this point to move forward.” And I said, “If we hadn’t voted this at the department level, at the supervisory level, it definitely would have come out.”

And we, maybe we wouldn’t have been called to the carpet, but we would have been told, “Really, this person should not have been moved forward with this...” So, the person waited 3 years, worked really hard, and sailed through the promotion.

In this conflict, Humboldt reported one of his faculty members, who seemed like he was upset about an outcome from a promotion, asked Humboldt for a meeting with all the faculty members. The conflict originated with the faculty member but was intervened by Humboldt, as the department chair, who acted as a third party and advised the insulted faculty member.

Humboldt shared a story of a continuing conflict that he experienced in his early time as department chair between himself and a faculty member who was a former department chair but that impacted all the faculty members in the department:

But it was a former department [chair] of the department who had stepped down. He was not the one just prior to me, but he was the one just prior to him. And he stepped down, in large part because he didn’t have the support of the department. And so, the dean said to him, I think, you’ll finish this year off but then someone else will take over. So, when I became department chair, one of the things that would come up on a regular basis in faculty meetings or in conversations, email, or sometime in the hallway was “well when I was the department [chair] we did it this way.” And it was a conflict that tended to fester. And one of the unfortunate parts of it was that some of the tenure track faculty, some of the junior faculty. When you’re tenure track faculty, you’re kind of in a vulnerable position. And this individual obviously, was a full professor who had been here for a long time. So, the junior faculty, sort of felt caught between, you know,” If I look like I’m

looking too much like I'm backing you as the department [chair], that's going to infuriate this person who is a former department [chair] and they're going to be voting on my tenure and promotion." So, it put them in a difficult spot, and I could see that.

In this conflict, Humboldt reports his perception of the former department chair as imposing his ideas, thoughts, and opinions onto Humboldt as the new department chair as well as all the faculty, including junior faculty. Humboldt perceived the junior faculty to be vulnerable and tenuous with regards to their position with the former department chair, who could vote towards the junior faculty members' tenure and promotion. This conflict began with faculty members, extended to all the departmental faculty members, and to Humboldt as the department chair.

Humboldt told another story about conflict that he experienced in his role in the institution between himself and a faculty member:

I have a colleague whom I believe is insecure. And there would be times they would hear something from somebody that they, apparently, thought I had done. And they thought this was being done directly to them. And they'd come to me, "Why did you do this?" And I'd say, "This is what I did, and this is why I did it. It's not aimed towards you." But the insecurity just kept... and this was bubbled up after the pandemic with this person too that they felt like I was... And I don't know what was going on in people's- during the pandemic- people's lives, and I have to take all of this with a grain of salt. But this person was getting really over the top with sending emails that I was not valuing them. And I was trying to figure out, "What was the origin of this?" You know, reply back and say, "this is why I did this. This was not aimed at you." There was one email from them that, in my mind, had a bit of threatening tone to it, so I took it to the office on campus that evaluates potential threats and said, "is there a threat there?" And they looked at it and

said, " it's not professional but it doesn't rise to the level of threat." And I don't know, again, what's going on in this person's life. It is a person who does have a tendency to overreact. It's a person who has a tendency to overreact verbally, has a tendency to overreact in terms of communicating and sending emails. And, in my opinion, has the habit of using capital letters in email communications, which has the tone where you might as well be shouting at somebody.

In this conflict, Humboldt reported he interpreted written communication, through email, as a possible threat due to the capitalized letters which Humboldt perceived as a raised voice. This conflict began with the faculty member and extended to Humboldt, but then also reached the office on campus to whom Humboldt asked for input.

Paul told two stories about conflict he experienced between himself and a staff member, the office manager, in the department:

And I was, we had a staff member who had been hired before I was chair, and this individual was still within their probationary period... The [office] manager had sought my input related to this person and whether or not they were going to be extended or not. And there was sort of mixed reviews by faculty. Some really liked the person and [there were] faculty who repeatedly said they did not enjoy working with the person. And the conflict arose when the [office] manager had sought my input on the way I suggested we proceed, and I don't even remember what my suggestion was, but the reaction of the [office] manager was, "well, then, I'll just terminate this person" and that was completely not what I was suggesting, and it struck me that the [office] manager was being extremely defensive. I was trying to engage in a conversation about what to do and it seemed like the person, the [office] manager, was more thinking that what I said was going to happen,

so I was almost feeling, like, “God they must think I’m a dictator.” That was not what I was intending.

In this conflict, Paul reported concern about how the staff member may have interpreted Paul’s email in a different way than Paul intended. Paul tells another story about conflict involving the same staff member’s attitude and curt responses through email:

Sometimes I still get emails from the [office] manager that just strike me as being very abrupt. And there was a time when I had actually drafted a very angry email, which I don’t believe I ever sent [that time]. But I do think I sent an email back once that was returning in kind what seemed to be the attitude that my interpretation of the email I got was. But then that ended up making the person visibly very distraught. The individual has always had really, really good positive evaluations, but even to this day the tone, and I know that emails don’t have tone, but they imagined the tone in which they were sent. But even on the phone sometimes other people feel like they’re bothering the individual and they’re interrupting what they’re doing and it’s never a warm “what can I do to help you” sort of attitude. I don’t believe that it’s something I’m ever going to see change. I’ve just gotten better at just letting it go. And not let it get under my skin as much. If you have someone whose job it is to answer the phone and they’re always sort of curt and rude on the phone, you could get after for it. But in this case, that is not the job of the office manager to be catering to every faculty member’s need anyway. So, I think that, in some ways too, I think that perhaps I even benefit from it because I think some faculty know of the nature of this individual on email. Some might think twice before asking.

In the last conflict, Paul reports some faculty members may have perceived the actions and communications from the staff member as being curt or rude while other faculty members give

the staff member positive evaluations. These conflicts both originate with the same staff member, and both extend to Paul as department chair, but the second story reaches the entire faculty and other staff in the department.

Paul told another story about a conflict he was experiencing with another faculty member who also serves as his vice department chair. This conflict is also involving email communication:

I haven't had articulated conflict with [my vice chair]. I've had sometimes the emails that I've gotten from [my vice chair], I feel like, are just, they're often like long, rambling emails with all their personal problems...I think after a while that gets to be tiresome and I do my best to respond to them in an encouraging way and usually I don't get a response back. But I think sometimes they're just venting in the form of written communication. I guess I probably have a short fuse for that sort of thing. Not that I would let them know that, but I just sometimes it becomes tiresome. I had gotten an email from the dean which prompted me to then email my vice chair and I just asked her, "Like so where are you with the drafting of a justification and position description for a replacement position for one of the senior faculty in her discipline. And I knew she was working on it, but then the email from the dean prompted me to say, where are you with this? And in the email, the dean sent me, he had said that a hospital director had gotten feedback from some of the faculty on the service that there was a lack of leadership within the service at the top. I had accidentally forwarded the email from the dean in my email to the vice chair. So, she read that, and she took great offense to that. And she sent a very lengthy email prefaced by "Sorry to bother you on your vacation" but then it was the sort of thing where it's just a long venting email.

In this story, Paul reports his vice chair may have interpreted the act of Paul forwarding the email with words from the deal as an offensive action. This conflict involved the vice chair, who is also a faculty member, and Paul as the department chair.

Paul told a story in the second interview in which the researcher asked questions regarding experiences of the participant in which they served as a mediator, third party, or neutral party. His story was about a conflict that happened between faculty members at a department meeting in which he later served as a mediator:

I was trying to get the computer to work in the room where we have our department meeting, to project the agenda, and it wasn't working. The faculty were filling in and sitting. So, this is now at a point in time where the minority are wearing masks for in person meetings. And most of the faculty were in the room were not wearing masks except for, I don't know, like 5 or 6. [There was] some kind of questioning going on [of one faculty member], "Why are you still wearing a mask?" And that kind of came and went and we had the department meeting [that weekend] I got an email [from the faculty member] about, essentially, how belittling it felt to be singled out for wearing a mask and being asked those questions was totally inappropriate, because you're almost being forced to divulge medical preexisting conditions which require you to wear a mask. I talked to her on the phone over the weekend [and on] Monday morning, I asked the faculty member who asked those questions to meet with me. And I just had to meet with him and impress on him how inappropriate it was to do that. And I actually ended up sending an email to the entire department, including staff, faculty, students, everybody, just telling them that it's never appropriate to ask those questions. And the individual

who asked was completely apologetic. They totally hadn't meant to be harmful in any way by asking.

In this conflict, Paul reports one of his faculty members may have interpreted the questioning by another faculty member about the reason for wearing a mask as an inappropriate and violating action. This conflict began between two faculty members but extended to Paul, who mediated in his role as department chair.

The past nine stories about conflict included experiences from the participants, department chairs, with conflict which came from upper administration, faculty, and students. The next stories involve conflict which originated with the students.

Chair Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that Which Comes from the Students

As discussed earlier, the first theme which emerged from the data analysis, chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which is multi-directional, includes participant narratives which describe conflicts originating from upper administration, faculty and staff members, and lastly, students. The stories in this section all come from Humboldt and involve conflicts which originated from students.

Humboldt shared that one of his most frequent conflicts in which he has to serve as a mediator, or third party involves students:

Well, the first time and the most frequent, by far, that I've acted as a mediator or a third person is the department [chair] becomes the person that if students are unhappy about a grade they receive, they come to me. And it's typically, "I was in professor so-and-so's class, and I don't think the grades were fair and this is why. Do something."

And my response has always been, “I appreciate you contacting me. I’ll do what I can. Have you talked, have you met with professor x, professor y, professor z?” And about 65% of the time [they say], “Well no.”

Humboldt mentioned to me several times the importance of meeting with people face to face. He discussed voice tone does not always translate through email and he is a believer in meeting in person to discuss disagreements. This conflict originated with students and extended to Humboldt as the department chair and often to faculty involved as well.

Humboldt also shared a story about a conflict that students brought to his attention about a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) during the covid pandemic:

We did have a problem during the pandemic with a graduate student who was teaching and got covid and had a tough time with it and became very slow to respond and didn’t get [assignments] posted on time and the student’s grades suffered. And we tried to kind of work with her advisor here in the department. And we tried to get her to be more responsive. Finally, we said, “We both have to become co-primary instructors for this class”, so we obtained access to all the systems, grades, and [the learning management system] so we could look through the materials as we needed to. So, for whatever reason and whatever was going on in this GTA’s life, she’s not able to basically fulfill her obligations as GTA and we had to intervene and take away her [access] and she understood. She appreciated it because she was really struggling. Covid had really set her back. She was predisposed to have complications and she did actually have complications. So that was a case where I had to intervene and take care of it.

Humboldt showed deep empathy as he told this story, especially when he mentioned the complications, he perceived his graduate teaching assistant suffered. Humboldt perceived the

students to be upset by their grades not being posted on time which caused them to complain to Humboldt. The conflict began with the students, extended to Humboldt as department chair, to the GTA's faculty advisor, and the GTA herself.

Humboldt shared a story about a conflict with a doctoral student and other faculty members that involved research plagiarism and her advisor but ended up impacting Humboldt as the department chair as well:

This PhD student was difficult to work with. She had several different advisors and she had gotten to the point where no one was willing to take her on as their advisee, which means you can't graduate from the program. With the exception of the person who took her on and six years later is accused by her of plagiarism. So that also didn't sit well. And then I get contacted by the provost as the student wanted to come back and get hooded. So, the provost contacts me and says, "Obviously, the PhD advisor, because this process [of plagiarism] was still going on, can't hood her. Would you step in, as department [chair] and hood the student to be fair to the student?" And I said, "yeah." And there were some people who resented me, who were like, "How could you honor her what she did to her advisor?" And I said, "The provost asked me to do this. She earned the degree. She has the right to be hooded so it has to be done by somebody. If the advisor can't do it, it falls to the department [chair] and that's what I am."

Humboldt gave a heavy sigh as he said, "If the advisor can't do it, it falls to the department [chair] and that's what I am." This story is significant due to the magnitude of the conflict topic of plagiarism and the weight of responsibility expressed by Humboldt both as he told the story and as he verbalized in the story. In this story, the conflict was brought to the surface by a student, however the catalyst of the plagiarism was committed by the faculty member.

Humboldt told a story about another doctoral student who had conflict with his advisor, a faculty member, and felt like he was being discriminated against because of his sexual orientation. Humboldt began the story:

We had a student, a PhD student, who was really struggling and felt like the feedback he was getting and felt like his advisor was being overly critical. And this happened to be a student that was, was gay –openly. [He] contacted [human resources] and said, “I believe that I am being discriminated against and overly criticized because of my sexual orientation.” So, they had an open inquiry and I had to get involved because I’m department [chair], of course. The student presented the information. I was asked to visit with the student, which I did, and he just laid things out. And he was very emotional about it, very tearful about it, very upset about it. And he laid out the information and what this faculty member had done, why he wasn’t being treated fairly, and why he felt singled out. And then of course [human resources] had to contact the faculty member and tell them that he’d been accused about it. And I think the faculty member was wise enough about it to know that I was probably involved in it as well, but they never came to me and said, “What’s your role in all this?” So, I didn’t, sort of, get dragged into that.

Humboldt reported from his perspective, the student contacted human resources about being discriminated against by his faculty advisor, due to his sexual orientation. Humboldt reported after the information was presented and laid out, he was asked by human resources for his input. He continued:

And I was obligated to listen to what the student had to say about it, and I was obligated by [HR] to give my opinion about what’s this faculty member saying in emails, in my judgement, did this constitute that the faculty member was discriminating against the

student. And I answered to all those questions, “No. This faculty member can be very critical and very, very frank, and has very high standards.” But I didn’t think it rose to the level of denigrating the student and certainly no evidence, that I could see, again I’m not a judge of this, but no evidence the student was being discriminated against because of his sexual orientation. That was another case where I was sort of stuck between wanting to help the student and wanting to see the student finish, but seeing that the criticism that was being directed towards the work he was turning in, his proposal, his lack of progress, was really kind of the normal criticism and direction that can happen and was being couched by the faculty member as being, “I want you to be successful, but you have to get your level of work up to... It has to get up to a level where you can be successful.” He said, “to do otherwise, I wouldn’t be doing my job preparing you to go out into academia and have a successful career. If I were to tell you this was good enough and I don’t think it is.” And for whatever reason, the student just couldn’t accept that. So, when [HR] came back and said there was no evidence of discrimination, I think the student also said, “I can’t work with this faculty member anymore.” And another faculty member stepped forward without knowing all the details and offered the student, “I would be willing to serve as your advisor.” But the student decided to leave the program.

This conflict is significant as it is the only conflict mentioned by any participant in this research study about sexual orientation. In this conflict, Humboldt reported the student may have perceived the critical feedback of his advisor as discriminatory. This conflict originated from the student extending to the faculty member, to human resources, and to Humboldt as the department chair.

Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which can be multi-directional is the first theme that emerged from the data which answered the first research question, how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. The stories in this section involved stories that originated from upper administration, faculty and staff, and the students. In the next section, I will discuss the second theme that emerged from the data and also answer the first research question—chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches outside the department.

Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which Reaches Outside the Department

Department chairs describe their experiences in which conflict which originated in their department with faculty or students, reaches the upper administration, such as the deans or assistant deans at the college level, human resources, other departments, and even to people outside the university altogether. As opposed to the stories in the previous section about conflict that originated with upper administration, as well as faculty, staff, and students, the stories in this section involve conflict that originated elsewhere and involved other conflict parties, but the conflict reached outside the department to the upper administration (see Table 7).

Table 4.2

Organization of Stories by Participant and Sub Theme Within The Main Theme- Chairs Describe Their Experiences With Conflict As That Which Reaches Outside The Department

Participant	Main theme: Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach outside the department.	
	Sub themes below:	
		Number of stories
Helen	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches upper administration.	1
Humboldt	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches upper administration	1
Deborah	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches human resources	2
Chair	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches other departments	1
Humboldt	Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches other departments	1

Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which Reaches Upper Administration

In this section, Helen and Humboldt each share stories which involve conflict that may have originated elsewhere but reached upper administration. Helen told a story about a conflict

that began with another faculty member who thought they should be promoted to department chair when Helen was promoted to department [chair] but reached upper administration:

Like, this happened in a meeting [with the dean's office, our faculty, advisors, and program directors] not too long ago. The dean's office said it's really best if every program does their curriculum changes for the year at one time, at the beginning of the school year. The graduate director who is bitter about [me becoming department chair] said, "Well, then we should all start doing that!" And most of us go, "we already do that you know" but she goes, "but doesn't it make sense that we would make a point of doing it that way?" In the meeting, she made it seem like we didn't have our shit together and we're doing things wrong. After the meeting, one program director came up to me as she was leaving says, "I don't know why she doesn't understand what we do. We're already doing it that way." And I said, "Yeah, I know. I think she was just trying to make a point." The next week after that meeting, I was talking to our dean and she was asking me details about something that person was organizing but was problematic, and I said, "well she just likes to cause challenges." And she said, "Yeah, I kinda picked up on that last week at the meeting when she said you guys weren't doing what you should be doing. And I thought you guys always do it the way we wanted you to do it." And I said, "Yeah, I know we do." And it's just this sort of. It's a low drum beat of pain in the ass.

Helen reports actions she observed from a member of her department which Helen perceived as insulting and "a low drum beat of pain in the ass." This conflict originated with the graduate director, who is also a faculty member, and extended to all attending the meeting, which included upper administration.

Humboldt told a story about a faculty member who did not like a required protocol for advising students and sent a hotly worded email to a staff member in the college which brought in the upper administration:

This person is not particularly happy with the way the college is moving and advising students right now. They've adopted a new platform, new system, and this person doesn't like the new system- doesn't think it works. Doesn't think they should have to use it. But essentially it was a decision that came down from [the powers that be] saying, "Students are going to use this system when they arrive. They have to use this system." And this person was firing off email messages to the advisors in the college with many capital letters in it. So, I ended up talking to the dean and you know, he wanted to know what we could do about this situation. And I was able to give them some background and insight into this person and said, "Ultimately this person is a really good advisor but here are some of the issues." And she said she would talk to this person. And I said, "do you want me there?" She said, "let me do it first, because then it will be like the department [chair] sitting there" and sort of didn't want this person to get thrown into that sort of situation. But if things bubble to the surface, then... So, in any case we said, "this is why we're doing this. This is not aimed towards you. And in case of advising we want to put the student first and moving along and this system does that. We can use some of the other methods we've used in the past, but we also have to use this system. It's a change but there are also so other elements we can use.

In this conflict, Humboldt reports receiving emails from a faculty member with many capital letters, which Humboldt interpreted as equal to the faculty member yelling at him. He also reported he believed the faculty member sent emails filled with capital letters in them to other

people at the university which led Humboldt to have to talk to upper administration about the faculty member. This conflict began with the faculty member, extended to multiple advisors, upper administration, and Humboldt as department chair.

In this section, Helen and Humboldt told stories about their experiences in which conflict which originated with faculty members but reached out and included upper administration. The stories in the next section are from experiences in which conflict originated elsewhere but reached human resources.

Chairs Describe their Experiences in which Conflict Reaches Human Resources

In this section are two stories from Deborah's experiences in which conflict originated elsewhere but reached human resources. Deborah told the first story of her experience in which conflict originated with faculty members but reached beyond the department to resources in the first interview in which the researcher asked questions regarding experiences of the participant with personal conflict in their role as department chair. Deborah told a story in which she reported faculty members acting in ways Deborah interpreted as being upset with her regarding enforcing the rules voted on by the department regarding performance and publishing requirements. This conflict extended beyond the department to human resources:

By having that then I was able to use [the department rules] as a rule book, to talk to the people who were underperforming and say, "Here's what the faculty agreed the performance requirements are. You're not meeting those and" originally, I was accused of changing the rules, raising the bar, and all this kind of stuff which wasn't really true. And it led to hard feelings because I had to rate faculty as underperforming, and they hadn't received that kind of assessment before. In the end several longer-serving faculty were in that category...But you know, I made it clear that these are the requirements now

and you can either meet them like everyone else, or you can choose a different path. And so, some upped their game, and some didn't. Those who didn't were not the happiest. One of those faculty members that left basically trashed his office, trashed his lab, and left behind a huge mess that basically I had to clean up...I had to involve HR. It was very, very challenging.

In this conflict, Deborah described some faculty members as underperforming, and she perceived they were upset with her for holding them accountable to the rules voted on by the department. Deborah reported one faculty member responded by leaving a large mess in his office and laboratory. This conflict began with the faculty, extended to Deborah as department chair, and reached to human resources.

Deborah told another story about conflict involving faculty members that extended to human resources, but this conflict was between two faculty members in which Deborah acted as a mediator. The following excerpt from Deborah's interview is lengthy, however, the researcher included the excerpt in its entirety to provide context to the complex conflict and to honor the participant's voice:

I used to have a faculty member who had a dry sense of humor. He wasn't everybody's taste. He was one of those people that some people loved because he was unique and different and creative...And other people felt uncomfortable with some of the things he might say or whatever...And this was in front of everybody in the faculty meeting...they were talking about field experiences with students and the one faculty member takes students out on campus and teaches them to use instruments right there on campus. And this other faculty member said something along the lines of 'You might be careful because they might think you're a terrorist' because he looks ethnic, put it that way. And

this was at or around the time when there were issues you know with Muslim bans and this kind of thing. So, the one faculty member did not take this very well. He felt insulted that he might be misinterpreted as a terrorist...But I had this faculty member who got extremely offended to the point that he contacted the [human resources]. And reported this whole thing. And so, this was without discussing with me first, he just went straight to [human resources] and they have their protocols which is to contact me to say they had received this complaint of one faculty member against another. So, I basically had a meeting with the two of them and tried to, you know, hear both sides. The faculty member who had made the comments basically said, well I was just trying to be funny and this kind of thing. And it, then sort of blew over. I just basically listened and encouraged the two to explain their side so that the fella who was offended gave him a chance to explain why he felt offended, had the other faculty member explain that he was just trying to be funny and his usual sometimes off-color way.

In this conflict, Deborah reports serving as a mediator between two faculty members, one who Deborah perceives may have interpreted comments from the other as being discriminatory and offensive. The conflict which originated between two faculty members extended to Deborah as department chair, and then reached human resources.

There were two stories in this section from Deborah involving conflict which originated elsewhere in the department but ended up reaching human resources. In the next section, the stories from department chairs who describe their experiences in which conflict originates in the department but reaches other departments.

Chairs Describe their Experiences in which Conflict Reaches Other Departments

In this section, there are two stories shared by Chair and Humboldt of their experiences in which conflict that originated in their departments with faculty members, but the conflict seeped out and involved other departments. Chair's story is about her experiences with conflict about the flow of information from the department chair to the rest of the department:

So sometimes, I don't always share things in our departmental meetings because, from my perspective, they're still being worked out. But some of my faculty will come to me and say, "Well, this department is doing this and that. Why aren't we?" And I'm like thinking, "we weren't supposed to share that." So now I've got to come up with another answer to that. And so, rather than, I will be accused of, probably, under sharing, rather than oversharing. I don't overshare. I will under share, not share, but never overshare. Now both are problematic. But very rarely do I have to come back and say that I misspoke. I'll come back and say, "I didn't tell you." Because that, to me, is more impactful than the other for me. But I know they can be equally impactful. But for me, the overshare...I don't want to be accused of peddling misinformation. Now no information? You can always come back and start to share. Misinformation? Every time you share something, it's like, 'Is it real?' No information? 'Oh, okay.' You're starting from a different point, as opposed to the misinformation. You have to regain a level of trust and that's the part I don't want to have to be working for. Yeah. So that's where I've seen it happen sometimes. They find out what's going on from other places and it's like, "oh."

In this conflict, Chair reports faculty members may have been comparing her information flow to information flow from other department chairs. This conflict began in the faculty, extended peripherally to Chair as department chair, and reached other departments.

Humboldt told a story about his experience in which conflict that began in the faculty, seeped out into other departments in other universities:

There was some damage that was done with this situation with the grad students, negative feelings got to the students, and I think some negative feelings still linger with some of the graduates and that's unfortunate. Because at least one of them has gone into academia and still carries a grudge against some of the faculty he felt were against them. I don't think they were. And he's had students ask him, "Where did you get your PhD?" "Is that a good place to go?" And from what I heard he said, "No, no, it's not." So, we get that kind of stuff. That kind of stuff goes on to the next generation and that's, that's difficult to accept, but it's there. So unfortunately, that kind of damage radiates beyond the department and can spread in our discipline, which is fairly small. And you don't want that kind of reputation. And it should never have gotten to the students. And once it did, you sort of saw people on the other side, the last of this individual's PhD students, it then goes to the next generation- a festering problem. The damage can go beyond this department.

In this conflict, Humboldt reported faculty members may have allowed the negative feelings amongst themselves to become known by the graduate students, who are now employed at other universities and, from Humboldt's perspective, may be using their experiences in Humboldt's department to negatively influence students from attending Humboldt's university for graduate

school. The conflict which began between faculty members reached students in departments at other universities.

In this section, were two stories from Chair and Humboldt of their experiences in which conflict originated in their respective departments then seeped out into other departments. The second theme, chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches out, included stories in which conflict which originated in the department reached outside the department to upper administration, human resources, and to other departments. The next section is the third theme, chairs describe their experiences in which conflict “drips down” to students. It will be the last of the first three themes which emerged from the data analysis answering the first research question, how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution.

Chairs Describe their Experiences with Conflict as that which “Drips Down” to the Students

The third theme which emerged from data analysis is chairs describe their experiences in which conflict “drips down” to the students (see Table 8).

Table 4.3

Organization of Stories By Participant In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Experiences With Conflict As That Which "Drips Down" To Students

Participant	Number of stories
David	1
Deborah	2
Humboldt	3

The phrase “drips down” comes from a narrative told by Humboldt. The researcher used the phrase as an In Vivo code during the first cycle coding but upon second cycle coding and final

analysis and representation, the researcher found the phrase was descriptive and appropriate to use to encapsulate the theme. Stories in this section involve conflict that begins with upper administration or between the faculty and staff “drips down” to impacting student mental health, student course options, student supervisory committees for theses or dissertations, and student culture. There are six stories in total from David, Deborah, and Humboldt.

David told a story about his experience in which conflict that started between the faculty and upper administration involving a change in credit requirements dripped down to impacting student mental health:

Really where I see it taking more of a toll with the student is actually on the mental health side. Because, for them, their perception of the courses is that this is just a course we have to take...What an engineering major would take for 12 credits is 4 classes, well 12 credits for a music major could be upwards of 8 courses. So we're almost doubling the amount of coursework and homework because the content delivery and the expectation of outside practice and the expectation of everything else that goes on with that...They are in ensemble for 6 hours a week but they get 1 credit and that kind of shows up as 1 credit and in some cases if they do multiple ensembles, the student will have the option to sign up for 0 credit. Let's say they do 2 ensembles, that's 12 contact hours a week that they are applying to 1 credit hour. So now, those 12 contact hours doesn't even talk about or address the practice issues. For instance, if you have, you've got your concerts, you've got your public events that you may be playing depending on what ensembles you're in. It's not just the contact, it's not just the homework, it's not just the finals. It's everything that goes into it. That one credit now turns into almost a full-time job, and we haven't

even got to their English course. They end up experiencing it in terms of stress, in terms of struggles with mental wellness and being able to take time on their own.”

In this conflict, David describes the conflict between his faculty and the upper administration over the changing requirements being placed on his department as possibly impacting the mental health of the students.

Deborah told a story of a conflict that originated between two faculty members but dripped down to impacting the students that were being advised:

I had a faculty member who had his domain in the department for a couple of decades and we hired some new faculty members, two of whom overlapped with what he was doing in different ways...We were hoping that we would expand a sub-discipline area as opportunities for collaboration and sharing graduate students or co-supervising to enhance that part of our program. And [the long-time faculty member] created a difficult situation, particularly with the female hire and really upset her, insulted her; was extremely rude to her. They tried to co-supervise some students. And when she tried to provide advice to these students, he took great umbrage to some of the things she was saying. And confronted her and said she shouldn't be offering advice without coming through him and this kind of thing. And she was really taken aback by this because that is not how most people collaborate. And I didn't realize until she came and told me, after it was pretty much all resolved. Eventually they agreed that after this student, they would never co-supervise a student together or ever work together again, it was like, 'you stay in your corner, and I'll stay in mine' sort of thing. That had ripple effects among the graduate students, so it was quite obvious that there was this internal war going on between these two people.”

In this conflict, Deborah reports what she perceives as a territorial conflict between faculty dripped down to impacting the graduate students, even limiting who they could have as an advisor.

Deborah also told a story about conflict that started within the faculty of the department in deciding the rubric for assessing incoming graduate teaching assistants (GTA) but then dripped down to impacting the students of the department:

There is stiff competition you know, for graduate student [teaching assistants]. When I first came here, there weren't any clear criteria for making the assessment, so it was all rather ad hoc. And then a couple of years ago, there was a big push from one sector of the department to get rid of graduate GRE exams. I was against it because I couldn't see how we could adequately assess international applications without some kind of benchmark. I lost that battle and the department decided to get rid of the GREs. The year after that, we saw a huge influx of applications from different countries in Africa. One of the criteria we had was that we tried to evaluate teaching experience [which] sets an applicant above, because most domestic students never have that. But in these African countries they're expected to do national service and the national service for most college graduates is to teach school somewhere for a set number of years. So, by our criteria we had to move them to the top of the list. Well, they come in and we get complaints about them from students, they can't understand them. They don't follow the material...So the intro classes we have them teach, the material is already designed for them. All the presentations, everything. All they have to do is just deliver it. A ten-minute presentation, which is how it's designed gets extended to an hour. They have a different view about their responsibilities. They don't seem too worried if they miss office hours.

In this conflict, Deborah reports her perception that the GTAs in her department were not conducting classes the way they were designed or keeping office hours as outlined which was impacting the success of the undergraduate students. The conflict began in the department as they disagreed over the best way to assess applications from prospective GTAs, but it dripped down to impacting undergraduate students taking classes from the GTAs.

Humboldt told a story about a conflict that began among faculty members but then dripped down into the students. The following excerpt from Humboldt's interview is lengthy. The researcher chose to include the excerpt in its entirety to honor Humboldt's voice, provide an authentic narrative, and provide important context to the complex conflict:

There was a member of the faculty who took their grudges, or disagreements with faculty, beyond the faculty group; beyond faculty meetings and brought it to certain students. He actually named the faculty with whom he was having the disagreements. So that really poisons the atmosphere because it takes what should be disagreements and conflicts from faculty meetings and faculty in offices and not necessarily public places, and brings it out to the broader student community. And students are already kind of in a tenuous position, because they will be taking classes – potentially- from some of these faculty. The faculty member who was spreading these stories would say, “Well, you know, you really shouldn't have so and so on your committee. They don't work well with students or they're...” The person wouldn't say “their standards are too high” but he would insinuate it was impossible to please them. And in some cases, the faculty member who was recommended not to be on the committee, they were tenure-track faculty members, and one of the things that faculty members have to do, one of the parts of, not the whole part, to earn tenure is membership on supervisory committees. So, it is

basically, preventing this faculty member from 1. Participating and giving advice, valuable advice, and useful advice to a student on a supervisory committee. And then the students started to be in conflict with one another. And that, it just really poisoned the atmosphere. I had to deal with it person to person because I had some grad students come in and say there was a toxic environment that existed. So, I also went into the dean of the grad school, and I made it clear that these faculty were very good quality grad faculty... And I would do what I could to make sure that number 1, the tenure-track faculty members are protected so there are no repercussions [and 2.] let the students know this is completely unprofessional behavior.

In this conflict, Humboldt reports his perception that faculty members who were warring with each other allowed their conflict to impact who their students asked to serve on their supervisory committees. Humboldt reported students spoke with him about the issue and then circumvented Humboldt and complained to the upper administration about the faculty conflict and its impact on them. This conflict originated among faculty, reached upper administration, and dripped down to the students.

Humboldt told another story about a faculty member who did not agree with school policies that Humboldt was enforcing, and therefore bypassed Humboldt when getting signatures on supervisory committees, which dripped down to impacting graduate students:

There's a policy in the grad school about supervisory committees, [that the members] should avoid personal relationships which the dean of the grad school at that time, took to mean, if you have a 3 person master's committee and 2 of the people on that committee had a personal relationship or were spouses, then it was not an independent committee and there would need to be a fourth member. That's what's in the grad handbook. The

dean of the grad school talked to me about that issue, so I enforced that which created animosity in some parts of the department. This person went to the dean and the dean said, “It’s written in the grad handbook. It has to be. It’s for the benefit of the students.” And this person once in a while, [would] go around me and instead of having the department [chair] sign off on programs of study, they’d go to the graduate program director [for signature], who should’ve known that this committee was not appropriate, but let it slip through and once it slips through, it’s too late- it’s signed.

In this conflict, a faculty member challenged the rules of the graduate school regarding members of supervisory committees. When Humboldt upheld the rules of the graduate school, the faculty member went around Humboldt and had another person authorize the faculty member’s paperwork which did not meet the rules of the graduate school. This conflict dripped down to the students because the members on the supervisory committee that did not meet the rules of the graduate school may not have been in the students’ best interest. The conflict began with faculty, peripherally reached the graduate school, extended to the department chair, and then dripped down to the students.

Humboldt told a story about another faculty member who had conflicts with other people in the department but allowed those conflicts to drip down to the students:

[This faculty member] was just really unpredictable. You could do something with him, and it would be handshakes and “we got this done!” and then, a week later, here comes the knife. And so, ultimately, I had to learn I just couldn’t trust this person. And I said, “Okay, I can take it. I’ll figure out how to deal with it.” But then it started to impact the tenure-track faculty, and it started to influence some of our grad students, because they got dragged into this. Whereby, they thought, “Boy, I better not get this person mad at me

or I'm never going to get my degree." And so, I started to get some emails from grad students and had to talk to them and say, "Yes, there's some background on this" without divulging some of the things that I shouldn't divulge to students. But [I said], "We want you here. There are faculty that will work productively with you to make sure you get your degree and there won't be extraneous things that will prevent you from graduating." And that was sort of...and my colleagues became incensed when they heard this person was spreading things that were untruths about some of the other faculty, because that is completely unprofessional. Yes, faculty disagree, but those disagreements stay with the faculty. They don't drip down into the grad students. And what was happening was it was dripping down into the grad students and poisoning the grad student culture. Grad students who were working with faculty member A weren't talking to grad students who were working with faculty member B and things like that. So, that took some work to make sure the grad students knew they had support.

In this conflict, Humboldt perceived the graduate students in his department may have felt one of the faculty member might prevent their graduation if they did not share the faculty member's approval or disapproval of others. Humboldt also reported, from his perception, the faculty member was spreading untruths about other faculty members and let this conflict drip down to the students. This conflict began with one faculty member, extended to other faculty members and Humboldt as department chair, and dripped down to the students.

In this section there were six stories which included conflicts which began somewhere else but "dripped down" to the students. This section was the final section in the themes answering research question one which was how department chairs describe their lived

experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. The main themes and sub themes were:

1. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as multi-directional.
 - a. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from upper administration.
 - b. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from faculty.
 - c. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from students.
2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach out beyond the department.
 - a. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach upper administration.
 - b. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach human resources.
 - c. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach other departments.
3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to students.

The next section begins with the themes and sub themes that answer research question two, how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution.

Themes answering Research Question 2 “How do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution?”

The narratives that follow are selections from participant interviews which support the emerged themes in response to research question two which asks how department chairs at

public, research one universities, describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The main themes and sub themes which emerged are:

1. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as listening, talking, and asking questions.
2. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other resources.
 - a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other seasoned department chairs.
 - b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from professionals.
 - c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking one's faith and self-reflection.
3. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to other resources.
 - a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies.
 - b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict.
 - c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to other entities.

Some of the quotations are lengthy but the length adds to the rich, thick descriptions needed to understand the institutional knowledge and context of the conflict situation.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Listening, Talking, and Asking Questions

The participants described their conflict resolution efforts as including listening and gleaning information from others as well as chairs giving information through talking and asking questions from the conflicting parties (see Table 9).

Table 4.4

Organization of Stories By Participant In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Role In Conflict Resolution As Talking, Listening, and Asking Questions

Participant	Number of stories
Deborah	2
Helen	3
Humboldt	5
Paul	2
David	1

In this section, Deborah, Helen, Humboldt, Paul, and David described their roles in conflict resolution in which they used the actions of talking and asking questions. Deborah shared about one of her experiences which describes her role in conflict resolution. The researcher chose to include the following, lengthy, excerpt from Deborah's interview, to provide context of the conflict scenario and to honor the participant's voice:

I think things have gotten better [in the department since I became the department chair] because I believe very firmly in being fair, in being transparent in decisions, and documenting the rationale for how we get to point x. One of the things I do is we all have to do annual evaluations, but I meet individually with every person in the department, instructors, tenured faculty, staff, etc. to do the annual evaluations. And as part of that process, not only do I do the backward look and evaluate their performance in the year, I do the forward look and say, 'Here's the expectations in the coming year. Here are the courses you're going to teach. Here's the research I'm looking for.' And of course, I ask them to tell me, 'What research are you planning to do? What service are you planning to...' And of course, they always want to avoid the service, so I always have to tell them,

“You have to do this or the other.” And it all gets written down in their annual evaluation. So, they know the rules. So halfway through the year I meet with everybody to just touch base and say, “How are you doing on your goals? Here’s what you said you were going to do. Is everything going to plan? Have you had hiccups? What’s going on?” And it gives us a chance to update those goals. If something has gone completely wrong, then you know, it’s no fault, you just document what you’re doing. And so, I think that investment of time, people know where they stand.

Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as talking with each of her faculty members yearly, in person, about research goals and then again halfway through the year, about the progress. Included in each of these meetings, Deborah asked questions about the faculty members’ progress and what else is going on as well as documenting what they discussed. In another story that Deborah shared, her department was facing conflict that was about the international graduate student teaching assistants (GTA); she also discussed a conflict resolution strategy:

So, we’ve got to figure out how to deal with this [GTA situation] while having one faculty member who thinks it’s actually fine. So, we’re currently in the process of looking at these and coming up with options. So, I set the graduate program committee a task with coming up with several options which we can discuss at the next department meeting and then we’ll vote via some survey or see what we can get to. It will be democratic. If I did [came up with the options for solutions], it wouldn’t be accepted. So, this engages the department. Everyone will have their chance to voice their opinion and actually I was quite pleased the document from the graduate program committee was sent out yesterday and I had a look at it and what I was pleased about was that all the things I

objected to were listed at the top of the document, “We agree. We agree that it’s not a good idea to have an overwhelmingly international cohort. We agree there should be a gender balance. We agree...” once you agree on those basic principles then you can work on a solution that achieves those things.

In this story, Deborah described her role in conflict resolution to ask the department for their possible solutions to the conflict instead of coming up with possible solutions by herself because, she says, “If I did [came up with the options for solutions], it wouldn’t be accepted.” Therefore, Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions.

Helen told a story about her role in conflict resolution in a conflict with her upper administration:

I have a big, here’s my big strategy. I know that we have people in charge who don’t really understand or care to understand our college. So, I decided to do is stay very connected to as many people as I can in our college—[especially] the people who are disaffected and walking away and not paying any attention, because g. damn it, they’re just gonna get their salary until they retire. And there’s a bunch of them. I talk to them and say, “I need you to stay engaged, because this is a big opportunity.” “Get engaged around this issue or that issue. We can make a difference, right? You’re one of the old guards; you know what it’s like to be part of our college.” I don’t care what department they’re in or what their biases are. I’m just trying to stay connected. Because one of the things our college is trying to do is disconnect us. They’re trying to make us all enemies in a zero-sum game. And if you let them make you enemies in a zero-sum game, they can conquer you. So, one of my goals has been to stay super connected. Now, I have to walk a line because I don’t want to be called the gossip or the ne’er do well, or the loose

cannon. I don't want to be the person that's seen as one who's trying to pull things down.

Because that's not my goal. My goal is to help us get more voices heard.

Helen described her role in conflict resolution as to talk to people—a lot of people across campus and in multiple departments. She encouraged others to “stay engaged” but also admitted other people might see her as a “gossip or the ne'er do well, or the loose cannon.” She described her role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions.

While Helen was telling a story of conflict between faculty members that might arise during faculty meetings, she also shared about her role in conflict resolution:

So, when a non-tenured faculty member has a disagreement with a tenured faculty member or a full professor about how something should be done, a lot of times what you have to do is refocus the conversation about the problem and not the people. Or ask people to reframe what they just said. And I've actually personally practiced a few things so that I'm ready to say them. So, if someone says something that's just not very nice about someone else, you can just stop right there and say, “Would you like the opportunity to reframe that?” You're not saying, “Holy cow, I can't believe you just said that?” But you are recognizing that everyone in the room just saw them say something kind of mean. And maybe they didn't mean it to be mean, but it came across as mean and everybody needs to know that we noticed and that if you thought better of it in a split second, you get a chance to say that.

When her one of her faculty members they have publicly said something that could be construed as mean, Helen asked them, “Would you like the opportunity to reframe that?” She also included the phrase, “and everybody needs to know that we noticed”, which demonstrated Helen's observance that the faculty and staff in the department needed her, as the department chair, to

address a situation in which a junior faculty member said something “kind of mean.” Helen described her role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions. She shared another experience that described her role in conflict resolution in a story about having dissenting voices in the department:

A year ago, we had this meeting where we were trying to decide whether to combine with another department and we had a straw vote [to see if] are you warm as in 10, lukewarm as in 5, Or cold as in 1. And everybody kind of voted and they went all the way down to 1. Only one person raised their hand at the one. She was on Zoom, and I just said, “Thank you.” She was the only one down there. Like everyone else was like 5 or higher. And I was like, “thank you so much, can we examine why you’re at 1? Can you tell us more?” right? Because to me, you learn where your challenges are gonna be. So, we’re really good at valuing the outlier and examining it. We’re really good at recognizing when maybe we’ve fallen into group think and maybe need to step back from that right? And we’re also good about saying, and I’ll do this all the time. I’ll say, “that’s an interesting idea that has merit. We don’t know how we would do that now, but let’s remember that because there might be a time in the future when we can do that. So, remember to bring it up again. Don’t think we’re saying no-never. We’re just saying not-now.” And that helps a lot. It just, it just lets people have value in their engagement.

Helen asked questions to encourage conversation among her faculty members when they had differing opinions, because “we’re really good at valuing the outlier and examining it.” Helen used the questions, “Can we examine why you’re....?” and “Can you tell us more?” She asked questions so that she knows where the “challenges are gonna be.” Helen described her role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions in the next four stories:

You've got to wander around the department. I wouldn't say you've got to go around and knock on everyone's door every third day and say, "Hey, how's it going?" But you have to have a physical presence in the department, in the hallways, and not just be in here with the office door closed. But to make sure they know that you're open and willing to discuss. And even the person that had been spreading this misinformation wanted to discuss with me and I would always sit down with them. I would never say, "you're a jerk. I don't want to see you." It was always "yeah, sure, let's visit" even though it wasn't always a pleasant conversation. We can't just ignore the unpleasant conversations and only hold the pleasant ones. So that was one strategy was to be sure I was always available. Because I wanted to be sure that that person couldn't go to the dean or somebody else and say, "The department [chair] never meets with me. He ignores me. And that's why I'm angry." And I wanted to be sure they couldn't say that. I wanted to make sure they knew, not by me communicating, but by them seeing that I had my door open. So just having a presence and keeping your ears open to what the students are saying.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution to talk to the people in his department and be available for them to talk to him. During another interview, Humboldt included additional information about how he uses transparency as he talks and asks questions:

You need to be transparent. We have had some situations in the college where transparency has not been as present as it should be. All that does is create speculation on the part of the other people saying, "What's going on?" "What's that situation?" What

was wrong with these people for the position?” And all it does is feed the rumor mill. If you’re transparent and you say, maybe “I really screwed up. I messed up on this. I’ve learned something in this.” Or if you’re transparent about a decision, you say, “This is why I made this decision.” People can disagree with you but if you try to hide that decision, you just create more problems. And some things you can’t let them know all the details. But you can let them know to the extent that you can, why you made this decision, what you were thinking when you made the decision. That’s the important part. Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as talking, being transparent or being open and clear with information. He gave a suggestion when there is information that he is asked not to share with his faculty members, “And some things you can’t let them know all the details. But you can let them know to the extent that you can.” Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions.

During the last interview, Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions, but also included listening:

The other thing about conflict is trying to anticipate when a situation might be developing. A situation, you have to, you have to try to be perceptive and listen to what people say. Listen to our support staff first. If someone comes in and they’re having a problem, or there’s something that’s happened between them and a student and she thinks I need to know about it, she’ll let me know. And that’s why I say to listen to them to a point where I need to get involved and talk to this faculty member. And try to deal with situations and work them out before they get to the level where people have said something to somebody else and words are exchanged. Because then it’s a little bit more difficult to walk them back off the window ledge.

In this story, Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as listening to his support staff because the support staff hears about problems sooner than he usually does. Humboldt also described his role in conflict resolution as talking to the faculty member, “when a situation might be developing” and deal with the possible conflicts early “before they get to the level where people have said something to someone else and words are exchanged.” Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as talking, asking questions, and listening.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution in the story about conflicts which originate with students about a grade they receive from a faculty member for which they are unhappy:

If students are unhappy about a grade they receive, they come to me. And it’s typically, “I was in professor so-and-so’s class, and I don’t think the grades were fair and this is why. Do something.” And my response has always been, “I appreciate you contacting me. I’ll do what I can. Have you talked, have you met with professor x, professor y, professor z?” And about 65% of the time. Well no. If they have met with them, it’s usually that they haven’t met with them, but they’ve emailed them. And if they respond that way, I say, “Okay, that’s a good first start. But what you really need to do is sit down with professor x/professor y and meet with them.” And say, “I’m unhappy with the grade I got. Could we talk?” I say, you need to schedule an appointment and sit down with the faculty member, first and foremost. And the ones that have done that, the situation has typically been resolved. I put the responsibility on the student to do that.

Humboldt talked with the complaining students and asks them questions, then he encouraged the complainants to talk with the faculty face to face and ask them questions saying, “But what you really need to do is sit down with professor x/professor y and meet with them.” In another story,

Humboldt shared a time he functioned as a mediator between faculty members, he described his role in conflict resolution of suggesting the conflict partners talk and ask questions of each other saying:

And I had to be little bit of a go between, because the professor wanted to meet with all the full professor faculty in a setting and I said, “If you want to talk to them, I would suggest you schedule an appointment with them individually and sit down with them in a room. That’s my recommendation. I’d be happy to talk with them, but I think a setting where we sit down with this person is not a productive way moving forward.”

Humboldt again encouraged the faculty member to sit down with the rest of the faculty face to face, but additionally, he encouraged this meeting to be one-on-one instead of as a group and ask questions of each of them. Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as talking and asking questions as a conflict resolution strategy in his role in the institution.

Paul described his preference for speaking directly with somebody as an effort to resolve conflict instead of using email:

I thought there were going to be [upset] [direct] after I sent my email because it was very out of character for me to respond to that sort of thing in that way. Most of the time, if I have a problem, I want to speak directly to somebody. Because they had CC’d a bunch of other people, it wasn’t like I could go to each individual person and set the record straight. So, I chose the path of sending the email to make the correction, which I don’t really like doing. Honestly, I feel like the whole email, use of email for direct personal interaction is a poor substitute for that.

He described in his role in conflict resolution he would have preferred to go “to each individual person and set the record straight” but because there were so many people the email was sent to,

he “chose the path” of sending the email instead of talking directly to people. In another story, Paul described his strategy in mediating a conflict with a faculty member who felt like she was being less valued in her area of expertise:

She felt about, maybe, being undervalued as a woman, as a woman faculty member.

Anyhow, I ended up trying to... I did ask her if she had, if she felt like she could talk to this person. Like, could she address them and have a constructive conversation about it. And I can't remember her specific response, but it boiled down to, she felt like she had already done that. She had pushed back in the meeting to make it known that she was unhappy with the way she was being treated. In the end, I did offer to talk to the executive associate dean who's in charge of personnel. He seemed to think that I could offer to talk to the person who threw the first punch. I asked her, “Do you want me to go to them and talk to them?” And she did not. She chose, I think she felt like it was too many things escalate. And so, she ended up not wanting me to do that.

Paul described his role in conflict resolution as offering to talk to the offending party in this story but honored the complaining faculty member's wishes when she declined.

As David told the story about negotiating with the upper administration and his faculty about credit hours, he described his role in conflict resolution as asking questions of stakeholders:

Understanding that if this problem gets set on my table, I'm not gonna sit there and create a solution just on my own. I'm gonna go to each one of those stakeholders and say, this is coming down the pipe. And what are some of your thoughts? What are some ways that maybe we can navigate this. And understand that person A is going to have a wildly different view than person B and person C and that somehow within all of this, I'm gonna

have to figure out how to navigate all of those; put all of those together and work those through.

In this story, David was faced with having to cut credit hours from the faculty members in his department, so he asked questions of the stakeholders to work on the conflict. David could have produced a solution and then tried to sell it to the stakeholders, but instead said, “I’m not gonna sit there and create a solution just on my own.” David described his role in conflict resolution as asking for ideas from quite different perspectives and then working on a solution together.

The stories in this section included descriptions of the participants’ role in conflict resolution that included talking and asking questions, which supports the theme, chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as listening, talking, and asking questions. The stories in the next section support the theme, conflict resolution involves seeking input, which will include experiences of the participants in which they seek input from other seasoned department chairs, human resources, ombudsmen, lawyers, through faith, and finally self-reflection.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input

Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from resources outside the department such as other seasoned department chairs, former department chairs, human resource consultants, ombudspersons, attorneys, one’s faith, and inward through self-reflection (see Table 10).

Table 4.5

Organization of Stories By Participant and Sub Theme In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Role In Conflict Resolution As Seeking Input

Participant	Sub theme	Number of stories
Humboldt	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from seasoned department chairs	5
David	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other departments	1
Humboldt	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other departments	1
Chair	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input through faith and self-reflection	2

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input from Seasoned Department Chairs

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution seeking input from other department chairs in a story about dealing with conflict in the department:

I wanted to get an outsider's input and perspectives. So having outside department [chairs] to go to and say "Here's a situation. How would you handle this, what would you do?" And it's one of the reasons why, since I am now one of the more seasoned department [chairs] in the college, I have gotten involved in some of the mentoring programs the provost has set up. And I think it's been helpful. I've had a few of the

newer department [chairs] say how much they appreciated it. And the answers and advice I have may not be relevant to their situation, but they can at least have some tools to call upon. And they can say that might be a tool I can use in my situation. The more tools you have, the more information you have to draw upon. And that information you get through experiences, but as a new [chair], you don't have those experiences to draw on so if you can get some of the insight and perspectives from people who've been in this position for a while, then it's extremely helpful.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other department chairs from which I pulled the following four short references:

1. "I did, without divulging any of the information about who it was, I did talk to a long-standing department [chair], at that point."
2. "And, you know, I talked to a couple other department [chairs], in a general way, to say, what would you do?"
3. "And this was a difficult situation for me because I didn't know how to deal with...And I talked to other department [chairs], more seasoned department [chairs], not giving specifics but saying..."
4. "Through the help of some other department [chairs] and the other people I mentioned, I was able to negotiate through it."

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other "seasoned department chairs" often when he struggled with a conflict situation. When he became considered as a more seasoned department chairs, he began working with one of the department chair mentoring groups at his university. In the next section, the participants describe their roles in conflict resolution as seeking input from other departments.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input from Other Departments

David described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other music departments when trying to resolve conflict about classroom spaces in his department:

But understanding that we have more offerings than we have physical space at this point, then trying to figure out who do we need to contact, why is it set up this way, and I will say, the positive part of this conversation and what came out of it was that everyone was in agreement that this summer we have to sit down as a group of leaders and look at this and take everything off of the line schedule and begin building it from the ground up to fit our needs now not our needs from 1985.

David recognized that other departments would be using the physical space, so he reached out to the other departments so they could “sit down as a group of leaders” and work on a solution to their scheduling problem.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from human resources when trying to resolve conflict with a faculty member who was criticizing the support staff in his department:

This person had to complain about something or to bring up that it was different when they were department [chair]. They also had a habit of criticizing, overly criticizing the support services, the shared service support service, which is HR and accounting. And that’s something I will not tolerate. #1 those people are tremendously underpaid. They’re doing an important, a critical service to the department. And in some cases, they’re operating under constraints that have come down. from above. The support staff might say, “You have to do things this certain way because this is a state agency.” And this person didn’t like some of these things. And all they were doing was what they knew

they had to do. And all this person would do was lash out at them. And I had to talk to this person and say, “This is not the way to deal...” And the thing that really bothered me is this person should know that, because this person had to deal with people as a department [chair]. And I said, “You know, these people need to be treated professionally.” And that was the point that I sought out some people in [human resources] that deal with some conflict stuff and say, “how, what is the best way to do this.” And I do have the option on the annual evaluation to, you know, part of the annual evaluation talks about collegiality, so I have the option to put that in the record so there is a record. And unfortunately, this person had a track record of also conflicting head-to-head with my immediate predecessor, so let’s just say this was a known suspect.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from human resources for help in this situation because he recognized they “deal with some conflict stuff.” He recognized he could not manage the situation on his own, so he sought input. In the same story, Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from the dean’s office while pursuing resolution with the former department chair:

A couple people in the dean’s office that I talked to, were aware of his rap sheet and had some suggestions for dealing with him. So that outside support, in the form of long-term department [chairs]- senior department [chairs], one person in particular in the dean’s office, was really very helpful in giving me the confidence and self-esteem to work on the problems without getting run over and without letting this person, you know, behind the scenes, dictate what was happening.

In this section of the story, Humboldt acknowledged the dean gave him “confidence and self-esteem” to work on the conflict and deal with the person. Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from human resources and the dean.

Paul described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from his dean’s office while trying to resolve conflict in his department between department members and a staff member:

There were faculty that asked me, “So when do we get to evaluate” this particular individual, because they’ve had problems with them, too, over the years, similar to my experiences. So, one thing I did do, is I asked the dean “Hey can I do this to seek input for the performance evaluation just the way the office manager does for the staff in the office?” She will send an email to the faculty asking for input on the four other office staff for their performance evaluation. She’ll get feedback and put it in the performance evaluation for each of those people. And so then, what I thought was well, why can’t I do that for the office manager from the faculty. And some of the faculty had asked when they get to do that. One year I did that. It was interesting because prior to doing that I discussed doing that with the office manager and at the time they were very worried about what that would be because they are the ones that often have to say no to people. I did create a Qualtrics survey to get feedback back and some of it, a lot of it was very positive, and then there was some negative. And I shared both the positive and the negative with the individual.

Paul described his role in conflict resolution as seeking input from the dean’s office on whether to allow faculty to have input on a staff member’s performance evaluation.

The stories from Humboldt, David, and Paul include descriptions of the participants’ role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other departments while resolving conflict. The

stories in the next section are from participants who describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input through their faith or self-reflection while resolving conflict.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Seeking Input Through One's Faith and Self-Reflection

In this section, Chair described her role in conflict resolution as seeking input through her faith and self-reflection:

As a side note, as a person of faith, I had to pray about the matter myself, because I didn't want to- I understood the delicacy of it. I didn't want to, I just needed to be at a place of objectivity to the extent possible. And to ensure that the decision made, or statements made, were fair and reasonable. And considerate because, again, I had to minimize the damage that could be done because of faculty member's grievances with each other.

Chair described her role in conflict resolution as seeking input from her faith because she desired to be "fair and reasonable" as she made decisions or talked with the faculty members.

Chair described her role in conflict resolution as seeking input inwardly through self-reflection, "So some conversations came up about whether I was highlighting some people over other people." As Chair began describing her efforts in conflict resolution, she said:

I didn't like it at first but then I started to look at it like, "Well maybe, let me see what I was doing?" I did the concept of self-reflection...And I said, "Okay, I see how it can be perceived. And probably is true." And I own it, and that's okay. But it's also contributed to where I am today. I can't afford to not be that. It's who I am. But I can be more mindful to be mindful about the difference of opinion or of perspective.

Chair described her role in conflict resolution as seeking input from her faith and through self-reflection. In the next section, the stories from the participants will support the third sub theme which is chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring outside the department.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Referring Outside the Department

Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring the conflicting parties to agencies or policies outside the chair and department which includes university or college policies, procedures, and processes, as well as official grievance processes, in addition to chairs creating policies with others outside the department (see Table 11).

Table 4.6

Organization of Stories By Participant and Sub Theme In The Main Theme Chairs Describe Their Role In Conflict Resolution As Referring Out

Participant	Sub theme	Number of stories
Chair	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies and procedures	1
Deborah	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies and procedures	1
Humboldt	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies and procedures	1
Chair	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict	1
Deborah	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict	1
Paul	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict	1
Deborah	Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to other entities	2

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Referring to Policies and Procedures

Chair, Deborah, and Humboldt describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies and procedures set in place by the department or university. Chair told the following story:

[Conducting faculty observations] was something that was already in place by our [university], and the rubric that they had or that they would use to assess faculty who would seek them out for professional development and opportunities, ways to improve their ability to deliver instruction, this is the rubric they were using.

When Chair met resistance against the faculty observations, she described her role in conflict resolution as referring to the greater university's procedures and rubric to demonstrate that faculty observations are being conducted throughout the university and not just Chair's department. Additionally, the university was using this procedure and rubric as part of the tenure and promotion packet and the process for seeking professional development opportunities. Chair described her role in conflict resolution as referring to policies and procedures outside the department.

Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as referring to her department rules which had been agreed and voted on by the faculty members in the department:

But then by having [the department rules] then I was able to use that as a rule book, as it were, to talk to the people who were underperforming and say, 'Here's what the faculty agreed the performance requirements are. You're not meeting those and originally, I was accused of changing the rules, raising the bar, and all this kind of stuff which wasn't really true. And it led to hard feelings because I had to rate faculty as underperforming, and they hadn't received that kind of assessment for forever. In the end I had, basically

half the department was in that category...I made it clear that these are the requirements now and you can either meet them like everyone else, or you can choose a different path.

Some upped their game, and some didn't.

Deborah faced conflict with her faculty when she began enforcing performance requirements shortly after she became department chair. Full conflict resolution was not necessarily achieved, though, until some underperforming faculty members left the department, as Deborah says, "Some upped their game, and some didn't." Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as referring to her department rules, which were voted on and signed by all department faculty members.

Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as referring to university processes and policies:

And the other kind of common conflict that develops through department [chairs] is that faculty don't know why we are doing something in a particular way. Why do we have to put this on the annual evaluation? And why do we have to turn in these purchase orders? Because that's the system we have in place. If we don't do it, then it clogs up the works at different levels and slows them down or worse and someone doesn't get paid or reimbursed. There are reasons why these processes are in place. It's not that they can't be improved, but we can't just say "To hell with it" or "I'm not going to do this." Because then the whole thing grinds to a halt. I have to get involved. So yeah, there's things like that that some faculty just don't understand. And some of it is that it's a state policy. That's just it. And you know, we may not like it, but come on, you're a state employee. Or the fire Marshall comes around and says there's too many extension cords in the office and there's this or that and that's not legal. And this person goes, "well, it's my

office” you know. You’re using a facility that belongs to the university which belongs to the State, so we have to abide by those rules.

Faculty members in Humboldt’s department were complaining about certain procedures or processes in the department. “Why do we have to put this on the...?” or “Why do we have to turn in...?” Humboldt described his role in conflict resolution as referring to the policies and procedures set in place by the university for things to flow smoothly and by which state employees must abide.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Creating Policies to Address Conflict

In this section are stories in which Chair, Deborah, and Paul describe their roles in conflict resolution as creating new policies or processes. Chair described her role in conflict resolution as creating a policy at the institution level to address an issue about a change in compensation for her faculty members:

Our faculty, if they graduated so many doctoral students, they received financial compensation and/or a course release for the year for the number of graduate students. Well, when we became a college, because some of the former, those former set of experiences were at play, now the college says, ‘No, we can’t compensate you.’ I knew it was going to have to go beyond me to get this moving. And in return, I worked at my level as department chair and my colleagues and above at the college, to get a policy instituted where this kind of issue could be resolved, one way or the other. If we were going to compensate, then okay, in the new college we pay. If not, then we have to be able to articulate something that is reflective of that practice. And so, I took that on because I knew that the issues they were talking about and the back and forth- it was not going to be resolved by anything I could do and might in my role as a department chair.

In my bifurcated role as department chair, I had to extend, I had to utilize other resources to be able to get something bigger to impact a broader audience. I couldn't, in the department, make a policy because it was going to influence resources. And that's not what I saw as my role, well not necessarily as my role, but it needed something bigger. So, I shepherded that effort for that policy, where the institution said, "We're not going to be compensated. It's a part of your load. And that's what it is." And getting buy in...I had my own philosophical purposes, or professional beliefs about it, because if this is something that is popular or occurring in the broader university, then maybe I need to adapt. But I just knew we needed to have something in place as a college. And I shared with them that I took that on, on our behalf, to have that established. So, in that way, it started off as something negative and now it is something positive and established-whether we like it or we don't. We have a policy we can operate by.

For an unknown length of time, faculty members in Chair's department were compensated for graduating a certain number of doctoral students. Around the time that Chair became department chair, the university stopped compensating the faculty members who then became upset. Chair shared that if she tried to make a policy in the department that said faculty members could be compensated if they graduated a certain number of doctoral students, "I couldn't, in the department, make a policy because it was going to influence resources." And Chair did not have the authority to allocate resources of the university beyond the department. She did, however, see that something needed to be done at the institution level, to clearly state whether the university would be compensating for graduating doctoral students. She worked with other department chairs across the university to write the policy, "and now it is something positive and

established—whether we like it or we don't. We have a policy we can operate by.” Chair described her role in conflict resolution as creating policies.

Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as creating policies in a story about conflict between faculty members that ended up having a positive impact on the department with adding a section on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to their department's annual performance evaluation:

That [conflict] though, I think, contributed to what I consider a positive improvement in the department because the female faculty member felt very strongly about having issues of diversity and equity and inclusion as part of the department document. We did not have that up to that point. And I strongly agreed with her about that so she wrote a page or so which basically described activities that could be considered in an annual evaluation or performance or whatever, certain texts that could be incorporated into our department document and that was put before the faculty and ultimately approved... So, now we have that in our department document. I believe we are the first department in the college to have a specific part in our department document which is about considering any activities in diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of the annual evaluation and promotion and tenure... We made a big step forward there.

The female faculty member in Deborah's department was experiencing conflict regarding her culture and gender from another faculty member. Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as creating new policies by adding a diversity, equity, and inclusion section in the department rules and annual performance evaluation.

Paul described his role in conflict resolution as creating new policies and procedures in a story about conflict among the faculty members in his department over coveted office spaces:

Before I became department chair, I was aware there was some unhappiness in the way the previous chair had assigned some coveted office space. The building that I'm in has just a small handful of windowed offices and most offices are in the interior of the building that has no natural light. And so, when I became chair there was a faculty member who came from another university, recruited by the previous chair who was given one of these very coveted offices. And when that individual left, because I was aware of the fact that there was some unhappiness in the way that was assigned, I worked with other faculty in the department to come up with a process by which windowed offices could become available to existing faculty. I was trying to avoid a situation where that space would go to people who were, potentially very junior faculty who were coming in. I think when those types of hires get coveted space, it doesn't increase collegiality among faculty members. And so, out of that negative experience we developed a transparent process and have been able to reassign 2 of those offices with a window to existing faculty and hasn't been left up to a potential hire to negotiate for those spaces. Faculty members in Paul's department were upset because some "coveted office space" was being assigned to junior faculty members instead of more senior faculty. Paul worked with his department to "develop a transparent process" on assigning those coveted offices. Paul described his role in conflict resolution as creating new policies and procedures.

In this section, Chair, Deborah, and Paul described their roles in conflict resolution as creating policies or procedures. In the next section, participants describe their roles in conflict resolution as referring to other entities.

Chairs Describe their Role in Conflict Resolution as Referring to Other Entities

In this section, the participants described their roles in conflict resolution as referring to other entities. Deborah described her role in conflict resolution through a story about conflict in her department between a male faculty member and a female faculty member. In her story, she describes her role in conflict resolution as having to reach out to human resources for help- not just input from human resources- but intervention:

I've tried very hard to diversify our department. And I've basically transformed the department from having one woman to now having 5...But it creates problems as well. People not understanding each other culturally as well. So, we hired a new faculty member and one of my faculty members who is now retired, I would describe him as the traditional that I had to contend with when I was studying, you know. The macho, you know, sort of guy. And he felt threatened by this new faculty member...The older faculty member was quite offensive to the newer one and it happened toward the end of a semester, and we tried to reach out to him and then it turned into summer, and he said, 'Well I'm a 9-month faculty member so I don't have to talk to you'... And eventually I had to involve [human resources] to essentially strong arm him to get him to talk and it was not terribly successful. He wouldn't admit that he had been at all offensive to the new faculty member. And he was quite angry that this newcomer was trying to horn in on his territory.

Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as referring to human resources for help, which resulted in human resources as "essentially [having to] strong arm him" to attempt the conflict mediation between the now-retired faculty member and the new faculty member. Deborah described her attempts to reach out to the faculty member by herself but needed to refer to

another entity. Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as referring to other entities. In another story, Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as referring to other entities when a faculty member had a conflict with an anonymous student:

[We had] instructor we had a couple of years ago. She was a woman, you know, very attractive and she was teaching a lot of our large format intro classes. But she would have had some questions, you know, on the screen and [the students] had been given an anonymous name and they could type their response to questions, and they would show up on the screen. And some wise guy types up a really insulting thing about her, personally. And she was very offended and didn't really know what to do. And so, she just kind of shut things down and dismissed class, and this was well outside of my experience. And I said to her, well, I think you did the right thing- shut down class- the exchange and dismissed class" but the problem was there was no way to know who had done it. Because it was all set up anonymous. And even to this day I don't understand why she felt threatened by this, but she felt threatened... "Well, you're outside of my expertise. I don't know how to help you do anything about it technologically and I'm not sure you can because you set it up to be anonymous. But why don't you go talk to someone in the student life department or someone in the [human resources department] and see what advice they can give you. And I didn't think anything more about it. I don't know if she actually went and did anything about it and talked to [HR]. But nonetheless, a few months later I get a letter of resignation from her.

In this story, Deborah described her role in conflict resolution as referring her faculty member who was feeling threatened by a student to the student life department or human resources because Deborah mentions, "Well, you're outside of my expertise."

In this section, the participants described their roles in conflict resolution as referring to other entities.

The themes and sub themes in this section answered the second research question which was how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The themes and sub themes were:

1. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as listening, talking, and asking questions.
2. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from others.
 - a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from seasoned department chairs.
 - b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other department chairs.
 - c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from one's faith and self-reflection.
3. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to other entities.
 - a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies.
 - b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict.
 - c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to other resources.

In the next paragraph, I will summarize the contents of Chapter Four and introduce Chapter Five.

Summary

In this chapter, I included overviews of participant demographics, participant interviews, and then discussed the themes and sub themes that emerged from the data analysis. The first

three themes answered the first research question, how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. The first three themes were chairs describe their experiences in which conflict is multi-directional, chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches outside the department, and chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to students. The themes which answered the second research question, how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. These three themes were chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as talking, listening, and asking questions; chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input, and chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring out. All themes were supported with rich, thick narratives from participants. In the next chapter, I will discuss implications, and suggest further research.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the interpersonal conflict of department chairs at public, research one universities. The research questions guiding this study were how department chairs at public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution and how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The conceptual framework used in this study includes department chairs as administrative leaders, universities as systems, interpersonal conflict, and General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968). Narrative inquiry was the methodology used through which I gathered 18 interviews from six participants which were then analyzed and coded leading to emerged themes which were explored in the previous chapter. The first three themes answered the first research question, how department chairs from public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. The main themes and sub themes were:

1. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which is multi-directional.
 - a. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from upper administration.
 - b. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from faculty members.
 - c. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from students.
2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach out beyond the department.

- a. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach upper administration.
- b. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach human resources.
- c. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach other departments.

3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to students.

The next three main themes answered the second research question, how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The main themes and sub themes were:

- 1. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as talking, listening, and answering questions.
- 2. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from outside the department.
 - a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from seasoned department chairs.
 - b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other departments.
 - c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from one’s faith and self-reflection.
- 3. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring outside the department to other entities.
 - a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies.

b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict.

c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to human resources and other entities.

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings first by each research question, second by my conceptual framework, and third by additional discussion of findings, which will be followed by implications, suggestions for future research, and the conclusion.

Discussion of Findings

This study explored the experiences of department chairs at public, research one universities with conflict, asking how they describe their experiences with interpersonal conflict and how they describe their roles in conflict resolution. The findings suggest universities could look at conflict in the departments as a systemic issue which may be impacting the university overall. In this section, I will discuss the findings by research questions, by conceptual framework, and by additional discussion of the findings.

Research Question One: How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their experiences with conflict in the university institution?

The first research question guiding this study was how department chairs from public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution. The participants described conflict as coming from multiple sources including upper administration, faculty, and staff, and even the students. Department chairs are seen as academic middle managers between upper administration, the faculty, staff, and students (Floyd, 2016). The findings suggest conflict originates with these same groups of people, which therefore supports that department chairs are middle managers for upper administration, faculty,

staff, and students. The findings suggest the conflict from these groups of people lead to department chairs experiencing stressful conflict in the workplace (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Berdrow, 2010; Gmelch & Burns, 1991; Gmelch & Burns, 1993). Helen spoke about her feelings after experiencing conflict with her upper administration saying, “[I] felt shitty” and “[I] needed to go home and cuddle up with a soft animal and a cup of hot chocolate”. The literature mostly discussed the collegial and contemporary conflict of the department chair, citing conflict from faculty members and staff (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Holton & Phillips, 1995; Jolley et al., 2014; Langen, 2011; Wallin, 2004) however the findings of this study indicate that department chairs also experience conflict which originates in their upper administration and the students. A significant and unexpected finding is department chairs are facing conflict from students and upper administration, as literature on department chairs report stressful pressures of department chairs are in confronting their peers, such as faculty (Gmelch & Burns, 1993; Roach, 1991). David and Helen told two and five stories, respectively, about experiences with conflict which came from upper administration and Humboldt told four stories about conflict that came from students. With students being the focus of the mission of universities as well as the financial fuel of the universities, future research could explore the juxtaposition of conflict originating from students who are also the customers and clients of the university. This finding suggests universities could explore ways to prepare department chairs for resolving conflict originating with students in addition to faculty, staff, and administration.

The participants also described conflict in their roles in the institution as not staying in the department. By grounding this study in General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) the researcher was able to focus in on the interconnections of the different elements of the system, also seen as a subsystem, of the academic department. The participants described conflicts that

began within the department extending past the department and reaching other people not associated with the conflict, such as other faculty, staff, and students within the university, other departments within the university, even to other universities. The open system of the university, with its relationships and interconnections of people (Checkland, 1994) does not have a predictable behavior because it is constantly being impacted by other elements from other systems (Bertalanffy, 1968). The unpredictable behavior due to being impacted by elements from other systems is seen in the participant's stories as they discuss interconnections the department chairs make when they sought input from other people and resources, such as seasoned department chairs, human resources, upper administration, and even ombudsmen and attorneys. The interconnections of department chairs as administrative leaders and academic middle managers are discussed further in the section of this chapter on the conceptual framework.

Lastly, the participants described the conflict in their departments as “dripping down” to students. The phrase “dripping down” was used by Humboldt to describe conflict which began in the faculty starting to impact the students in his department. This description was impactful to me as the researcher and this finding is significant, due to the intensity of the impact on the students. The participants who told stories about conflict negatively impacting students used descriptive words such as “distressed” and “poisoned” to describe the impact on the students from the conflict originating in the faculty. One student who was negatively impacted by conflict now works at another university and perpetuates the negative impact of conflict from the faculty at Humboldt's university. The participants in this study described conflict in their roles in their institutions as originating from multiple sources, extending beyond the department, and “dripping down” to students.

In this section, the findings were discussed by the first research question, how do department chairs at public, research one universities, describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict in the university institution. In the next section, the findings are discussed by the second research question, how do department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution.

Research Question Two: How do department chairs at public, research one universities describe their role in conflict resolution in the university institution?

The second research question guiding this study is how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution. The participants in this study described their role in conflict resolution in multiple ways, sometimes as “dealing with conflict”, “handling conflict”, having “strategies”, or in broad terms such as mediating or negotiating.

The participants described their role in conflict resolution as talking to the conflicting people, or conflict partners, asking questions of the conflict partners, listening to people, seeking input from others, and referring to others when the department chairs felt they did not have the answers. The participants described their roles in conflict resolution as preemptive actions by listening to the staff who might hear people talk about tensions before they happen, or by having a visual presence and approachable demeanor for people to come talk to about issues before they intensify. The participants described their roles in conflict resolution as using formal policies and procedures, whether already put in place or by created for the purpose of conflict resolution, to resolve conflict. All participants discussed their role in conflict resolution which supports literature that department chairs do have a role in conflict management and conflict resolution (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Gmelch & Burns, 1993; Roach, 1991; Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016; Wolverton et al., 1999). The participants described their roles in conflict

resolution as talking and listening, asking questions, seeking input, referring out, sitting down and mediating conflict, and referring to policies.

The participants spoke about enlisting input from other people including ombudsmen, lawyers, people in human resources, their upper administration, other department chairs as they navigated their roles in conflict resolution. This finding suggests the participants may need additional resources or training in conflict resolution. The finding of participants needing additional resources or training for conflict resolution is further supported by the finding that participants are referring some of their conflicts to other entities for assistance because they do not have the knowledge in that area. The finding participants need additional resources and training for conflict resolution supports literature which has asserted the need for additional skills and training for department chairs (Gigliotti, 2021; Gmelch et al., 2017; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Person & Yao, 2021; Wolverton et al., 1999). The findings suggest department chairs could benefit from additional resources or training in conflict resolution.

In this section, I discussed the findings by research questions. In the next section, I will discuss the findings from this study by the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study included department chairs as administrative leaders, universities as systems, interpersonal conflict, and General Systems Theory (see Figure 8). The findings will be discussed with each piece of the conceptual framework in the following sections.

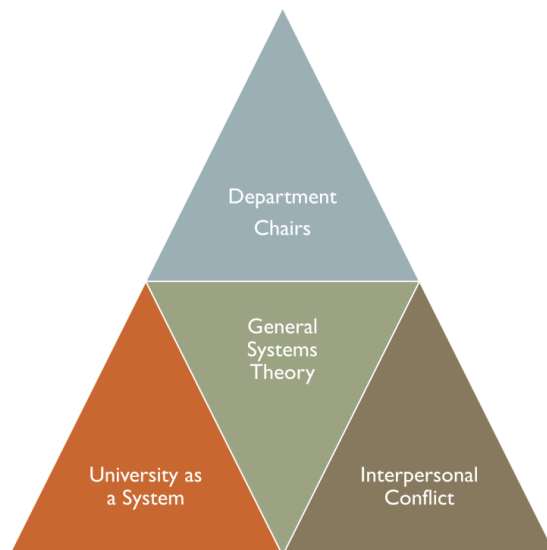
Department chairs as administrative leaders

The findings suggest department chairs serve as administrative leaders between upper administration and the faculty, staff, and students in the department (Floyd, 2016). An example

of this is David's story about working with upper administration on the desires of scheduling and budget cuts and the needs of his faculty, staff, and students. He served as an administrative leader working between the different layers of hierarchical structure within his department. Viewing the participants as leaders, the findings suggest leadership styles are perceived differently by their departments. The department chairs reported not creating solutions to conflict situations on their own because they perceived the department would not accept a solution being handed down to them which was created by only the department chair, but instead would accept a solution that was created by their peers or a group of people. The department chairs having small groups of people from their department to create solutions to problems could be seen by

Figure 5.1

Conceptual Framework



Note: The conceptual framework of this study includes department chairs as administrative leaders, the university as a system, interpersonal conflict, and General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968). General Systems Theory is the center piece of the conceptual framework because it touches each of the other pieces of the conceptual framework.

faculty as a strategy to build relationships with the faculty (Roach, 1991) and could support other findings in which faculty gave their department chairs higher ratings and reported higher ratings of job satisfaction when they perceived the department chairs as building relationships with them (Brown & Moshavi, 2002; Thompson, 1999). This finding suggests democratic conflict resolution efforts are perceived by the department chairs to receive more buy-in from their department than autocratic conflict resolution efforts. Deborah spoke about this in a story about her department faculty disagreeing about a decision and instead of Deborah making a decision on her own and informing the department, she created a committee to come up with options on which the department voted. She stated, “If I did [came up with the options for solutions], it wouldn’t be accepted.”

An important findings from this study suggests department chairs need greater support through mentoring programs. Participants in this study reported utilizing department chair mentor programs at universities where it was offered, for guidance on conflict management and resolution topics, policies and procedures, advice on navigating lower budgets and course credit changes. The participants at universities which offered mentor programs reported the programs were recent developments. The idea of department chairs mentoring was one of Berdrow’s (2010) list of responsibilities for department chairs, but it was referring to the mentoring of faculty. Studies have reported that department chairs need more training for conflict resolution (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Boulding, 1964; Paape et al., 2021; Person & Yao, 2021; Watson et al., 2019; Wolverton et al, 1999) and this sentiment was supported by the participants in this study as they echoed the need for training in conflict resolution matters, when they sought input from human resources, other department chairs, and their upper administration on handling conflicts. One participant reported their university used to have a position of someone the department

chairs could contact when they needed assistance on conflict or personnel matters, but that the position had gone away. It is possible that streamlining university positions to meet lower budgets has caused this type of position to be terminated. The findings in this study suggest, however, this type of position is still needed by department chairs.

Budgetary matters are the topic of another important finding from this study, which suggests universities could examine the change in budgetary governance from department chairs to upper administration. Participants in this study reported having little to no governance over their department's budget which is a change from literature which suggests a department chair's role has historically included budgetary decisions (Berdrow, 2010; Brikley-Etz Korn & Lane, 2019; Miller & Steinberg, 1975; Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016; Tucker, 1981). Participants reported budget decisions had been moved to their upper administration and therefore the department chairs had no authority or power over the budget. Helen reported the decision of moving budget power to upper administration was limiting the understanding of the needs of the specialized programs and departments by the decision-makers in the upper administration. Participants reported the lack of understanding about the needs of the specialized programs resulted in lack of funding for some departments and swollen funding for other departments. Universities could explore whether the change in budget authority is an effective decision. The findings in this study suggest this description of department chairs as being decision-makers of their department's budget is changing and universities need to explore the effectiveness of this change.

Universities as systems

In viewing universities as systems, conflict in academic departments within universities does not remain disconnected and isolated. Instead, conflict happens between people who are an

essential element in systems, representing organic interconnections. Conflict is an interconnection also, and sometimes can serve as a catalyst to increase interconnections between people in the university as a system. Literature discussed gossip as a flow of conflict, connecting parts of a system (Meadows, 2008). The finding conflict can serve as a catalyst for interconnection was supported in the findings, by Chair who reported faculty members in her department were comparing the amount of information she was sharing to the amount of information other department chairs were sharing with their departments. The faculty in both departments were gossiping and furthering interconnections between the two departments. Participants also reported conflict which began in the department, reached other departments, other department chairs, other entities such as human resources, academia at other universities, and even ombudsmen and attorneys. In the findings, conflict may have begun in the department between faculty, but conflict reaches outside the department to other departments, to students, to human resources, to lawyers, ombudsmen, and even academics at other universities.

The findings suggest universities could look at departmental conflict as a factor in an academic department's success or failure when looking at budget issues, faculty attrition, and retention of students. As budgets have been shrinking for higher education in the past two decades, (Ehrenberg, 2011; Schulz, 2009) academic departments are seeking ways to ensure their future on smaller budgets. Department chairs have historically been charged with furthering the mission of the department as well as thinking strategically about the future success of the department (Berdrow, 2010; Paape et al.2021). The findings in this study suggest conflict in departments may be playing a part in faculty attrition and student retention as well. Helen reported faculty attrition due to poor leadership in upper administration and budget cuts, which supports literature which found conflict within a department could lead to faculty leaving the

university (Mazur, 2021). Humboldt reported student retention being impacted by conflict within the department. A participant reported that a graduate student who was impacted by faculty conflict went on to be an academic at another university. As a faculty member, the now-graduated student discourages undergraduates from pursuing their graduate work at Humboldt's university because of the conflict among the faculty members. Students are drawn to universities with a positive working relationships and sense of community (Biggs, 1981; Del Rey & Romero, 2004; Elliot & Healy, 2001; Florenthal et al., 2009; Kusku, 2003; Nishii et al., 2000; Van Vaught, 2008). The findings in this study suggest universities could examine conflict in the department as a factor of departmental success or failure, when looking at budget issues, faculty attrition, and student retention.

The findings suggest academic departments could look at departmental conflict as a factor in the growth or dissolution of their department. Participants reported departments had been dissolved due to unresolved conflict within the department. Participants reported reorganization of multiple disciplines and departments in the recent decade due to budget cuts. Participants reported departments with feuding faculty members had been dissolved in the past and were concerned about being considered "problem children", implying the dissolution and disbursement of the department and feuding faculty. Academic departments could look at conflict as a factor in the growth and success of their department.

The findings suggest universities could examine the procedure of tenure and promotion voting. Participants expressed deep emotion as they reported junior faculty feeling undue pressure from the tenured faculty with voting privileges. Participants described letters they have written to upper administration to defend junior faculty who may have received negative voting outcomes due to personal grudges in the department. The ability for department chairs to write

such letters is a way for the department chairs to communicate with the upper administration about extenuating factors which may be influencing either the lack of votes for junior faculty or the excess of votes in favor of a junior faculty member despite the junior faculty member fulfilling the requirements needed for a legitimate vote. Department chairs are faced with conflict between faculty on their promotion and tenure voting history (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Hearn & Anderson, 2002; Holton & Phillips, 1995). Conflict related to tenure and promotion has been discussed in other studies as the most important kind of conflict (Holton & Phillips, 1995) as the votes for tenure and promotion decide who will advance in the department toward rank of full professor who then, in turn, will have voting privileges for the next round of voting. The universities could examine this process for ways to remove subjective voting and replace it with objective criteria.

Interpersonal Conflict

In this study, the findings suggest there are task conflicts, relational conflicts, and process conflicts which take place in the university academic department. Participants reported task conflict (Vrhovec & Markelj, 2021) such as differing views on how a task of delivering something like introduction classes should be presented to students. Another example of a task conflict reported by participants was differing ideas of how the task of counting credit hours towards degree completion are added up. In these two examples, the differing ideas of how a task should be carried out or completed led to conflict between parties.

Participants reported relational conflict such as one faculty member possibly interpreting comments from another faculty member as personal criticisms (Vrhovec & Markelj, 2021). Participants reported relational conflict which began with faculty members could “drip down” to impacting students. The relational conflict (de Wit et al., 2012) between the two faculty members

demonstrates an assertion of Bendermacher et al. (2017) that tension between faculty impacts student learning and supports both Barnes and Austin (2009) and Barens et al. (2010) who suggested graduate students are impacted by the relationship of faculty.

Participants reported process conflict with their upper administration involving bureaucratic systems, paperwork, procedures, or processes (de Wil et al., 2012). A participant reported the upper administration was slated to facilitate the conversation with all parties on the schedule of courses and classroom spaces. Not all departments were consulted, which led to massive miscommunication and need to reschedule multiple departments' courses and classrooms.

The findings also suggest task conflict, relational conflict, and process conflict can alternate and increase in the shape of a spiral. This spiral conflict can begin with a small task conflict such as a disagreement over how an introduction class should be presented, then grow into a relational task such as a personal criticism, then grow into a larger task conflict such as an error in a major paperwork process, and consequently, grow into a larger relational spiral such as a discriminatory criticism in a public setting (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018). The findings in this study suggest this spiral can also include process conflict. A participant reported that a group of people, who were not invited to be part of a decision-making group, which could be seen as a process conflict, grew into a relational conflict if they perceived being left out as a personal criticism. The conflict can grow into a grievance process, citing discriminatory action which would be a larger process conflict, in the same spiral. This finding is important because in a systemic environment like a university, a conflict spiral can grow and mutate from task conflict to relational conflict, to process conflict, while connecting more and more departments and people. This finding suggests universities could explore conflict resolution training which could

help define task conflict, relational conflict, and process conflict in hopes of limiting the growth of the conflict spiral.

General Systems Theory

By looking at these findings through the lens of General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968), conflict is a complex conflict with issues at different levels and involving multiple groups of people, which Checkland (1994) asserted to use systems theory to view and analyze. Participants reported hierarchical conflicts between their upper administration, faculty and staff, and students. The hierarchical levels are essential to the structure of the university (Kumar, 2021) but also cause conflicts between the different levels of hierarchy more complex. One participant reported shuttling information about changes in curriculum and credit hours from the levels above him, the upper administration, to the level below him, the faculty, however the impact of the change reached to the students which were at a hierarchical level under faculty. This tentative placement of students at a lower hierarchical level is deceiving because although the information dissemination hierarchy would place the students at this lower hierarchical level, the students provide the financial support of the greater university system which therefore would place them at a much higher hierarchical level of importance as the customer. Systems thinking allows us to zoom out and look at this situation holistically seeing that student retention and satisfaction brings in financial resources which then supports the entire system which encompasses all the hierarchical structures.

The findings suggest conflict which begins in the academic department then reaches outside the department, permeates the entire system. Holton (1995) stated, “We need a culture that supports and acknowledges a systemic view of conflict, a view that acknowledges that conflict within one part of the academic influences all other parts. As systems theory purports,

change and conflict permeate the entire system” (p. 93). Participants reported conflict between faculty members then spread into other faculty members and into the students, as well as the department rules and annual performance evaluation. Every new faculty member in the department from here forward will be impacted by the conflict between the two faculty members. Additionally, any other entity at the university who reads or researches the department rules will be impacted by the conflict. This finding also suggests looking at the same conflict holistically Senge (1991). The faculty member who had been at the university for many years was a white male and the newer faculty member was a non-white female. The conflict between the two could be seen as a gender conflict or even a cultural conflict, hence the diversity, equity, and inclusion perspective. Zooming out, the participant reported the department had increased in number of females from one to five. Zooming out further to a greater view, there may have been a push from higher education to increase the number of diverse faculty. It could have been this much larger, much greater initiative to increase numbers of faculty members from diverse cultures, genders, or backgrounds, which influenced the decisions down at the department level, which began the conflict between the two faculty members in the department, which led to a diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment on the department annual performance evaluation. Systems theory allows us to look at the situation as a whole instead of looking at conflict stories as disconnected, isolated events.

Additional Discussion of Findings

The findings also suggest department chairs perceive the students may be feeling the weight of the conflict that takes place in the department. Students are viewed as part of the department; however, they are not the desired receptors of the conflict that happens within the department. The participants reported that conflict between faculty members, the department

chair, or upper administration, should never impact the students. The findings in this study support Bendermacher et al.'s (2017) assertion that students' learning is impacted by tension between faculty and staff. Participants reported conflict between faculty "dripped down" to impact the graduate students in choices of courses to take and faculty to be mentored by or part of their supervisory committees. The finding department chairs perceive students may be feeling weight of the conflict that takes place in the department also supports graduate students are particularly impacted by relationships with and between faculty (Barnes & Austin, 2009; Barnes et al., 2010).

Participants reported student's coursework and instruction is also impacted by the conflict, for example, classroom doors not being unlocked for class times. The students were unable to receive their full lecture and instruction nor were they able to use the workspace or class time to work on their design projects.

An important finding from this study suggests universities should explore whether or not student mental health is being impacted by conflict as well. Participants reported a change in credit hours for students, resulting in students taking multiple one-credit courses which require multiple hours of practice and performances per week begin to multiply and impact the students' mental health. Other participants reported they perceived some of their students as being troubled or greatly distressed about conflict between the faculty with whom they interacted with often.

Findings from this study suggest mental health, coursework, and instruction of students should be seen as of great importance. Participants reported students were experiencing barriers to their graduation due to conflict between faculty which is supports the converse in the literature that student success is related to faculty and faculty input (Arellano, 2020), and student graduation is the goal of the university. Participants reported students left the university due to

faculty conflict which supports the converse in the literature that students stay at their universities and persist to graduation when they feel positively (Bean, 2005), feel the faculty and staff are approachable (Roberts & Styron, 2005), feel satisfied with their advisors (DeLaRosby, 2017; Strayhorn, 2015), and have positive relationships with the faculty and staff (Axelson & Flick, 2011; Astin, 1993; Kuh, et al., 2005; Pascarella et al., 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1975; Zhou & Cole, 2016). The findings suggest universities explore the converse, therefore, that students who have faculty conflict “drip down” to them may be unhappy with their university and may not persist to graduation. Universities could examine how to lessen the impact of departmental conflict on students, so the students stay at their universities and persist to graduation, thereby furthering the success of the department and preventing the failure of the department.

An important finding of this study suggests positive benefits can come from the negative experiences of interpersonal conflict. Participants reported female faculty members who felt belittled by another faculty member due to gender and cultural ethnicity which resulted in a significant diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment on their department’s annual performance evaluation for all faculty. Another participant reported conflict which began in the department over coveted office spaces resulting in a new office space assignment system to prevent frivolous assignment of those spaces. Other participants reported conflict that began in their departments with faculty not receiving compensation for graduating doctoral students which resulted in a university-wide policy which specifically outlined the new process of faculty not receiving the compensation for graduating doctoral students. Another participant reported classrooms not being opened in time for class, which caused conflict between upper administration and themselves but resulted in acquiring new keys for all the classrooms. Still another participant

reported a line schedule needing to be revamped because the needs of the department presently were not matching the needs of the department from decades past when the line schedule was first created. The conflict resulted with all stakeholders sitting down together to build a new line schedule from scratch, taking into consideration all needs from all users of the spaces and schedule. The findings suggest positive outcomes can result from negative experiences with interpersonal conflict. In the next section, I will discuss the implications of this study.

Implications

The implications of this study are three-fold. The first implication is this study uses General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) to explore the descriptions of conflict in a system and the descriptions of the roles in conflict resolution in a system. Much of the literature on using General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) or Senge's systems thinking (1991) in educational contexts focuses on using systems theory towards solutions. This study is not looking at cause and effect, but this exploratory study used systems thinking to look at the interconnections and connectedness which occurs with conflict and roles in conflict resolution. This is a unique use of systems thinking and General Systems Theory (1968), in that the study is not focused on the solution aspect but instead on the problem, being conflict, and the spreading or reaching of the problem due to the interconnections and connectedness as posited by the theory.

The study added to the literature on using General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) and Senge's systems thinking (1991) appropriate theory to use when studying interpersonal conflict at a university. Through the study, the interconnections of the system of the academic department and the greater system of the university were amplified with the increased understanding of the connectivity between the parts of the system. Students with a major from one department were required to take a few courses in other departments. Looking at it from a

different angle, for one department to be successful and continue to keep their numbers in their courses, they rely on students who are majoring in other departments to fulfill part of their common core curriculum with them. Looking at it from yet another angle, if department A does not get the budget money required to have the best equipment and technology to attract new undergraduate students, then department A will not have enough undergraduate students to remain intact and will dissolve. If there are no department A undergraduate students taking core classes from department F, then department F may not be able to hire many graduate teaching assistants. If department F does not have the funds to hire graduate teaching assistants, the number of graduate students wanting to come to the university to be part of department F may drop which could threaten the success of department F.

Systems thinking can be applied to classroom spaces and equipment also. If department G's enrollment numbers are not high enough to use all the classrooms in their building, department H may start using department G's classrooms. Department H uses different equipment than department G, so if department H uses department G's classrooms, department H may move department G's equipment out of the way which could cause damage to the equipment. If department G does not have money in the budget to repair the equipment due to their low enrollment, then department G's equipment may not be repaired. If department G's enrollment increases next year, department G may not have functional equipment to use with the increased student numbers. If students in department G do not have access to functional equipment, they may not want to stay at that university, but instead transfer to another university with newer and better equipment. These connections and interdependency of the departments at universities are examples of the appropriate use of General Systems Thinking (Bertalanffy, 1968) for universities and academic departments.

Another implication of this study is the use of narrative inquiry as the methodology in combination with the use of General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968). The participants told narratives in which they leapt from time to time in the past to time in the present and back to a different time in the past, demonstrating the connectedness of General Systems Theory. The participants stopped midsentence, changing the course of their current thought, and completing sentences with different outcomes than the ones started. The participants sometimes stumbled over their words, had lengthy pauses to come up with the right word to use, or spoke strings of connective words such as “you know”, “like”, “you know what I’m saying”, “um”, and “I don’t know.” When the participants were presented with the transcripts for approval, five of the six participants commented on the connective words in their transcripts, offering apologies for what they deemed to be incoherent thoughts or unorganized stories. Instead of viewing these connective words as incoherent thoughts or signs of disorganization, narrative inquirers view the connective words as spur-of-the-moment meaning-making and the mental activity of processing memories, attaching them to current knowledge, and formulating them into sentences and organized stories. Were this study to have used short answer surveys or a structured interview using only predetermined questions, it is possible the participants would not have shared as many stories of conflict as they did. It was through the narratives and the space the researcher gave them to expound on their stories as they wished that the participants would continue speaking which led to more meaning-making, deeper processing of memories, and added details. If we look at the narrative as a systemic view of the memory, story, or situation, then the participants could be conducting a holistic, zoomed out, broader view of the memory, gauging the outcome of the story or trajectory of the story if they were to continue speaking the entire sentence or thought. The concept that narratives could be systemic thoughts and memories which are

interconnected and can be looked at holistically, and possibly divided into subsystems as they are being conceptualized into verbalizations is a unique concept of the combination of theory and methodology. The choice of narrative inquiry as methodology in combination with General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) led to a unique combination of methodology and theory which should be explored further.

In this section, I discussed implications of the study. In the next section, I will discuss the significance of the study.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is it adds to literature on department chairs, of which there is a dearth of literature on the narratives of department chairs on conflict they experience and their description of their roles in conflict resolution. This study is significant, also, because the findings identify conflict can originate in upper administration and students in addition to faculty and staff. The participants in this study gave thick, rich descriptions of conflicts they experience which are not found in other literature. The finding of conflict “drips down” to students is significant, as mentioned before in this chapter, because the students are the purpose of the university as well as the financial sustenance of the university. Finally, the significance of this study is the policies which benefit the department which originated as conflict within the department. In the next section, I will discuss the limitations of the study.

Limitations

A limitation for this research is the final pool of participants, recruited through a snowball sampling. This approach limited to participants to department chairs known by another possible participant or colleague. A purposeful sampling of department chairs from all disciplines or a single discipline may have led to additional or different findings.

Another limitation for this research is purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to explore interpersonal conflict experienced by department chairs. Categorizing this study as exploratory kept the research questions and data analysis at a level of analysis that described conflict and the department chairs' roles in conflict resolution. Had the purpose been to deconstruct or challenge department chair roles in conflict resolution or their views of conflict, the study may have led to additional or different findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was a narrative inquiry of department chairs at public, research one universities, with six participants from three different public research one universities from three different regions in the United States –West coast, Midwest, and East coast. The six participants included three females and three males from the fields of education, science, design, fine arts, and veterinary medicine. Future research should duplicate the study with participants from single fields of disciplines per study. Researchers could explore conflict and conflict resolution as may be specific to the field. In this study, several participants discussed discipline-specific issues. David shared about the struggles in the field of fine arts involving the line schedules and class credit issues as they weighed on students' mental health. Helen shared about classroom space requirements, including technology and workspace, which made classroom availability an impactful issue.

Future research should duplicate the study at private universities, community colleges, and online universities to explore conflict and conflict resolution in those specific settings. Exploring conflict and conflict resolution across multiple disciplines as well as in single disciplines. With different mission statements and purposes, research could be added to the literature. Future research could also look at the intersection of the origins of conflict with the

conflict resolution strategy used. While that was not appropriate in this study, because interview questions were not designed with that in mind, nor in line with the research questions, the researcher observed some references in the participants' interviews which could be explored further.

Future research could also be a case study conducted, exploring conflict and conflict resolution in one academic department, interviewing people from all levels, such as department chair, faculty members, staff, students, and upper administration. Observations and policies of the department could also be analyzed. Future research could also be to duplicate this study in all areas but participants, interviewing students, and faculty instead of department chairs. Academic deans or other upper administration could be another possible participant pool for a duplicate study to be conducted. Action research could be conducted in a department chair mentoring group at universities to explore possible training opportunities for department chairs in conflict management, conflict resolution, mediating, and negotiating.

Current literature describes department chairs as having administrative authority with their department's budget (Berdrow, 2010; Brinkley-Etzkorn & Lane, 2019; Meadows, 2008; Schmidt & Yelich-Biniecki, 2016) however the findings of this study indicate that this administrative authority is being shifted from the hands of the department chairs to upper administration. The findings suggest that the lack of budget authority does not necessarily lessen the conflict experienced by department chairs. Deborah discussed budgetary constraints coming from upper administration as having an impact on her faculty's course scheduling, since her dean's office was enforcing the cancellation of courses which did not have the minimum number of students required. Helen discussed her dean's decisions with budgets and the conflict that was being caused by the dean's unequitable allocation of resources for their college. Researchers

should study this shift of responsibility of budgets and the impact this shift has on the department chair and department. In the next section, I summarize the study, findings, and discussion.

Conclusion

This study was grounded in the conceptual framework of department chairs in a university institution which serves as a system, with interpersonal conflict, and General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968). The purpose of the study was to explore interpersonal conflict of department chairs from public, research one universities and it answered the research questions how department chairs from public, research one universities describe their lived experiences with interpersonal conflict within the university institution, and how department chairs describe their role in conflict resolution within the university institution.

There were six participants from three different public, research one universities from three regions of the country—the West coast, the Midwest, and the East coast. The three males and three females represented the fields of education, science, design, and fine arts. The researcher interviewed each participant three times and through thematic analysis and coding, the researcher identified main themes and sub themes which emerged. The first three themes, with sub themes, that answered the first research question were:

1. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as multi-directional.
 - a. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from upper administration.
 - b. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from faculty and staff.
 - c. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which come from students.

2. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach outside the department.

a. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach upper administration.

b. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reach other departments.

c. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which reaches human resources.

3. Chairs describe their experiences with conflict as that which “drips down” to students.

The next three themes, with sub themes answered the second research question:

1. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as talking, listening, and asking questions.

2. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from others.

a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from seasoned department chairs.

b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from other departments.

c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as seeking input from one’s faith and self-reflection.

3. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring outside the department.

a. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to policies and procedures.

b. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as creating policies to address conflict.

c. Chairs describe their role in conflict resolution as referring to other entities.

The findings included stories from the participants which supported these themes.

Discussion of the findings support the literature that democratic leadership styles are perceived by the department chairs to receive more buy-in from their department than autocratic leadership styles. Discussion of the findings also suggests greater support for department chairs in mentoring programs, confidential conflict resolution resources, and greater autonomy over budget decisions. Findings also suggest a revamp of the tenure and promotion voting procedures to include more objective rubrics limiting interpersonal conflict impact. Implications included conflict which begins in the department does not always stay in the department, students are feeling the weight of the conflict, conflict in the department can impact departmental success or failure, and conflict which begins as a negative occurrence can have a positive outcome.

Suggestions for future research included focusing on one discipline, conducting a case study of one department, or duplicate study to include community colleges or private universities. The significance of the study is that students were identified as an originator of conflict, students were also identified as being negatively impacted by faculty conflict, and that positive policies and procedures were coming from negative conflict.

References

- Adler, P. & Adler, P. (2012). "Expert voice." In S. E. Baker and R. Edwards, *How many qualitative interviews are enough?* National Centre for Research Methods Review Discussion Paper, pp. 8-11.
- Aiston, S. J., & Yang, Z. (2017). "Absent data, absent women": Gender and higher education leadership. *Policy Futures in Education*, 15(3), 262-274.
- AL-Omari, A. A. (2007). Leadership Styles of Department Chairs at the Hashemite University: Pilot Study. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Sciences*, 8(03).
- Amason. (1996). Distinguishing the Effects of Functional and Dysfunctional Conflict on Strategic Decision Making: Resolving a Paradox for Top Management Teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(1), 123–148. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256633>
- American Association of University Professors. (2003). Policy statement: Contingent appointments and the academic profession. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.aaup.org/report/contingent-appointments-and-academic-profession>
- Andersen. (2019). *Professional and Personal Challenges of Ombudsmen at Higher Education Institutions: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Anderson. (2018). *Diversity as/in Practice: Difference, Belonging, and Conflict at an American Public University*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Arellano, L. (2020). Capitalizing baccalaureate degree attainment: Identifying student and institution level characteristics that ensure success for Latinxs. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 91(4), 588-619.
- Argyris, C. (1957). Personality and organization; the conflict between system and the individual.

- Armstrong, D. E., & Woloshyn, V. E. (2017). Exploring the Tensions and Ambiguities of University Department Chairs. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 47(1), 97–113.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: JosseyBass.
- Axelson, R. D., & Flick, A. (2011). Defining student engagement. *The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 43, 38-43.
- Bacq, S., Janssen, F., & Noël, C. (2019). What happens next? A qualitative study of founder succession in social enterprises. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 57(3), 820-844.
- Barnes, B. J., & Austin, A. E. (2009). The role of doctoral advisors: A look at advising from the advisor's perspective. *Innovative Higher Education*, 33, 297-315.
- Barnes, B. J., Williams, E. A., & Archer, S. A. (2010). Characteristics that matter most: Doctoral students' perceptions of positive and negative advisor attributes. *NACADA Journal*, 30(1), 34-46.
- Bautista, V. (2018). University Department Chairs Experience of Their Role in Promoting Faculty Well-Being: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Doctoral dissertation, Creighton University).
- Bean, J., & Eaton, S. B. (2001—2002). The psychology underlying successful retention practices. *J. College Student Retention*, 3(1), 73-89.
- Becker, H. S. (2012). "Expert voice." In S. E. Baker and R. Edwards, *How many qualitative interviews are enough?* National Centre for Research Methods Review Discussion Paper. P. 15.
- Bendermacher, G. W. G., Wolfhagen, I. H. A. P., & Dolmans, D. H. J. M. (2017). Unravelling quality culture in higher education: a realist review. *Higher education*, 73(1), 39-60.

- Berdrow, I. (2010). King among kings: Understanding the role and responsibilities of the department chair in higher education. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(4), 499-514.
- Bertalanffy, L. V. (1968). *General system theory: Foundations, development, applications*. G. Braziller.
- Bertaux, D. (1981). From the life-history approach to the transformation of sociological practice. In D. Bertaux (ed.), *Biography and Society: The life history approach in the social sciences*, pp. 29-45. Sage.
- Bettinger, E., & Long, B. T. (2010). Does cheaper mean better? The impact of using adjunct instructors on student outcomes. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 92(3), 598-613.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. Routledge.
- Bhola, H. S. Systems Theory Perspective on Education for Rural Transformation. *Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)*, 3.
- Biemiller, L. (2008). To college employees, the work environment is all important. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54(45), 12-15.
- Biggs, M. (1981). Sources of tension and conflict between librarians and faculty. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 52(2), 182-201.
- Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. (1964). *The managerial grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Board, J. (2018). Community colleges-the history of community colleges, the junior college, and research university. Education Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1873/Community-Colleges.html>
- Boatman, A., & Long, B. T. (2016). Does financial aid impact college student engagement? *Research in Higher Education*, 57, 653-681. doi:10.1007/s11162-015-9402-y

- Boulding, K. (1964). *The meaning of the twentieth century: The great transition*. Routledge.
- Brabazon, T., & Schulz, S. (2020). Braving the bull: Women, mentoring and leadership in higher education. *Gender and Education*, 32(7), 873-890.
- Braiker, H. B., & Kelley, H. H. (1979). Conflict in the development of close relationships. In *Social exchange in developing relationships*, R. L. Burgess & T. L. Huston (Eds.) Academic Press
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brinkley-Etzkorn, K. E. & Lane, J. (2019). From the ground up: building a system-wide professional development and support program for academic department chairs. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(3), 571-583. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1389877>
- Brinkmann, S. & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews*, 3rd ed. Sage.
- Brockman, J. L., Nunez, A. A., & Basu, A. (2010). Effectiveness of a Conflict Resolution Training Program in Changing Graduate Students Style of Managing Conflict with their Faculty Advisors. *Innovative Higher Education*, 35(4), 277-293.
- Brown, F. W., & Moshavi, D. (2002). Herding academic cats: Faculty reactions to transformational and contingent reward leadership by department chairs. *Journal of leadership studies*, 8(3), 79-93.
- Bucklin, B. A., Valley, M., Welch, C., Tran, Z. V., & Lowenstein, S. R. (2014). Predictors of early faculty attrition at one Academic Medical Center. *BMC Medical Education*, 14(1), 27.

- Burlingame. (1979). Some Neglected Dimensions in the Study of Educational Administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 15(1), 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013131X7901500102>
- Buss. (1975). Systems theory, generation theory, and the university: Some predictions. *Higher Education*, 4(4), 429–445. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00154468>
- Butina, M. (2015). A narrative approach to qualitative inquiry. *Clinical Laboratory Science*, 28(3), 190-197.
- Buzan, T. (1993). *The Mind Map Book*. New York: A Dutton Book.
- Carroll, A. B. (1974). Role Conflict in Academic Organizations: An Exploratory Examination of the Department Chairman's Experience. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 10(2), 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X7401000204>
- Carnegie Classifications. (2023). Search by classification.
[Carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/Carnegie-classification/classification-methodology/basic-classification](https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/Carnegie-classification/classification-methodology/basic-classification)
- Cavaleri, & Sterman, J. D. (1997). Towards evaluation of systems-thinking interventions: a case study. *System Dynamics Review*, 13(2), 171–186. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1727\(199722\)13:2<171::AID-SDR123>3.0.CO;2-9](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1727(199722)13:2<171::AID-SDR123>3.0.CO;2-9)
- Checkland, P. (1994). Systems theory and management thinking. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 38(1), 75-91.
- Checkland, P. (1999). Systems thinking. *Rethinking management information systems*, 45-56.
- Christensen, C. (2008). The employment of part-time faculty at community colleges. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2008(143), 29-36. doi:10.1002/he.310

- Chu, D. (2002). The return of the native: Department chair returns to the faculty. *Academic Leader*, 18(2), 7-8.
- Churchman, C. W. (1967). Guest editorial: Wicked problems. *Management science*, B141-B142.
- Clandinin, & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research* (1st edition.). Jossey-Bass.
- Clauset, A., Arbesman, S., & Larremore, D. (2015). Systematic inequality and hierarchy in faculty hiring networks. *Science Advances*, 1(1), e1400005. doi:10.1126/sciadv.1400005
- Coalition on the Academic Workforce. (2012). A portrait of part-time faculty members: A summary of findings on part-time respondents to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce Survey of Contingent Faculty Members and Instructors. Retrieved from http://www.academicworkforce.org/CAW_portrait_2012_pdf
- Coleman, Kugler, K. G., Mitchinson, A., & Foster, C. (2013). Navigating conflict and power at work: the effects of power and interdependence asymmetries on conflict in organizations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(10), 1963–1983.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12150>
- Connelly, & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14.
- Conrad, C., & Poole, M. S. (2005). *Organizational communication. Handbook of organizational rhetoric*. New York: Wiley.
- Costantino, C. A., & Merchant, C. S. (1996). *Designing conflict management systems: A guide to creating productive and healthy organizations*. Jossey-Bass.

- Council of Graduate Schools. (2010). *Ph.D. completion and attrition: Policies and practices to promote student success*.
- Cowley, S. (2019). Emotional labour in the role of university department chair. *SFU Educational Review*, 12(2), 9-26.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). An introduction to mixed methods research. Lincoln, Nebraska, USA: University of Nebraska.
- Creswell, J. W. (2011). Controversies in mixed methods research. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 4(1), 269-284.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study. Croom, N. N. (2017). Promotion Beyond Tenure: Unpacking Racism and Sexism in the Experiences of Black Womyn Professors. *Review of Higher Education*, 40(4), 557–583.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2017.0022>
- Crotty, M. J. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*, 1-256.
- Curtis, J. W. (2014). The employment status of instructional staff members in higher education: Fall 2011. Washington, DC: American Association of University Professors. Retrieved from <https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/AAUP-InstrStaff2011-April2014.pdf>
- Czech, K., & Forward, G.L. (2010). Leader communication: Faculty perceptions of the department chair. *Communication Quarterly*, 58(4), 431-457.
- Dana, D. (2005). Managing differences: How to build better relationships at work and home (4th ed.). Prairie Mission, KS: MTI.
- De Dreu, C. K. W., & Gelfand, M. J. (Eds.). (2008). The psychology of conflict and conflict management in organizations. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- De Dreu, C. K., & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance, and team member satisfaction: a meta-analysis. *Journal of applied Psychology*, 88(4), 741.
- Dee, J. R., Henkin, A. B., & Holman, F. B. (2004). Reconciling differences: Conflict management strategies of catholic college and university presidents. *Higher Education*, 47(2), 177-196.
- DeLaRosby, H.R. (2017). Student characteristics and collegiate environments that contribute to the overall satisfaction with academic advising among college students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 19(2), p145-160.
- Del Rey, E., & Romero, L. (2004). Competition between public and private universities: Quality, prices, and exams. Economics Working Paper we046423, Universidad Carlos III, Departamento de Economía.
- Derry, S. J. (1999). 'A Fish called peer learning: Searching for common themes', in O'Donnell, A. M., and King, A. (Eds.) *Cognitive perspectives on peer learning*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp 197-211.
- Deutsch, M. (1973). The resolution of conflict: Constructive and destructive processes. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press
- Deutsch, M. (2006). Cooperation and competition. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, & E. C. Marcus, (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 23-42). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- De Wit, F. R. C., Greer, L. L., & Jehn, K. A. (2012). The paradox of intragroup conflict: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(2), 360-390. <https://doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1037/a0024844>

- Duong, M., Wu, C., & Hoang, M. (2017). Student inequalities in Vietnamese higher education? Exploring how gender, socioeconomic status, and university experiences influence leadership efficacy. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, pp. 1-11. doi:10.1080/14703297.2017.1377098
- Ehrenberg, R. (2011). Rethinking the professoriate. In B. Wildavsky, A. Kelly, & K. Carey (Eds.), *Reinventing higher education: The promise of innovation* (pp. 101-128). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Elliot, K., & Healy, M. (2001). Key factors influencing student satisfaction related to recruitment and retention. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 10(4), 1–11.
- Emery, M. (2000). The current version of Emery's open systems theory. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 13(5), 623-643.
- Eng, J. (2005). Beyond quality control: Writing assessment and adjunct accountability at a small public university. *Writing Assessment*, 29(1-2), 59-79.
- Findlen, R. A. (2000). Conflict: The skeleton in academe's closet. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 109, 41-49.
- Florenthal, B., & Tolstikov-Mast, Y. (2012). Organizational culture: Comparing faculty and staff perspectives. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 12(6), 81-90.
- Florenthal, B., Tolstikov-Mast, Y., & Yilmazsoy, N. (2009). Understanding organizational culture from multiple perspectives: Faculty-staff relations analysis. *The Journal of Academic Administration*, 5(1), 29–41.
- Floyd, A. (2016). Supporting academic middle managers in higher education: Do we care? *Higher Education Policy*, 29, 167-183.

- Follett, M. P. (1973). Power. In E. M. Box & L. Urwick (Eds.), *Dynamic administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follett* (pp. 72-95). London: Pitman. (Original work published 1924).
- French, J. & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In *Studies in Social Power*, D. Cartwright, Ed., pp. 150-167. Institute for Social Research.
- Gardner, S. K., & Barnes, B. J. (2007). Graduate student involvement: Socialization for the professional role. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(4), 1-19.
- Gawlewicz. (2015). Beyond “us” and “them”: migrant encounters with difference and reimagining the national. *Fennia*, 193(2), 198–211. <https://doi.org/10.11143/46322>
- Gigliotti, R. A. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on academic department chairs: Heightened complexity, accentuated liminality, and competing perceptions of reinvention. Accepted: 2 February 2021/ Published online: 12 March 2021. *Innovative Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1008/s10755-021-09545-x>
- Gill, P. B. (2001). Narrative inquiry: designing the processes, pathways and patterns of change. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 18(4), 335–344. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.428>
- Gleason. (1971). The Job Market for Women: A Department Chairman’s View. *College English*, 32(8), 927–930. <https://doi.org/10.2307/375632>
- Gmelch, W. H. (1993). *Coping with faculty stress* (Vol. 5). Sage.
- Gmelch, W. H., & Burns, J. S. (1991). Sources of Stress for Academic Department Chairs: A National Study. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
- Gmelch, W. H., & Burns, J. S. (1993). The cost of academic leadership: Department chair stress. *Innovative Higher Education*, 17(4), 259-270.

- Gmelch, W.H. & Burns, J. S. (1994). Sources of stress for academic department chairpersons. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 32 (1), 79-94.
- Gmelch, W. H., & Miskin, V. D. (1993). *Leadership skills for department chairs*. Anker Publishing Company, Inc.
- Gmelch, W. H. & Seedorf, R. (1989). Academic leadership under siege: The ambiguity and imbalance of department chairs. *Journal for Higher Education Management*. 5:37-44.
- Gmelch, Roberts, D., Ward, K., & Hirsch, S. (2017). A Retrospective View of Department Chairs: Lessons Learned. *The Department Chair*, 28(1), 1–4.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/dch.30140>
- Golde, C. M. (1998). Beginning graduate school: Explaining first-year doctoral attrition. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 101, 55-64.
- Golde, C. M. (2005). The role of department and discipline in doctoral student attrition: Lessons from four departments. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(6), 669-699.
- Goldspink, C., & Kay, R. (2004). Bridging the micro–macro divide: A new basis for social science. *Human Relations*, 57(5), 597-618.
- Goudy, W. J., & Potter, H. R. (1975). Interview rapport: Demise of a concept. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 39(4), 529-543.
- Grinyer, A., & Thomas, C. (2012). The value of interviewing on multiple occasions or longitudinally. *The Sage handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*, 2, 219-230.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.

- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Goode, H. (2022). An open systems model of successful school leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Hausmann, L. R. M., Ye, F., Schofield, J. W., & Woods, R. L. (2009). Sense of belonging and persistence in white and African American first-year students. *Research in Higher Education*, 50, 649-669.
- Hearn, J., & Anderson, C. (2002). Conflict in Academic Departments: An Analysis of Disputes over Faculty Promotion and Tenure. *Research in Higher Education*, 43(5), 503-529.
- Henning, M. A., Zhou, C., Adams, P., Moir, F., Hobson, J., Hallett, C., & Webster, C. S. (2017). Workplace harassment among staff in higher education: A systematic review. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 18(4), 521-539.
- Hocker, J. L., & Wilmot, W. W. (2018). *Interpersonal conflict* (10th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Holton, S. A. (1995). *Conflict management in higher education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Holton, S. A. & Phillips, G. (1995). Can't live with them, can't live without them: Faculty and administrators in conflict. In S. A. Holton (Ed.). *Conflict management in higher education* (pp. 43-50). Jossey-Bass.
- Holmes, M. (2020). Examining Black Art Therapy Graduate Students' Experiences with Racial Battle Fatigue.
- Hoyt, J. (2012). Predicting the satisfaction and loyalty of adjunct faculty. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 60(3), 132-142. doi:10.1080/07377363.2013.722417
- Jacks, P., Chubin, D. E., Porter, A. L., and Connolly, T. (1983). The ABCs of ABDs: A study of incomplete doctorates. *Improving College and University Teaching*, 31, 74-81

- Jayachandran, S. (2015). The roots of gender inequality in developing countries. *Annual Review of Economics*, 7(1), 63-88. doi:10.1146/annurev-economics-080614-11540
- Jones, F. R. (2011). *The future competencies of department chairs: A human resources perspective*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Jong, R. R. (2019). *Factors impacting allied health faculty retention* (Order No. 13809792). Available from ProQuest One Academic. (2313719814). Retrieved from <https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.er.lib.k-state.edu/dissertations-theses/factors-impacting-allied-health-faculty-retention/docview/2313719814/se-2?accountid=11789>
- Jolley, M., Cross, E., & Bryant, M. (2014). A critical challenge: The engagement and assessment of contingent, part-time adjunct faculty professors in United States community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 38(2-3), 218-230. doi:10.1080/10668926.2014.851969.
- Jorgensen, E. R. (2009). On thick description and narrative inquiry in music education. *Research studies in music education*, 31(1): 69-81. Doi: 10.1177/1321103X09103632
- Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (2003). A framework for narrative research proposals in psychology. *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research*, 2, 259-274.
- Kast, F. E., & Rosenzweig, J. E. (1972). General systems theory: Applications for organization and management. *Academy of management journal*, 15(4), 447-465.
- Kemmerer, P. K. (2014). Rigor, Grades, Support, and the Amount of Time Students Spend Outside of Class: A Comparison of Full-and Part-time Faculty in an Entertainment and Music Business Program. *MEIEA Journal*, 14(1).

- Kiedrowski. (2006). Quantitative assessment of a Senge learning organization intervention. *The Learning Organization*, 13(4), 369–383. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09696470610667742>
- Kim, J. H. (2015). *Understanding narrative inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. Sage.
- Kimmel. (1974). Status of Women in the Psychological Community in the Southeast: A Case Study. *The American Psychologist*, 29(7), 519–520. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0020174>
- Kreisberg, L. (2012). Mediation in Conflict Systems. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* *Systems Research*, 29, 149-162. DOI: 10.1002/sres.2103
- Krupa. (2021). *Gender Equality in Higher Education: Faculty Perspectives*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., & Whitt, E. J. (2005). Never let it rest lessons about student success from high-performing colleges and universities. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 37(4), 44-51.
- Kumar, A. (2021). Academic institution as a system and systems’ approach to them and attributes of their excellence. *International Journal of Research – GRANTHAALAYAH*, 9(1), 271-278. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v9.i1.2021.3012>
- Kusku, F. (2003). Employee satisfaction in higher education: The case of academic and administrative staff in Turkey. *Career Development International*, 8(7), 347–356.
- Kuzel, A. (1992). Sampling in qualitative inquiry. In B. Crabtree and W. Miller (eds), *Doing Qualitative Research*, pp. 31-44. Sage.
- Landrum, R. E. (2009). Are there instructional differences between full-time and part-time faculty? *College Teaching*, 57(1), 23-26.

- Langen, J. M. (2011). Evaluation of adjunct faculty in higher education institutions. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 36(2), 185-196.
- Langenberg, D. N. (1998). The subfaculty. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 104, 39-44.
- Lederach, A. J. (2021). 'Each Word is Powerful': Writing and the Ethics of Representation. In *The Companion to Peace and Conflict Fieldwork* (pp. 455-470). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Lewicki, R. J., Barry, B., Saunders, D. M., & Minton, J. W. (2003). *Negotiation* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Maher, M. A., Ford, M. E., & Thompson, C. M. (2004). Degree progress of women doctoral students: Factors that constrain, facilitate, and differentiate. *The Review of Higher Education*, 27(3), 385-408.
- Martin, J. (2002). *Organizational culture: Mapping the terrain*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mason, J. (2018). Intellectual puzzles and research questions (pp. 3-19). *Qualitative Researching*.
- Maturana, & Varela, F. J. (1980). *Autopoiesis and cognition: the realization of the living*. D. Reidel Pub. Co.
- Maxwell, T. W. (2013). A model for reflection to be used in authentic assessment in teacher education. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*, 17(1).
- Mazur, T. (2021). *The Relationship Between Faculty Perception of Departmental Leadership Style and Turnover Intention in Higher Education* (Doctoral dissertation, California Southern University).

- McDermott, Hutchison, N., & Crick, R. (2021). The Evolution of HELIX: A Competency Model for Complex Problem Solving. *INCOSE International Symposium*, 31(1), 907–925.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2334-5837.2021.00877.x>
- McGregor, J., & Fernández, J. (2019). Theorizing qualitative interviews: Two autoethnographic reconstructions. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103(1), 227-247.
- McMahon, M. (1997, December). *Social constructivism and the World Wide Web-A paradigm for learning*. In ASCILITE conference. Perth, Australia (Vol. 327).
- Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer*. Chelsea Green publishing.
- Meyerson, D. (1991). Normal ambiguity? A glimpse of an occupational culture. In P. J. Frost, L. F. Moore, M. Louis, C. Lundberg, & J. Martin (Eds.), *Reframing organizational culture* (pp. 131–144). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Designing your study and selecting a sample. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*, 67(1), 73-104.
- Miller, G. R., & Steinberg, M. (1975). *Between people: A new analysis of interpersonal communication*. Science Research Associates.
- Mills, R. (2006). Leadership in higher education and the second half of life. *Education*, 127(2), 294-302.
- Mlakar, T., Mulej, M., Mulej, N., Rosi, B., & Zenko, Z. (2013). General systems theory completed up by dialectical systems theory. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 1(30), 637-645.
- Monk, D., Dorris, M., & Erickson, R. (2009). In search of a new equilibrium: Economic aspects of higher education's changing faculty. *Education Finance and Policy*, 4(3), 300-318.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp.2009.4.3.300>

- Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Narayan, K., & George, K. (2012). Stories about getting stories: Interactional dimensions in folk and personal narrative research. In *The Sage handbook of interview research*. SAGE Publications Inc. National Institute for Dispute Resolution 1994
- Nerad, M., & Miller, D. S. (1996). Increasing student retention in graduate and professional programs. *New directions for institutional research*, 92, 61-76.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.37019969207>
- Nishii, L. H., Raver, J. L., & Dominguez, A. L. (2000). Results of the Maryland libraries' organizational culture and diversity assessment. *University of Maryland, Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program*. Report available at
<http://www.lib.umd.edu/PUB/diversity.html>
- Norqvist, L., & Ärlestig, H. (2020). Systems thinking in school organizations—perspectives from various leadership levels. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2020-0031>
- Notes and news. (1950). *Oceania*, 21, 236—.
- O'reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2013). 'Unsatisfactory Saturation': a critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 13(2), 190-197.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112446106>
- Paape, J. E., Miller, M. T., Grover, K. S., & Morris, A. A. (2021). Department chair training: Priorities, needs, and preferences. *Community College Enterprise*, 27(1), 38–53.
<https://search-ebscohost-com.er.lib.k-state.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eft&AN=151054704&site=ehost-live>

- Parker, C. (2015). Practicing conflict resolution and cultural responsiveness within interdisciplinary contexts: A study of community service practitioners. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 32(3), 325-357. <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.21115>
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The Social System*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Pascarella, E. T., Duby, P. B., & Iverson, B. K. (1983). A test and reconceptualization of a theoretical model of college withdrawal in a commuter institution setting. *Sociology of Education*, 56, 88-100. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2112657>
- Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). *How college affects students: Vol. 2 A decade of research*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, (3rd eds). Sage.
- Person, & Yao, C. W. (2021). Navigating the academic labyrinth: The influence of leadership and professional development for women engineering department chairs. *The Journal of Faculty Development*, 35(1), 63–69.
link.gale.com/apps/doc/A652826839/AONE?u=ksu&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=6cb69bf4
- Pingree, S., Butler, M., Paisley, W., & Hawkins, R. (1978). Anti-Nepotism's ghost: Attitudes of administrators toward hiring professional couples. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 3(1), 22–29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1978.tb00522.x>
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Suny Press.
<https://sunypress.edu/>
- Pood, E. A. & Glenn, E. C. (1981). Conflict management and the administration of higher education. *Association for Communication Administration Bulletin*, 36, 42-46.
<https://commadministration.org/>

- Rahim, M. A. (1983). Measurement of organizational conflict. *Journal of General Psychology*, 109, 189-199. Doi: 10.1177/0022002795039001003
- Rahim, M. A., (2000). *Managing conflict in organizations* (3rd ed.). Westport, CT: Quorum.
- Reese, S. (2020). Taking the learning organization mainstream and beyond the organizational level: An interview with Peter Senge. *The Learning Organization*, 27(1), 6–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-09-2019-0136>
- Reimer, L. E., Standish, K., & Thiessen, C. (2019). *Expanding the edges of narrative inquiry: Research from the Mauro Institute*. Lexington Books.
- Riley, T. A. & Russell, C. (2013). Leadership in higher education: Examining professional development needs for department chairs. *Review of Higher Education & Self-Learning*, 6(21), 38-57.
- Roach, K. D. (1991). University department chairs' use of compliance-gaining strategies. *Communication Quarterly*, 39(1), 75-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379109369784>
- Roberts, J. & Styron, R., Jr. (2010). Student satisfaction and persistence: Factors vital to student retention. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 1-18.
<https://www.springer.com/journal/11162>
- Roch. (2019). *Self-Efficacy, Motivation, and Persistence Factors at Higher Learning Institutions*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. Sage.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446288009>
- Ryan, M. L. (2009). Temporal paradoxes in narrative. *Style*, 43(2), 142-164.
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, 1-440.
- Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

- Schmidt, S. W., & Biniecki, S. M. Y. (2023). *Organization and administration of adult education programs: A guide for practitioners*. (2nd ed.). IAP.
<https://www.infoagepub.com/>
- Schroeder, C. L. (1802). Interlude: Read (Writ)ing classrooms with department chairs. In *Reinventing the university* (p. 70–). Utah State University Press.
<https://upcolorado.com/utah-state-university-press>
- Schulz, S.D. (2009). *Predicting job satisfaction among Iowa community college adjunct faculty members: Use and application of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI 3389145)
- Seedorf, R. G. (1991, April). *The transition of the university department chair: What must be left behind?* Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. <https://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Meeting>
- Seedorf, R. G., & Gmelch, W. H. (1989). *The Department Chair: A Descriptive Study*.
- Sellani, R., & Harrington, W. (2002). Addressing administrator/faculty conflict in an academic online environment. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 5(2), 131-145.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(02\)00090-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(02)00090-8)
- Senge, P. M. (1990). The art and practice of the learning organization.
- Senge, P. M. (1991). Team learning. *The McKinsey Quarterly*, (2), 82-94.
<https://www.mckinsey.com/quarterly/overview>
- Senge, P. (2001). Peter Senge and the learning organization.
- Senge. (2006). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization* (Revised and updated.). Doubleday/Currency.

- Senge, P. M., Scharmer, C. O., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B. S. (2004). Awakening faith in an alternative future. *Reflections*, 5(7), 1-11. <https://reflectionsjournal.net/>
- Shaked, H. (2022). Instructional leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic: The case of Israel. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 17411432221102521.
- Shaked, H., & Schechter, C. (2013). Seeing wholes: The concept of systems thinking and its implementation in school leadership. *International review of education*, 59(6), 771-791. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-013-9387-8>
- Shaked, H., & Schechter, C. (2020). Systems thinking leadership: New explorations for school improvement. *Management in Education*, 34(3), 107-114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020620907327>
- Shayne. (2019). *An Exploration of Adjunct Faculty Experiences*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing
- Siegfried, J. J. & White, K. J. (1973). Teaching and Publishing as Determinants of Academic Salaries. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 4(2), 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220485.1973.10845367>
- Smith, B. (1995). *Hidden Rules, Secret Agendas: Challenges Facing Contemporary Women Doctoral Students*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, 1995). <https://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/2023-Annual-Meeting#:~:text=Each%20year%2C%20the%20American%20Educational%20Research%20Association%20Annual,will%20be%20held%20in%20Chicago%2C%20IL%2C%20April%2013-16.>

- Smith, D. L., Rollins, K. B., & Smith, L. J. (2012). Back to the faculty: Transition from university department leadership. *Innovative Higher Education*, 37(1), 53-63.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-011-9186-8>
- Spratlen, L. P. (1995). Interpersonal conflict which includes mistreatment in a university workplace. *Violence and Victims*, 10(4), 285-97. <https://doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1891/0886-6708.10.4.285>
- Stawnychko. (2021). *Leadership Development Experiences of Department Chairs at a Canadian University*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2015). Reframing academic advising for student success: From advisor to cultural navigator. *NACADA Journal*, 35(1), 56-63. doi:10.12930/nacada-14-199
- Sullivan, L. A. (2019). *Department chairs in the crucible: Managing faculty conflict in the age of institutional change* (Order No. 27546137). Available from ProQuest One Academic. (2351619893). <https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/department-chairs-crucible-managing-faculty/docview/2351619893/se-2?accountid=11789>
- Thébaud, S. (2015). Business as Plan B. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 60(4), 671-711.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/asq>
- Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1974). *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*. Mountain View, CA: Xicom.
- Thompson, K. J., & Behfer, L.T. (Eds.). (2007). *Conflict in organizational groups: New directions in theory and practice*. Northwestern University Press.
<https://nupress.northwestern.edu/>

- Thompson, J. L. (1999). *Leadership and influence of university department chairs: A comparison of department members' and chairs' perceptions*. University of South Dakota. <https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/leadership-influence-university-department-chairs/docview/304544346/se-2>
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of educational research*, 45(1), 89-125.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045001089>
- Tjosvold, D. & Wisse, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Power and interdependence in organizations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. www.cambridge.org/9780521703284
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “Big-Tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- Trammel, M. S. & Gumpertz, M. (2012). Maybe we’re not so smart: Identifying subconscious bias and microaggressions in academia. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* (11)8.
<https://www.diverseeducation.com/opinion/article/15092370/maybe-were-not-so-smart-identifying-subconscious-bias-and-micro-aggressions-in-academia>
- Tucker, A. (1981). *Chairing the academic department: Leadership among peers*. New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40163761>
- Tufford, & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Social Work: QSW: Research and Practice*, 11(1), 80–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010368316>
- Umbach, P. (2007). How effective are they? Exploring the impact of contingent faculty on undergraduate education. *The Review of Higher Education*, 30(2), 91-123.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2006.0080>

- Van Vught, F. (2008). Mission diversity and reputation in higher education. *Higher Education Policy*, 21(2), 151–174. <https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2008.5>
- Volkwein, J. F. & LaNasa, S. (1999, November). Teamwork and interpersonal conflict among university administrators. ASHE annual meeting. *The Association for the Study of Higher Education*, San Antonio, TX. <https://www.ashe.ws/conference>
- Vrhovec, S., & Markelj, B. (2021). The relation between project team conflict and user resistance in software projects. *PLoS ONE*, 16(11), e0260059. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A682753026/AONE?u=ksu&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=ac745499>
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. *Readings on the development of children*, 23(3), 34-41.
- Wallin, D. (2004). Valuing professional colleagues: Adjunct faculty in community and technical colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28(4), 373-391. doi:10.1080/10668920490424087
- Watson, N.T., Rogers, K. S., Watson, K. L., & Yep, L. H. C. (2019). Integrating social justice-based conflict resolution into higher education settings: Faculty, staff, and student professional development through mediation training. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. (36)251–262. <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.21233>
- Watson, N. T., Watson, K. L., & Stanley, C. A. (2017). In F. Nafukho & B. Irby (Eds.), *Conflict management and dialogue in higher education: A global perspective* (2nd ed.). Information Age Publishing. <https://www.infoagepub.com/products/Conflict-Management-and-Dialogue-in-Higher-Education-2nd-Ed>

- Williams, F. I., Campbell, C., & Denton, L. T. (2013). Incivility in academe: Strategies for managing high-performing instigators. *Journal of Business and Educational Leadership*, 4(1), 148. Retrieved from <https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/incivility-academe-strategies-managing-high/docview/1498930256/se-2>
- Winslow, S., & Davis, S. (2016). Gender Inequality Across the Academic Life Course. *Sociology Compass*, 10(5), 404-416. doi: 10.1111/soc4.12372
- Wolverton, M., Wolverton, M. L., & Gmelch, W. H. (1999). The impact of role conflict and ambiguity on academic deans. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 70(1), 80-106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1999.11780755>
- Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The qualitative report*, 20(2), 134-152. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2102>
- Zeegers, M., & Barron, D. (2015). *Milestone moments in getting your PhD in qualitative research*. Chandos Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1016/C2014-0-02299-X>
- Zhou, J., & Cole, D. (2016). Comparing international and American students: Involvement in college life and overall satisfaction. *Higher Education*, 73(5), 655-672. doi:10.1007/s10734-016-9982-2
- Roghanizad, M. M. and Bohns, V. K. (2022). Should I ask over Zoom, phone, email, or in-person? Communication channel and predicted versus actual compliance. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Vol 13(7) 1163-1172. DOI: 10.1177/19485506211063259

Appendix A Statement of Informed Consent

Narrative Inquiry of Department Chairs and Interpersonal Conflict

Thank you for taking the time to read this form. My name is Audrey Ayers, and I am a doctoral student in the Adult Learning and Leadership program at Kansas State University. I am working on a research project exploring the lived experiences of academic department chairs with interpersonal conflict in the university institution.

You are invited to participate in the research study in which three (3) interviews are part of the study. Your participation is expected not to exceed three (3) hours including interviews, emails, and member-checking for accuracy. Please read the information below which explains more about the study and your possible participation in it. After reading the information, if you would like to participate in the study, enter your name and signature.

After the third interview is complete, you will be given a \$50 Amazon gift card as compensation for your participation.

Project title: Narrative Inquiry of Department Chairs and Interpersonal Conflict [IRB-11340]

Project approval date: 10/10/2022 Project expiration date:10/09/2025
Length of study: 1 year

Principal investigator: Susan Yelich-Biniecki, Ph.D.

Co-investigator: Audrey E. Ayers

Contact details for problems/questions: ayersaudrey@ksu.edu

Kansas State University Institutional Review Board Chair contact information:

1. Lisa Rubin, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects
203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224
2. Heath Ritter, Acting Associate Vice President for Research Compliance
203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

Purpose of the research: To explore the interpersonal conflict of department chairs at public four-year Doctoral Institutions

Procedures or methods to be used: The research study will have 6-8 participants and each participant will be interviewed 3 times.

Each of the three semi-structured interviews will be 45 minutes in length and will be conducted in person or via Zoom at the convenience of the participant. Each participant will choose their own pseudonym to be used during the research study and on all data materials. The researcher will transcribe all interviews and send transcripts to participants to verify accuracy.

Participants may choose to opt out of the research study at any time.

Risks or discomforts anticipated: There is minimal risk in participating in this research study. The potential risk is identification; however, the researcher will work diligently to preserve confidentiality of the participants and any part of their lived experiences. Each participant will choose their own pseudonym to be used in all data materials for confidentiality.

Benefits anticipated: Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences with conflict which may provide some therapeutic effects.

Extent of confidentiality: All data (interview recordings, transcripts, data analysis, findings, etc.) will be maintained on the researcher's password protected computer. Data materials will not include the names of participants or individuals mentioned during data collection process. Interview recordings will be deleted after transcription.

The data collected, except the interview recordings, could be used for future research studies by the co-investigators without additional consent, but again, the participants' names will never be used.

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

**PARTICIPANT
NAME:**

**PARTICIPANT
SIGNATURE:**

**WITNESS TO
SIGNATURE: (PROJECT
STAFF)**

DATE:

DATE:

Thank you!

Audrey Ayers

Appendix B Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview questions

Interview #1

1. Can you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, the first time you faced personal conflict as department chair?
2. Can you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, your most recent experience with personal conflict as department chair?
3. Is there anything else you would like to talk about or tell me?

Interview #2

1. Can you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, the first time you acted as a mediator, third party, or neutral party as a department chair?
2. Can you describe, in as much detail as you can remember, the most recent time you acted as a mediator, third party, or neutral party as a department chair?
3. Is there anything else you would like to talk about or tell me?

Interview #3

1. Can you tell me about a time, in as much detail as you can remember, you have experienced conflict negatively impacted the department?
2. Can you tell me about a time, in as much detail as you can remember, you have experienced conflict positively impacted the department?
3. Is there anything else you would like to talk about or tell me?

Appendix C Structural Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Fil es</u>	<u>Refer ences</u>	<u>Created on</u>	<u>Creat ed by</u>	<u>Modified on</u>	<u>Modif ied by</u>	<u>first cycle codin g meth od</u>
Conflict Definitions	6	7	2/11/2023 9:49 AM	AA	2/21/2023 3:24 PM	AA	struct ural
Conflict goes beyond university	1	1	2/18/2023 6:23 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:23 PM	AA	struct ural
Conflict reaching outside the department	14	32	2/11/2023 9:32 AM	AA	2/19/2023 8:11 PM	AA	struct ural
Conflict Resolution Efforts	17	71	1/31/2023 6:51 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:15 PM	AA	struct ural
Conflicts between Chair and others	11	41	1/31/2023 6:32 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:15 PM	AA	struct ural
dissertation committee	1	2	2/18/2023 6:06 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:07 PM	AA	struct ural
faculty issues drip to students	1	2	2/18/2023 6:02 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:05 PM	AA	struct ural
faculty vs staff	2	2	2/18/2023 11:27 AM	AA	2/19/2023 3:38 PM	AA	struct ural
faculty vs student	3	9	2/18/2023 8:06 AM	AA	2/18/2023 5:52 PM	AA	struct ural
grad student	1	1	2/19/2023 4:44 PM	AA	2/19/2023 4:51 PM	AA	struct ural

Mediating Conflict	13	36	1/31/2023 7:15 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:41 PM	AA	structural
Negative impact from conflict on department office manager	11	24	2/6/2023 8:45 AM	AA	2/19/2023 8:03 PM	AA	structural
Positive Impact from Conflict on Department	10	15	2/6/2023 8:47 AM	AA	2/20/2023 7:13 PM	AA	structural
Road to Chair Position	10	18	2/6/2023 8:57 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:50 PM	AA	structural

Appendix D Appendix D In Vivo and Process Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>File s</u>	<u>Refer ences</u>	<u>Created on</u>	<u>Creat ed by</u>	<u>Modified on</u>	<u>Modifi ed by</u>	<u>first cycle codin g meth od</u>
accused of gatekeeping	1	1	2/19/2023 8:17 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:17 PM	AA	In Vivo
ad hoc committee	4	6	2/18/2023 8:02 AM	AA	2/20/2023 9:28 AM	AA	In Vivo
addressing issue	1	1	2/19/2023 5:41 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:41 PM	AA	In Vivo
adjunct	1	3	2/16/2023 6:11 PM	AA	2/16/2023 6:12 PM	AA	In Vivo
ambition	1	2	2/14/2023 6:31 PM	AA	2/14/2023 6:31 PM	AA	In Vivo
annual performance	6	13	2/17/2023 8:40 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:04 PM	AA	In Vivo
assessment	1	2	2/16/2023 6:03 PM	AA	2/16/2023 6:04 PM	AA	In Vivo
assume positive intent	1	1	2/19/2023 5:51 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:51 PM	AA	In Vivo
band aid	1	1	2/17/2023 6:51 AM	AA	2/17/2023 6:51 AM	AA	In Vivo
being present in office	2	2	2/17/2023 7:28 AM	AA	2/18/2023 6:13 PM	AA	In Vivo
beyond me	1	1	2/19/2023 8:07 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:07 PM	AA	In Vivo

board of regents	2	3	2/15/2023 8:19 PM	AA	2/18/2023 8:57 AM	AA	In Vivo
boiling under surface	3	3	2/17/2023 7:44 AM	AA	2/18/2023 12:13 PM	AA	In Vivo
build diversity	1	1	2/17/2023 10:34 AM	AA	2/17/2023 10:34 AM	AA	In Vivo
burn out	1	4	2/15/2023 8:34 PM	AA	2/16/2023 6:08 PM	AA	In Vivo
called on carpet	1	1	2/18/2023 8:11 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:11 AM	AA	In Vivo
cause challenges	1	1	2/18/2023 8:28 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:28 AM	AA	In Vivo
cc sort of cheating	1	1	2/19/2023 5:39 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:39 PM	AA	In Vivo
created a schism between faculty	2	2	2/17/2023 7:54 AM	AA	2/18/2023 9:18 AM	AA	In Vivo
deal with the hint of conflict	4	9	2/18/2023 9:35 AM	AA	2/22/2023 1:37 PM	AA	In Vivo
demonstrate good faith	1	1	2/15/2023 10:24 AM	AA	2/15/2023 10:24 AM	AA	In Vivo
department rules	4	12	2/17/2023 7:57 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:14 PM	AA	In Vivo

departmental culture	3	4	2/19/2023 7:11 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:04 PM	AA	In Vivo
did not reappoint faculty	1	1	2/18/2023 9:29 AM	AA	2/18/2023 9:30 AM	AA	In Vivo
didn't tell chair	2	3	2/18/2023 7:04 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:10 AM	AA	In Vivo
disbanded departments	1	1	2/18/2023 6:16 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:16 PM	AA	In Vivo
don't take advantage of me	1	1	2/17/2023 8:59 AM	AA	2/17/2023 8:59 AM	AA	In Vivo
don't want to be seen as the problem child dept	1	1	2/18/2023 6:21 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:21 PM	AA	In Vivo
driven to research	1	2	2/17/2023 10:37 AM	AA	2/18/2023 7:01 AM	AA	In Vivo
electronic ballots	1	1	2/19/2023 6:42 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:42 PM	AA	In Vivo
faculty evaluation	3	7	2/16/2023 6:02 PM	AA	2/18/2023 12:22 PM	AA	In Vivo
faculty felt betrayed	1	3	2/18/2023 5:39 PM	AA	2/18/2023 5:44 PM	AA	In Vivo
felt threatened	5	8	2/17/2023 10:38 AM	AA	2/19/2023 5:29 PM	AA	In Vivo
ganging up	2	2	2/17/2023 7:25 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:28 AM	AA	In Vivo
get it over with	1	1	2/19/2023 5:42 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:42 PM	AA	In Vivo
got crosswise	1	3	2/18/2023 8:20 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:25 AM	AA	In Vivo

grant proposals	1	1	2/17/2023 8:39 AM	AA	2/17/2023 8:39 AM	AA	In Vivo
grievance	1	1	2/18/2023 5:35 PM	AA	2/18/2023 5:35 PM	AA	In Vivo
guilty of undersharing	1	1	2/19/2023 8:17 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:17 PM	AA	In Vivo
harbored resentment	1	1	2/18/2023 8:11 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:11 AM	AA	In Vivo
hierarchy	4	5	2/11/2023 12:18 PM	AA	2/21/2023 1:25 PM	AA	In Vivo
hiring diverse faculty	1	1	2/17/2023 10:35 AM	AA	2/17/2023 10:35 AM	AA	In Vivo
hiring staff vets	1	1	2/19/2023 5:43 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:43 PM	AA	In Vivo
horrible leadership	1	2	2/18/2023 8:46 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:46 AM	AA	In Vivo
imbalance of equity	4	17	2/12/2023 6:22 PM	AA	2/18/2023 8:36 AM	AA	In Vivo
inherited conflict	2	2	2/17/2023 8:24 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:48 AM	AA	In Vivo
institutional knowledge	4	8	2/12/2023 5:56 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:13 PM	AA	In Vivo
instructor	1	1	2/16/2023 6:14 PM	AA	2/16/2023 6:14 PM	AA	In Vivo
interconnected roles	1	1	2/19/2023 7:30 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:30 PM	AA	In Vivo
it eats me up	3	5	2/17/2023 8:08 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:12 AM	AA	In Vivo
junior faculty	4	8	2/17/2023 10:39 AM	AA	2/18/2023 6:12 PM	AA	In Vivo

kumbaya	2	2	2/19/2023 7:10 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:43 PM	AA	In Vivo
labeled as troublemaker	1	2	2/18/2023 8:40 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:42 AM	AA	In Vivo
load credit	3	9	2/15/2023 8:19 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:16 PM	AA	In Vivo
made intent known	1	3	2/19/2023 7:11 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:27 PM	AA	In Vivo
making bad decisions	1	3	2/18/2023 8:31 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:36 AM	AA	In Vivo
mansplain	2	2	2/18/2023 8:52 AM	AA	2/21/2023 1:21 PM	AA	In Vivo
mean shit	3	6	2/18/2023 8:52 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:29 AM	AA	In Vivo
mental health	3	8	2/15/2023 8:27 PM	AA	2/17/2023 8:09 AM	AA	In Vivo
microaggression	2	2	2/18/2023 8:29 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:14 AM	AA	In Vivo
mutually beneficial	1	1	2/19/2023 7:13 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:13 PM	AA	In Vivo
new ideas	1	1	2/17/2023 6:41 AM	AA	2/17/2023 6:41 AM	AA	In Vivo
one thorn	2	5	2/17/2023 8:59 AM	AA	2/18/2023 7:14 AM	AA	In Vivo
passive aggressive	3	8	2/17/2023 8:33 AM	AA	2/19/2023 5:40 PM	AA	In Vivo
perceived or perception	4	6	2/14/2023 6:41 PM	AA	2/18/2023 12:58 PM	AA	In Vivo
perceived subjective of excellence	1	1	2/19/2023 7:21 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:21 PM	AA	In Vivo

power	2	3	2/17/2023 7:07 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:29 AM	AA	In Vivo
prayer	1	1	2/19/2023 7:41 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:41 PM	AA	In Vivo
promotion	2	3	2/16/2023 6:15 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:57 PM	AA	In Vivo
publishing	1	1	2/17/2023 8:38 AM	AA	2/17/2023 8:38 AM	AA	In Vivo
pure evil	1	1	2/18/2023 8:47 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:47 AM	AA	In Vivo
put in awkward position	1	1	2/18/2023 5:42 PM	AA	2/18/2023 5:42 PM	AA	In Vivo
rabble rouse	1	1	2/18/2023 8:29 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:29 AM	AA	In Vivo
retaliation	3	5	2/17/2023 8:06 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:26 AM	AA	In Vivo
root cause	2	6	2/17/2023 6:44 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:36 AM	AA	In Vivo
rubric	1	1	2/16/2023 6:03 PM	AA	2/16/2023 6:03 PM	AA	In Vivo
Sabotage	3	5	2/11/2023 9:43 AM	AA	2/18/2023 12:00 PM	AA	In Vivo
shared camaraderie	2	2	2/17/2023 6:40 AM	AA	2/19/2023 5:46 PM	AA	In Vivo
shepherded policy	1	2	2/19/2023 8:10 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:11 PM	AA	In Vivo
shouldering the stress	2	4	2/17/2023 7:45 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:38 AM	AA	In Vivo
silver lining	1	2	2/14/2023 11:32 AM	AA	2/14/2023 6:29 PM	AA	In Vivo

sneaky	1	1	2/18/2023 11:39 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:39 AM	AA	In Vivo
so proud	1	1	2/17/2023 8:33 AM	AA	2/17/2023 8:33 AM	AA	In Vivo
squeaky wheel	3	5	2/15/2023 10:16 AM	AA	2/19/2023 8:16 PM	AA	In Vivo
staying connected	3	4	2/18/2023 8:41 AM	AA	2/21/2023 3:08 PM	AA	In Vivo
straw votes	1	1	2/19/2023 6:39 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:39 PM	AA	In Vivo
students said toxic environment	1	2	2/18/2023 6:07 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:07 PM	AA	In Vivo
support system	1	1	2/17/2023 8:08 AM	AA	2/17/2023 8:09 AM	AA	In Vivo
systemic in vivo	7	12	2/11/2023 9:41 AM	AA	2/20/2023 7:48 PM	AA	In Vivo
tell everything	3	5	2/18/2023 8:59 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:39 AM	AA	In Vivo
tenure	5	6	2/16/2023 6:14 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:57 PM	AA	In Vivo
the dark side	1	1	2/19/2023 7:29 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:29 PM	AA	In Vivo
the deark side	1	1	2/19/2023 7:29 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:29 PM	AA	In Vivo
thick skin	1	1	2/18/2023 11:15 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:15 AM	AA	In Vivo
throwing weight around	2	4	2/17/2023 7:08 AM	AA	2/18/2023 12:00 PM	AA	In Vivo
waiver	1	1	2/15/2023 10:46 AM	AA	2/15/2023 10:46 AM	AA	In Vivo

who are you leading	1	1	2/19/2023 8:18 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:18 PM	AA	In Vivo
accusing	6	11	2/17/2023 8:00 AM	AA	2/19/2023 8:17 PM	AA	Proce ss
advising students	2	4	2/18/2023 7:38 AM	AA	2/18/2023 1:02 PM	AA	Proce ss
advocating	5	16	2/12/2023 5:32 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:29 PM	AA	Proce ss
affirming	3	5	2/19/2023 7:22 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:13 PM	AA	Proce ss
analyzing	7	19	2/12/2023 6:22 PM	AA	2/18/2023 12:16 PM	AA	Proce ss
arguing	1	1	2/19/2023 6:38 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:38 PM	AA	Proce ss
asking a lot	2	5	2/15/2023 8:36 PM	AA	2/17/2023 7:50 AM	AA	Proce ss
asking questions	3	3	2/14/2023 6:40 PM	AA	2/22/2023 11:41 AM	AA	Proce ss
assessing GTAs	1	2	2/18/2023 7:47 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:02 AM	AA	Proce ss
avoiding	6	11	2/14/2023 11:20 AM	AA	2/21/2023 1:32 PM	AA	Proce ss
being attacked	3	8	2/17/2023 8:00 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:28 AM	AA	Proce ss
being aware	6	15	2/12/2023 5:32 PM	AA	2/21/2023 3:10 PM	AA	Proce ss
being civil	1	1	2/18/2023 6:48 AM	AA	2/18/2023 6:48 AM	AA	Proce ss

being extremely defensive	1	1	2/19/2023 3:40 PM	AA	2/19/2023 3:40 PM	AA	Proce ss
being heard	1	1	2/19/2023 7:40 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:40 PM	AA	Proce ss
being transparent	1	1	2/18/2023 7:27 AM	AA	2/18/2023 7:27 AM	AA	Proce ss
bringing to surface	1	3	2/14/2023 11:31 AM	AA	2/15/2023 10:16 AM	AA	Proce ss
building consensus	1	1	2/17/2023 7:33 AM	AA	2/17/2023 7:33 AM	AA	Proce ss
bullying	3	3	2/17/2023 10:39 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:28 AM	AA	Proce ss
communicating	6	19	2/14/2023 6:30 PM	AA	2/18/2023 10:02 AM	AA	Proce ss
competing resources	7	13	2/14/2023 6:35 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:48 PM	AA	Proce ss
complaining	5	8	2/17/2023 7:27 AM	AA	2/18/2023 12:14 PM	AA	Proce ss
compromising	4	14	2/14/2023 11:25 AM	AA	2/17/2023 7:59 AM	AA	Proce ss
cooling off period	1	1	2/18/2023 11:24 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:24 AM	AA	Proce ss
co-teaching	1	1	2/18/2023 9:19 AM	AA	2/18/2023 9:20 AM	AA	Proce ss
criticizing	1	1	2/18/2023 11:28 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:28 AM	AA	Proce ss
discriminating	4	5	2/17/2023 10:19 AM	AA	2/18/2023 5:49 PM	AA	Proce ss
distributing money	2	2	2/14/2023 6:36 PM	AA	2/18/2023 8:37 AM	AA	Proce ss

documenting	2	5	2/17/2023 8:47 AM	AA	2/18/2023 7:26 AM	AA	Proce ss
eliminating	3	10	2/12/2023 5:17 PM	AA	2/18/2023 8:57 AM	AA	Proce ss
encouraging	1	1	2/19/2023 7:25 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:25 PM	AA	Proce ss
encouraging academic rigor	1	1	2/18/2023 5:50 PM	AA	2/18/2023 5:50 PM	AA	Proce ss
encouraging ideas	1	2	2/17/2023 7:33 AM	AA	2/17/2023 7:36 AM	AA	Proce ss
enforcing	1	1	2/19/2023 7:13 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:13 PM	AA	Proce ss
exposing personal info	2	2	2/19/2023 5:23 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:38 PM	AA	Proce ss
facing issue	1	3	2/12/2023 6:21 PM	AA	2/14/2023 6:47 PM	AA	Proce ss
feeling alone	5	6	2/17/2023 8:09 AM	AA	2/18/2023 6:25 PM	AA	Proce ss
feeling ashamed	1	1	2/17/2023 10:22 AM	AA	2/17/2023 10:22 AM	AA	Proce ss
feeling blindsided	2	5	2/14/2023 11:14 AM	AA	2/20/2023 9:30 AM	AA	Proce ss
feeling dismissed	1	1	2/18/2023 8:48 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:48 AM	AA	Proce ss
feeling stuck	2	2	2/18/2023 8:54 AM	AA	2/18/2023 5:51 PM	AA	Proce ss
feeling supported	2	2	2/17/2023 9:08 AM	AA	2/18/2023 12:05 PM	AA	Proce ss
feeling unsupported	3	4	2/17/2023 9:07 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:27 PM	AA	Proce ss

feeling vulnerable	5	10	2/12/2023 5:51 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:05 PM	AA	Proce ss
getting involved	1	1	2/18/2023 5:29 PM	AA	2/18/2023 5:34 PM	AA	Proce ss
giving back	1	1	2/15/2023 10:26 AM	AA	2/15/2023 10:26 AM	AA	Proce ss
giving heads up	2	2	2/12/2023 6:12 PM	AA	2/18/2023 11:30 AM	AA	Proce ss
going around me	2	4	2/17/2023 10:31 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:39 AM	AA	Proce ss
gossiping	3	3	2/18/2023 12:08 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:49 PM	AA	Proce ss
grumbling	1	1	2/18/2023 11:19 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:19 AM	AA	Proce ss
handling situation	1	2	2/18/2023 11:25 AM	AA	2/18/2023 11:30 AM	AA	Proce ss
impacting students	10	34	2/14/2023 11:22 AM	AA	2/18/2023 6:10 PM	AA	Proce ss
includin	1	1	2/19/2023 7:22 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:22 PM	AA	Proce ss
increasing	1	1	2/12/2023 5:16 PM	AA	2/12/2023 5:16 PM	AA	Proce ss
injecting humor	1	1	2/19/2023 7:43 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:43 PM	AA	Proce ss
insulting	3	3	2/17/2023 8:45 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:07 AM	AA	Proce ss
joking	1	2	2/17/2023 10:28 AM	AA	2/17/2023 10:32 AM	AA	Proce ss
learning	1	5	2/12/2023 5:31 PM	AA	2/14/2023 6:28 PM	AA	Proce ss

leaving people out	1	2	2/12/2023 6:29 PM	AA	2/12/2023 6:31 PM	AA	Proce ss
letting it go	1	1	2/19/2023 6:52 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:52 PM	AA	Proce ss
listening	5	6	2/14/2023 6:40 PM	AA	2/20/2023 8:08 PM	AA	Proce ss
looking elsewhere for job	1	2	2/16/2023 6:05 PM	AA	2/16/2023 6:09 PM	AA	Proce ss
losing good faculty	4	5	2/16/2023 6:09 PM	AA	2/18/2023 8:54 AM	AA	Proce ss
losing opinions	1	1	2/19/2023 6:43 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:43 PM	AA	Proce ss
lying	2	2	2/17/2023 8:59 AM	AA	2/18/2023 12:04 PM	AA	Proce ss
making it harder for people	1	1	2/18/2023 10:02 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:02 AM	AA	Proce ss
making things public	1	1	2/18/2023 8:43 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:43 AM	AA	Proce ss
managing personalities	3	6	2/17/2023 7:34 AM	AA	2/20/2023 8:45 PM	AA	Proce ss
manipulating	3	4	2/17/2023 7:25 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:47 AM	AA	Proce ss
mentoring	3	6	2/16/2023 6:07 PM	AA	2/18/2023 12:23 PM	AA	Proce ss
miscommunicating	1	1	2/19/2023 3:41 PM	AA	2/19/2023 3:41 PM	AA	Proce ss
misunderstanding	1	2	2/14/2023 11:35 AM	AA	2/14/2023 11:37 AM	AA	Proce ss
navigating	3	3	2/14/2023 6:46 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:39 PM	AA	Proce ss

negotiating	4	16	2/12/2023 5:27 PM	AA	2/21/2023 3:16 PM	AA	Proce ss
not collaborating	2	2	2/18/2023 7:20 AM	AA	2/18/2023 7:40 AM	AA	Proce ss
not fulfilling duties	2	2	2/18/2023 7:57 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:31 AM	AA	Proce ss
not wanting to change	7	15	2/12/2023 5:57 PM	AA	2/21/2023 1:32 PM	AA	Proce ss
overreacting	1	1	2/18/2023 8:07 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:07 AM	AA	Proce ss
playing favorites	2	4	2/18/2023 10:07 AM	AA	2/19/2023 8:14 PM	AA	Proce ss
poisoning grad student culture	2	3	2/18/2023 12:03 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:08 PM	AA	Proce ss
pressuring	1	1	2/18/2023 6:08 PM	AA	2/18/2023 6:08 PM	AA	Proce ss
punishing	1	1	2/18/2023 12:26 PM	AA	2/18/2023 12:26 PM	AA	Proce ss
recruiting	2	2	2/14/2023 6:35 PM	AA	2/18/2023 8:38 AM	AA	Proce ss
reframing	1	2	2/18/2023 10:21 AM	AA	2/21/2023 1:29 PM	AA	Proce ss
refusing to be silenced	1	3	2/18/2023 9:00 AM	AA	2/18/2023 9:03 AM	AA	Proce ss
relying on	1	1	2/12/2023 5:55 PM	AA	2/12/2023 5:55 PM	AA	Proce ss
remembering with disdain	1	5	2/12/2023 5:24 PM	AA	2/12/2023 6:37 PM	AA	Proce ss
requiring	1	2	2/15/2023 8:37 PM	AA	2/15/2023 8:46 PM	AA	Proce ss

scheduling	4	8	2/17/2023 7:45 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:46 PM	AA	Proce ss
seeking input	11	29	2/12/2023 6:00 PM	AA	2/21/2023 3:21 PM	AA	Proce ss
setting expectations	2	4	2/17/2023 7:56 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:46 PM	AA	Proce ss
setting of mediation	1	1	2/19/2023 7:42 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:42 PM	AA	Proce ss
setting the record straight	1	2	2/19/2023 5:14 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:15 PM	AA	Proce ss
shielding chair	2	4	2/19/2023 5:22 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:59 PM	AA	Proce ss
shuttling	1	1	2/19/2023 7:39 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:39 PM	AA	Proce ss
solving	5	8	2/12/2023 5:34 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:32 PM	AA	Proce ss
staying engaged	1	3	2/18/2023 8:41 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:43 AM	AA	Proce ss
strategizing	1	2	2/18/2023 8:42 AM	AA	2/18/2023 8:43 AM	AA	Proce ss
supporting faculty	4	6	2/17/2023 8:30 AM	AA	2/19/2023 7:28 PM	AA	Proce ss
talking to HR	2	2	2/18/2023 9:50 AM	AA	2/21/2023 3:14 PM	AA	Proce ss
talking to ombudsperson	1	1	2/18/2023 10:01 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:01 AM	AA	Proce ss
thinking forward	1	1	2/14/2023 6:27 PM	AA	2/14/2023 6:27 PM	AA	Proce ss
troubleshooting	4	15	2/12/2023 5:36 PM	AA	2/18/2023 10:01 AM	AA	Proce ss

underperforming	2	7	2/17/2023 7:55 AM	AA	2/18/2023 10:32 AM	AA	Proce ss
understanding	2	6	2/14/2023 11:16 AM	AA	2/15/2023 10:50 AM	AA	Proce ss
understands the ethos	1	1	2/19/2023 7:50 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:50 PM	AA	Proce ss
updating	1	1	2/12/2023 5:16 PM	AA	2/12/2023 5:16 PM	AA	Proce ss
upsetting	1	1	2/19/2023 6:51 PM	AA	2/19/2023 6:51 PM	AA	Proce ss
uses sarcasm	1	1	2/19/2023 7:50 PM	AA	2/19/2023 7:50 PM	AA	Proce ss
valuing excellence	2	4	2/19/2023 7:06 PM	AA	2/19/2023 8:19 PM	AA	Proce ss
venting	2	4	2/19/2023 5:00 PM	AA	2/20/2023 9:36 AM	AA	Proce ss
wearing masks	1	1	2/19/2023 5:37 PM	AA	2/19/2023 5:38 PM	AA	Proce ss
willing to communicate	5	9	2/14/2023 6:46 PM	AA	2/20/2023 8:13 PM	AA	Proce ss
working for best interest of department	4	7	2/18/2023 11:40 AM	AA	2/22/2023 11:50 AM	AA	Proce ss
worrying	5	11	2/12/2023 5:20 PM	AA	2/19/2023 3:40 PM	AA	Proce ss

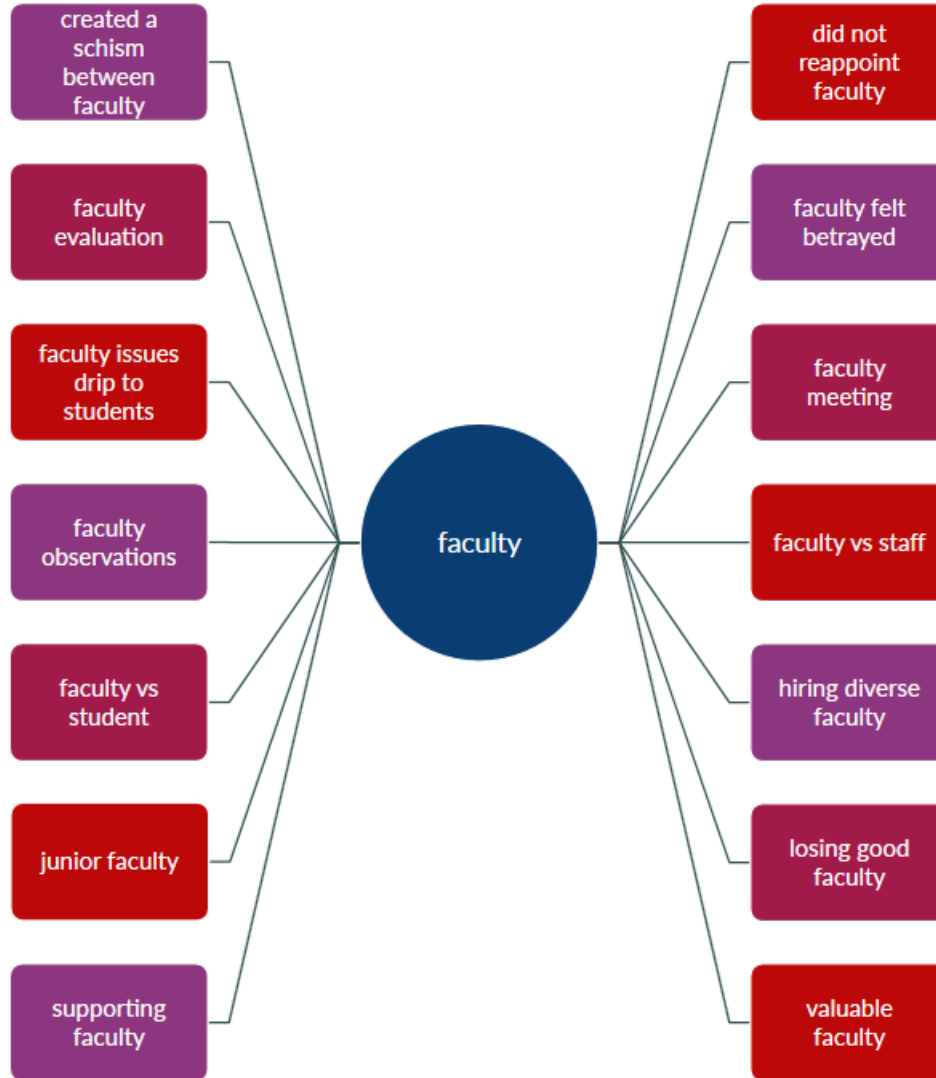
Appendix E Second Cycle Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>second cycle coding method</u>
Conflict goes beyond university	conflict goes beyond department
Conflict reaching outside the department	conflict goes beyond department
Mediating Conflict	conflict resolution
agency	eclectic
autonomy	eclectic
being accountable	eclectic
clear is kind	eclectic
conflicts are stacking	eclectic
constructive use of power	eclectic
diffuse situation	eclectic
emotional intelligence	eclectic
empowering	eclectic
fair	eclectic
feeling responsible	eclectic
felt sorry	eclectic
get the whole story	eclectic

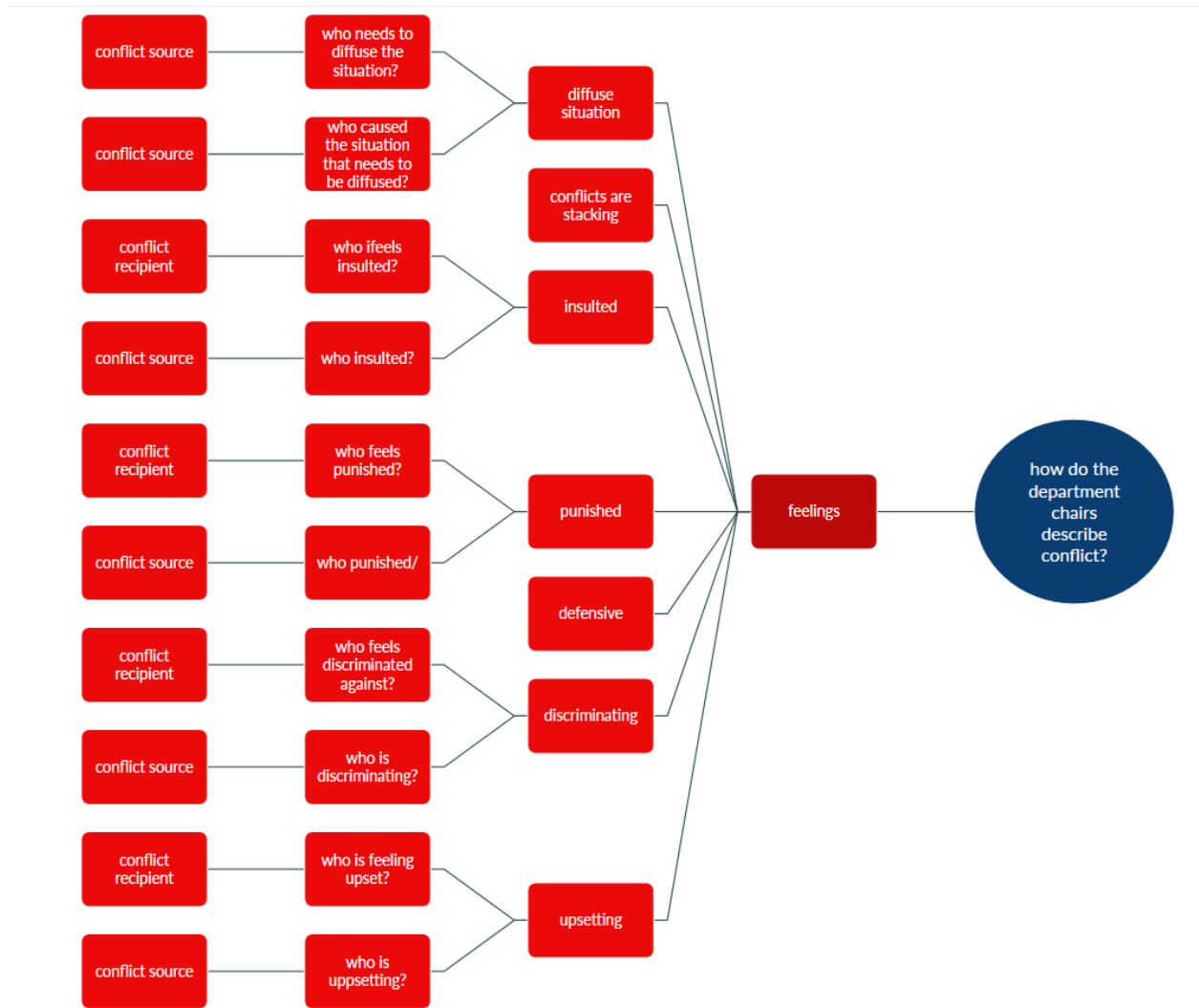
giving voice	eclectic
in context	eclectic
including	eclectic
inform	eclectic
intentions	eclectic
knowledge is power	eclectic
leadership perspective	eclectic
not pressured	eclectic
offer a trade	eclectic
read between the lines	eclectic
ultimate goal of chair	eclectic
we complained	eclectic
soldier	in vivo
go talk to them	in vivo
fairness equity and transparency	in vivo
fairness transparency and documenting	in vivo
transparency	in vivo
holding accountable	in vivo
don't care to understand	in vivo
calmly answer questions	in vivo
need to be rescued	in vivo
mindset shift	in vivo
trust now but not always	in vivo
I messages	in vivo
executive decision	in vivo
bossy	in vivo
be humble	pattern
bie the bigger brain	pattern
building social capital banks	pattern
ego vs humility	pattern

explore multiple angles	pattern
facilitate growth vs telling	pattern
give the why	pattern
growthmindset	pattern
High Conflict Person	pattern
introducing one's own personality	pattern
keep self out of it	pattern
patience	pattern
personal growth	pattern
present multiple solutions	pattern
proactive chair	pattern
problem vs people	pattern
reaching out	pattern
reactive vs proactive	pattern
save face	pattern
self-directed learning	pattern
set standards	pattern
social awareness	pattern
stress relief activities	pattern
why department chair	pattern

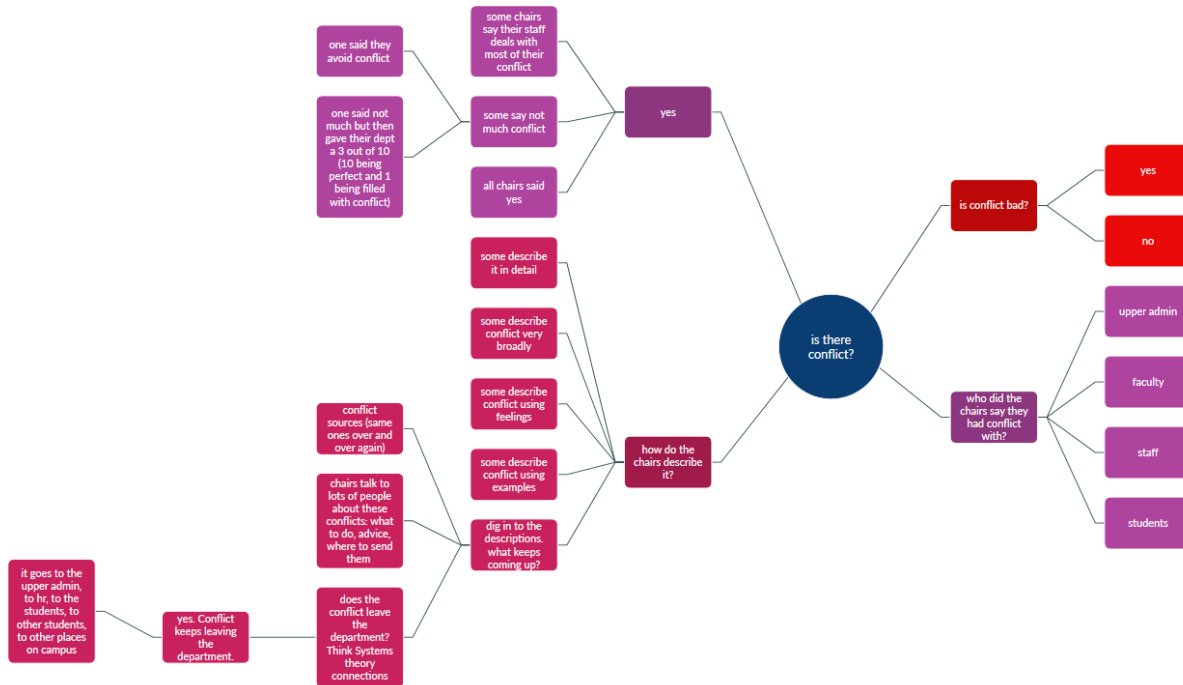
Appendix F Mind Map on Faculty



Appendix G Mind Map About Research Question 1



Appendix H Mind Maps About General Ideas



Appendix I Mind Map About Students

