

**SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST? THE REBRANDING  
OF WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION**

**EXCERPT: CHAPTER TWO: RATIONALE  
FOR A COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY CHANGE**

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## CHAPTER TWO: RATIONALE FOR A COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY CHANGE

*It's common for men to give six pretended reasons instead of one real one.* – Benjamin Franklin (n.d.).  
*There is only one justification for universities . . . They must be centers of criticism.* – Robert M. Hutchins (n.d.).

In August 2007, Pennsylvania's Waynesburg College quietly leaked to the press that the institution would soon be changing its name. Although reporters inquired further about this possibility, the medium-sized college's public relations department only acknowledged that the school would soon become "Waynesburg University." Apparently instructed by the administration, staff deferred any additional comments until the August 20 press conference. The media, however, was quick to note a trend developing, as 13 colleges in the Keystone State made similar adjustments in the recent past (Schackner, 2007). One editor even speculated, "The word 'college' seems to have gone out of fashion" ("College No More," p. A4).

While keeping up with the "Joneses" of higher education could have been one of Waynesburg's motivations, it was not a reason that the school's administration openly acknowledged. One of the cited factors was that the university designation matched Waynesburg's current identity. President Timothy R. Thyreen elaborated, "While changing our name better reflects the institution we have become, our core values, our mission, and our personal attention to our students will remain the same" (Stevens, 2007, p. B1). Reinforcing this rationale, Senior Vice President Richard L. Noftzger further explained, "Receiving this designation as university recognizes the comprehensive institution that we have become" (Stevens, p. B1).

In addition to having a name that reflected the school's mission and overall composition, having a marketable name played an important role in the overall decision to rebrand. According to board member Bill DeWeese, "As the word university implies, it

reaches out to broader horizons than just our local community . . . and now it's time to think out of the box" (Stevens, 2007, p. B1). President Thyreen recognized that international markets often equated the designation "college" to a high school education. He further reasoned, "It will be beneficial to us when students in other countries see Waynesburg University rather than Waynesburg College. It will make a dramatic difference" (Stevens, p. B1). Although Waynesburg University's decision was multifaceted, the matching of its name to its current identity appeared to be the administration's primary rationale.

As this study further explores the rebranding of West Virginia colleges to university status, this chapter investigates the rationale utilized by the various institutions for adding the "university" brand to their names. A mixed method approach for data collection was used. By using quantitative data, this chapter will seek to discover reasons both regionally and nationally for such changes and will determine if West Virginia's institutions followed suit. In addition, historical and qualitative research were also employed. The historical data included, but was not limited to, the following primary source materials: governmental records, accreditation documents, board minutes, interviews, and newspaper and television reports. These overlapping methods aided in the analysis of rationale of the 10 West Virginia institutions that became universities during the last 30 years.

Since the bulk of these changes occurred between 1996 and 2005, there was a concentration of materials from this 10-year period. Since this chapter will ascertain the rationale for the change, information regarding the actual change process and the results produced by the change will be discussed in further chapters. The information provided

about specific West Virginia institutions is reported up to the moment of the name changes. Occasionally, information subsequent to the change was provided, as these later factors helped facilitate understanding of the institution's rationale for seeking to become a university.

During the period of West Virginia's greatest number of university name adoptions (1996 through 2005), the *HEP Higher Education Directories* listed 151 U.S. colleges that rebranded as universities. With nearly five percent of the 3,036 regionally accredited institutions having experienced this type of change, a perceived benefit in transforming a college to a university must exist. The reasons for the rebranding, therefore, could be legion.

Spencer (2005) identified a number of factors that might influence a decision to change an institutional name. Among a larger list, he included a) increasing enrollment; b) increasing prestige; and c) accurately describing purpose. In addition, Koku (1997) noted the following motivations: a) widening the school's appeal; b) counteracting spiraling enrollments; c) indicating a merger of institutions; and d) eliminating categorization as a regional institution. Morphew (2000), as well, enumerated possible reasons that included a) adapting to new higher education markets; b) becoming more like mainstream institutions; c) better matching its current or proposed institutional mission; d) sending a message of legitimacy; e) increasing prestige; f) increasing tangible resources; and g) reflecting organizational changes that have occurred or are forthcoming. While the aforementioned motivational factors are by no means an exhaustive list, single institutional studies suggested that often several factors may precipitate the need to change.



From 1996 to 2005, eight West Virginia institutions adopted a “university” brand. While eight schools may not constitute a large number, these schools represented one fourth of all of the regionally accredited institutions in the state. Numerically, West Virginia ranked fourth highest in the nation for college-to-university rebranding. Proportionally, however, West Virginia placed first in the nation. Such a large number of college-to-university changes raises the question, “What are the reasons for this phenomenon to occur?”

Several hypotheses can be generated regarding possible reasons this large percentage of college-to-university changes occurred in West Virginia. These include the following: a) the loss of statewide population and an older median age; b) a national trend of enrollment loss due to a smaller population of post baby-boom generations; c) higher education institutional over-saturation in West Virginia; d) state and regional poverty; and/or e) traditionally poor retention rates. Any, all, or a combination of these factors could stimulate the need to find innovative methods to attract students. One of these techniques could involve an institution’s rebranding itself as a university in an effort to attract more students. To better understand the reasons why these changes occurred with such a large frequency in West Virginia, the researcher embarked upon a mixed method study by utilizing quantitative data culled from similar institutions in a 10-state region and a qualitative study that examined historical data and analyzed interviews of administrators involved in the change process at 10 West Virginia institutions.

While only eight changes occurred in WV during the years 1996 to 2005, the researcher drew upon data collected about two earlier changes: Morris Harvey College to The University of Charleston in 1979 and Salem College to Salem-Teikyo University in

1989. As part of this study, comprehensive interviews were conducted with 17 West Virginia past and present higher education administrators. Four of the subjects represented multiple institutions. Two administrators from the state of Georgia participated regarding the system-wide change initiated in that state in 1996. Additionally, a West Virginia legislator and two Pennsylvania administrators were also interviewed. Forty-eight short interviews regarding institutional specifics and written documentation completed the qualitative data. Additional quantitative data from all 103 institutions in the United States that participated in a college-to-university change between 1996 and 2001 were collected to analyze the longitudinal impact of this type of strategic name change.

### **Regional Perspective**

In determining trends in a larger geographic region similar to West Virginia, it was determined to survey university presidents at 51 former colleges in a 10-state region that surrounds Appalachia. Each of the following 10 states includes Appalachian designated counties: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Two additional states with Appalachian counties, New York and Mississippi, were omitted because there were no qualifying institutions during the years 1996 to 2005. Because only 12 institutions in the Appalachian counties of this 10-state region rebranded as “universities,” it was necessary to survey administrators at rebranded universities in non-Appalachian counties as well.

The university presidents were asked to provide information on their specific institutional change and, if they were not institutional employees at the time of the

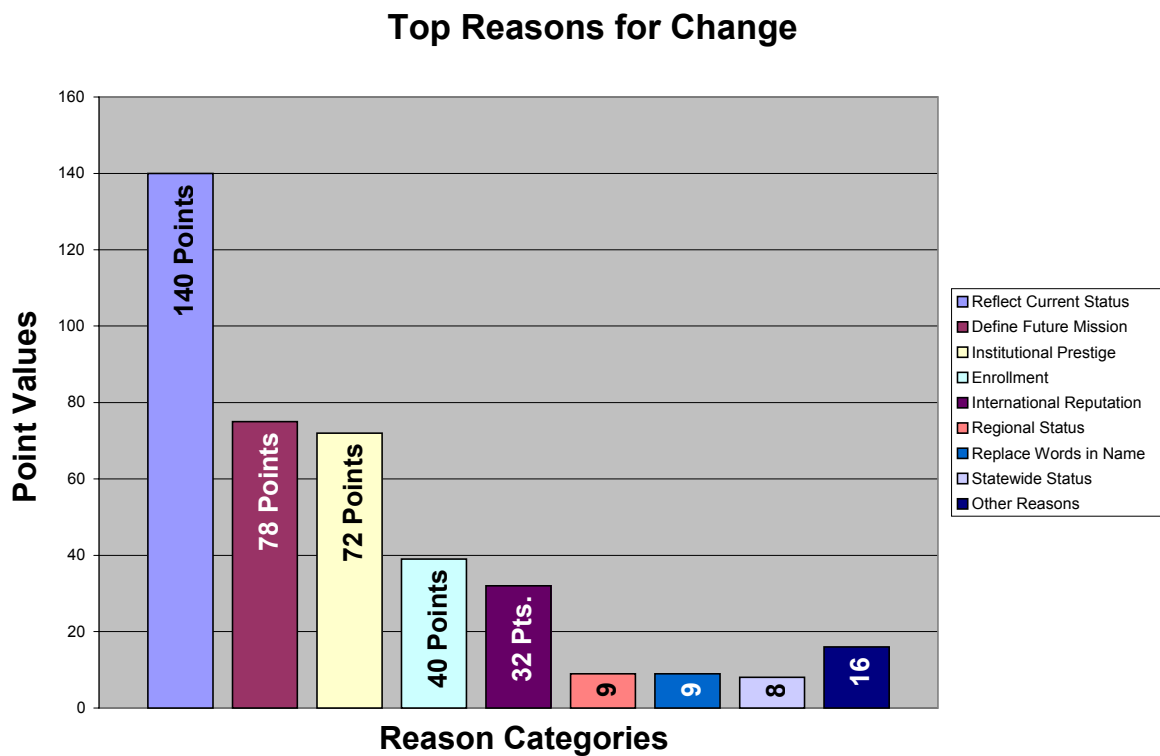
change, they were to designate another administrator who would act as a proxy. Of the 51 surveyed institutions, 34 or nearly 67% participated.

As part of the series of questions, each participant was asked to identify the five most significant reasons why his/her specific institution became a university. The questionnaire was a modified version of Spencer's (2005) instrument and included a list of twelve items based upon the items identified by Koku (1997), Morpew (2000), and Spencer (2005). These categories are listed below:

- to honor a benefactor
- to more adequately describe the institution's mission at the time
- to adequately define a future mission or goal of the institution
- to increase institutional prestige
- to replace inappropriate words in existing name
- to signify independence from a parent institution or system
- to signify a merger into another institution or system
- to increase enrollment
- to more accurately describe the institution's location
- to signify that the institution had intrastate regional institution status
- to signify that the institution had statewide institution status
- institutional economic problems

Additionally, respondents provided custom reasons to the list. Only 11 institutions provided five reasons; the majority provided three or fewer reasons. The categories were rated by importance (e.g., the most important reason was given five points, second most important reason four points, and so on). Thirty distinct reasons were provided (see Appendix S). Because many of the categories were similar, these were compressed into nine major themes (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1  
*Top reasons why colleges change to universities.*



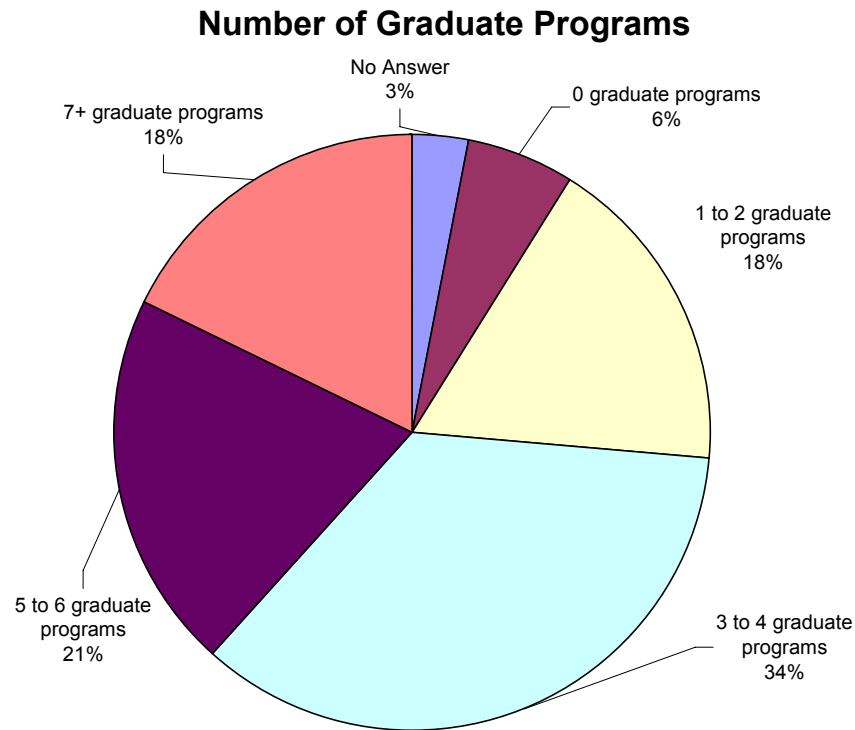
The primary reason for the change (with 140 points) was attributed to being a reflection of the institution’s current status. Other significant reasons included the following: a) defining the institution’s future mission (78 points); b) enhancing institutional prestige (72 points); c) to increasing enrollment and/or applications (40 points); and d) increasing international recognition and attracting international students (32 points). All remaining factors paled by comparison.

“Reflection of the current mission of the institution” as the primary motivation agrees with the data self-reported by these institutions regarding graduate programs. The majority of the schools (73%) reported that their institutions had three or more graduate programs operational at the time of the name change (see Figure 2.2). In a number of

states, including West Virginia, university status is based partially upon the ability and the permission to offer graduate degrees.

Figure 2.2

*Number of graduate programs when the change occurred.*



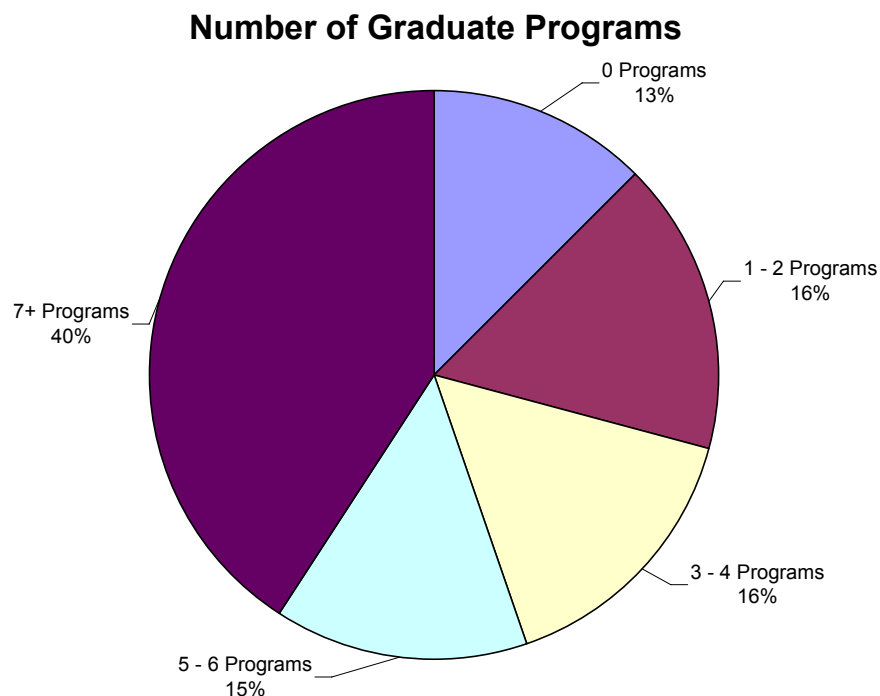
### National Perspective

On a national level, catalog and archived website data of the entire population of 103 institutions that experienced a college-to-university rebranding from 1996 to 2001 were consulted. This information was collected for the year of the change as well as for five years following the change. The numbers and types of graduate programs were enumerated. These programs were then categorized according the U.S. Department of Education's ranking of graduate programs (see Appendices X and Y).

As noted in Figure 2.3., 13% were not offering any graduate programs during the year of the change. Forty percent of the 103 institutions were offering a minimum of seven graduate programs during the year of their name changes. Twenty percent offered research doctorates and/or first professional degrees. While the exact reason for an institution's change cannot be known simply from counting and ranking the types of graduate programs, an inference may be made that many of these schools could have been seeking to identify themselves as universities to reflect an existing mission. Therefore, accurately describing one's mission could serve as a rationale for adopting the university designation.

Figure 2.3

*Number of graduate degrees and certificate during the year of the name change year.*

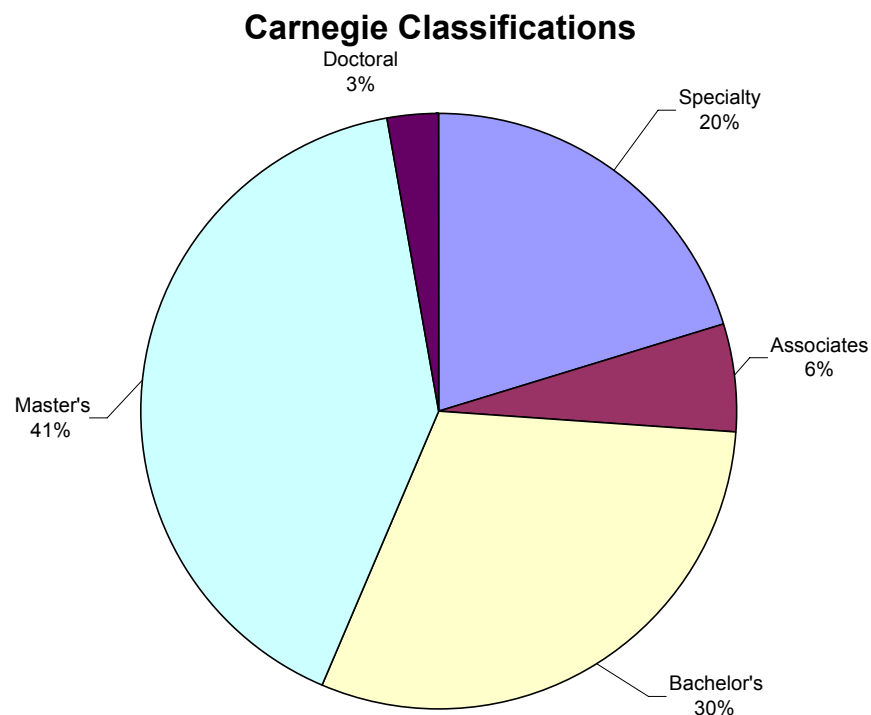


Additionally, the schools' Carnegie Classifications were also tracked for the year of the name change (see Figure 2.4) and for five years following the name change. While

one can draw only inferences from these data, the numbers and the types of programs provide insight concerning whether an institution was using the name change for the purpose either defining a future or an existing mission. These data will be reviewed in greater detail in a subsequent chapter.

Figure 2.4

*Carnegie Classification of population schools: Year of the change.*



### **West Virginia and the Rationale for a College-to-University Transition**

During the past 30 years, West Virginia was plagued with numerous issues that affected nearly every higher educational institution in the state. Some of these difficulties included a failing economy, a declining population of the next generation of college students, low college going rates, and a large number of colleges and universities per capita. In addition, West Virginia's public institutions have experienced added anxiety

regarding governance and funding; oftentimes an institution's administration feels powerless in regard to its own future. When the legislature ignores an institution's specific needs, the need for survival escalates. As one administrator editorialized, "There are some people in the legislature that, instead of overtly closing colleges, just let them go – starve to death until it became obvious they have to close."

All or any of the aforementioned issues could be detrimental for any college on the brink of disaster. Although these conditions have persisted, it appears that only three of the former colleges outlined in this study transitioned to university status in order to survive. By interviewing 17 West Virginia higher education administrators, three reasons emerged as the primary factors in deciding to seek university status: a) survival, b) to define a future mission of the institution, and c) to describe an institution's current mission. Additionally, supplemental reasons included the following: a) to align the institution with the current definition of the term "university," b) to better position the institution in stateside markets external to West Virginia, c) to become more attractive to international students, and d) to contribute to the economic benefit of the region. As an aside, one female administrator, when discussing the multitude of recent college name changes in West Virginia speculated that, "most of the name changes . . . have not come about from expansion; they've come about from the testosterone from the top."

Whether testosterone or expansion was the motivation, the three primary reasons for institutional change can be compared to Tuzzolino and Armandi's (1981) corporate interpretation of Abraham's Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Zenisek (1979) tied organizational need to economics and the result of how a business responds to market changes. Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981), while addressing self actualization, collapsed



Maslow's five categories into four primary areas: survival, safety, affiliation, and status. While the categories do not perfectly correlate with changes occurring in West Virginia higher education, one can draw some parallels.

Because most mergers in West Virginia satisfied lower level needs, the representation of the affiliation and status needs are tenuous at best. The mergers that produced Salem-Teikyo University and West Virginia University Institute of Technology were influenced by a need to survive and will be discussed further. Ohio Valley's absorption of Northeastern Christian Junior College in 1993 served to strengthen the programs at OVC and allowed the school to advance to the baccalaureate level. This merger better represents the need of a safety or, as is termed by Martin (1976), a "security need." The only adequate example of an institutional merger not based upon survival or safety needs would be Marshall University's absorption of West Virginia Graduate College. While this study references this particular merger, it was not included for primary consideration, as the school had utilized the term "university" twice in its history (see Appendix Z).

Even Tuzzolino and Armandi concluded that a "collapsed three-tier hierarchy might prove more tractable" than their four main categories or all five Maslowian categories (1981, p. 27). Unfortunately, Tuzzolino and Armandi did not identify these three tiers; however, Martin (1976) abbreviated organizational needs as survival, security, and prominence. Prominence can be equated to Tuzzolino & Armandi's status need. The great difficulty in addressing the level of needs at the time of name change is that the analysis is subjective in nature. Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981) recognized this shortcoming from their work, but concluded that it "might offer the added objectivity

needed in the assessment of organizational effectiveness” (p. 27). Although Maslow’s hierarchy is often discussed across disciplines, there appears to be a dearth of literature utilizing this theoretical perspective in regard to organizational growth.

### ***The Need to Survive***

Since a number of authors have referenced business models to understand college and university branding, there is the precedent to follow suit (Koku, 1997; Kotler and Fox, 1985; Sevier, 2002a; Toma, Dubrow, and Hartley, 2005). In the realm of business, the need to survive is at the lowest level and strategic planning becomes a mission critical to exist (Martin, 1976). By examining the situations at the time of their name changes, three institutions in this study qualify for being at the survival level: The University of Charleston, Salem-Teikyo University (now Salem International University), and West Virginia University Institute of Technology.

***The University of Charleston.*** Privately controlled Morris Harvey College (MHC), the only regionally accredited institution in West Virginia’s capital city, began its path to rebranding with the emergence of serious financial difficulties that began in the early 1970s. For the 1973-74 school year, the board of trustees approved a 20% hike in tuition in order to help balance the school’s overextended budget. The decision, however, was counterproductive and resulted in loss of 200 local students. According to board chair Deal Tompkins, “It’s kind of self-defeating as far as revenue raising is concerned. There is too much of a spread between state tuition and ours” (“Moore blames,” 1974, p. 1A).

Fearful of rumors of the establishment of a state operated community college in Charleston and a repeat of the 13% enrollment loss from the previous fall, Morris Harvey's board feared the worst (Withrow, 1974). In an unprecedented move, the MHC trustees conveyed the school and its property to the State of West Virginia on April 20, 1974 to be effective July 1. In a press conference, Governor Arch Moore conditionally accepted the gift valued at between \$27 and \$34 million. Moore's acceptance was on the condition that the acceptance of the school met the approval of the Board of Regents, the State Public Lands Corporation, and both houses of the legislature ("Moore Blames," 1974; Steele, 1974).

It was proposed that the campus, which was being used by the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies (COGS), could become COGS' permanent home. MHC was already hosting more than half of the current COGS offerings ("Moore blames," 1974; Steele, 1974). Considered a win-win situation for the school and the state, President Marshall Buckalew said the institution could become "a growing dynamic force in the system of education in the State of West Virginia . . . the college must go forward" (Steele, 1974, p. 1A). Later Buckalew defended the solvency of his institution: "Morris Harvey is not going out of business. It is not a failure . . . the decision was made . . . in the best interest of Morris Harvey College and the community it serves" ("Buckalew defends," 1974, p. 10A). While faculty and students had mixed reactions, the decision played more favorably among some of MHC's student body ("MHC Students," 1974). Leonard Riggleman, MHC president from 1931 to 1964 and an emeritus trustee, was the decision's major opponent. Riggleman publicly criticized the board and intimated that his protégé Buckalew should be fired ("Buckalew Defends," 1974; "MH 'Giveaway,'" 1974).

Governor Moore, the plan's chief supporter, called a special legislative session to address a number of issues including the acquisition and the need to front the school \$2 million for its operating costs (Grimes, 1974; "MH Among," 1974). Operating under the assumption that on July 1 the Board of Regents would own the institution, Buckalew announced a \$200 to \$250 reduction in tuition for the next school year and planned raises for faculty (Withrow, 1974). On July 1, Morris Harvey's status remained unchanged. Moore, the Board of Regents, the State Public Lands Corporation, and the House of Delegates all approved the gift; however, a decision to accept Morris Harvey continued to stall in the State Senate ("Moore Blames," 1974). Senate President William T. Brotherton, Jr. defended the Senate's decision on a concern regarding whether "Morris Harvey College could be integrated into the higher education system on a basis that would benefit all of education in West Virginia" ("Revenge Denied," 1974).

Needing to enter its fall annual fund drive and not willing to wait for another legislative session to deal with the issue again, the MHC board withdrew the offer on October 3, 1974 ("Moore Blames," 1974). In wake of the decision, Buckalew tendered his resignation and left the school in 1975 (Hendricks, 1978). Over the next three years, problems escalated at the Charleston school. One involved the hiring of Buckalew's successor. In May 1975, the trustees offered the position to Dr. Hugh L. Thompson, a graduate of Shepherd College and then president at Sienna Heights College in Adrian, Michigan. Thompson refused to come to Charleston after receiving a host of threatening letters and phone calls regarding the board's decision. During this time, MHC was also involved in a \$2 million dollar capital campaign. Although the school raised significant funds, it fell short of the intended goal (Hendricks, 1978).

Robert Bliss, former vice president of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, was hired as president in August 1975 and resigned in less than two years. Former board chair Deal Tompkins served as acting president until July 1978. During Tompkins' tenure, he instituted another 20% tuition increase and announced that MHC had planned to increase tuition at a rate of 20% over the next five years. To make up for budget deficits, MHC nearly exhausted its endowment by drawing upon the funds for operating expenses (Hendricks, 1978). As one administrator reminisced, the "school was at the brink of bankruptcy." In addition, the students perceived the school as little better than a high school and was commonly known by students as "Harvey High" (Gadd, 1978).

Dr. Thomas G. Voss, the former president of Tennessee's oldest college, took over the reins at Morris Harvey in July 1978. Voss had honed his administrative skills with six years' experience as the CEO of Tusculum College. At age 35, he had new ideas that propelled the school's name frequently onto the front pages of the *Charleston Gazette* and the *Daily Mail*. Not all of the publicity was favorably received and Voss was much criticized for his radical approach, which included the firing of most of MHC's top administrators. The new president "vowed to reverse the college's gloomy financial picture within three years and increase its diminished enrollment" (Hendricks, 1978). The most controversial, however, regarded the sanctity of the Morris Harvey name.

In a well choreographed press conference held on the morning of December 15, 1978, Voss announced that in six months the Morris Harvey brand would be diminished in role to become the Morris Harvey School of Arts and Sciences. Readers of that afternoon's *Daily Mail* learned about Voss's issuing telegrams to the school's 34 trustees to attend a special meeting held two days previously. It was then that Voss unveiled his

plans to the board of a name change to The University of Charleston (UC). While the vote of the board was unanimous, a few board members later indicated that they were not entirely pleased with the decision although they did not object at the time of the vote (Gadd, 1978; Gadd & Grimes, 1978).

Nearly everyday until the end of 1978, the Charleston papers covered some aspect of the story. The *Daily Mail* supported the change stating “as traumatic it is for many, changing the name of Morris Harvey to the University of Charleston is far better than another alternative: no college at all” (“The New University,” 1978, p. 4A). Sensitive to the issues raised by alumni, the editors further stated “it will be far more satisfying to point to the school they used to attend than to point to the spot where their alma mater once stood” (“The New University,” 1978, p. 4A).

Figure 2.5

*The current University of Charleston entrance on MacCorkle Avenue.*



The adoption of the “university” moniker was a new concept in West Virginia and it was widely criticized. The last time a college emerged as university was in 1961 when Marshall College became Marshall University. Voss admitted that, of the several names suggested, he felt that the school “should identify itself with the community of service” (Cheshire et al, 1978, p. 1B). Since the school did not have any graduate programs, Voss characterized UC’s status as an “undergraduate university” citing 88 other such schools in the United States (Cheshire et al, 1978, p. 1B). Utilizing a university model, Voss organized UC into three schools overseeing programs in business, health, and arts and sciences. He was hopeful that by summer the school would have its initial accredited graduate program. True to his word, the North Central Association approved the University of Charleston to offer a Master of Science degree in Environmental Studies on July 23, 1979 – just 22 days after the university name became official (Cheshire et al, 1978; Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007).

While the news media characterized the move as necessary for the institution’s survival, Voss placed a more positive spin on the motivation. “I think these days every decision a private institution makes deals with survival. But I think that the question is not a question of survival, but a matter of purpose. I think that reorganization and a name change give every indication of our new purpose” (Cheshire et al, 1978, p. 1B). Voss expected that over the next year UC would be receiving additional grants and gifts tied to the name. While the name change occurred in July 1979, Voss did not expect that a full transformation to a university would occur until December 1981 (Cheshire et al, 1978).

***Salem-Teikyo University (now Salem International University).*** Salem International University’s nearly 120-year history is characterized by its very struggle to

exist. Started as Salem Academy and rechristened a year later as Salem College, the school was founded by members of the Seventh Day Baptist Church. Although connected to the denomination, the school was ecumenical in spirit. The incorporators, many of whom had familiar connections to the failed West Union Academy decades earlier, did not want to risk the same failure as West Union because of its sectarian requirements (Randolph, 1905). For many years, Salem operated as a stock based institution that paid dividends to its shareholders.

One story from its first decade illustrated the institution's struggles and its tenacity to survive. In 1895, the sleepy hamlet of Salem, WV transformed almost overnight from a village of 200 to an expansive shantytown of 5,000. An oil and gas boom in the region brought thousands of hard living and hard drinking men into this small religious community. In an effort to obtain the college's property to build a brewery, several of the men decided to buy up a controlling share of the stock. Because the school's incorporators' splitting the stock foiled their plan, the men plotted a more direct route to ownership and that was to first burn down the school. When the drunken mob approached with torches, President Theodore L. Gardiner armed with a double-barreled shotgun and a revolver called out, "The first man who steps foot on this campus dies like a dog." He then accentuated his intentions by firing one shot over the mob's heads. Gardiner saved the school, but the men attempted to torch the entire town and inadvertently managed to destroy every saloon in the process. The town's original residents considered the result as an act of divine intervention and Salem College continued ("Mission to Appalachia," 1976; Smucker, 1988, p. 23; Taylor, 1992).



While not officially a religious school, Salem held the characteristics as such for many years because of the denominational composition of its board. Dancing and drinking were prohibited and campus activities were suspended on Saturdays – a day reserved for worship. The Seventh Day Baptist characteristics and the quasi-proprietary stock operations ceased prior to Salem’s receiving accreditation candidacy from the North Central Association in 1961 (“Statement of Affiliation – SIU, 2006). According to one administrator, “they had to do two things. They had to give up being a stock institution and they had to give up a homogeneous board of trustees and had to go to something more heterogeneous. And that happened in the 50s, and it really changed the character of the institution.” Salem embarked upon its second iteration and North Central accredited the school in 1963 (“Statement of Affiliation – SIU, 2006).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Salem developed its third persona as a career preparation institution. This identity switch was largely due to the help of Senator Jennings Randolph and Title III funding for work related training. Randolph’s connections to Salem ran deep. His grandfather, Jesse Randolph, was one of the first incorporators and served as chair of the board. Both he and his father were Salem graduates and both had served on its board – Senator Randolph doing so from the time he was a student (Smucker, 1988). As one administrator reminisced,

Salem always was a poor school. Its constituents were poor; its students were poor. They were great ministers. They were great mid level managers. They were great teachers, but they were not wealthy, except for a couple of dozen people who really distinguished themselves financially. So, Salem was always dependent on where the next amount of money

would come from to keep the lights on and still give the scholarships to students that they brought in from so many different places. So the next phase, I think partially because of Senator Randolph, was to take advantage of all of the career orientation and all of the funds that our government was making generously available for schools that focused really not on what we would consider a liberal arts education, but really focused on career preparation. So, Salem moved very, very much in that direction; and in fact, it was totally characterized in [its] publicity, in catalogues, and everything dealt with “come to Salem and get a job.” “Find out what you’re going to do.” “Train yourself to be in the workplace.”

During this time, Salem had one of its strongest financial periods. Many returning Vietnam vets were taking advantage of the G.I. Bill. Tuition rich, Salem’s board saw the opportunity to build a modern campus about a half mile from its primary location. The “Valley of Learning” is where the bulk of Salem’s campus activities have occurred for the past 30 to 40 years. During the enrollment boom, Salem also opened a center in Clarksburg to offer learning opportunities for several hundred students from Clarksburg and Bridgeport.

Unfortunately, this period of expansion ceased. Each year, Salem’s funding diminished as did the number of students taking advantage of these programs. Without the funding, Salem was overwrought with debt from the building of the Valley of Learning. They had no contingency plans for times of economic distress. In addition, the school’s current mission was no longer viable and Salem needed to move back to its

liberal arts roots. During this fourth period, Salem applied for accreditation of its first master's degree program: a Master's of Arts in Education. The NCA granted permission on July 23, 1979 – the same day as the University of Charleston's initial graduate offering (Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007).

While this period exhibited mounting financial difficulties, one administrator characterized the return to the school's liberal arts roots as a time of redefinition and excitement.

There was a real identity crisis of almost every institution in West Virginia. It was the time when everybody now was going to focus on “what is our mission going to be?” In some ways, this was precipitated by the North Central Association and their focus on the college education program – the mission and the outcomes assessment had to have a certain continuity. So, that's when . . . the college went back to being a very traditional liberal arts school. The curriculum was revised and the faculty was augmented. It was kind of an exciting time academically. I think that the community . . . especially the people who had been there a long time, never really bought into all this career activity. We, as the faculty, somehow saw teaching someone to be an accountant as [being] a little different. This could be done in a community college or they can do it in a business school. The faculty who had been there a long time in particular still had this real sense of what a liberal arts kind of education should be. And so, one of things we did . . . started off as a real return to a liberal arts focus and everything that would go with that for an institution.

Unfortunately, the liberal arts mission could not sustain Salem College. When financial problems were imminent, members of the board were able to raise support for Salem; but with economic changes in West Virginia – less and less funding became available.

Well it was, it was a solid school academically – financially, it had numerous problems. And, we were fortunate that the West Virginia economy was very good for our principle supporters – even though our tuition was real low because our students were poor and our scholarship assistance was very generous. Whenever it came to the point that we needed funds, then there were a half a dozen people we could go to and the budget was covered – expenses were covered – the bills were paid. There was no question that that was going to happen. Senator Randolph was instrumental. He had friends that were also wealthy – Armand Hammer being one. Mr. Marriot would contribute and some of the West Virginia people who were local and had sizeable discretionary income. As you may remember, the bottom dropped out of the West Virginia economy – so the people who were supporting us locally were not any less wealthy, but the amount of discretionary money they had was dearly limited. So then, we were faced with two problems. One was, how do we finance ourselves and secondly, what do we need as an identity to be competitive so that we're not recruiting the same students who want to go to Beckley, or want to go to Wheeling, or who want to go to Buckhannon, or Charleston or the state schools. What would be something we could look at that could provide

adequate financing, but also which would provide us an identity, which would allow us to be competitive.

As the school approached its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Salem College was on the brink of economic disaster. Deferred maintenance was rampant and some buildings had no repairs in 10 years or more (Kur, 1990; Salem-Teikyo, 1990). Enrollments were consistently down. Fall full-time equivalent undergraduate students were 495 in 1987, 512 in 1988, and 372 in 1989 (Salem-Teikyo, 1990). During the 1980s, Salem borrowed heavily and owed nearly \$4 million by 1988. Fiscal year 1986-87's balance was a loss of nearly a million dollars: \$967,251 of expenditures over revenue. By 1988-89, an influx of students and tuition helped improve the situation; however, Salem continued to lose money with its deficit of \$284,988 (Salem-Teikyo, 1990). During this period, the North Central Association conducted a comprehensive visit in 1985 and a focused visit in 1987. Several areas of concern were noted regarding faculty pay, faculty turnover, a lack of academic atmosphere, and small enrollments in many programs. Salem addressed these concerns during the 1990 NCA focused visit (Salem-Teikyo, 1990).

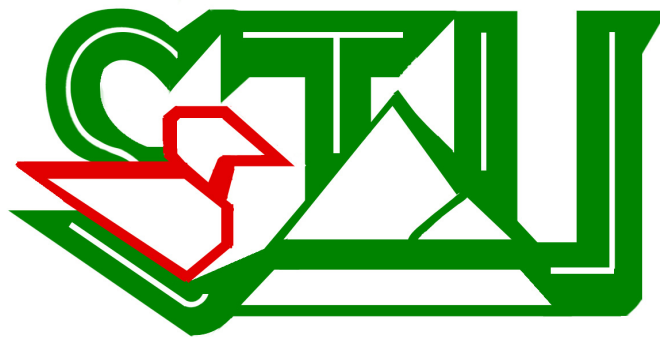
In survival mode, Salem's administration began looking for an opportunity to keep the school afloat. That opportunity occurred through an affiliation with Teikyo University of Tokyo, Japan. According to one administrator,

I don't see how we could have survived . . . Our endowment had always been meager. . . and our expenses were really high – there was just no way we could have survived as an institution without looking for a different kind of partnership. So, that became a major responsibility . . . to identify that partnership and keep on going.

Another administrator credits Salem's president for saving the institution:

Ron Ohl is to be greatly praised for that because he basically saved the school by bringing in the Teikyo affiliation. I think they found a niche. No one in West Virginia really was looking at that whole global philosophy and diversity which it so sorely needs. So, it was it was a way for them to take on a different persona, and as a result of that, they attracted several new markets. It really was a marketing hinge. I think they did the right thing, and they did it at the time when it was not fashionable. That takes real guts.

Figure 2.6  
*Salem-Teikyo University logo from the 1990s.*



On July 28, 1989, Salem College and Teikyo University publicly announced the merger and unveiled the new name of the institution: Salem-Teikyo University. The *New York Times* reported, “The merger will be one of the most extensive joint educational ventures by American and Japanese institutions and the first one created on an existing American campus and involving a name change” (Carmody, 1989, p. 16). The university name was key to Salem-Teikyo's success as one administrator reflected that it gave the

school “a credible identity which many institutions wanted to draw on in terms of [recruiting] international students.” According to NBC’s Bob Kur (1990), Salem was now experiencing “growth at a college that almost went out of business . . . but now it’s in a financial position that many schools would envy.” Salem was now in its fifth identity and had tremendous success with the first five years under the Salem-Teikyo banner. Due to a variety of reasons, however, Salem’s cycle of survival would return in 2000 with a new name and a new partner.

Figure 2.7  
*Salem International University campus entrance.*



*West Virginia University Institute of Technology.* During the halcyon days (1961-1986) of President Leonard C. Nelson, West Virginia Institute of Technology gained a national reputation as a quality school of engineering. As one administrator recalled, “They had a lot of really outstanding faculty members and they did have a

national reputation . . . A lot of these Tech old timers had connections to business and industry and they [the students] were going out there with really good jobs.”

During the 1990s, however, West Virginia Tech’s reputation began to wane as a number of the engineering faculty retired and “hiring replacements for these specialized engineers was just too competitive to bring them in at high enough salary.” Furthermore, new faculty just did not have the connections to business and industry, as did the seasoned professionals. “So they had kind of a double whammy, they [the graduates] weren’t going out with good salaries anymore within the state, and of course [the] in-state industry was being diminished too. So, everything just seemed to work against Tech at the time.”

In addition to the engineering department’s problems, numerous difficulties affected Tech’s bottom line. One administrator characterized the conditions at Tech in the 1990s as producing “the perfect storm.” Used often as analogy to describe multifaceted disasters, the Merriam Webster company (2006, ¶ 4) defined “the perfect storm” as “a critical or disastrous situation created by a powerful concurrence of factors.”

The terminology has its roots in the Halloween Storm of 1991 where a “collision between a high pressure system, a low pressure system, and the remnants from a dying hurricane—sent high winds and Atlantic Ocean waves crashing into the East Coast, from New England to Cape Hatteras” (NOAA, 2000, ¶4). The actual coinage of the phrase came by happenstance when Bob Case, Deputy Director of the Boston Weather Forecast Office, answered the telephone a year and a half later in spring 1993. Sebastian Junger, a journalist, expressed interest in getting an explanation of the formation of this storm as he was writing a book on the subject. In an attempt to use non meteorological language,



Case (2000) categorized the synergy of events as “it was the perfect situation, a perfect storm.” At that moment, Junger expressed that had the title forthcoming best selling book (Case, 2000).

Like the Halloween 1991 storm, “the perfect storm” over West Virginia Tech was characterized by multiple factors that created a devastating situation. One administrator described the situation in the following manner:

The State College Board of Directors had decided that Tech had been super funded or funded in excess, and they decided to cut back over a five or ten-year period their level of funding to a level equal to a level of Shepherd, Concord, Bluefield, and other state colleges. This began drawing large amounts of money out of the budget – \$250 thousand a year out of the base budget – and they were just having trouble managing that, and so they thought if they could affiliate with us that the name recognition and maybe doing some back room operations would take some cost out and that would help them. At the same time, the state began 547 [SB 547, 1995] which mandated pay increases for faculty and staff, but only bellied up part of the money. So every year, Tech would lose a big chunk of change and get a small portion of it back and have to spend more than it got. This put them in a very bad way and then we ran into declining high school enrollments in West Virginia, and the 18-county primary service area of Tech was the heart of enrollment declines. Fayette, Webster, eastern Kanawha counties, and everything. So, I view Tech’s issues as almost the “perfect storm.” Their own board of directors was pulling

money out of them and giving it other people, their service area was declining in high school enrollments, and the state was withdrawing money from all colleges at the same time . . . That's why John [Carrier, Tech President] . . . wasn't sure they could survive on their own as an institution without a partner.

At this time, West Virginia's public colleges and universities were under two distinct systems. The Board of Trustees of the University of West Virginia System [University System] governed Marshall University, West Virginia Graduate College, West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, and all campuses of West Virginia University. All other public colleges in the state reported to the State College System Board of Directors [College System]. As previously indicated, the state had enacted Resource Allocation Model (RAM) and the Resource Allocation Policy (RAP) that called for equitable funding within the two systems (SB 547, 1995). Coleman (1996b) estimated that Tech was losing \$450,000 annually through RAM/RAP.

As described by one institution's self-study, RAM and RAP created additional problems: "While the models were extremely complex with a number of various factors, the principal driving factor was the FTE enrollment in the fall semester prior to the allocation year. However, the system as conceived had numerous problems for all institutions, including promotion of competition instead of partnerships among colleges" (WVNCTC, 2002, §1.a). Another administrator further explained the policy's impact upon Tech:

What was happening was the university system declared equity in their Resource Allocation Policy. What they said essentially was that Marshall

and the Osteopathic School and WVU were equitably funded and they didn't need to make any adjustments. The Board of Directors [of the State College System], and you've got to give them a little credit for this, took the approach a little more seriously and . . . would actually allocate and reallocate funds among and between institutions, which was kind of gutsy when you think about it. In other words, they would take some funds from one school to another based on the criteria . . . at that time in the Resource Allocation Policy. So Tech, because they were a little behind the eight ball in enrollment and other things, they were starting to have some of their funds diverted to schools that were growing like Shepherd.

Additionally, Tech was reeling from the Senate Bill 377 (1993) mandate that colleges eliminate program duplication by geographic regions. This precipitated the phasing out of Tech's teacher education program, which some saw it as a positive move for Tech. According to an editorial in the Beckley *Register-Herald*, "The president of West Virginia Tech, John P. Carrier, clearly understands that Tech cannot be all things to all people. He successfully followed a mandate to reduce redundant academic programs that students can find at other state colleges" ("Editorials: WVU, Tech," 1996, p. 4A). One administrator considered this action of great financial consequence to Tech: "teacher education and business . . . are kind of the cash cows at most colleges. You just need education and business to keep your enrollment . . . So they were going to have a hole [in enrollment] there."

Short on capital, other factors relating to facilities and deferred maintenance were also haunting West Virginia Tech. Under the College System, an institution was not

responsible for securing its own bonds for building projects; the entire 10 colleges worked as a unit and a bond was “amortized out among all the institutions.” Therefore, anytime one of the other nine schools needed a new facility, Tech was required to participate in the financing. Tech’s yearly commitment for bond indebtedness to the College System was \$284,525 (West Virginia State Code §18B-2-9d, 1996). By transferring to the University System, Tech was not relieved of this obligation. One administrator explained, “We insisted that, even though Tech was going to the other system, that they still had to make an annual payment to our capital fund to pay off bonds on buildings . . . So, Tech owed quite a bit of money to us over the years . . . So each year, that came off the top of their budget – but again, that probably added to their financial troubles.” Tech’s obligation continued over three years, and its last payment to the College System’s Board of Directors was in fiscal year 1998-99 (West Virginia State Code §18B-2-9d, 1996).

By the mid 1990s, a number of schools in the College System had problems regarding deferred maintenance. Tech was no exception. One administrator explained, “We let our residence halls really get in disrepair. If you were a parent, I don’t think, if you visited the campus you would have let your child go there and I think probably Tech’s dorms were the worst [in the state].” Another administrator characterized Tech’s campus at the time as being “run down” and in “need of intervention and a lot of infusion of money.”

With so many uncontrollable factors colliding at Tech, “the perfect storm” analogy is fitting. By 1995, Tech President John Carrier knew he needed to do something for the school’s very survival. In the third year of his presidency, Carrier came to Tech in 1992 following a position as academic dean at Concord. A historian by discipline, one

administrator felt that Carrier was not a good fit for Tech: “I go back to his lack of a science background . . . the guy was a liberal arts guy. He was smart enough, and that’s just not the same thing.” Carrier, however, was perceptive enough to know that the school was in trouble and began having talks with West Virginia University’s president David Hardesty about the possibility of a merger of the two schools. Additionally, another administrator speculated that Carrier “wanted protection from Marshall.” Therefore, Carrier logically aligned Tech with West Virginia University.

It is obvious that Carrier’s past was also instrumental in the development of the entire merger concept. One administrator mentioned, “John was from Texas – he was from East Texas State and he saw them become a part of the Texas A&M system, so he had professional friends that seemed to be satisfied going under the umbrella of a large state university. I think that he felt that their [Tech’s] funding was in jeopardy and they were weak politically.”

Although discussions of the merger did not play well initially in Huntington, as Marshall feared an expansion of WVU in the southern part of the state. Nevertheless, Carrier drummed up support in the media and the legislature. Often incorrectly characterized as David Hardesty’s efforts to create his own fiefdom in the state, the merger was actually the brainchild and personal agenda of John Carrier and Tech and not of WVU. One administrator explained, “For a merger to truly work the party that wants to be merged into a larger organization has to want it . . . [WVU] was not going to go down there and beg the legislature to do this because we [WVU] had our own [SB] 547 problems. We had declining enrollment here. We had a lot of issues on our belt. The people of Montgomery and the people of Tech were going to have to say ‘we want to be

part of you.”” Tech, the citizens of Montgomery, the College System, the University System, and the Legislature all accepted the proposal. Regarding the ease of the legislative process, another administrator reminisced, “I would say that the way was paved from [University System Chancellor’s Charles] Manning’s board – [board member] Kay Goodwin’s connection to [Governor Gaston] Caperton and Hardesty – they got to [House Speaker Bob] Kiss and to [Senate President Earl Ray] Tomblin and I’d say that was pretty smooth.”

On a positive note, Tech was unlike any other school in the system as it had a graduate program. The North Central Association approved Tech to offer a Master’s in Engineering on July 23, 1979 – incidentally, the same day that the NCA permitted UC and Salem to offer their initial graduate degrees (Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007). One administrator stated, “Since Tech was the only school in the College System with a graduate degree, Carrier felt that the school should have been in the [state’s] University System.” This became one of Carrier’s rationales for merger as one administrator noted:

I believe that was part of his case . . . I’m not sure that case would have come up if they were [still] super funded. He was looking for where his future would lead because he knew it was going to be a rocky road. I think he thought, well if I have to take this kind of money out of my budget, I’ve got to find partners that understand me. And from moving from the Board of Directors [College System] to the Board of Trustees [University System], he did get that – [colleagues who] understood graduate education better.

On July 1, 1996, West Virginia Institute of Technology and West Virginia University consummated the relationship and West Virginia University Institute of Technology or WVU Tech was born. Although, there would be issues – one administrator characterized its success, “By and large, there was a mixed reaction, but on the whole in ’96, it was optimistic. People had seen what had happened at Parkersburg [WVU-Parkersburg]. They had wanted to be associated with the university. This put the university name on them. We had an affiliation; we didn’t have a division [i.e., a WVU division].”

Figure 2.8

*West Virginia University Institute of Technology as one enters Montgomery.*



### ***The Need for Security***

Martin (1976) characterized the need for security, which correlated with Maslow's safety needs, as an organization's need for customer approval. Tuzzolino & Armandi (1981) associated the following characteristics with this level: "the successful attempts toward achieving closure," "profit," a "competitive position," "managed competition," and "organizational slack" (p. 24-25). Herold, Jayaraman, and Narayanaswamy (2006, p. 373) define organizational slack as "excess resources that both cushion the organization from environmental changes and represent an opportunity for discretionary allocations."

These characteristics describe a secure institution that is poised for positive change. Therefore, an institution that is beyond survival, but has not quite attained its desired level of notoriety, would be positioned as having a security need. A college that transitioned to a university in preparation of what it will become is secure, but has not yet attained full university status. Drawing upon the definitions of university formulated in Chapter One, full university status could be defined as having operational graduate programs and an organization divided into multiple academic units. One institution, Ohio Valley University, is at the security level because they do not yet have an operational graduate program.

***Ohio Valley University.*** Over the years, Ohio Valley College has experienced steady, incremental growth. By acquiring Northeastern Christian College of Villanova, Pennsylvania in 1993, the Church of Christ school was able to transition from an associate's degree granting institution to a baccalaureate level school. In 1994, the school had the opportunity to purchase 136 acres and a large facility from the Wheeling-



Charleston Catholic Dioceses. The facility was the former home of the St. Joseph Preparatory Seminary, which had ceased operation in 1987. Now OVC's North Campus, additional facilities were added to the property ("About us," 2007; "History of OVU," n.d.). As Ohio Valley grew, it became a school of choice for students who were not from the Church of Christ religious tradition. With its increased involvement in Parkersburg and Vienna communities, Ohio Valley was poised for a move to the next level.

On the unanimous recommendation of its board, the school officially changed its name to Ohio Valley University (OVU) on June 4, 2005. With this change, administration organized the university into three academic units: the College of Professional Studies, the College of Undergraduate Studies, and the College of Graduate Studies. In time, additional colleges are planned for future expansion ("Transition," 2005).

The university name came within the first eight months of the new presidency of Dr. James A. Johnson. According to Johnson, "We have been diligently exploring this opportunity for some time and it has always been an expectation among our constituency that we would declare university status some day" ("Transition," 2005, p. 12). While the board had desired in the past to make this change, one administrator stated, "Basically the reason they had not made a name change was because they didn't understand all that it entailed. They didn't know if it was simply a name change, a change in status, or a change in accreditation. They were afraid to ask because of what red flags may come up."

Similar to John Carrier's previous merger experience, Johnson was the co-chair of the name changing committee when Lubbock Christian College transitioned to Lubbock

Christian University in 1988. Additionally, there are some parallels to the experience at The University of Charleston. These include the relative newness of the president, the adoption of the university name prior to the addition of graduate programs, the immediate reorganization of the institution into academic units, and the removal of certain staff members. Unlike UC, the announcement of the new name drew little fire from OVU's stakeholders, and while graduate accreditation did come, it was not as swift as UC experienced.

Figure 2.9  
*Ohio Valley University's North Campus entrance.*



Reminiscent of the UC name change, questions arose concerning the school's lack of graduate programs. OVU represented itself as comparable to other universities in a category of "general" baccalaureate-level institutions that graduate fewer than 20

students per year from master's programs" ("Transition," p. 19). OVU's administration considered the graduate program question a moot point, as one administrator explained:

We had a couple of people just ask out of curiosity. You don't have graduate programs, do you? . . . and to those people who would ask, we'd say according to North Central Association and the definition of university, we just have to have a plurality which would be two schools. Technically, it is more than a name change . . . We did have to do some organizational changes . . . we had to organize into schools or colleges and we did that. You do not have to offer graduate courses to be a university . . . We do have plans, [however], to offer graduate courses in a couple of areas in the near future.

Within a year of the name change, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association approved OVU to offer a Master's of Education degree with concentrations in special education, curriculum and instruction, and educational leadership. The date of the approval was May 11, 2006 and OVU was given additional permission to offer the degree 100% online (Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007; "Statement of Affiliation – OVU," 2006). Although approved, the institutional website offers the following cryptic announcement regarding the master's program: "In May 2006, The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools formally approved graduate programs for Ohio Valley University. Once graduate programs are in place, a graduate supplement to the academic catalog will be published and courses will be offered" ("OVU College," 2007 ¶ 2). One administrator explained, "We are approved and highly recommended to offer

graduate programs by North Central. However, we are currently working through issues with the state on that particular program.” In addition to the forthcoming Master’s in Education, OVU added a number of undergraduate concentrations during the fall of 2005 (“OVU Expands,” 2005).

Despite setbacks regarding the graduate program’s official start, the university identification distinguished Ohio Valley from other schools. More than anything, as one administrator explained, the new name provided a better image and increased positioning in the marketplace:

I think I would rather say quality – perception of quality. I think is just some that just comes with the connotation [of being a university] . . .

There’s a lot a places you could talk about, and I won’t mention them, but they’re a university and that’s a horrible place. But, if you just compare Ohio Valley College to Ohio Valley University – you tell me, which one is going to have the higher quality? I think if you did that on a blind test – 80% of the people – [would say] yeah, Ohio Valley University – the higher quality. A lot of people . . . haven’t heard of us before – That’s a new marketing technique. The people that have heard of us before, “hey, they’re not a college anymore – they’re a university” – I think it’s just a win – win.

Another administrator summarized, “There’s a whole list of reasons why we did it and it really was done from the standpoint of repositioning us for future growth and [it was] seriously a rebranding of where we are and where we are going.”

### *The Need for Status*

According to Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981, p. 24), an organization fulfills its status needs when the organization has a “standing relative to others” in the marketplace. This standing is influenced by the organization’s “market share, patent position, price leadership, and corporate image” (Tuzzolino & Armandi, 1981, p. 24). Martin (1976) lists acceptance as key for this level. For an institution of higher education, these attributes could be comparable to enrollments, brand position, tuition costs, institutional image, and acceptance via accreditation at the graduate level. Institutions in this study that were already operating graduate programs when the transition to university status occurred, are considered as operating in the realm of the status need. When Incarnate Word College transitioned to the University of the Incarnate Word in 2006, President Louis J. Agnese, Jr. announced, “The structural shifts we are proposing do not constitute a dramatic change from the way we are currently operating. What we are proposing is clearly a natural evolution of the path we have followed for some time. The benefits we reap by calling ourselves what we are will be simple, direct, and unpretentious” (p. 8). In essence, the name reflected what the institution already had become.

For the purpose of this study, these schools are Wheeling Jesuit University; Mountain State University, Concord University, Fairmont State University, Shepherd University, and West Virginia State University. While some of these institutions had difficulties in their recent past, survival was not the motivation for becoming universities. These transitions do not appear to be reactionary, as one administrator explained:

The fact that what was happening in West Virginia, the fact that it was happening, I’m not sure it had that much of an influence on what we did.

What was happening in West Virginia in 2001 was happening in 1990; and now today in 2007, it is becoming real and we know the demographics and the dynamics here. So, I'm not certain there is anything there that caused it [the name change]. The dynamics? No, the main reason for the name change – broad, generically had to do with one – name recognition; and two – branding that gets you into being a player.

While the process of becoming a university could be categorized as a security response, Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981) indicated that security and status needs can and often do overlap.

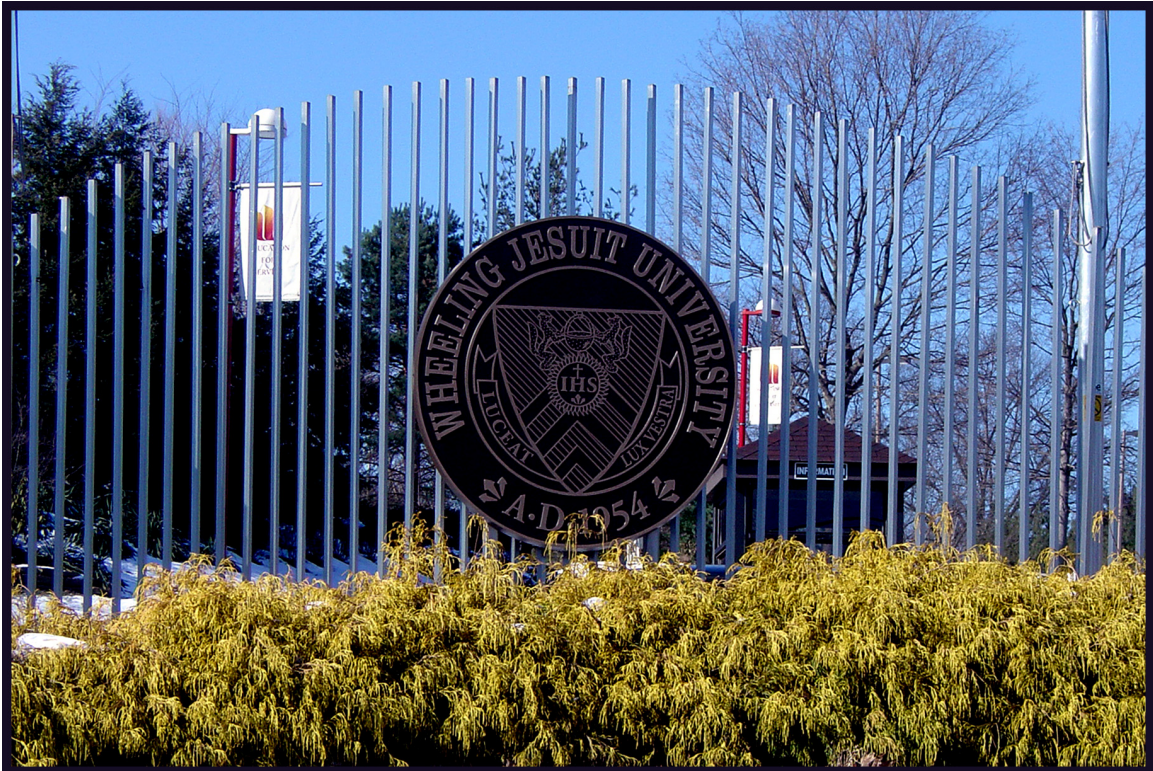
***Wheeling Jesuit University.*** Originally named Wheeling College, the school experienced many of the same problems as did the Morris Harvey and Salem. Wheeling College had serious operational issues in the early 1980s and its very existence at the time seemed tentative at best. One administrator described the situation:

There was a real question that it was going to exist or not. There was a deficit budget, a falling enrollment, [and] deteriorating buildings. So, I had a program . . . We will make the campus attractive to students and conducive to teaching – the first thing. We'd do that, and there would be an increase the amount of dollars that we'll have and therefore we will be able to increase the salary . . . We went on that . . . and that's what we kept doing. We kept building the campus – first thing, we had to make it attractive to students – that meant we had to build up the facilities. The grounds were always nice, but you had to build up the facilities and make them conducive to teaching and the enrollment started to grow.



Figure 2.10

*Wheeling Jesuit's front gate near the I-70 interchange.*



The next plan was to improve the image of the school – this began with the institution's first name change to Wheeling Jesuit College. The addition of the term was a tie to the school's traditions as a Jesuit institution and the change occurred on May 1, 1987, but was not publicly announced until July 17 of the same year ("Statement of Affiliation – WJU," 2006; "Wheeling College," 1987). According to one administrator, the term Jesuit was necessary to clarify the school's identity:

The principal thing you try to do is to recruit students. As the recruiters went around, they'd say "Wheeling College," and that sounds very much like it's a state college or city college or something like that, and they were always answering: "Wheeling College?" "That's a Jesuit college." I said, "That's a crazy thing to do, why not put the name Jesuit in right off the

bat” – so it would be[come] Wheeling Jesuit College. So, that was the basis of going after that particular change. It better stated what you were. It stated that it was a college. It stated it was a private college by putting the [name] Jesuit in, and it traded on the importance of the Jesuit name since . . . the Jesuits run about 48 different high schools and 28 universities throughout the United States. We were the youngest.

As Kelly (2004) suggested, the Jesuit imprimatur has a certain *je ne sais quoi* as the Jesuit schools have a reputation for quality education. One administrator explained, “What the indoctrination is at Harvard, and Yale, and Princeton, the same can be said for the Jesuit schools. When you walk out of there, you are well balanced – you understand what liberal arts is all about.” Another administrator explained the Jesuit difference:

The Jesuit tradition in education is really part and parcel of our mandate . . . we have ways of teaching. [We have] a very strong emphasis on philosophy as a handmaid into theology. [There is] a very strong rational approach – theology is really a science. It’s faith seeking understanding. You have this doctrine of faith . . . and you try to say, “how does this doctrine of faith fit with the rational nature that God also imposed upon us?” . . . So much of our training has very strong concepts of loyalty, strong obedience, and strong discipline. We are open to a lot of . . . the world, but we always bring a sense of education, strong discipline, strong rational approach [which are] the handmaids of theology. Those are some of the characteristics of Jesuit education.



As with UC, Salem, and WV Tech, North Central approved the institution's first graduate program, a Master's of Business Administration, on same day: July 23, 1979 (Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007). By May 1996 when the school added "university" its name, Wheeling Jesuit had three graduate programs and was seeking accreditation for a fourth ("WJU Graduate Catalog," 1996). One administrator emphasized that neither rebranding of the institution was actually a name change: "It's a very important concept in advertising – you don't change the name, you add to it . . . I always claimed to everyone else [that] we are not changing the name; we are adding to the name. So it's not a change of name." Name change or not, the addition of the Jesuit brand and later the university identification was done to aid recruiting efforts. "The whole concept of changing to Wheeling Jesuit College and then to Wheeling Jesuit University was to attract more students. I think in that sense it has an attractive feature – it's a university."

***Mountain State University.*** Like other private colleges in the state, Beckley College was barely existing at the end of the 1980s. In a little over two short years, the institution witnessed the death of one president, the hiring and subsequent firing of his replacement, an interim president from among the staff, and the hiring in 1990 of its current CEO: Dr. Charles H. Polk. When Polk arrived at the junior college in July, he was unprepared for what he would find. The endowment was gone, scholarship funds were depleted and had been used to cover operating costs, and the profit and loss statement was reported on one simple index card that revealed that the school only had a few thousand dollars at any given time for expenses let alone have funds to use as a contingency ("Decade of Progress, 2000). The school's academic reputation was no

better than its finances. One administrator recalls, “The lack of quality that it represented and also the proverbial joke about going to BC and getting your ‘C’ – all synonymous with what the school had been; synonymous with its previous leadership.”

Beckley College had not always been in a state of financial uncertainty. Much like Salem, the school was incorporated with stockholders and was solvent for most of its early history. The founding of Beckley College often mirrors MSU’s current successes with the institution’s ability to act and react to challenges and opportunities. With the disappointments of the 1980s behind the school, MSU’s current employees will be quick to acknowledge the speed by which decisions are made and plans are implemented. One administrator commented, “If you don’t like something, don’t worry because it will change soon.” This responsiveness was noticed outside of the institution. In comparing MSU to other schools, one legislator observed, “You need a higher education system that is flexible and can react quickly enough to offer the degree programs that are needed. Some people make the argument that Mountain State has been doing that and that’s why they have survived.”

The ability to adapt and change is not new to the school and this attribute may be embedded within its own institutional DNA, as Beckley College was founded within a whirlwind of activity. Within 35 days of its suggestion, the school was chartered, administration and faculty hired, a library started, classroom sites secured, students enrolled, and classes conducted (“College is Taking Over,” 1933; “Library,” 1933). During the next 30 days, a president was appointed, evening and extension classes were being offered, a mascot was chosen, and a basketball team was organized (“Allen Given

College Post,” 1933; “Blue Eagle Recognizes,” 1933; “Bumgardner,” 1933; “The New College,” 1933).

The Beckley College vision started as an idea suggested by a former high school educator, Barton “Barty” Wyatt (“The New College,” 1933). Wyatt, whose name is omitted from the published annals of the school’s history, was the original architect of the initiative. Inspired by the recent successes demonstrated by Kanawha Junior College in Charleston and Armstrong College in Alderson, Wyatt outlined the following in an August 1933 letter to the Beckley Chamber of Commerce:

There is a strong demand and a real need for a junior college in or near Beckley. The city’s location midway between Concord College and New River State [now WVU Tech] and being nearly fifty miles from either institution makes it impossible for the 600 boys and girls in and around Beckley to have the advantage of a college education. Beckley is so located that the boys and girls graduating from the twelve high schools within a radius of fifteen miles of the city could come to such a college and return home each day, which would mean a great savings to parents . . .

The junior college movement is becoming very popular in the leading cities of the country, and there is no reason why Beckley should not support one adequately. It is possible for Beckley to open a standard recognized junior college offering two years college work in temporary quarters by October 1<sup>st</sup> (“College in Beckley is Wyatt Plan,” 1933, pp 1 & 9).

Wyatt further advised the chamber about the issue's immediacy: "Whatever you do, do it quickly as the time is short" ("College in Beckley is Wyatt Plan," 1993, p. 9). Inspired by this possibility, Charles Hodel, owner of the local papers and later one of the school's original trustees, promoted the idea immediately: "If junior college work can be given successfully to high school graduates in communities all about us, there is no reason why it cannot be done in Beckley" ("Junior College Possibilities," 1933, p. 2). Within a week, Grover C. Hedrick, Beckley mayor and Raleigh County Bank president, called for a meeting to discuss the issue, and the Chamber of Commerce appointed a citizen's committee. Unfortunately, no one involved with the project up to that point had any experience in organizing a college ("Mayor Calls Meeting," 1933).

Figure 2.11

*Beckley College capital stock issued to one of the school's founders.*



As fate would have it, two young men who knew the business of education arrived on the mayor's doorstep. D.K. "Ken" Shroyer and Dr. George E. Hartman, former New River State employees, heard of the endeavor as they were traveling to Florida to invest in a circus. At Hedrick's invitation, Shroyer and Hartman were tasked with organizing the school ("Interest in College," 1933; "Ken Shroyer Dead," 1974; "Organizing a College," 1933). Hedrick, Shroyer, and Hartman each invested \$100 for one share of capital stock (see Figure 2.11) and Beckley College was incorporated on August 30 ("Beckley College Charter," 1933). Although the task seemed daunting, the initial enrollment projection of 80 students was met and classes began September 11 ("College is Now Ready," 1933).

Founded at the height of the depression, the *Daily Mail* reported, "To launch a new college in these days of economic uncertainty requires a high deal of courage and confidence" ("Beckley College," 1933, p. 4). The article reflected some of the same concerns that West Virginia institutions have faced even to the present day, "West Virginia already has a large number of educational institutions in this class with the result that keen competition exists" ("Beckley College," 1933, p. 4). Despite the conditions of the time, Beckley College found its niche as a junior college. Unfortunately, that mission could not sustain the school in the 1990s. One administrator explains, "Although I think they had done some marvelous things to get the school where it was, to keep it alive . . . [There wasn't] any opportunity to move the institution beyond where it was at that point without making a major statement about what it was going to be."

In 1991, the administration began positioning for the future. Two major initiatives occurred: North Central accreditation of its first baccalaureate degrees and a change of name to The College of West Virginia (CWV). There was no announcement of the name

change, although advertisements hinted at it with “Beckley College, the College of West Virginia.” On the same Sunday that staff erected new signs on campus, the *Register-Herald* theorized that this tag line “was suggesting that the institution’s marketing strategy is looking beyond the southern part of the state” (“BC President,” p. 13). According to one administrator, the new name moved the school to a regional focus: “It positioned us in our mind to be all over West Virginia. Because back in that time frame, we were laying the foundations of how we were going to become an operation everywhere in West Virginia we could.”

As early as 1991, a university type structure was in place with three schools identified as the School of Arts and Sciences; the School of Business and Technology; and the School of Nursing, Health, and Human Sciences. One administrator saw this as a natural part of the institution’s growth:

If you’re going to be one, you’ve got to look like one, and part of the organization of the institution early on was to try to begin to look like one. Knowing that we have had evaluation team after evaluation team and the iteration and reiteration of schools of business, school of arts and sciences, etc., begins kind of in a build-up way to begin to add credibility to your claims. And I’m not sure that it was a deliberate kind of thing, but given the fact that I’ve always been and remain a very sociopolitical person – looking around the trees rather than through the trees, and so on to what’s the next stem – connecting the dots. It always seemed very easy, and when you start connecting the dots: we’re college, now we’re a bigger college, now we’re an organized college, now we’re one with schools, you begin to



layer that on how you can build that in a pyramidal kind of fashion so ultimately you are getting to that pinnacle of a doctoral granting institution.

The 1990s produced growth in programs, enrollment, facilities, partnerships, and delivery modalities for The College of West Virginia. A move directly toward university status included the establishment of a graduate council and the introduction of graduate programs. On February 27, 1998, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association approved CWV to offer the Master's of Science in Nursing with concentrations in Administrator/Education and Family Nurse Practitioner (Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007). The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission subsequently approved the MSN degree. The NCA approved six additional graduate programs prior to institution's move to university status.

Figure 2.12

*Mountain State University's "tombstone" on the south side of the campus.*



Although the CWV brand helped reposition the institution, the local community had difficulty accepting it.

We went for 10 years with The College of West Virginia as a flag; and I don't say this derogatorily, but the old guard of Beckley who had familiarity with it just could not make the break and they never did with Beckley College to The College of West Virginia. While we accomplished a lot with changing the name, particularly from an external point of view, internal in this community – I am not so sure how significant that was. We dealt with The College of West Virginia – it was a good name. It was reflective of what we were at the time, but I think it too outlived its usefulness after a 10-year period.

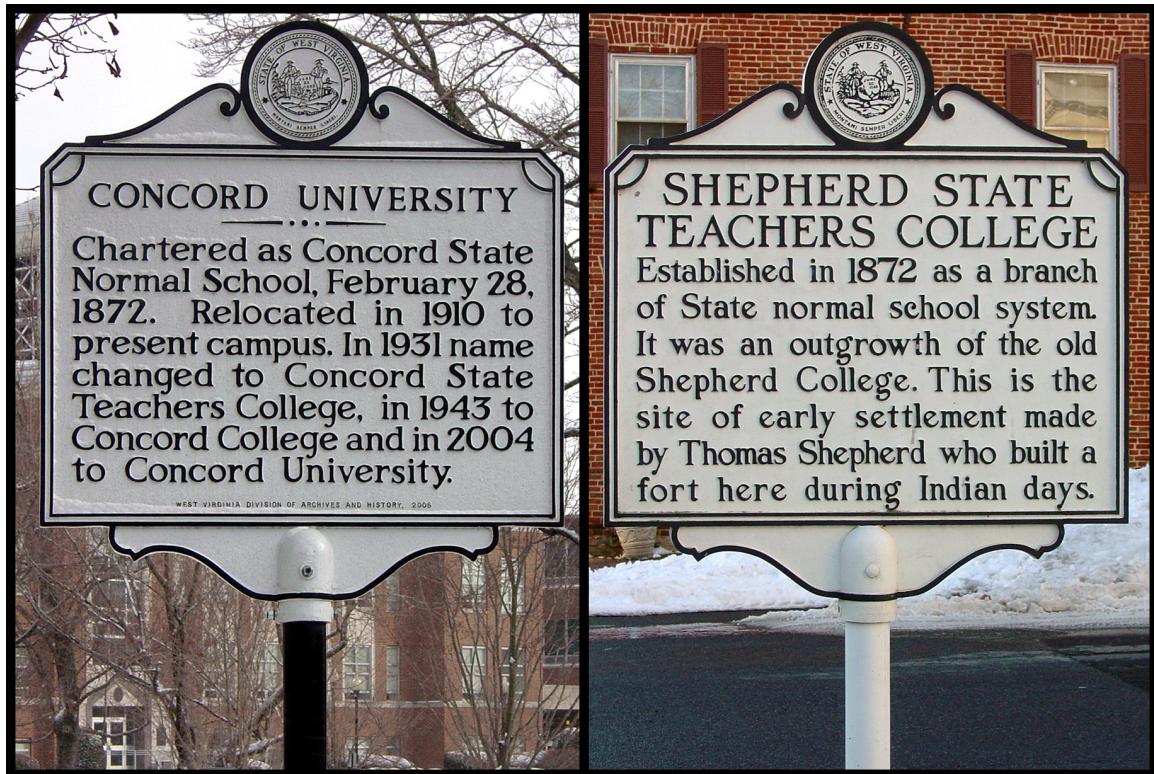
Just shy of the tenth anniversary of the first name change, The College of West Virginia became Mountain State University on August 20, 2001. A move to a new identity with university status was necessary to position the institution outside of West Virginia.

In 1990, we were trying to escape from our past. In the year 2001, we weren't trying to escape from our past, but we were trying to define what we were going to be in the future. And given the fact that we were beginning to see that our long term objectives could be fulfilled, part of that fulfillment would be getting beyond the borders of West Virginia. It was apparent that you could not go into Florida or Pennsylvania and be The College of West Virginia . . . I don't think that we could have been the



player that we are now or hope to be in the future without riding on a good brand and Mountain State University is a good brand.

Figure 2.13  
*Historical markers at Concord & Shepherd.*



*The Four Sisters – Concord, Fairmont, Shepherd, & WV State.* Although motives and the specifics differed from campus to campus, the process leading to university status for these “four sister” institutions is inextricably intertwined. Concord University, Fairmont State University, Shepherd University, and West Virginia State University all became universities simultaneously in accordance to with the laws of the State of West Virginia. Additionally, Concord, Fairmont, and Shepherd (along with Glenville and West Liberty) share an early history. This commonality included the following: a) being branches of the WV State Normal School (Marshall College); b) becoming independent of Marshall in 1919; c) dropping “Normal School” for “State

Teachers College” in 1931; and d) dropping the “State Teachers College” designation in 1943 for their most recent college name (Ford, 1921; “History,” n.d.; Maury & Fontaine, 1876; “The Story,” n.d.).

***The prequel.*** While Senate Bill 448 (2004) granted status, the process of the “four sisters” becoming universities can be traced back several decades through the efforts of West Virginia State College. One administrator chronicled this history:

Probably Hazo Carter, president of West Virginia State [started the process]. I think that West Virginia State had gone to the legislature and asked for a change in its name. They were the only historically black institution that was a land grant that wasn’t a university and that was the basis of their claim. They had been given land grant status by the federal government again, and again the result of Dr. Carter’s leadership and his influence with Senator Byrd and others for which there was a substantial financial reward. The federal government provided land grant money and that ended up leveraging state money for matching which West Virginia State continues to get. And when West Virginia State asked for that, the legislature thought that, [and] I don’t know who it was, thought that there may be other institutions that might want to change as well . . . If there was a seminal event or action, I would say it was what they started . . . Dr. Carter probably worked for a decade on achieving land grant status. I think it was in that.

The process began in 1988 when West Virginia State's president, Hazo Carter, mounted a crusade to return the land-grant status that the school had enjoyed from 1891 to 1957. Created during the Civil War, the first Morrill Act of 1862 provided property and funding for the support of one college in each state or territory that would specialize in the area of agriculture and mechanics. The founding of West Virginia University in 1867 was a direct result of the land-grant system. By 1890, it became necessary that separate but equal facilities for African-Americans needed similar Congressional funding and the Second Morrill Act was signed. As a result, West Virginia Colored Institute (now West Virginia State University) was established on March 17, 1891 as a land-grant institution under the 1890 act (Byers & McMeans, 2006; "Second Morrill," 2006).

In October 1956, the State Board of Education, which oversaw higher education at the time, voted to transfer West Virginia State's land-grant status to West Virginia University effective July 1, 1957. During the spring of 1957, the state legislature passed two bills that upheld the Board of Education's decision and personnel and funding were transferred to WVU. Unfortunately, this act cost the region millions of federal dollars that were lost without an 1890 land-grant institution in West Virginia. While Carter's efforts spanned 13 years, incremental victories happened over time and full land-grant status was eventually restored to WV State in 2001 ("A Compendium," 2004). One administrator believed that had State not lost land-grant status in the 1950s, the institution would have had sufficient funding to have sought university status at an earlier date.

In the 1970s, all of the 1890 land-grant schools, which were the historically black schools, started to receive federal money as land-grant institutions . . . They used those funds to help develop graduate programs,

which also helped them to become universities. Because we were not in the pipeline for that funding, we did not have the resources to be able to do that. So I feel that university status, that if we had not had the land-grant status removed in the 50s, we would have had resources in the 70s and 80s to become a university. So this really should have happened many years ago.

Figure 2.14

*West Virginia State University on WV 25 in Institute.*



Although West Virginia State returned to full land grant status, there were issues concerning its “college” designation. A 2003 *Charleston Gazette* editorial, that championed WV State’s cause for university status, incorrectly identified State as “the only land-grant school in America lacking that [university] designation” (“Real U-name,” 2003, p. 4A). Of all of the 106 land-grant institutions, there were three institutes and 26



colleges in addition to WV State. The institutes and 23 of the colleges were granted land-grant status as tribal colleges in 1994; most of these schools located on or near reservations are community or technical colleges. The remaining three, created under the 1862 act, are in the Pacific territories of American Samoa, Micronesia, and the Northern Marianas. Before 2004, West Virginia State remained the only 1890 land-grant school still designated as a “college” (“Land-Grant,” 2007).

The loss of land-grant status was not West Virginia State’s only miss at becoming a university. For several decades, the College of Graduate Studies (COGS) coexisted on the same campus sharing State’s facilities. While a merger of the two bodies could have occurred without difficulty, this never materialized.

We were told, for some reason it couldn’t be worked out. I don’t know of anyone who was given a satisfactory answer to that. But for some reason, it just couldn’t work out. There are many people who remember being told that [and] who also realized that within three years of COGS leaving this campus for some reason it was able to be worked out with Marshall. It could have been possible when COGS was at Institute – miraculously it became possible when COGS moved off campus.

Another administrator theorized the reason why this did not happen:

I don’t know how much of it was due to West Virginia State at the time [being] perceived as a pretty weak institution . . . But in reality, State should have had a graduate program and there shouldn’t have been a

graduate college and Marshall probably shouldn't be located in South Charleston, but that's not the way it is.

***Graduate courses / graduate centers.*** Undaunted, West Virginia State began working on graduate classes in 1999. Following a recommendation from the academic vice president to begin graduate offerings in the school's strongest programs, the biotechnology faculty began developing curricula. President Carter communicated State's intentions to College System Chancellor Clifford Trump ("WV State," 2000a).

West Virginia State, however, was not the only institution that faced the university question. When Shepherd President David Dunlop first met with the media following his appointment in 1996, a reporter asked when Shepherd would become a university. Dunlop recalled, "That was, I think, the first question I was asked at a press conference when I took this job . . . I deferred to the chancellor [Trump]" (Tuckwiller, 2001, p. 1A). While that idea was not on the horizon in 1996, it would become a goal for several of the state colleges. During 1999 and 2000, Concord College and the Northwest Education Research Center (NORED) (2000) assessed the unmet needs for graduate education in 14 counties in West Virginia and Virginia. NORED provided Concord recommendations for graduate programs and suggestions regarding a change in their mission to fill the void.

Each school realized that students within their region were not being served in the area of graduate education. One administrator commented in that regard:

I think the reason, as much as anything of what the consultant said, you know you need to give these four institutions a chance of graduate programs is because . . . WVU, and to a lesser extent Marshall, had not met

the market's needs. It was still a strong preference by faculty to have the students on campus for two years. When in fact, my view is that master's degrees have turned into professional development type programs where people are doing them while they're working. They are not going to take two years off work to sit on a campus and at the regional sites. We do most of our graduate work online – that's where the market is for growth in West Virginia – probably the whole country really. I won't be surprised – very few disciplines are the majority of students going to be on campus for master's degrees for the future. Simply because people want to go out – they need to go out and make money and pay their college loans off if nothing else.

One-method schools could use to position themselves for university status was to begin developing graduate courses. West Virginia's state colleges, “under the accreditation guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, with West Virginia Higher Education Commission concurrence, may offer up to five graduate level courses within a single year” (Flack, 2001a, p. 3.1).

In addition to graduate courses, Senate Bill 653 (2000) permitted five schools to develop “graduate centers for their regions to broker access to graduate programs by contracting with accredited colleges and universities in and out of the state.” In addition to the four future universities, West Liberty State College was also among this number. In addition to brokering graduate education, the bill gave latitude for the five schools to work collaboratively with other institutions on graduate education and to begin to develop their own graduate programs (SB 653, 2000). The bill was signed into law on March 19,

2000. One administrator recalls, “I think as much as anything it’s related to the graduate programs. In one of the reorg bills, maybe in 653, it indicated that the HEPC could give us authority to offer graduate programs after some review. I think that really got the ball rolling; that’s what they ultimately used as a differentiation between us and the three or four campuses that didn’t get the name change.”

Figure 2.15

*Three years after the name change, Shepherd’s two primary signs still have “college.”*



In June, Shepherd’s plan for graduate education was approved by the HEPC – the first degree, a Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT), was to be cooperatively delivered with the help of Marshall University (“Shepherd College New Academic,” 2001). This was the first graduate proposal approved by the HPEC. By September 2001, Fairmont, Shepherd, and State all revised their mission statements to include graduate education. The HEPC approved the new missions of Fairmont State and Shepherd.



WV State, however, was the only one to broach the topic of university status. “We take great pride in our accomplishments and envision building our community college programs, baccalaureate education, and graduate offerings to become a university recognized for excellence in teaching, research, and service” (Flack, 2001b, WVSC Mission Statement, 2001). The reference to university was stricken and Dr. Carter was told to address that issue separately in November 2001 (Mullen, 2001). West Virginia State presented their argument to become a university and concluded with the following:

Our rationale for university status encompasses our complexity, the multifaceted nature of the communities that we serve, and our commitment to graduate education. We are proud of our past but we are pulled by the future. The College does not wish to replicate yesterday, but does intend to create tomorrow. Our justification for university status is value-driven and not event driven . . . the time has come for West Virginia State College to become West Virginia State University (2001, p. 14).

By December 2001, the HEPC approved WV State’s proposal for four new self-developed graduate courses that were to begin January 2002 (Flack, 2001a). At the same meeting, Concord’s new mission statement reflecting graduate level education was also approved (Flack, 2001c). As one administrator recalled, the mission change had to come before moving on degrees or a change in status. “So, there was a slight shift in mission here and that preceded the university, and we didn’t need the university name to affirm the importance of that truth – of that new part of our name.”

Figure 2.16  
*Concord University's main entrance.*



At the January 2002 meeting, the Commission addressed the issue of university status and presented three alternatives, with West Virginia State initiating the process. As one administrator recalls, “When we started along this path it was discovered by some that there were no criteria for university status in West Virginia. So eventually, we had criteria, but those criteria came about really because we started talking about becoming a university.” Another administrator explains the process: “Rather than awarding the change of names they came up with a plan to create criteria that institutions had to meet. And I think that the Policy Commission ended up studying . . . Maryland and Georgia and some other states to determine what criteria they had applied.” By February 2002, the HEPC had drafted criteria for state colleges to offer master’s degrees, and the specific “Criteria for Designation of University Status.” While criteria overlap, West Virginia now

had a mechanism that allowed institutions to move to the next level. The criteria for both are as follows.

Criteria for offering master's degrees:

1. an approved mission statement which indicates that the institution may offer graduate degrees;
2. approval of the Higher Education Policy Commission to offer any master's level degree programs;
3. approval of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association to offer graduate programs;
4. at least two-thirds of the institution's baccalaureate faculty hold the terminal degree, typically the doctorate;
5. faculty must have a proven record of scholarship, including substantial research and publication;
6. library holdings must meet the American Library Association's standards; and
7. demonstrated adequacy of resources to offer graduate degree(s) without compromising the baccalaureate mission.

Criteria for university status:

1. offer at least one master's level program;
2. have an approved mission statement which provides for the offering of graduate programs;
3. obtain approval of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association to offer any master's degree program;
4. have faculty, excluding community and technical college faculty, in which at least two-thirds of tenured and tenured track faculty hold the terminal degree, typically the doctorate.  
(WVHEPC, 2002).

By the time the criteria were approved, all five colleges had submitted their graduate degree plans to qualify for Senate Bill 703's (2001; Flack, 2002b) provision that the HEPC could identify one of the five institutions as a regional graduate center that

would be allowed to develop four of its own programs. Each school submitted their proposals and the programs were as follows:

Concord College:

Master's of Education

Fairmont State College:

Master's of Education for Middle Childhood Education

Shepherd College:

Master's of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

Master's of Science in Information Technology

West Liberty State College

Master's of Education in Reading

West Virginia State College:

Master's of Arts in Media Studies

Master's of Arts / Master's of Science in Biotechnology

Master's of Science in Education (Middle School Math and Science) (Flack, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b).

Although the Commission felt that all of the submissions were “meritorious,” it chose Shepherd because it “most closely met the requirements in the statutory criteria, particularly in regard to regional population growth” (Flack, 2002b). While SB 703 appeared to limit growth to one center, the commission noted that SB 653 did not prevent schools from developing graduate partnerships and programs (Flack, 2002b). One administrator recalled this situation,

I think the first bill that came out – the 2000 bill, was written by friends of Shepherd and made it appear that . . . you had to be in a region of the state with a fast growing population or some such. The HEPC kind of ignored that criteria as they put us all on the march toward getting permission to offer the degree programs.

***Accreditation.*** One of the HEPC’s criteria for university status was an accredited master’s degree program. Several of the institutions followed the advice of SB 653 (2000) and became partners with another university. One administrator recalled the process:

What happened initially, we all, at least we worked with Marshall, we had a three-year period of transition where we partnered with Marshall on degrees in education and criminal justice and we moved those over to our own when we started. I think everybody else did similar sorts of things but I can’t say that for sure.

West Virginia State and Concord did not collaborate with other institutions on developing their degree programs, West Liberty worked with WVU, and Fairmont and Shepherd with Marshall (“Concord,” 2002; West Liberty, 2001; “WV State,” 2002a & 2000b).

[Marshall had] people willing to do it. You know, I think that Marshall is a little hungrier in terms in wanting to develop their graduate programs and get a more statewide presence. It may well be it was just a person-to-person type issue. It started with the School of Education and I think we

had a good contact down at Marshall that was easy to deal with. From what I hear, WVU is pretty bureaucratic. It takes a long time to get much done – so the two of us work well together.

Figure 2.17

*One of Fairmont State University's main entrances.*



While Fairmont State was coordinating two programs with Marshall, Shepherd collaborated with Marshall only on the Master's of Arts in Teaching. Shepherd's faculty developed the Curriculum and Instruction degree without Marshall's help ("Fairmont," 2001; "Shepherd," 2002). Additionally, the four schools worked with each other as well as with other institutions. Concord worked with WVU on a number of initiatives that aided Concord in receiving \$30,000 in funding from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation (2004 p. 27) to develop a "Professional Development School model of teacher preparation at public institutions in the state."



At some point, West Liberty State College conceded that they were unable to meet the HEPC's faculty requirements and ceased progression toward university status (J.D. Carpenter, personal communication, February 13, 2007). The remaining four pressed on and in April 2003, the HEPC approved five programs: Concord's M.Ed., Fairmont's M.Ed. in middle childhood education, Shepherd's M.A. in curriculum and instruction, and two degrees for West Virginia State. State's biotechnology degree was proposed with three iterations: an M.A., an M.S., and a B.S./M.S. dual degree; the second program was the M.A. in media studies ("WV State," 2002a & 2000b). All programs began in the fall of 2002 and, by the summer of 2003, the NCA approved all five programs. According to one administrator, "I think that we had concluded that we were derelict in our duties not to begin to offer high quality master's programs, as resources permitted, for the people of this region."

Continuing their lead, West Virginia State was the first to receive North Central approval for both degree programs on June 30, 2003. Concord, Fairmont, and Shepherd followed suit on August 3, 2003 (Lil Nakutis, personal communication, February 12, 2007). Although all the four schools met West Virginia's criteria for university status, only the legislature could approve a name change. This did not come easily and will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

On March 13, 2004, the WV Legislature passed Senate Bill 448 (2004) which authorized the name change of the "four sister" institutions. Governor Wise signed the measure on March 21 and it was recorded in the respective House and Senate Journals on April 7. Additionally, the four schools recognized different dates for the name change. Shepherd claims March 13, Fairmont and WV State use the April 7 date, and Concord

waited until next fiscal year and adopted the designation on July 1, 2004 (“Statement of Affiliation Status – Concord; Fairmont; Shepherd; WV State,” 2006).

As an addendum, West Liberty State College (WLSC) is strategizing to become West Virginia’s next public university. The Higher Learning Commission has approved WLSC to offer five graduate classes or 20 hours of graduate credit hours (Statement of Affiliation – WLSC, 2007). West Liberty is currently offering two graduate programs in collaboration with other institutions: a Master’s of Science in Nursing with Marshall and a Master’s in Education Administration with WVU (“WLSC Collaborative,” 2007).

Exactly five years after the WLSC Board of Governors approved proposing an M.Ed. in reading to the HEPC, the board approved the decision to move on seeking university status. According to the December 11, 2006 minutes, “Based on the latest data submitted to the staff of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), the administration of West Liberty State College believes that the College has fulfilled the criteria established by the HEPC for ‘University Status.’ This resolution provides authorization for the administration to fully pursue all appropriate steps with the HEPC and, if necessary, the West Virginia Legislature, in order to establish University Status for West Liberty State College” (§ 10). To prepare for a name change, West Liberty began to use a new website domain name: westliberty.edu. Secured in July 2006, it currently mirrors the existing wlsc.edu domain (“Who is: westliberty.edu”, 2006). WLSC is scheduled for a comprehensive visit from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association during the 2007-2008 school year (“Statement of Affiliation – WLSC,” 2007).



### ***Supplemental Reasons for College-to-University Name Changes in West Virginia***

Since institutional transformations can be multifaceted, there are numerous supplemental reasons in addition to survival, striving to become a university, or choosing a name that more accurately defines one's current status (Morphew, 2000; Spencer, 2005). While there could be untold reasons for a college to emerge as a university, several surfaced during the interview process as being significant. These included the following: to align the institution with the current definition of the term university, to better position the institution outside of West Virginia, to become more attractive to international students, and to increase the region's economic base.

***To align the institution with the current definition of the term university.*** Since the 1960s, there has been a tendency to transition state colleges to university status (see Appendix AA). In analyzing the 411 member institutions of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU, 2006), there are currently 374 universities, 35 colleges, one institute, and one designated as a school. Institutions with dual names as North George College and State University; City University of New York, Queens College; and West Virginia University Institute of Technology were considered universities.

Fourteen states have at least one AASCU member institution designated as a "college" (see Table 2.1). In half of those states, at least 50% of the AASCU members are colleges. The nine AASCU members from West Virginia include the following: Bluefield State, Concord, Fairmont, Glenville, Marshall, Shepherd, West Liberty, WV State, and WVU Tech. One administrator suggested that there has been a change in the university definition:

It's a national trend and . . . over time our vocabulary in higher ed has changed so that college to most people denotes a two-year institution and university is a four-year institution; it doesn't matter how big or small they are. There are a few exceptions. Liberal arts colleges tend to be colleges . . . but the names just get lost. I mean, you've got Boston College with 20 thousand plus students – probably research intensive, and you've a university somewhere that's a two-year institution with a thousand students in it. If there was a surefire definition of university that applied to all universities, it doesn't exist today.

Table 2.1  
*Percentage of college members in the AASCU.*

STATES WITH ASCCU MEMBER COLLEGES			
State	Colleges	Totals	Percentage
Vermont	3	3	100.00%
Rhode Island	1	1	100.00%
<b>West Virginia (pre 2004)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>77.78%</b>
Massachusetts	7	9	77.78%
Colorado	4	6	66.67%
New Hampshire	2	3	66.67%
Nebraska	3	5	60.00%
New Jersey	4	8	50.00%
<b>West Virginia (now)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33.33%</b>
Idaho	1	3	33.33%
Nevada	1	3	33.33%
Utah	1	3	33.33%
South Carolina	2	12	16.67%
Georgia	1	17	5.88%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>8.03%</b>

Georgia was one state that made systemic changes in 1996. During that year, the Georgia Board of Regents and Chancellor Stephen R. Portch decided to change the names of a number of colleges to reflect the type of degrees these schools offered. One administrator explained the rather involved structure in Georgia:

And he [Portch] wanted as much as possible for the names of the . . . 34 institutions to accurately to reflect in a sense the curriculum, but really it was about the degree granting authority of the institution. And so, he wanted it structured so you could tell from the name of the school what kind of degrees they offered. And, what was developed then was a five-tier structure . . . and unfortunately it is sort of hierarchal . . . and some schools in the perception were higher and lower – better and worse.

1. But at the top of this structure, were the four research universities. There were a couple of . . . variations from this general theme because you couldn't tell from three of the four names of the research institutions that they had full doctoral degree granting authority. The four research universities were then and are still Georgia Institute of Technology [Georgia Tech], which does not have university in the name; the University of Georgia, which does; the Medical College of Georgia; and Georgia State University. And, Georgia State is anomalous in that group . . . none of them [the research universities] had any name changes.
2. The next . . . are the regional universities, [of] which [there] are two: Georgia Southern University and Valdosta State University. And they at the time were authorized to do . . . bachelor's and master's degrees up through the Ed.D., and not the Ph.D.
3. And then . . . schools that were . . . authorized to offer bachelor's and master's degrees, but not doctorates. Chancellor Portch wanted all of them

to have “State University” in the title . . . We’ve already got two exceptions because we have a research university [Georgia State] and a regional university [Valdosta State] that are called “State University.” But, set that aside. He wanted to be sure that all of the schools that had bachelor’s and master’s [degrees] were state universities . . . It was simply a way to reflect the fact that we did master’s degrees based on the name of the institution.

4. Just to finish the line of reasoning, there’s a category of schools that offer mostly two-year degrees but a couple of bachelor’s degrees based on the needs in the local area . . . For example, one of these schools might offer two-year degrees plus a bachelor’s degree in nursing because there is a strong need in their part of the state. Those are “State Colleges.” So, if you’re called a “State College,” that means you offer mostly two-year degrees, but a couple of bachelors degrees.
5. In Georgia, if you are a public institution that is just called a “College,” that means you are only authorized to offer two-year degrees.

The schools in Georgia named “College” were previously identified as “Junior Colleges.” In addition to these five levels of the University of Georgia Board of Regents System, a parallel system of schools exists. The Technical College System emphasizes vocational and technical education. Some of these schools hold regional accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. With states like Georgia identifying “junior colleges” and Maryland identifying “community colleges” simply as

“colleges,” the possibility of confusion and misperception of the term “college” could occur as one administrator explained.

There’s another thing happening simultaneously – a lot of the community colleges were taking the word “community” out of their name. So just down the road in Western Maryland . . . there was Garrett Community College in Garrett County, Maryland. And Garrett Community College changed their name to just Garrett College. So, when our admissions people would go to the western part of Maryland to recruit students with the name Shepherd College, the high school students said, “OK, Shepherd College that must be like Garrett College – they must only have two-year programs.” And when a University would recruit in that area, then they would say, “They must be like Frostburg University. They have four-year programs and master’s degrees.” And so, we were not able to properly position Shepherd on our recruiting trips because people were confusing us with community colleges. So in the long term, I think it’s more important for us to be able to send our admissions folks on the road and talk to the people who are looking for a four-year institution as opposed to people thinking we were a two-year institution. I think that’s even more important than the ability to offer master’s programs.

Another administrator advised, “States have to look at what’s going on. Everybody should want their institutions to be viewed for what they are. So if the peer group is called a ‘university,’ then you should probably look at naming your institutions ‘university’ as well.”

*To better position the institution outside of West Virginia.* Slightly over 91% of members of the AASCU are currently designated as universities. When West Virginia institutions are competing against schools in neighboring states, the university name has a competitive edge, as one administrator noted: “We’re happy with it; we’d rather be a university. But it’s mostly for out-of-state audiences. And, if we’re trying to recruit more out-of-state students, then I think when they look around in their state everybody’s a university except two-year institutions . . . I think on a regional or a national scale, the university name better reflects who we are.”

Figure 2.18

*“Open for Business” sign: I-81 at the Virginia / West Virginia line.*



Another administrator expressed that being a university allowed his school to become a product that is exported outside of West Virginia:

I think there is a reality here that to sell West Virginia outside of West Virginia – there is nothing, outside of our state demographically, that you can look at that ranks high on the list – the reasons to be here – to sell it – to work here and all of that kind of thing – and it’s not in the fact that we stick signs up on our borders that say “Open for Business” – that doesn’t tell you very much (see Figure 2.18). And it’s my assumption that it [the university name] is that kind of thing that will propel us into future growth which will occur outside of West Virginia and not inside West Virginia.

The “university” name may have been a factor in increasing out-of-state enrollments at one administrator’s school. “I believe we started getting applications from states where we had not seen applications. When we received applications, the person didn’t write in ‘oh, it’s ‘cause you’re a university.’ But at the same time we became a university, then we started getting applications from states that we normally did not have an interest from students.”

***To become more attractive to international students.*** Not only did the “university” designation aid in marketing elsewhere within the U.S., it allowed schools to strengthen their outreach to international students. This was the fifth most important reason for changing names to “university” according to the survey’s sample population. As one administrator suggested, “if you were an international student you were on the Web and you were trying to find a good school on the east coast, moderately priced – you might feel stronger about it if it had university status.” In many overseas countries, college is synonymous with high school, as one administrator explained.

We're small but we got a fairly nice percentage of international students on our campus. And something that we became aware of is that many, many of our international students cannot attend a place that has "college" on the transcript – because where they're from, a "college" is a prep school; it's like high school or vocational tech . . . We had many international students come and visit their friends who are going to school here and said, "Now this is where I would like to come. Small school, nice small teacher – student ratio, closed environment. I would love to come here, but I can't – it's a college." And it doesn't matter that we're a four-year [school]. The fact is when they get back home that . . . that diploma has the word "college" on it. It's just too much red tape for them – too much hassle. Whereas, a university – they come right on through. So, we know literally we've had international students walk right by our table at various student fairs because it says "college" – they just literally walk right by and wouldn't stop. So, that is another reason why we wanted to make a change.

One administrator reminisced about being at Richard M. Nixon's alma matter, Whittier College. At that time, Whittier's president wanted to change from a college to a university, as the name would be helpful in attracting international students as an administrator reminisced.

The president there really, really wanted the institution to change the name from college-to-university . . . His argument was prestige and image, but with a very specific goal. He saw a real market for that institution to



attract Japanese students: in his mind, rich Japanese students. And, he argued that in Japan there is a huge difference in status between a college and university. So in order to attract these masses of Japanese students that he saw as a major potential market, changing the name from college-to-university would communicate the status of the institution and then would result in a huge increase in international students – Asian international students.

With Salem-Teikyo it was not enough to be owned by Teikyo Univeristy. The “university” identification brought assurance to its international student base and their families.

Now in terms of the international students who were coming to study in the United States. Their parents had very little appreciation that in the United States that a college and university could mean the same thing. So for the international students who were coming – they didn’t understand [about] going to a college because when you’re going to school everything is geared for those who were bright enough to be able to take the examinations and go on to a university. So for about five, six, or seven years, if we were anything but a university; we would not have had the enrollment . . . In a lot of these places, the traditional name of a college was like a seminary for women or a high school kind of level . . . so without the “university” name we would have had a lot of confusion – they wouldn’t have known what they were coming to.

*For the economic benefit of the region.* Last, several of the administrators saw the potential for institutions to create additional revenue to their primary service areas. The ability for an institution to offer graduate programs was beneficial to the students, the school, the region, and the state. The pragmatic solution was to allow other institutions besides the flagship universities to enter into graduate education. One administrator emphasized the permitting of other institutions to offer graduate degrees would not harm the existing efforts of WVU and Marshall.

But it was equally true if you look at the data that we have as a state, one of the lowest percentages of not only college graduates, but of people with master's degrees. And further if you look, the only two places in West Virginia where there were any significant clusters of master's degree educated people, one as you might guess would be around Morgantown and the other one around Huntington. Well, guess why? That's a no brainer. And I think that there were people in the legislature [that] . . . held this position and still would today – that Marshall and WVU had been trying to expand master's programs into other parts of the state through outreach types of programs. But it really didn't catch on in any great numbers . . . If we would allow some of the four-year institutions to offer graduate programs, then the employers in those areas would benefit and it would be good for workforce development at the graduate level . . . It seemed to be a win-win and Marshall and WVU could focus their resources on their own campus, do their own mission better, and it would be a win-win for everybody.

Allowing smaller institutions the opportunity to become universities and offer master's degrees, it was argued, helps to increase an individual's quality of life, and this creates a domino effect upon the local economy.

One thing it will do, it should increase the number of West Virginians who have opportunity for graduate education. As you know, West Virginia ranks last in the United States in the percentage of adults with college degrees: I think about 14.4 percent. Often there is a relationship between an individual's personal income and their level of education. So, the belief that I have is that you have more people who have opportunities for graduate education. I really give the legislature credit for understanding this. As you have more people who have more access to graduate education, that you end up having people, not only people who are highly educated, but you probably have individuals who have higher incomes – they put more money into the economy – it affects the kind of housing they can afford – the kind of taxes they pay – the kind of cars they drive. All of this circulates through the economy.

### **Summary**

As with the changes elsewhere, the West Virginia changes are similar to those found in the region surrounding Appalachia and analogous to the inferred reasons elsewhere in the country. While economic conditions and the demographic shift in West Virginia have been so pervasive, there is no indication that these indicators were a factor in the university change outside of the three institutions at the survival level. The primary

reason in West Virginia, as well as in other areas of the United States, was to align an institution's name with its current mission. The offering of graduate programs is often part and parcel of the current definition of the term "university." Becoming a university additionally allows schools to expand beyond the borders of the state and the nation to seek students. In turn, being a university has positive effects upon the local economy. There can be many reasons for change. It appears, however, that there is one primary motivation in West Virginia: to have a name that fits an institution's current programmatic identity.