CONFRONTING CONVERGENCE: ARE HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS USING A STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH TO MASS COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM CONVERGENCE?

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Professors in mass communications departments of higher education institutions continue to search for the best way to prepare graduates for the ever-changing world of print, broadcast, and online media. Business administration theories have long been used in other areas, including education. While some application of strategic planning has been documented with regards to education, there is not much to reference in this area.

The study investigated the use of strategic planning in developing a course of action for curriculum convergence in mass communication programs. The study used a purposive sample to determine if administrators are utilizing this method as a part of curriculum convergence. The results indicated a use of this method among institutions involved in curriculum convergence.
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INTRODUCTION

Imagine an industry experimenting with restructuring and reassessing its training methods. This industry is trying to adapt to changes in its market as a result of rapidly advancing technology, increasingly impatient consumers, and pressure from management to keep profits high in a time of economic decline. In order to maintain efficiency, the administrators are using the most experienced and educated people in their field to restructure their business. They are anxiously awaiting the results.

This scenario could easily apply to any number of media companies, but it also directly applies to public higher education systems teaching journalism and mass communication curricula. These institutions are profit-driven, and are also faced with budget reductions, changing expectations, changing economies, shrinking resources and expanding technology (Minatra, 1997). McMinn (1980) summarizes this scenario:

The increased cost of higher education has drastically affected patterns of administration, forcing administrators to seek greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Another issue facing the higher education administrator is one of accountability. In providing income for the universities, the public is rightly asking for increased production from the universities and for more information on the workings of the university. Present day administrators are being forced to pursue better ways to manage their “business” (p. 3).

Strategic planning, a management function developed in business administration, is one way administrators can develop plans that will prepare them for the needs of an ever-changing future (Minatra, 1997). It could be argued that the very unpredictability of the future negates the need for detailed planning. However, it is the certainty of changes
ahead that give credence to planning. While planning cannot guarantee a solution to future problems, it can provide a tested approach to change.

Working towards Curriculum Convergence

Curriculum convergence discussions began in the late 1990s. With the widespread media adoption of Web sites, traditional journalism jobs were slowly transforming. Students who could multitask successfully in this new medium were in high demand (Birge, 2004). By 2000, the Internet was no longer a place for reproduced content from radio or television. Trombly (2000) wrote, “flexibility is the key for new media journalists. ‘Old school’ journalists can still get in on new media, but they have to be willing to learn” (p. 14). Media executives echoed that claim and pushed for “one man bands,” or graduates who could shoot, edit, and report across media lines. They demanded journalists who were more flexible in how stories and content were presented (Trombly, 2000). Students had to learn to separate the “content” from the “container.” In other words, students began to question the best way to tell a story, and the answer was not always black and white. Journalism and mass communication educators made curricula convergence a popular topic of conversation during this time. Between 2001 and 2003, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) conventions hosted fourteen panels on the topic of converged media (Lowrey, Daniels, & Becker, 2005). By 2003, the discussions had turned into experimentation. However, students and educators alike were unsure about the new classes. At Brigham Young University, print journalism students were skeptical of the broadcast majors. Print majors were completely out of their element and did not appreciate the exposure to radio
and television when they had intended on focusing solely on the print medium. They also questioned the validity of Internet reporting since, at that time, many of the “reporters” online were what are now considered “citizen journalists” (Hammond, Peterson, & Thomsen, 2000). At the University of Kansas, the faculty lacked the skills to teach across media lines (Utsler, 2002). Nonetheless, the majority of educators continued to teach convergence skills in their classrooms and enrollment numbers reached an all-time high (Becker, Vlad, Hennick-Kaminski, & Coffey, 2004). One study reported about 85% of universities had adopted their curriculum to reflect convergence in the media. Still, most of the changes were minor ones and there was no real curriculum renovation (Auman & Lillie, 2008).

In 2005, educators took a step back and reevaluated what had been accomplished. At a Poynter Institute for Media Studies session on “Convergence Journalism for College Educators,” University of Southern California’s Larry Pryor (2005) reviewed his school’s work with curriculum convergence and the problems the university encountered. He stressed the importance of an experienced faculty, partnerships with other schools and departments, and incorporating new technology into the classroom experience. Pryor also acknowledged the difficulties associated with curriculum change, including cost-weary administrators who were opposed to curriculum change and investment in new media facilities. This problem proved especially difficult to overcome since, according to Pryor, USC’s curriculum was not designed for the new century, even after seven years of experimentation with new courses. It seemed that the changes in the classroom could not keep up with changes in the industry. Still, the programs that continued to embrace the
idea of convergence were dedicated to preparing students for the changing media industry (Birge, 2004). By 2006, journalism and mass communication enrollment numbers were on the rise, a statistic Becker, Vlad, and McLean (2007) attributed to the addition of new programs. In their annual enrollment report for *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, they stated that they expected to see growth in these new programs for the next five to ten years.

Currently, the most critical curriculum question is how to incorporate new technologies into old curricula (Huang et al., 2006). How can instructors teach “ahead” of an industry that is not sure itself where it is going? Graduates and current employees alike are worried that their current skill sets will be obsolete in just a few years. However, educators must still teach the basics of writing and ethics. This leaves little time in an already overloaded curriculum for new courses. Instructors are struggling to find a way to keep the basics in plane while still offering the courses employers and students are beginning to demand.

The Importance of Planning

The common problems faced by educators and industry leaders alike would suggest that there is a common solution. While no answer has proven to be the “right” one, the studies mentioned above have mainly focused on the operational level of curriculum change. They are short term changes with short term results. It is apparent that higher education institutions are experimenting with new ways of teaching a new media landscape, but the study and review to date focuses mainly on the operational aspects and not the planning process itself. Also, there has been little focus on the
administrators of the (possibly) merging or emerging departments. McMinn (1980) recalls research that reaffirmed the need for careful planning, organizing, and staffing in both business and higher education administration. This type of planning can better prepare the institution for even more changes in the industry that are sure to come. Planning is one of the most important functions of management in any field. By definition, it should precede all other action and be the most important part of any major change (McMinn, 1980). Unfortunately, this step is often overlooked in favor of a quicker solution.

Literature Review: Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a management tool that uses specific actions to carry out an organization’s strategy (Minatra, 1997). Strategic planning models will vary from institution to institution, however Golden (1993) lists the following as key elements of strategic planning:

1. View of institutional mission
2. Setting department goals
3. Identifying and targeting audience
4. Establishing interdepartmental links
5. Setting out action crisis budget and evaluation plans in writing

Management techniques, like strategic planning, were created within business administration. However, strategic planning has been utilized by many other organizations, including health care, governmental agencies and nonprofit groups
In higher education, strategic planning must be a series of well-organized decisions that will shape the future of the institution.

It is important to clarify the distinction between strategic planning and long-range planning. The terms are often used interchangeably, but there are two important differences that are relevant to this study. One unique element of strategic planning is its consideration of external forces which impact the organization in addition to internal issues (McMinn, 1980). Strategic planning recognizes that an organization is affected by these forces just as much, if not more than, internal forces. This is important because the curriculum changes taking place in higher education are a direct result of external influence from the industry, where opportunities for the traditional employee are shrinking (Wenger, 2005). For example, a student who graduates with only a print or broadcast skill set cannot compete with a student who has learned to distribute one story on three different media platforms in one day. Employers have repeatedly stressed their desire for multi-talented applicants. Secondly, strategic planning “aims to exploit the new and different opportunities of tomorrow, in contrast to long-range planning, which tries to optimize for tomorrow the trends of today” (Drucker, 1980, p.61). In their research, Morrison et al. pointed out that long-range planning often fails because it does not consider external experiences from the past and present. For the purposes of this study, the model of strategic planning illustrated in Morrison et al. was used to formulate questions to participants about their use of strategic planning. Their model, which overlaps internal and external forces, consists of six identifiable stages: environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting, goal-setting, implementation, and monitoring.
Environmental scanning allows for the careful consideration of the external factors. Trends are identified and measured. These factors are then evaluated and its impact on the organization is considered. Forecasting focuses on understanding the expected future of these issues and their importance to the organization. Goal-setting and implementation follow simultaneously with continued monitoring to judge the success of the plan while also keeping an eye on new and existing external issues. The model merges the external factors (environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting) and the internal factors (goal-setting, implementation and monitoring), illustrating the interaction between the two.

*Strategic Planning and Education*

There are only a few examples of research that directly link strategic planning and education. In addition, most of the research centers on single case studies or quantitative research in a small area. Nonetheless, each has applications to this study.

*Strategic Planning in Texas Independent School Districts*

In 1996, Gehrking applied strategic planning to small, medium and large Texas independent school districts. The study compared superintendents’ strategic planning practices and their opinions regarding those practices. In this study, the school district’s size directly affected the managerial style of the superintendents. In small districts, there was direct contact between the superintendents and the classrooms. In middle-sized districts there was typically one intermediate level of management. Large districts had two or more levels of management. Research involving higher education institutions found similar results. Larger enrollment at larger schools will usually mean more faculty
and administrators. This can mean more disconnection between administration levels. In Gehrking’s study, questionnaires were sent out to examine the development of a mission statement, operating plan and budget, involvement of stakeholders, and strategic planning logistics. Gehrking found a significant different between the large and small school districts’ superintendents’ ratings of the effectiveness of strategic planning. There was also a significant different regarding the use of outside consultants, the involvement of support staff in the planning process, and student involvement in the planning process, among others.

An important contribution of this study is its acknowledgement of the inconsistency of strategic planning definitions across administrations. However, Gehrking acknowledged there are some similarities between the definitions, which he uses to classify the definitions into four leading definitions. To create his questionnaire, Gehrking used these representative definitions of strategic planning, evaluated by Basham and Lunenburg (1989):

1. Strategic planning is “a process consisting of…an examination of the current environmental circumstances…, the establishment of a statement of purpose or mission with related time-frame goals, supporting operational objectives and specific plans to carry out these objectives, and resource analysis” (Spikes, 1985, pp. 3-4)

2. Strategic planning is “a process for organizational renewal and transformation…(which) provides a framework for improvement and restructuring of programs, management, collaborations, and evaluation of the organization’s progress” (McCune, 1986, p 34)

3. Strategic planning is a “process designed to move an education organization through the steps of understanding changes in the external environment, assessing organizational strengths and weaknesses, developing a vision of a desired future and ways to achieve the mission, developing and implementing
specific plans, and motivating that implementation so necessary changes can be made” (Brown & Marshall, 1987, p.1).

4. Strategic planning is “…a plan characterized by originality, vision, and realism…aimed at total concentration of the organization’s resources on mutually predetermined measurable outcomes” (Cook, 1988, p. 83).

This comprehensive summary of strategic planning as it applies to educators maintains the core ideas of the process but tailors the definition for an academic application.

The limitations of this study were also interesting. The research was limited to select superintendents, and excluded staff members and outside consultants who were delegated planning duties by their superintendent. Gehrking chose to only focus on the superintendents because, “as chief executive officer, the superintendent has primary operating responsibility for strategic planning” (p. 15).

*Strategic Planning and Texas Community Colleges*

In 1991 the passing of House Bill no. 2009 required all Texas State Government agencies, including community colleges, to develop a strategic plan (Minatra, 1997). For this purpose, the elements of strategic planning were grouped into the following categories:

1. Statements of purpose (SOP)
2. Statements of direction (SOD)
3. Statements of impact (SOI)

In a 1997 study, Minatra discussed the growth the community college system had experienced in the last three or four decades and he emphasized the importance of planning in light of such consistent and dramatic growth. Minatra pointed out that
changes can mean disaster or opportunity, depending on the readiness of the institution.

This study was also quantitative and determined the significance of independent variables towards the perceived importance of three dependent variables—SOPs, SODs, and SOIs. An analysis of the independent variables which included administrative position, years of experience, levels of training and institution location, offered insight into the strategic planning process and identified program barriers.

Another limitation was the sample size which only included Texas community colleges. However, this study allowed for flexibility of its participant selection, questioning only the person directly responsible for the planning program, regardless of their administrative position.

Strategic Planning and Music Programs in Institutions of Higher Education

The closest related study to this study is actually the oldest research found that incorporated both strategic planning and higher education. In 1980, McMinn developed a strategic planning model for music programs in institutions of higher learning. Music administrators interested in strategic planning for their programs could use this highly-specific model as a guide in their institutions. In order to prepare the model, McMinn first researched literature in business administration, planning models in educational administration, and strategic planning in education administration. From this research, McMinn made the following conclusions:

1. Strategic planning is an effective means of planning
2. Business techniques can be successfully applied to educational organizations
3. A model is an effective means of communicating a system
4. Music executives are interested in developing management skills

Through personal interviews, McMinn discovered the ways in which music administration was different from other higher education departments. McMinn used this information and current business models to create a model for music programs in institutions of higher education. The model was reviewed by music executives and was recommended for use as a primary or supplement planning tool and/or as an aid to encourage strategic planning among administrators considering curriculum change. The research questions created for this study could serve as exploratory questions for a similar model for journalism and mass communication programs at similar institutions.

Another important contribution of McMinn’s research is the differentiation between strategic and operational planning. Strategic planning (in an institution of higher education) would focus on “acquisitions of major facilities, starting or dropping new majors/degrees, gross resource allocation, choosing mission and broad objectives and deciding on organizational structure” (p. 8). This is an important distinction to make in regards to this research because it focuses on strategic planning, not operational planning. As such, the participants were members of higher administration, and may seemingly have no involvement in curriculum convergence. However, those participants would develop a strategic planning process for their departments, or would delegate this task to someone on their team.

Due to its highly specific nature, this study was obviously limited to one particular department in one level of education. However, it clearly illustrates a process that could be replicated to create a model for other departments.
Purpose of this Study

As previously mentioned, there is little research that directly links strategic planning and higher education, despite its successful implementation. Specifically, there are not many studies that offer a nationwide comparison. Most are state or locally-centered. It also seemed there was no research paring strategic planning and the complicated task of converging curriculum, sometimes across department lines.

This study did not develop a strategic planning model for curricula convergence. Rather, it will serve as an informative tool for educators grappling with the ever-changing media industry. It offers insight on a national level as to whether or not strategic planning is being used and with what level of success with the mass communication departments of institutions of higher education.

Research Questions

This study answers the following research questions:

RQ 1: Are administrators using a strategic planning approach to mass communication curriculum convergence?

RQ 2: If so, what are the similar, successful elements to their plans?

RQ 3: If not, what are the common barriers to implementing a plan for curriculum convergence?

For the purpose of this study, curriculum convergence will be defined as the blending of two or more curricula within a university. The focus was not on the degree plans themselves, but on the process of converging existing curricula or the creation of new convergence curriculum.
Methodology

Mass communication department structure can vary greatly across institutions. As such, a qualitative analysis of a purposive sample provided the best exploratory information for the study. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006), intensive interviews provide detailed background about a subject’s answer. They allow for customization and adjustment, as deemed necessary by the researcher. This kind of flexibility was important to the comprehensive nature of this study.

Participants

This study gathered and analyzed data from a purposive sample of participants. First, a list of the Institutional and Associate Members of the Broadcast Educator Association (BEA) as of October 2007 was obtained. This list was compared with the directory of members of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) from the same year. Sixty-eight schools are members of both groups and were considered for study (see Appendix A). The final list of participants was chosen after an in depth analysis of their departmental structure. This analysis was conducted online and confirmed via telephone. It considered three different elements of the university structure.

First, the divisions of the colleges within each university were noted. If there were two distinct colleges that separated journalism degrees from mass communications degrees, the institute was included for the study. If there were not two colleges that clearly housed different departments, further research was done.
The departments within the college were analyzed to determine which departments housed which degrees. Specifically, the researcher considered the journalism and mass communication majors that apply to the scope of this study. If the majors were available in separate departments, the institution was included for the study. If the majors were both available in one department or one singular college or school that was not made up of multiple departments, the institution was eliminated. See Appendix B for a coded list of the institutions and an explanation for each of their inclusion or exclusion. This process helped to ensure the validity of the study by finding the most comparable universities. Universities with only one department or degree related to journalism or mass communication were not considered because there would be no inter-departmental curriculum convergence. This department structure was confirmed with administrative personnel by telephone. Oftentimes, change occurs so rapidly and frequently, the information available on the university’s website is not an accurate picture of the true landscape of the institution. Once the institution structure was confirmed, I obtained the names of the department chairs of the appropriate departments. For the purposes of this study, I contacted the mass communications or other related department, such as telecommunications or radio, television and film. The journalism department chair was not interviewed, as this study’s scope was not designed to encompass both departments. Further research would add valuable insight about both sides of convergence efforts and how their opinions of the outcomes relate or differ. The mass communication department chair names, addresses, and phone numbers were verified with administrative personnel via telephone. The department chairs were then mailed a
letter asking them to participate in the study. After ample time was given for the interviewees to receive and review the letter, they were contacted by phone. This allowed me to fully explain the study (if the interviewee requested) and ensure the candidate would be accessible by phone. If the candidate was not accessible by phone or did not return two messages, the candidate was assumed unable to participate in the study. Several candidates asked to be contacted in the future via email to set up appointments for phone interviews. All actual interviews via telephone. All candidates who agreed to participate were allotted a time at their convenience for the phone interview. Any candidates who could not interview during their allotted time were rescheduled for a second appointment. No third appointment scheduling was necessary.

*Research Approach*

Intensive interviews were conducted using a list of questions developed from previous research of strategic planning and institutions of higher education. The interviews were conducted on the phone. All interviewees answered the same battery of questions. The questionnaire is in Appendix D.

The interviews were transcribed by myself and analyzed to find patterns relating to the three proposed research questions. Content analysis is a widely used method of interpreting in depth interviews. It allows the interviews to be compared on many different levels. Such comparison allowed me to find responses and compare their similarities and differences.
METHODOLOGY

The Sample

Finding the appropriate sample for this study was one of the most important elements of its implementation. Without the correct subjects, it is not possible to develop an appropriate interpretation of the use of strategic planning methods in curriculum convergence. The researcher had to find the suitable sample group on two different levels. First, the correct sample pool of universities had to be discovered. Then, the correct department and department chair had to be determined. Both were critical parts of sample selection for this study.

University Sample Selection

The higher education institutions included in this study are members of two educators’ associations. First, the researcher obtained a list of all the institutional and associate members of the Broadcast Education Association (BEA) from 2007 (the year available when the sample group was chosen). This list is printed in the back of the organization’s publication, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. According to the official website, the BEA is “the professional association for professors, industry professionals, and graduate students who are interested in teaching and research related to electronic media and multimedia enterprises” (*Some information, n.d.*). The BEA’s membership list was used to determine which mass communication departments were accredited by the BEA. At the time research began, the BEA was comprised of 265
schools. That list was cross-referenced with a list of universities who are members of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). This list is posted on AEJMC’s official website. The researcher used this list to represent the schools with nationally accredited journalism programs. According to the AEJMC official website, the AEJMC is “an education association of journalism and mass communication faculty, administrators, students and media professionals” (Welcome to AEJMC, n.d.). Sixty-eight schools were members of both organizations, as listed in Appendix A. Those 68 schools were examined further to determine which schools house their journalism and mass communication-type degrees in different departments. The reasoning behind their exclusion or inclusion was discussed in the previous chapter and is available in Appendix B.

Department Chair Participation

Twenty-five departments met the requirements to be included in this study. These departments house either radio, television, and film degrees or mass communication degrees. Their department did not have a journalism degree, which told the researcher that curriculum convergence would be inter-departmental, and therefore relevant to this study. This degree was available in a different department (usually a journalism department). As mentioned above, the institutions were members of both the BEA and AEJMC. After eligibility was confirmed, the department chairs were researched online. Once a faculty member was found, this faculty member’s name and contact information were confirmed via telephone.
Two departments were eliminated due to lack of an active department head. For the purpose of standardization, no interim or associate department heads were interviewed. One of the important elements of strategic planning is the use of delegation and oversight. As such, it was not in the best interest of the study to include the second-tier of administration. This would not offer the most accurate representation of the use of delegation.

An introductory letter was mailed to the remaining twenty-five department heads (see Appendix C). This letter was approved by the Internal Review Board of the University of North Texas and sent on official Department of Radio, Television and Film letterhead with handwritten signatures of the researcher and committee co-chairs. This was done to encourage participation by demonstrating the level of academic professionalism of researcher and the University. The researcher chose to send a letter via mail in the hopes that the letter would stand out against the barrage of emails administrators receive every day. The letter requested the participation of the interviewee for thirty minutes during a phone interview scheduled at their convenience. No questions were given to ensure the interviewees’ answers would not be pre-meditated. The letters were sent in one-week intervals to allow the researcher time to conduct and transcribe interviews. After one week, the department chairs were contacted via telephone to set up times for their interviews if they chose to participate.

Of the 25 individuals who were contacted, interviews were scheduled with 12. Thirteen did not return two voice messages with information explaining the reason for the call and a phone number where the researcher could be reached. Interviews were only
requested of the potential interviewees twice in an effort to not disrupt the administrators during the semester. Four of the twelve interviewees were conducted successfully and their interviews were relevant and useful to the study.

Of the eight interviews that were not used, three interviewees answered “no” to the first question regarding curriculum convergence. Two of the five remaining interviewees did not answer their phone during the scheduled interview time and did not return two phone messages regarding rescheduling. Two of the three remaining individuals had fallen ill since the interview was scheduled and did not return two phone messages regarding rescheduling. The remaining interviewee did not have time during the scheduled interview time and was not interested in rescheduling (see Appendix B).

Questionnaire Design

Although this research was both relevant and timely considering the rapidly changing media industry, there was no previous research tool available to measure the use of strategic planning models in curriculum convergence. Although the concept has been applied to higher education as discussed in the literature review, previous questionnaire design was not applicable to this study. However, there is extensive research regarding the use of strategic planning in the business realm and the author used this previous research to design an original questionnaire for use in this study. The questionnaire was developed after review of these sources and consideration of the research questions posed in this study.
Questionnaire Design Approach

The purpose of this study was not to develop a strategic planning model to aid curriculum convergence in higher education institutions. Rather, it was designed to provide insight into the use of strategic planning models in curriculum convergence efforts. For that reason, the researcher chose to use the fundamental concepts behind strategic planning (as it is utilized in the business world) to create a questionnaire. By doing this, the use of these concepts could be determined and analyzed. In order to answer the research questions cited in this study, the researcher modified the concepts for application to higher education curriculum convergence. The questions focused on two major categories:

1. The use of specific strategic planning model theories when planning curriculum convergence.
2. Successful and challenging elements of planning and implementing curriculum convergence.

Category Identification

The questionnaire was formed over the course of several weeks involving the contributions of several industry and academic professionals. The objective was to create a questionnaire that would determine if a specific strategic plan was being followed to implement curriculum convergence. The author worked to create questions that were easy to understand, concise, and not predictable. While the use of strategic planning was explicitly addressed, the author also rephrased questions throughout the interview to ensure consistency in answers. This also allowed the interviewer to gather information
about the use of strategic planning even if the interviewee was unclear about whether or not their department was technically utilizing a strategic planning model. To do this, the questionnaire was divided into six sections based on six elements of a business strategic planning model:

I. Relevance of the interviewee to the study.

II. The use of goal-setting in the department’s curriculum convergence efforts.

III. The process of implementing a strategic planning model and the reasoning behind the decision to use such a model.

IV. Quantification of success or breakdown before, during, and after model implementation.

V. Scanning and evaluation of exterior issues, especially those in the media industry such as economic conditions, technological advances and hiring trends.

VI. Using a strategic planning approach to forecast prominent issues or trends in the media industry.

*Questionnaire Testing, Modification and Administration*

Once the questionnaire was written and reviewed, the researcher performed a test-run with a subject who was not a member of the sample chosen for this study. The researcher chose an individual who had previously served as a radio, television and film department chair because the interviewee had previous experience in curriculum planning and could recognize problems in question administration or relevancy of the questions to
a curriculum convergence effort. In order to assess any complications, the pre-interview process was followed and the test subject was called and asked to participate after reading the introductory letter. An interview time was set for a later date. The interview was rescheduled successfully after a scheduling conflict arose. The questionnaire was administered and timed. The interviewee offered insight about possible changes and modifications were made. These modifications were reviewed by the industry and academic professionals and approved. The final draft of the questionnaire was then administered to the sample population. Responses to the interviews were recorded by shorthand and then immediately transcribed. All interviews were reviewed and studied to identify common themes in the interviewee’s responses. Distinct commonalities and differences were noted and are discussed in the following chapter. For the purpose of this study and to ensure consistency, all interviews and transcriptions were done by the researcher. This also ensured anonymity for the interviewees, as required by the UNT IRB.
RESULTS

The following is a presentation of the questionnaire responses given by the four viable interviewees. Each section of the questionnaire is reviewed with direct quotes from the transcripts of the interviews. These responses are analyzed separately and in conjunction with the responses of the other interviewees in order to ascertain similarities and differences in the use of a strategic planning model in mass communication curriculum convergence. This analysis is followed by a response to the original research questions proposed in this study.

Section I: Relevance

This question was included to determine if the department was actually working on inter-departmental curriculum convergence. If they were not actively implementing some sort of curriculum change, they were not included in the study. If they had already implemented change and were still in the process of modifying their curriculum, they were included in the study. This section also determined whether or not the department heads were involved enough in the changes to answer questions in a manor that would be conducive to this study. One characteristic of strategic planning is the idea that a manager is delegating the tasks at hand to his or her staff. All four department heads said they were actively involved in the curriculum convergence, as was their staff. All four mentioned the use of committees and the University-mandated levels of approval.
DH represents “department head,” followed by a letter of classification to represent each school.

DH A: There are always committees. Everything has a committee and this was no exception, certainly. So I would say professors, myself, and many others. Our faculty was definitely involved, from both departments, which of course was a little tricky.

The department heads were at different stages of curriculum convergence. All are included in this study because they were actively implementing their changes or planning implementation in the near future. The following is an explanation of where the departments were on their curriculum convergence at the time of the interview.

DH A: No, we are not working on an entire curriculum convergence per se. But lately we’ve had no choice but to work with other departments on sharing classes and including other department’s classes in our recommended coursework. So yes, we are including other departments in our curriculum now. It takes a full year to conceptualize, propose and implement ideas. They are discussed in fall, formally submitted in winter and we hear an answer through the spring. Typically, we then implement in the fall semester so that’s what we’re working on now. Implementing and working towards the next change.

DH B: Let me be clear about our curriculum convergence. We are not teaching a convergence curriculum. That is, we do not have a curriculum set that is teaching convergence. We have tried to work towards a new school, but we ran into several problems, mostly with the staff of the other department. But yes, we are figuring out how to include their courses in our department, etc.

DH C: Yes, with the Journalism department. The new program was implemented this fall.

DH D: Yes, we are always working to find the best ways to prepare our students. We don’t have a new formalized curriculum revision as of yet.

Section II: Goal-Setting

Goal-setting is another important element of a strategic plan in the business model. Having a clear mission statement and developing that mission statement is
accordance with external and internal factors is a common practice managers follow when implementing a strategic plan. The department heads were split on this topic. Two of them said they had a mission statement that was directly related to their curriculum convergence. They were, however, divided regarding how they came to their mission statement. One said goals must come from careful observation of both internal and external factors, while the other stressed the importance of focusing on teaching and research that will benefit the students. When asked if the department’s goals were based on the department head’s assessment of internal factors such as budget and enrollment, DH D argued that those factors were not the important ones to consider when developing a goal for learning.

DH D: No, our mission statement has a great deal to do with research and teaching and service. Our mission is to maximize the experience for the undergraduate class. That is our ultimate goal and it must be placed before all others.

Both said a group of faculty worked to create their department’s mission statement regarding curriculum convergence and they actively oversaw the group. This is a common practice of traditional business managers and again shows the use of strategic planning. The two other department heads did have a mission statement for their departments as a whole, but no one specific to curriculum convergence.

DH A: No. Our mission statement is result oriented. We don’t have one that is specifically designed for curriculum convergence or change. We don’t have one that says “we will change curriculum periodically and successfully.”

Overall, this section proved the use of mission statements and goal-setting are important parts of the department’s mission statement, even if it was not directly linked to their work for curriculum convergence. Ultimately, each department was driven by a
clear mission statement that their faculty helped to create and referred to it often. The nature of this mission statement was either directly related to curriculum convergence, or called for progress in a way that would lead the department to consider curriculum convergence.

Section III: Implementation

This section was the first to specifically mention strategic planning. The department heads were asked if they were using a strategic planning model to implement their curriculum convergence. Again, DH C and DH D were following a strategic planning model, while DH A and DH B were using a less structured approach. Although they did not think they were following a specific strategic planning model, their efforts do mirror those of a formalized strategic planning model, in that they are based on internal and external factors.

DH A: I don’t know if we are…not in a formalized way. Our curriculum changes flow from our vision of where the field will be in 5-10 years. It’s based on interaction of industry technology changes, so on and so forth. Where the jobs will be, things like that. Mostly there is lots of discussion with faculty with particular areas of knowledge and expertise who propose things and changes. We have a wide range of sources who tell us when we need to bring in expertise other than our own.

DH D specifically mentioned the usefulness of management experience when using a strategic planning model.

DH D: Our faculty includes several professionals with many year of experience in their field. They have management experience that they bring with them to the department, and we value that experience. Some have academic management experience, while others have all forms of media management experience. The management models are the same in any field, so yes, we are able to use strategic models to formulate and carry out our restructuring efforts.
This section also addressed the successful and challenging elements of the departments’ curriculum convergence efforts. Two major themes emerged in this area.

*Staff cooperation and enthusiasm*

All the department heads mentioned the importance of staff enthusiasm and cooperation when working towards curriculum convergence. The challenges to their curriculum convergence came as a direct result of one or both departments’ faculty members not fully committing themselves to the changes. Some of the departments had to finally cease their efforts due to frustrations on both sides.

*DH A:* The big question is, “Who runs the new program?” Everyone is equally important, of course, but someone is going to be perceived as the home unit. Who gets credit? Ultimately, it falls on upper administration to ensure there are rewards for those who cooperate.

*DH C:* Coming up with syllabi with 9-10 people because of their own personal bias, etc., has been a challenge. Getting student media initially together was challenging, but we were able to get it done by keeping the faculty out of it every news item that is done goes to a centralized website for distribution to the entire school. Students took to it, but it has been difficult for the faculty. A truly integrated curriculum doesn’t reside in just one department, so how do we count this? Who gets the enrollment numbers, etc? It isn’t easy to find that answer, and everyone’s answer is different.

*DH D:* There has been a great deal of difficulty getting colleagues in print journalism to collaborate. This means we are losing opportunities for capturing teaching efficiencies. That is unfortunate and unacceptable.

Several of the department heads who were not included in this study because they were not working on curriculum convergence cited the poor attitude of the faculty on both sides of the attempts. Faculty frustrations were the only issues mentioned as barriers to implementation.
Student cooperation and enthusiasm

Although the programs are too new to determine whether or not the curriculum convergence will result in higher hiring percentages of graduates, the department heads reported positive feedback from students regarding their early experiences with the convergence efforts. The students seemed to take to the changes easier than did the faculty members. The required immersion into all skill sets seems to create a better-rounded student early on in their education. The department heads reported that the students are reacting better to team teaching efforts and are better able to present information on multiple platforms earlier in their education.

DH C: Our program calls for early immersion in skill sets as freshmen. Later, they experience immersion in other cities and locations as juniors. We require that of their internship. Then there is required immersion in all student media as seniors. That’s radio, television, newspaper and internet. The students find the team teaching is successful as long as everyone gets along. The duel perspective is beneficial for the students, and they appreciate the opportunity to gain experiences on so many different levels.

There were not any specific efforts towards curriculum convergence that were successful across the board. In fact, the specific convergence efforts vary greatly among the departments. However, all department heads reported the same barriers to implementation. It should also be mentioned in this section that all four department heads included in the study participated in the implementation of curriculum convergence. Most participated in the development of the plan and then oversaw its implementation, consistent with business management styles.
Section IV: Monitoring

Constant monitoring and evaluation is a crucial element of strategic planning. All department heads quantified the success of their efforts in some way, or planned to quantify results in the future. Enrollment data is the easiest way to come to conclusions about new courses, but each department planned to use this information differently. Regardless, they did see the importance of closely monitoring their new courses and curricula internally.

DH A: We only monitor through enrollment data. Enrollment in new or revised classes, credit hours generated by changes, number of new majors, things like that. This is easy enough to gather and consider.

DH C: Outcomes for each course are measured and reported back to the committee created for our curriculum convergence. They’re taking a serious look at the assignments and determining whether the students are getting it. For the first two years, we are monitoring every eight weeks, so at midterm and at the end of the semester. At that point we are redoing syllabi on the spot. We then put issues back on the committee to consider and make adjustments.

DH D: We do exit surveys at the end of the students’ term with us. We consider these carefully.

Consistent with business management techniques, department heads also used external factors to determine the success of their programs.

DH A: We look outside of the immediate department as well. We look at internship placement, career placement, grad school enrollment, etc.

DH D: Every year an annual survey run by our college looks at our employment rates and compares them across the country. Biannually we consider the input of our alum and triennially we are talking with industry professionals and getting their feedback.
Section V: Environmental Scanning and Evaluation

This section was included to determine whether the department heads were actively monitoring changes in the media industry. This section had the most consistent set of responses across the board. All department heads said they did monitor the economic conditions, technological advances, and hiring trends in the media industry. These were all tasks delegated to faculty members. The department heads did very little of the actual evaluation, but oversaw the application of the findings as they related to the department’s curriculum convergence.

Section VI: Forecasting

This section is valuable for suggestions for further research. In this section, the department heads discussed their opinions on the most prominent issue or trend in the media industry.

DH A: Changes coming through technology. That has been the biggest trend. For instance, increasingly availability of alternative platforms for distributions. Convergence, consumption, behavior, business model changes are all issues we are following very closely because they are dominating the change in our industry.

DH B: Development of new media options and the impact on the consumers.

DH C: Distribution of product.

DH D: Finding a new business model. It simply has tremendous implications for every other aspect of management. The number of people graduating with the skill sets that are now necessary to find a job is changing. We constantly hear from our contacts in the industry that the people they are laying off are the ones who refuse to become multifunctional. Traditional television journalism is nonexistent. The 5’o clock news is just beginning. Management wants to see employees who can turn that piece into several others and present it on multiple platforms.
All respondents admitted that these issues and trends would play an important role in their current and future curriculum convergence efforts. All said they would continue to track the issue or trend to monitor its continued relevance to their curriculum. Again, consistent with business management styles, all said their faculty primarily monitored the trends while they oversaw its relevance to their program.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: *Are administrators using a strategic planning approach to mass communication curriculum convergence?*

Though all department heads were not fully aware of it, they all used strategic planning approaches to their curriculum convergence. As discussed, there were very few administrators who were actively working on curriculum convergence, but the four department heads who were interviewed for this research were using mission statements, implementation and monitoring techniques consistent with strategic planning models discussed in the literature review. They were also actively engaged in environmental scanning and considered issues and trends in the media industry thoroughly.

RQ 2: *If so, what are the similar, successful elements to their plan?*

Student enthusiasm and cooperation was the most prominent successful element to their plans for curriculum convergence. All departments reported favorable response from the students who were directly affected by the curriculum convergence. Faculty enthusiasm and cooperation also encouraged success, but was not achieved in all departments.
RQ 3: If not, what are the common barriers to implementing a plan for curriculum convergence?

The respondents reported nearly identical problem areas in this department. Lack of faculty enthusiasm and cooperation provided the most common barrier to implementation, sometimes leading to an entire breakdown of efforts for curriculum convergence. Departments who were unable to reach a compromise in this area were forced to abandon their efforts for change. Those with little communication between departments did not successfully implement curriculum convergence across departmental divides. Those who were not able to clarify which department would house new curricula or degrees were not able to successfully implement curriculum convergence, despite attempts to follow a traditional strategic planning model.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the findings of the researcher during a series of in-depth interviews. The findings suggest a strong link between curriculum convergence efforts and strategic planning application in the departments reviewed. The mission statements, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and forecasting techniques are consistent with those used by managers in more traditional business settings. There were also clear similarities in the successful and detrimental elements of the departments’ curriculum convergence.
DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the many ways this study can contribute to previous research regarding the use of strategic planning models in higher education institutions and mass communication curriculum convergence. The author also suggests practical applications of the research for departments who are considering or beginning curriculum convergence. Finally, the author considers the intrinsic limitations of the study and suggests topics for further research.

Contributions of Study

Higher education administrators must react to many different influences. Universities are expected to be profitable businesses while at the same time turning out students who can survive and thrive in their job markets. This can create tension between learning and earning. Any academic research that can help administrators find a balance between the two is valuable. Mass communication departments are finding themselves in a unique situation because the job market for which they are training their students is experiencing great change of its own. Oftentimes new hires are expected to perform as “one-man bands,” a skill not always included in their academic curriculum. While it was once fairly clear which department should train students for which jobs, the distinction is no longer as obvious because the job descriptions are much more ambiguous than they were in the past. As a result, graduates are expected to have a more generalized education. Some degrees, specializations, and emphases are not giving students
everything needed to be successful after graduation. The mass communication administrators interviewed for this study recognize the need for restructuring, but admit it is difficult to train students for employment in an industry that is still adjusting to new technologies and trends. There is clearly a need for change, but where should administrators begin?

While there is not one magic answer for every department, this study offers insight into the usefulness of a strategic planning model for curriculum convergence. It acknowledges the business aspect of education and illustrates the value of using a business model to implement change. Each interviewee expressed the importance of having a plan when implementing dramatic change in a department that can be strategically monitored and modified. As discussed in the literature review, this is a key element of a strategic planning model.

*Overview of Current Department Structuring*

The interviewees were also very interested in the restructuring of other and mass communication departments. The department heads who said they were not working on any curriculum convergence now did say they saw some sort of restructuring on the horizon. They expressed a great interest in the findings of this study and in the configuration of other departments across the United States. This study is the first of its kind to offer insight into this issue on a national level. While the percentage of relevant interviewees was low, this ratio tells the researcher a great deal about the atmosphere of change right now. The fifty-five departments that were eliminated had already implemented some sort of curriculum convergence. Most of these schools had already
combined their journalism and mass communication title. Some universities are using the School of Journalism title, some are using the School of Mass Communication, and some are using the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. There is no obvious lean towards one or the other among those who have already brought their departments and curricula together.

There seemed to be an “all or nothing” mentality regarding curriculum convergence among the administrators in this study. The department heads who said they were not practicing inter-departmental curriculum convergence had either decided not to move forward with planned convergence or had no interest in trying. Those who chose to not to restructure their curricula all cited lack of cooperation between the faculties of the two departments. As a result, there were no new inter-departmental curricula, and the faculty’s efforts led to a total separation of the course work, degrees and, ultimately, departments. If a fully converged curriculum was not created, there was no further sharing of course enrollment across departments. This contributed to the small percentage of respondents whose departments were applicable to this study.

Overview of Departmental Interpretation of the Media Industry

The last few questions of the questionnaire were intended to detect the use of forecasting, another important step in the strategic planning process. By answering questions about their perceptions of the media industry’s future, the interviewees demonstrated knowledge of external factors and the industry’s influence on their department. These answers also offer a broad look at many issues in changing media markets. The interviewees were evenly spread across the United States, which makes
their answers even more valuable to others. Their answers offered a comprehensive overview of some of the most prominent issues and trends in media markets across the nation.

**Limitations of the Current Study**

The limitations of this study are a direct result of its purposive sample. This study was not designed to provide results that can be generalized across all mass communication departments in all institution of higher education. Rather, it was designed to augment research already done with regards to strategic planning and higher education by broadening the scope of the research geographically. Although the sample population was small, it was selected from institutions across the United States. However, the small sample size does not allow for generalization across all departments.

Another limitation of this study was the willingness of the participants. Department chairs were the best administrators to interview because their positions are similar to those of managers in the business field. However, those individuals are very busy and should many responsibilities. It was very difficult to actually contact these individuals and even harder to schedule interview appointments with them. Furthermore, college, school, and department structures vary widely between universities.

**Future Research**

While the limitations noted above make generalizations difficult, they also provide many topics for further study as there is much more to learn about convergence efforts of schools not relevant to this study. This fact provides an even greater challenge in developing the study sample. Many departments were not included in this study.
because they had already undergone some sort of curriculum convergence and were not in the process of planning convergence during the time of this study. There is much to be learned from schools that are in the monitoring stages of the strategic planning process. Further research could include a deeper look into their exact process of curriculum convergence. Such as, what classes were eliminated or added?

As the new departments’ graduating classes enter the job market, more research could be done on their success in the job market. These results would reveal more about whether or not institutions are taking the right steps to react to the changing media market. There is more to learn from industry professionals as they hire and observe the students who are products of curriculum convergence. Their observations of the skill sets of recent grads would be valuable to administrators who are trying to gauge the success of their new training methods.

Other departments eliminated from this study’s sample had chosen not to do any inter-departmental curriculum convergence. Many of these departments cited “complications between department faculty members.” There is more to learn about why these mergers did not go smoothly. What leads to this breakdown between department faculty? Why are some departments not able to overcome this obstacle?

Further research in any of these areas would benefit students and administrators and contribute to a more effective learning environment. As many areas of strategic planning can be studied in areas of higher education.
Summary

This study explored the use of a strategic planning approach to mass communication curriculum convergence in higher education institutions. The researcher found that, although the number of departments actively working on curriculum convergence was relatively small, they were all using some element of strategic planning to implement their change. This finding strengthened the argument that business models can be successfully applied to other fields, including education. While there was not one way to achieve a smooth curriculum transition, the interviewees did share similar opinions on the successful elements of their plans, including faculty enthusiasm and cooperation. Conversely, faculty dissention was a common barrier among those schools who have not implemented a successful plan for curriculum convergence. This study was not intended to create a strategic planning model for curriculum convergence and its small sample size limits the possibility for generalization. However, further research could address these limitations and explore the secondary findings in this study regarding the success of newly merged departments and the experiences of those who decided against inter-departmental collaboration.
APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBER OF THE BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
AND THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
American University
Arkansas State University
Ball State University
Baylor University
Brigham Young University
California State, Chico
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Northridge
Central Michigan University
Drake University
East Tennessee State University
Eastern Illinois University
Elon University
Grambling State University
Howard University
Indiana University
Kansas State University
Kent State University
Louisiana State University
Marshall University
Michigan State University
Middle Tennessee University
Murray State University
Northwestern University
Ohio University
Oklahoma State University
Pennsylvania State University
San Francisco State University
San Jose State University
Savannah State University
Southeast Missouri State University
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville
St. Cloud State University
Syracuse University
Temple University
Texas Christian University
Texas State University, San Marcos
Texas Tech University
University of Alabama
University of Arkansas
University of Georgia
University of Iowa
University of Kansas
University of Kentucky
University of Louisiana, Lafayette
University of Maryland, Col Park
University of Memphis
University of Miami
University of Minnesota
University of Montana
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
University of Nevada, Reno
University of North Texas
University of Oklahoma
University of Oregon
University of South Carolina
University of South Dakota
University of Southern California
University of Southern Indiana
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Tennessee, Martin
University of Tennessee, Chat
University of Texas, Austin
University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh
University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
Western Kentucky University
Winthrop University
APPENDIX B

INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Code</th>
<th>Letter Mailed?</th>
<th>Reason For Disqualification</th>
<th>Interview Scheduled?</th>
<th>Interview Performed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Department chair requested a return call one week later. Did not return two voice messages left the following week.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Only Communications department. No journalism or radio, tv, and film departments.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Department chair on leave.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Journalism and Communications has only journalism sequences.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One mass communication department. No Journalism department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Journalism and Mass Communication has only one department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Journalism and Mass Communication does not have separate departments for journalism and radio, television, and film.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>College of Mass Communication has separate sequences but not departments.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Separate emphasis, but not departments.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Communications created several years ago. Not involved in curriculum convergence.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interview scheduled via email at interviewee’s request during his/her regular office hours. Interviewee did not answer phone during scheduled time and did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Communication created after failed attempts at curriculum convergence several years before this study.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No longer working on curriculum convergence with School of Journalism</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One school with no departments.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Communications department has journalism and radio, television, and film.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All degrees under mass communication department</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Journalism and Mass Communication does not have separate departments.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All housed under mass communications department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Communication and Journalism lists all sequences within the journalism department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All under communications department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Department chair position available for hire.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School created several years ago. No true curriculum convergence currently practiced.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Journalism department has only broadcast sequences.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mass Communications department houses journalism, RTVF, and advertising degrees.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Students specialize in specific areas, but do not belong to a specific department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School only has one Dean and no department chairs. Dean does not oversee only one department, but the entire school.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Only one department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unable to obtain correct mailing address. Letter was returned and two voice messages were not returned.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>School of Journalism and Mass Communication has sequences, not departments.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Department chair unavailable for research interviews per administrative assistant.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interviewee requested to be contacted via email. Informed via email that the department was not involved in any curriculum convergence. Interview was not completed.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Only journalism department has applicable degrees.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No departments within School of Journalism and Mass Communications.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mass Communication department has journalism, broadcast, and radio, television and film degrees.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Department not involved in any curriculum convergence but anticipating it in the near future.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interviewee was ill and did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Journalism and broadcasting department house all relevant degrees.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One major for mass communication and journalism.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Journalism department houses all relevant degrees under the College of Communications and Fine Arts.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Journalism and Broadcasting department houses all relevant degrees.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One department of mass communication and journalism.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Interim department chair serving. He/she said the department was not involved in curriculum convergence.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not available via telephone for interview.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not return two voice messages.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Code</td>
<td>Letter Mailed?</td>
<td>Reason For Disqualification</td>
<td>Interview Scheduled?</td>
<td>Interview Performed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All under one department of journalism and telecommunications.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Scheduled interview, but did not have time to participate when called during scheduled time. Interviewee did not wish to reschedule.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One department with different emphasis.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Department chair was out of the country for the duration of the study period.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One department houses all relevant degrees.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One journalism and mass communication department.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No radio, television and film or mass communication department available.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One sequence in College of Journalism with broadcast and print.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Department not involved in any curriculum convergence.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interviewee was ill during scheduled time. Did not return call for reschedule.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER
Dear Department Chair:

As a masters student at the University of North Texas, I am conducting a research study of RTVF, mass communication, and journalism curriculum convergence for use in my thesis. The project concerns the use of strategic planning methods by higher education administrators who are facing curriculum change. Your help is very important and I am asking for a small amount of your valuable time to participate in a phone interview. Be assured that your response will be strictly confidential and used with others for analysis.

I will contact you by phone and ask if you are interested in participating in my study. If you would like to volunteer, we will set up a time to conduct the interview. The interview will take no more than 30 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience. A summary of this study will be available to you upon completion of the project. I hope you find it helpful and relevant to your department.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (940) 565-39470. Contact the UNT IRB with any questions regarding your rights as a research subject.

Whatever your decision, please accept my sincere thanks for your time and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Kristyn Huckeba
Graduate Student
Department of Radio, Television, and Film

---

Samuel J. Sauls, Ph. D.
Major Professor
Associate Professor
Director of Graduate Studies
Associate Chair, Department of
Radio, Television, and Film
(940) 565-3222

Phyllis Slocum
Co-Major Professor
Lecturer
Station Manager, NTTV
Department of Radio, Television, and Film
(940) 565-2565
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS
I. Relevance

1. Are you working on curriculum convergence with the (mass communication, telecommunication, or RTVF program) in your college?
2. Which members of your staff are working on the changes? Professors, dean, yourself, all or others?
3. Are the new degree plan(s) available to students in the Spring 2010 semester?

II. Goal-Setting: Do you have a mission statement that is directly related to your curriculum convergence?

1. Are your goals derived from your assessment of external factors, i.e. the trends and issues in the media industry?
2. Are your goals derived from your assessment of internal factors, i.e. your department’s budget, enrollment, etc.
3. Who created your department’s mission statement regarding curriculum convergence? You or someone else?

III. Implementation: Are you using a strategic planning model to implement your curriculum convergence?

1. Why or why not?
2. Who developed your plan? You or someone else?
3. Who is in charge of the implementation of your plan? You or someone else?
4. Describe the successful elements of your plan.
5. Describe the elements of your plan that have been difficult to implement.

IV. Monitoring: Do you quantify the success of your plan?

1. Who does this analysis and interpretation? You or someone else?
2. How often do you review or modify your plan?
V. Environmental Scanning and Evaluation: Does your department monitor changes in the media industry that could pose threats or opportunities for your program? For example:

1. Do you monitor the economic conditions of the media industry?
2. Do you monitor the technological advances in the media industry?
3. Do you monitor hiring trends in the media industry?
4. Who does the analysis and interpretation? You or someone else you’ve delegated?

VI. Forecasting: What do you think is the most prominent issue or trend in the media industry?

1. Do you think this issue or trend is relevant to your curriculum convergence?
   That is, will you consider this issue or trend when you are planning your curriculum convergence?
2. Will your department continue to track this issue or trend to monitor its continued relevance to your curriculum?
3. Who does the analysis and interpretation? You or someone else?
REFERENCES


