Roles and influence of the Governor's office in state policy-making for higher education: a two-state case study

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Roles and influence of the Governor’s office in state policy-making for higher education: A two-state case study

by

Gregory Scott Nichols

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Higher Education)

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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2005
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For the Major Program
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ABSTRACT

This study focused on participant perceptions of roles and perceived influence of state Governors and their staffs in higher education policy-making. Reported increased activity by Governors and their staffs in education policy-making, coupled with increasing public demands and limited or reduced state resources for higher education lend relevance to this topic. Literature also suggests that higher education leaders and state officials may have differing views of their roles in state policy-making processes.

The study was designed to capture participant perceptions as to processes, and roles and influence therein, not specific policy outcomes. Given the interpersonal and dynamic nature of the policy-making process, these perceptions were the focus of the study.

Qualitative case study methodology was used in this study. Initially, a preliminary survey was administered to Governor’s education policy advisors from ten states. Thereafter, a field study was conducted to examine policy-making in the states of Michigan and Kentucky. The study presents relevant background information on each state and commentary from approximately 50 in-depth personal interviews with governmental and education leaders in these states.

The researcher has worked as a staff member of his state legislature, Governor’s office, and as Executive Director of his state Board of Regents prior to assuming his current position as a Special Assistant to the President of Iowa State University. The commentary and emergent themes of the study are informed by those experiences as well as study data and existing literature.
Study findings included a confirmation of the state-to-state variation in: public sector system design, social/economic/political culture, expectations for Executive branch involvement in higher education policy-making, and the roles and influence of the Governor and staff. While some similarities in states’ approaches were noted as well, participants believed the circumstances in their state were unique from any other.

The perceptions by and of some very experienced Governor’s aides and state government and higher education officials in the study states may be of value in assessing similar situations. The study design, however, does not provide for quantifiable, transferable results that can necessarily be applied to differing points in time or differing locations.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1999, as a long-time public policy official within the legislative branch of state government, but a new employee in the office of the Governor, this researcher began more seriously to contemplate the roles and responsibilities of the executive branch leadership in state governments in higher education policy. There were relatively few academic resources available upon initial review, suggesting the need for more research in this area. The specific study topic emerged from conversations with faculty advisors, and evolved further through emergent findings and reflections upon completion of the pilot study and initial field study.

This introductory section contains a statement of the need for, purpose, and potential significance of the study; research questions; methodology overview; notes on the researcher’s background; study limitations; and dissertation organization. All are important in understanding this study and what the study findings represent based on the evolving nature of the qualitative method that was utilized.

Need for the Study

This study was designed to better understand state policy-making in higher education. More specifically, the research topic was selected based on the need to illuminate the process of policy-making for higher education at the state level. There is a paucity of existing research on state-level policy-making processes in higher education, especially regarding the roles of state Executive branch officials, and policy-making for higher education is of increasing interest to both state policy makers and higher education officials. Emergent trends are revealed in the literature, including increased expectations from the public and state leaders for accountability and efficiency or coordination by higher education institutions than in the past.
In many cases, these trends have increased tension in the relationship among state government and higher education leaders. The literature also brought to light an increasingly prominent role of state Governors and their staffs in higher education policy-making, and an increasing awareness among both public officials and higher education leaders of divergent perspectives, perceptions, and terminology related to what is necessary in the policy-making process to achieve desired results.

**Purpose of the Study**

The specific purpose of the study was to identify similarities and differences in participant perceptions and perspectives on the state higher education policy-making process, with a particular focus on involvement by Executive branch officials, in two dissimilar states. This study initially focused rather narrowly on the role of the staff member assigned primary responsibility for education issues by the Governor. The initial focus was a natural result of this researcher’s role(s) in higher education policy-making in Iowa. I was also curious about how my experiences and perspectives might be similar or dissimilar compared to those of colleagues elsewhere. This somewhat narrow focus arose, in part, based on the commentary of Arthur Levine, president of Columbia University Teachers College who, at a National Governors Association staff gathering in 1999, identified the Governor’s Education Policy Advisors as among the most critical potential change agents in education in the United States. As the research evolved, however, a broader view was sought and emerged of the role of the Executive branch leadership in state policy-making for higher education.

The study was based on a comparative look at two states with very dissimilar characteristics on an array of factors outlined in Table 1. As also identified in Table 1, each
Table 1. Distinctions in relevant data among the researcher’s state and the two case study states, 2000-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant data</th>
<th>Iowa</th>
<th>Michigan</th>
<th>Kentucky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>2.9 M</td>
<td>10.1 M</td>
<td>4.1 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Caucasian</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State HE operating budgets</td>
<td>770 M</td>
<td>2.3 B</td>
<td>1.1 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State coordinating board</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Grade(MU)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>108,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout rate</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Grade(MU)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college &amp; AA</td>
<td>29% some or AA</td>
<td>30% some or AA</td>
<td>23% some or AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree +</td>
<td>21% BA +</td>
<td>22% BA +</td>
<td>17% BA +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4 yr</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>276,000</td>
<td>103,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 2 yr</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>192,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private 4 yr</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>98,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private 2 yr</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability Grade(MU)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average tuition per year (instate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4 yr</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>$5,050</td>
<td>$3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 2 yr</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$11,800</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test scores (ACT)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Grade(MU)</td>
<td>A –</td>
<td>C +</td>
<td>C –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita income</td>
<td>28,300</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>25,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty level</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefit Grade(MU)</td>
<td>C +</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

study state had notably differing characteristic and practices than Iowa, the researcher’s home state.

**Research Questions**

Three basic research questions guided this study. Within each research question are the related interview questions which were developed for and utilized in the field studies.

1. What factors seem most important to participants in evaluating their states public policy-making processes for higher education, particularly with reference to involvement by the Governor and their staff, and what does that reveal about these processes within their state?

2. What similarities exist in the perceptions of the state policy-making process for higher education by state officials, and higher education leaders within each study state and what does that reveal about these processes in their state?

3. What similarities, if any, exist in the perceptions of the policy-making processes for higher education in both the study states and what does that reveal about these processes?

**Significance of the Study**

This study should better illuminate higher education policy-making processes in Michigan and Kentucky. Shared or dissimilar views emerging as a result of the study may be of use either in further research or for practitioners seeking to impact policy-making processes. The significance of the study is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

While recognizing that many variables contribute to unique state policy-making environments, this study is designed to provide a glimpse of the people and processes at work
at a particular point in time. The intent of the researcher is to provide others with an
opportunity in the context of their own local environment to determine what differences or
similarities exist, and what the analysis suggests about how to approach their own situation(s)
regarding state policy-making for higher education. This study also provides information that is
potentially useful to state policy makers and state higher education officials in promoting a
shared understanding of how best to interact with one another.

Overview of the Study Methodology

This research was exploratory in intent, qualitative in nature, and utilized a case study
approach, in large part due to the dynamic nature of the process, the innumerable independent
variables at work, and the lack of a reliable way to perform a quantitative analysis to accurately
depict the processes observed. The literature on qualitative research suggested ways to design
and conduct a study of the differing state-to-state dynamics, and the unique nature of the higher
education policy-making process under examination. The approach was consistent with
recommendations in the literature which suggested use of state-level case studies as an
appropriate method and identified techniques applied in previous studies.

The primary sites selected for field study were the states of Michigan and Kentucky. These two states were selected due, in part, to their differences from each other in several
relevant aspects, including: (a) historic level of higher education attainment and institutional reputations (Michigan-high, Kentucky-low); (b) structure of higher education governance and autonomy (Michigan-high autonomy, Kentucky-high state control); (c) political party in control of state government (Michigan-Republican, Kentucky-Democratic); (d) economic structure and circumstances of the state (Michigan-historically prosperous, Kentucky-low per
capita income); and (e) social and cultural differences in the population (northern vs. southern outlook) as well as population size differences. Distinctions in the relevant state data for Michigan, Kentucky, and available information for Iowa are shown in Table 1. Iowa was included based on the researcher’s experience conducting state policy-making in higher education and the purpose of the study to illuminate similarities and differences from state to state. These data were important in selecting Michigan and Kentucky as study states having unique characteristics related to higher education governance, educational reputation, and organization of the Executive Branch of state government, economic circumstances, and demographics.

Among characteristics the two states had in common that led to their selection was the fact that both had experienced Governors with well-established organizational and management systems, staff, and reputation; and that each had a Governor’s Education Policy Advisor and other key personnel who were willing participants in the process. It is interesting to note, however, that since the completion of the field study, both states elected new Governors who were of the opposite political party affiliation of those administrations that were studied.

Background of the Researcher

This researcher has enjoyed a 25-year professional career in the public policy arena, much of it focused on state-wide educational policy-making. His interest in the study topic arose first as a result of professional development questions about practices in other states that might be helpful in determining how best to conduct policy-making business in his workplace. During the initial phases of this study (1999-2002), he was serving as the Education Policy
Advisor for Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack, was involved in the National Governors Association “Governors Education Policy Advisors Network,” and with other NGA and Democratic Governors Association policy initiatives. These connections helped provide good access for initial pilot study and later field research, and a deep level of interest in the subject, but might have also raised the potential for unintended bias in findings, which was a consideration factored into the study design to the extent possible.

During the period 2002-2005, the researcher served as the Executive Director for the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, which helped provide a broader perspective regarding the research study. At the time of publication of the study, the researcher was serving as a Special Assistant to the President of Iowa State University. This position has provided additional perspective on the study topic and an opportunity to bring closure to the research process.

Prior to those professional experiences, the researcher was a policy and administrative staff member of the Iowa Senate focused in part on educational policy and budgets. In each of the roles described, perspective on the questions at hand in this study and views on policymaking at the state level for higher education was gained. From this more personal perspective, the study presented an opportunity to ask questions and observe interactions in other settings to see what emerged as similar or dissimilar to personal experiences, then an opportunity to reflect on the potential meaning or utility of those observations. This unique perspective of the study also enabled me to suggest specific questions for further study by researchers, areas for consideration by practitioners, or methods for future inquiry.
Limitations

The phenomena under study are multi-variate, socially interactive ones, and the participant perceptions are unique to the time and place of their observations. Thus, the findings of this study are not intended to be generalizable wholesale to other sites, nor to other times in history. The findings may be useful in future research to see if similar observations emerge in other locations or settings which focus on policy-making activities for higher education.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation is organized to replicate, to the extent possible, the actual sequencing of the study process. This is particularly important in this case study as the methodology provided for emergent design and evolving areas of inquiry. As previously mentioned, the initial impetus for the study was a search for knowledge from a professional development perspective, on higher education policymaking in other states, and the involvement of the executive branch leadership staff in those states as part of the process.

Chapter 2 provides a summary of the literature review which was conducted to provide the basis for the study. The initial portion of this review focuses on the theoretical basis for the study, drawn at the macro level from organizational behavior literature, particularly open systems theory and contingency theory. Both theories are concerned with interaction between an organization (i.e., the Governor’s office and its key education aides) and the environment (i.e., the state in which they serve). Additionally, definitions of key terms utilized in the study and drawn largely from organizational behavior literature are identified in Chapter 2, including most notably the terms “roles” and “influence”. Chapter 2 also identifies five “key assertions”
in literature sources from political science, public administration, public policy, higher education, and education administration, and qualitative educational research which provided the basis for the specific study topic rationale. These key assertions included the following:

- State-level policy-making activity is a very important aspect of U.S. higher education.
- State Governors have a key role and influence in state-level policy-making, including education policy, in the early 21st century and how that role is performed is worthy of further exploration.
- The Governor’s staff also have active and important roles and influence in state policy-making, and are worthy of further study as there is not a great deal of literature with that focus.
- State/Higher Education relations are at times strained, and yet the two institutions are of great importance to one another and important to the citizens of the states.
- The perceptions of educators and state leaders may differ as to what is appropriate or desirable relative to state policy-making issues and processes, and both perspectives are important to understand the process.

Chapter 3 presents the study methodology, and provides a timeline of the field study activities and information on interview topics and questions drawn from research question areas. Additional information is included in this section on this researcher’s roles in the study.

The findings from field study sites, presented in the chronological order of the field visits, are discussed in Chapter 4 with reference to relevant literature strands, research questions and areas of interview inquiry. Consistent with qualitative methods, many of the findings are reported in the voices of the study participants.
Chapter 5 outlines study conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This exploratory study was built upon a number of theories and definitions drawn from the literature of organizational behavior which, in turn, draw upon elements of several disciplines in the social sciences. At a macro level, organizational behavior literature provides two specific theoretical constructs upon which this study was built: opens systems theory and contingency theory. The former theory postulates that organizations are open systems exchanging information and resources with their environment (Wexley & Yukl, 1977, p. 12). In this study, that concept was applied to define the gubernatorial staff and the Governor as an organization, and their environment as the state in which they serve. The latter theory postulates that success of an organization depends on the “fit” between the organization and the environment in which it operates (Burns & Stalker, 1961, as cited by Nicholson, 1995, pp. 357-359). In this study that “fit” was measured on the basis of perceived roles and influence of the gubernatorial office by higher education and state stakeholders. The theoretical framework for this comparative case study was based, in part, upon the notion that, in different states, the environment provides different information and resources to Governors for use in the policy-making process for higher education, and that the success (as measured by perceived influence in the process) of the governor’s office is, in part, based on the perceived “fit” of their work into the specific state policy-making environment in which they operate.

Other relevant literature focusing on the specific research topic for this study was drawn primarily from the fields of higher education and education administration, political science and public administration. Particularly significant key assertions of the review are
outlined in this section, and provide the conceptual basis and rationale for the specific research questions in the study.

The literature key assertions were identified by the researcher during his initial review, and refined as a result of the initial phases of the study. The elements were selected, in part, to provide a literature-based rationale for narrowing the scope of this study to a discrete area of inquiry. To that goal, it was important to identify first, whether state-level policymaking, distinct from activity at other levels of government was an important and appropriate aspect of higher education policy-making to study. This topic is addressed in the review of key assertion 1.

The second key assertion identified in the literature is support for the notion that that within state policy-making, the Governor was a key player. The third, related key assertion has to do with establishing, based on literature, the relevance and importance of the Governor’s staff in the process. In initial phases of the study, these two elements were considered separately, with a more specific focus on staff. As the study progressed, however, it became more useful to consider the Governor and gubernatorial staff together in terms of their collective influence on the process. In any event, the literature supports the notion that both were appropriate to include in the study, and were indeed included thereafter.

The fourth key assertion suggests there are increasing strains and challenges noted in state/higher education relations, particularly around issues of public accountability of higher education institutions and state fiscal support for higher education. This area of the review was particularly helpful in suggesting relevant topics or concerns around which to focus participant discussion during the study.
The fifth key assertion relates to findings in literature that state government and higher education leaders have different perceptions of the policy-making process. This area of the review clearly indicates that the study to follow would be incomplete if it contained only the perceptions of one of these groups; as the literature suggested, their views would vary, in some cases.

All combined, the five key assertions described in this section provided the background rationale necessary to proceed to design a study of higher education policy-making in the states, with a specific focus on the roles of the Governor and the Governor’s staff, as seen through the eyes of both state government and higher education leaders.

Definitions of Conceptual Terminology Utilized in the Study

Organizational behavior literature provided useful definition of key terms that were utilized in this study. Most notably, definitions of interpersonal skills and influence that were at the heart of the inquiry in this study were drawn from organizational behavior literature. Interpersonal skills are defined as, “the capability to accomplish individual and/or organizational goals through interaction with others” (Nicholson, 1995, pp. 256-260). Among these skills, it is noted, are “influence,” which is specifically defined as “any social process in which an individual’s actions or attitudes are affected by the actual or implied presence of one or more others.” (Hollander & Opperman, 1990, as cited by Nicholson, 1995, p. 231). The current study was not designed to measure success of a specific initiative, but rather determine the perceived level of importance of specific actors in the process related to higher education policy-making, in general, perceived influence, rather than power or some other construct which became a focus of this inquiry.
Another specific theoretical construct and the related definitions in organizational behavior literature of particular relevance to this study, particularly in the early phases, are that of role definition and role development theory. This study was designed to assess key stakeholder/participant perceptions of the state policy-making process and, more specifically, gubernatorial actors in that process. That work clearly implied sophisticated conjectures about the role(s) played by those individuals in the process, and an assessment of their appropriateness. Systems theory as described in organizational behavior literature defines role as, “a delineation of the set of recurrent behaviors appropriate to a particular position in a social system.” (Nicholson, 1995, p. 495). Role development theory further suggests that, over time, “a mutual understanding develops” about those roles within a system (e.g., the policy-making system in the state) (Gerth & Mills, 1967, as cited by Nicholson, 1995, p.497). The current study was built on the presumption that a role, as broadly defined in literature, was being performed in the state policy-making system for higher education by Governors and their staff members; roles that were identifiable, and about which appropriateness (and influence) could be assessed by participants.

**Literature Elements/Key Assertions Related to the Research Questions**

**Importance of state-level activity (1st key assertion)**

An initial consideration in the literature review was the question of whether state level government activity is an appropriate focus of study in order to gain knowledge about American higher education policy. The result of the literature review discussed in this section is that a complete understanding of higher education policy-making in America, would necessarily study state-level activities, as states have a prominent role in structuring, funding,
and regulating higher education within their jurisdiction. While states have exercised their authority in many different ways, making each state system unique, there were indications in the literature that the importance of the state role is unlikely to decrease.

The U.S. Constitution in 1787 did not mention education, but did contain the admonition that “powers not enumerated herein are reserved to the states,” which formed the basis for states taking a key role in education policy. Clearly, many actions such as the Morrill Act in the 1860s, the G.I. Bill in the 1940s, and many others since, have provided a major federal influence on higher education (Gould, 1966, Hines, & Hartmark, 1980).

For many reasons, however, including fiscal support at all levels, the state role remains vital. Van Horn (1989) described that role as “…the states’ entrepreneurial role, which is important, and growing” (p. 209). The historical uniqueness of the state roles in U.S. higher education was noted by Richardson et al. (1999) in beginning their commentary on state higher education with the statement; “Higher Education in the United States differs from that in Europe and most other countries in that responsibility for it rests with individual states, rather than the national government” (p. 1). This point is further amplified by the statement, “Among governmental units the states have had the primary responsibility for the development of higher education throughout the history of the United States; before independence, this responsibility was carried by the colonies beginning with the support given to Harvard in 1636 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony” (Carnegie, 1971, p. 1).

In her book devoted to federal lobbying efforts for higher education, Cook (1981) amplified on the question of the importance of state activity in higher education policy-making starting with a comment on the federal role:
In spite of the significance of the higher education enterprise, there is no comprehensive federal policy regarding colleges and universities. Federal involvement in higher education policy-making has always been piecemeal, and the role of the national government is ambiguous. The U.S. Constitution is silent on the subject of all education, not just higher education, and although George Washington championed the establishment of a national university, the founding fathers ultimately decided against it. The Tenth Amendment of the Bill of Rights says that all power not specifically delegated by the Constitution to the federal government is reserved for the states, so the states have primary responsibility for higher education. As a result, it has been the state governments that have established and funded public institutions, and they continue to provide the largest share of institutional funding. (p. 5)

Hines and Hartmark (1980) provided further amplification on the topic of the prominence of the state role: “Despite the traditional separatist view of higher education, the missions, structure, and governance of higher education institutions are inextricably related to the politics and public policy of state governments” (p. 12).

Despite this commentary on state preeminence, there is a great deal of variation in the role of the state in higher education policy-making between states and at different periods of history noted in the literature. “This involvement [by state] sometimes has been relatively passive and sometimes relatively active” (Carnegie, 1976, p. ix). In attempting to explain why such variations between one state and another exist in higher education leadership, several authors have attempted to list some of the key variables at play. “The unique history, politics, economics, and demography of each state shape the policies and priorities that guide higher education in that state” (Richardson et al., 1999, p. 1).

In many different works, authors return to the central point, regardless of state to state variations, that the role of the states is a key to higher education. By way of example, on the issue of financial support for higher education, again state variations are noted: “State financial support for higher education varies greatly from state to state” (Carnegie, 1971, p. 3). In
addition, the prevailing view has been that, despite state variations, that states are reasonably well positioned to address concerns in higher education finance. “The states are, or will be, in a better position to remedy their deficiencies than is commonly supposed, although the capacity of the states varies greatly” (Carnegie, 1976, p. xi).

Not surprisingly, given the previous commentary, there has been reasonable consensus that states should continue to be preeminent in higher education policy and finance. This was expressed best in the 1970s in two Carnegie reports:

The states should continue to carry the primary governmental responsibility for higher education they have borne historically. They have done well with it. Their guardianship has led to substantial diversity, to adaptation to regional needs, and to competitive efforts at improvement. (Carnegie, 1971, p. 1)

The role of the states in higher education has always been important. Today and for the near future, at least, the states are taking an even more central place (Carnegie, 1976, p. 20)

A final caveat that is relevant to the question of how to approach study of state policy-making in higher education was also provided by Carnegie, which essentially was the point that generalized statements were difficult to make given the multiple variations between states. “The one simple statement about the states and higher education that is true is that no simple statement about them is true” (Carnegie, 1976, p. 59).

**Importance of the governors of the states (2nd key assertion)**

In this portion of the literature review, the question was the degree to which the Executive branch of state governments, more specifically the Governor and key staff, were considered important participants in the higher education policy-making process. The literature reviewed suggested that within the states, the Governors have played an increasingly important role in policy-making for higher education vis-à-vis the legislature or the education community
itself, in recent years. Therefore, study of state level policy-making in higher education relative to the role of the Governor and their key staff is of importance to understand the process in greater depth.

Numerous authors ascribe important influence within the state to the Governor, as chief executive officer and policy maker. The literature of political science and public administration contains many references to this influence increasing over recent years, albeit with wide variations from state to state (Mack, 1989; Serns, 1997). The first strand of information gleaned from research on state governors was that the duties and responsibilities are numerous, wide-ranging, and vary not only based on the individual characteristics of the office holder but also the formal and informal circumstances of the state and times:

The governorship is many things,...and the governor must play many social roles and must learn to help the public keep them individually identifiable. The governor is chief of state, the voice of the people, chief executive, commander-in-chief of the state's armed forces, chief legislator and chief of his party....The governor is, ex-officio, probably the single most powerful legislative leader in state.... (Beyle & Dalton, 1982, as cited in Beyle & Muchmore, 1983, p. 12)

While some of the literature, including Ransome (1982, p.100) and van Asendelft (1997, p. 9), focused on state-to-state variations in governors formal or institutional powers, others, such as Serns (1997, p. 154) noted less formal reasons like “tradition.” In every instance, however, there was general agreement with the assertion of Vergari (1996, p. 110) that “Governors play a key role in the policymaking process.”

In the specific context of state higher education policymaking, numerous authors made the case for extraordinary potential influence of the governor, and took note of increasing trends in the latter part of the 20th century for governors to more often assert themselves in this area:
The potential influence of a governor over public higher education in his state is perhaps greater than any other single force affecting the state's public colleges and universities. It is the governor who:

- Has the final power to approve or disapprove...the budget allocations from state funds.
- Appoints...the members of governing boards...and state coordinating...agencies.
- Serves...{on} governing boards...in many states.
- As state leader of his political party...provides leadership to other board members...
- Has power to sign into law or veto legislation...affect(ing) higher education.
- In some states, has authority to review...master plans.
- Most decisively affects public attitudes toward higher education.
- It is evident these formidable powers can profoundly affect...higher education in the state. (Carnegie, 1971, p. 19)

Indeed by the mid-1980s, literature contained references suggesting the governor had become “…the single most important person in higher education in most states…” (Kerr, 1985, as cited in Hines, 1988, p. iii). Finally, Governors themselves were quoted in several sources adding their voice to the view that higher education was a key area of attention for them and their colleagues by the 1990s:

- They [Governors] need to make steady progress in improving teachers' salaries, instituting higher quality standards for instruction and for teacher training, and ensuring that higher education changes with the demands of a society that will require continual reeducation. (Carlin, 1990, as cited in Behn, 1991, p. 89)

- Yet another perspective from the governor’s office—and I am now becoming more involved in this—is that we must expand substantially our commitment to higher education. (Hunt, 1998, p. 2)

- If we are to preserve that heritage of accomplishment and opportunity, Governors and lawmakers must place higher education among their most important priorities. (Hunt, 1999, p. 1)
Importance of the governor’s staff (3rd key assertion)

Particularly in the initial conception of the study, the role(s) of gubernatorial staff in the process for higher education policy-making was a point of interest and inquiry. This focus was consistent with assertions in the literature that state governors increasingly rely on professional staff to carry out their responsibilities and that these staff and their activities are also relevant to a study of how state level policy-making in higher education is conducted. There were three dimensions of this portion of the literature review. The first dimension of the review related to the general importance of state gubernatorial staff in policy-making in general. The second dimension of this portion of the review related to information related to gubernatorial staff and state education policy-making, and the third, specifically to higher education policy-making.

Within the framework of the states, staffing has undergone a steady increase in size and evolution in function. Rosenthal (1981) noted that: “…state staff have a substantial impact” (p. 86). Numerous authors make the case that increasing complexity of issues make it necessary for Governors to further delegate authority to subordinate staff. Numerous observers of gubernatorial activities across the country have clearly noted that staffs for these offices have grown in size, in skill, and in importance in the eyes of the governors themselves.

In the states, observers have also noted that governor’s offices are becoming larger, gubernatorial staffs are increasing in size and in actual and potential influence… While it is clear that the size of the governors’ offices do vary with the size of the state, it is also apparent that governors’ staff tend to be proportionately larger in the smaller states. This indicates a certain minimum size necessary to perform the activities and responsibilities of the governor’s office. (Beyle and Muchmore, 1983, p. 161)

Gargan (2000, p. 116) noted that, from a functional standpoint, governors depend on that increasing level of staff; “…for specific advice and to maintain critical relationships.” In
addition, Hedge (1998, p. 93) provided the view that the increase in resources for and advice from staff: “…have allowed Governors to innovate in policy.”

Observers of education policy-making in the states have provided a distinct, but complementary, view of staff from the governor’s office as key players in the policy-making process. Herzik and Brown (1981) noted that increased staff support in the education policy area: “…allows governors to more actively develop policy and oversee its implementation” (p. ix). Ransome (1982) noted that gubernatorial staff members play a: “substantial role” (p. 132). Wright (1991) described that role as “key” (p. 6), Serns (1997) as “very influential and significant” (p. 126), and Gargan (2000) as “important” (pp. 117, 280). Frandsen’s work in Utah (1997), noted the power of the Governor’s staff appeared constant, regardless of the “visibility” of an issue, while others power varied. Perhaps the most colorful commentary in the literature review on the point of gubernatorial staff influence came from Fisher and Koch (2000) which stated staffers: “…are the power behind the throne” (p. 191).

Garraway (1996) studied legislative and executive branch staff influence in a Maryland case study of education policy-making. Garraway found that staff have real, but variable influence, though it was not well understood. Her findings also included her emergent hypothesis that the role of staff was most influential in terms of policy analysis, information provision, interpretation of policy options and policy shaping, mediation and negotiation. Garraway, identified staff, including the Governor’s staff, as influential in education policy-making in Maryland. She also found that some educators understood that influence.

Related specifically to literature on higher-education policy-making in the states there is similar commentary on the importance of gubernatorial staff in the process.
As related directly to the subject of higher education policy, there is similar commentary on the importance of gubernatorial staff, although, as noted earlier, literature on that narrow topic is not plentiful. Glenny (1972) asserted that, “…anonymous outsiders (staff) are the main policy formulators in higher education” (p. 10). These comments were inclusive of many staff in all branches of state government. Later, Hammond (1984) articulated an alternative “variable influence” theory, which rejected Glenny’s sweeping view, and speculated that there would be variation in the level of staff influence from one state to another. Hammond recommended state-level case studies be performed to look at staff influence to explore the extent of similarity, inasmuch as the state political and governmental settings were themselves unique. This comment is one of the key points supporting the current study inclusive of considering the influence of state executive staff in the policy-making process for higher education. While the later work mentioned previously by Garraway (1996) was not exclusively focused on higher education policy, the theoretical basis of the work was drawn from Hammond’s hypothesis.

Ratti and Levine provided some additional useful commentary on the gubernatorial staff and higher education policy-making. Ratti (1995) noted the view of university business officers that these individuals were: “important decision makers, but difficult to access” (p. 49). The current study also draws on the views of Dr. Arthur Levine, President at Columbia University Teachers College. As a part of his strategic outreach plan for the institution for 1999-2000, Dr. Levine identified the Governor’s Education Policy Advisors as “…one of the three most critical potential change agents in U.S. education” (personal communication, November 20, 1999).
Challenges in state/higher education relations (4th key assertion)

Several trends in the environment of higher education point towards increasing tensions in the relationship between state governments and higher education, according to the literature reviewed for this study. Literature dating back from the 1960s (Gould, 1966, p. 5) provided a background reminding higher education leaders that state government was bound to be involved in their efforts. However, by the 1970s, the commentary began to shift more noticeably to increasing tension in those relationships, and discussion of why such trends were being observed. The first of these emergent trends is expectations of higher education to meet increasing standards of accountability to the state and to make decisions in a more coordinated fashion. These expectations are noted to have increased and that this trend is likely to continue. As a result, the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflict between state policy makers and higher education leaders is considered to also be high and perhaps increasing in frequency. Literature is full of references to increased expectations for accountability. In fact, some work reviewed, such as Vaillancourt (1995) made that subject the entire focus of their study.

The literature reviewed suggests several reasons for the increased expectations for accountability from higher education. Writing from the late 1970s and early 1980s provides three different perspectives, the first of which is from Balderson (1974, as cited in Hines & Hartmark (1980). Balderson’s argument has to do with issues of increasing complexity of demands on both higher education and public officials:

Numerous demands for more specific and detailed information have affected accountability. These demands have been a function of a number of factors: the increasing size and complexity of higher education; increased competition for public funds; problems with inflation, productivity, and enrollment, which have reduced institutional flexibility; a perceived decline in the value of the college degree; and recurrent problems in supply of trained manpower. (p. 19)
MacLeod (1979) offered a more specific commentary on why dynamics in changes within state government organizations were a cause of increased expectations for accountability in higher education:

Nationally, there has been a trend of centralization of control under the governor’s office within state governments throughout this century...state officials have attempted to make state agencies more accountable...In such a climate, it is only natural that public higher education was affected by these trends of centralization and accountability. (p. 5)

Hines and Hartmark (1980) offered their own summary of the state of higher education/state government relations that summarized the views elsewhere in the literature as follows:

The second theme in studies of statewide coordination is that the increased complexity, interdependence, and scale of higher education lead to demands for new forms of accountability and control by forces outside higher education. (p. 18)

More recently, the subject of the state of state/higher education relations has become the focal point of research and debate at a much increased volume. Several authors have commented on what they see as the rationale for tensions in that relationship, including Berdahl (1990, as quoted in Davis, 2001) who described the partners as “expecting too much” (p. 21) from one another. Vaillancourt (1995) who described universities as being “commonly criticized on five levels” (pp. 4-5), and “needing to demonstrate they are pursuing activities in the appropriate manner and that the activities themselves are appropriate” (p. 134).

The observed trend toward increasing tension in state/higher education relations was also noted by Garcia (1995), who stated that increasingly, “universities have to justify and defend their needs to the state” (pp. 1-2). Numerous authors noted that the automatic deference that society and politicians used to have toward public universities has eroded over time.
Newman (1987) described these relationships as “ambiguous, and in a number of cases as deteriorating” (p. 5). Davis (2001) suggested that “charges of a lack of accountability have stepped up demands on higher education leaders and fueled calls for postsecondary reform across the country” (p. 1).

Fiscal challenges for states were a second major trend noted in the literature that contributes towards increased challenges in state/higher education relations. These fiscal challenges relate to both declining revenues and increasing demands for other types of expenditures than higher education (i.e., medical services or criminal justice needs) were also noted likely to result in lower support for higher education in the future than the past. This trend was observed by numerous authors as one which will also increase the likelihood for misunderstandings and conflict between state policy makers and higher education leaders. Again, while this trend is not new, it is one of accelerating concern in recent times. Folger (1976) noted that the “…fiscal outlook has changed direction…which has produced several specific public criticisms of higher education” (pp. 157-158). In the most recent decade, more specific predictions and concerns about fiscal trends for both state governments as a whole, and higher education in particular, have multiplied. Gold (1995, as quoted in Frost 1997, p. 365) commented that state fiscal challenges “…have hit universities especially hard: spending on postsecondary education has taken the worst hit of all state spending categories in recent years.” Davis (2001) noted that “Higher education is one of many sectors of state government vying for scarce state funding…” (pp. 18-19). Jones (2003, as quoted in NCPPHE, 2003), noted that “States, and higher education in particular, are likely to face very tight budget conditions for the next decade” (p. 1).
A third important trend noted in literature that complicates the state/higher education relationship is an increase society’s reliance on higher education institutions to provide a well-educated workforce, research and economic development ‘engines’ for state economies, and other services of benefit to the state. In other words, neither the state nor higher education institutions are likely to meet their goals without mutual understanding and support at a higher and more interactive level. This mutual dependence, of course, is complicated greatly by the strains of the accountability/autonomy debates and fiscal constraints already mentioned.

Perhaps the most succinct commentary on this trend came from Newman (1987), who stated “In a world of growing economic competition and social complexity, it is the university to which the states turn for assistance” (p. 1). He also commented that, along with that increased complexity, “…the demand for more effective universities grows.” (Newman, 1997, p. 5) McGuiness (1997) in Davis (2001) noted that economic changes in society have lead to increasing concerns with “…mission clarity, technology infrastructure, and increasing political control in state-level higher education planning across the country” (p. 20). Numerous other authors echoed the point that the stakes for these state/higher education relationships were increasing, adding pressure to all participants in the process. In short, then, these relationships are seen as increasingly important, increasingly complex, and increasingly difficult in the modern era.

State government and higher education leaders have different perceptions of policy-making (5th key assertion)

Leaders in state government and higher education have been reported in the literature to have different perceptions on how policy-making in the states does and should work, in addition to some differing views on substantive issues of higher
education policy and governance. These differing perceptions further complicate the ability for them to work together, according to the literature reviewed. McLeod’s (1979) study found significant disagreement over issues of institutional autonomy, governmental encroachment, and coordination between groups of university presidents, state executive branch officials, and legislators. Holsenbeck (1980) found “some difference of opinion on the relative influence factors in higher education policy-making...between state officials and higher education leaders” (p. 15). Ewell (1991) noted “…an inability of state and university leaders to see each others problems, such as the policy makers need for closure and straight forward evidence, and the university need for long-term timelines and commitment” (p. 24). Vaillancourt (1995) stated her view that among challenges universities will face, “is the lack of consensus regarding the proper role of public doctoral institutions” (p. 141). Her study also revealed that “state legislators and university administrators disagree to some extent what should constitute university priorities” (p. 141). Garraway (1996) noted “…several interesting differences in perception were evident among legislative staff and key senators as well as key delegates and college and university officials” (p. 196). Johnston (1997, p. 196) noted differential responses to questions of preferred direction for state higher education from state officials, and education administrators. Ruppert (1998) added that “…state policymakers and higher education officials view higher education’s response to challenges through radically different lenses” (p. 18)

There is also notable commentary in the literature about the importance of acting upon the perceived differences in perspective between state and higher education leaders. Gould (1966) previewed much of the recent commentary in stating that
educators should see their task as “...develop personal relationships which make it possible for us to make clear to men in government the nature of our enterprise, the role we play...and most of all, the heavy responsibility resting on them as well” (pp. 4-5). Newman (1987) admonished state officials that “the harsh fact our state government has forgotten is that there are no great universities run by governors, legislators, or budget analysts” (p. 9). Cook (1998), by contrast, advised higher education leaders to “understand that their work is already politicized, and the future of colleges and universities is on the line…” [in government relations] (p. 201). Garcia (1995, pp. 115-117) both counseled both higher education leaders and state officials to better understand each others processes and priorities.

**Use of Key Assumptions in Shaping this Study**

With the intent to fashion a study better illuminating policy-making in American higher education, the first key assumption found in the literature confirmed that state-level activity was a useful focal point for study based on the importance of state activity in the U.S. system of higher education. Further, the literature cited related to the first key assumption confirmed that significant state variations in structure and support for higher education exist, which suggested that study of a single state might not be as useful a design as a comparative study involving more than one state as a study site.

Two distinct types of literature were found related to the second key assumption noted in this review. The first type was primarily drawn from the literature of political science and public administration, and in those works it was clear that gubernatorial leadership in state policy-making was on the increase, and that the Governor was considered an important player
in those processes in virtually all states, albeit with wide variations from one state to another in their specific roles and responsibilities. The second type of literature, which came in some cases from specific inquiries by educators or in education policy-related studies, suggested that education policy, and in some cases higher education policy were specific areas where an expansion of gubernatorial activity and influence were believed to have been observed. As was stated at the outset, however, the specific literature on gubernatorial activity in higher education, specifically, was relatively limited. In any event, the broader assertion that state Governors were important enough to state policy-making processes in general, and potentially higher education, specifically, provided a foundation for study of the role of Governors offices in these processes.

Key assumption three in this literature review was that state governmental officials staffs, both legislative and executive were growing in size, importance, and influence in the policy-making process. More specifically, the literature pointed to many trends related specifically to increased importance of gubernatorial staff persons in state policy-making—a few examples of which were found more specifically relating to education policy. Additionally, the commentary of Columbia University Teachers College identifying Governors Education Policy Advisors as among the most critical potential change agents in U.S. education was further confirmation of the more general assumptions stated elsewhere. As a result, the study was designed to focus on the roles of the gubernatorial staff members and the perceptions of their roles as a way of gaining more insight into specific state policy-making processes.

The fourth key assumption noted in the literature review related to the increasing challenges in state/higher education relations. That review clearly indicated an increasing level
of concern in this area due to a number of factors including increased expectations and state fiscal challenges. Additionally, it was noted that the two partners in the relationship were likely to be increasingly dependent upon one another to achieve their goals. These assumptions in the literature reviewed were important in two ways to the study. First, these assumptions undergird the importance of studying state level policy-making for higher education with participants from both arenas. Secondly, the types of challenges noted in the literature became very helpful in identification of topical areas for consideration in formulating discussion questions for site visits around the general topic of what factors are important to consider in analysis of state policy-making processes.

The final key assumption in the literature review was the notion that state officials and higher education leaders have differing views of the state policy-making process for higher education, and differing preferences as well. In simple terms, this assumption was important in designing the subsequent study in two ways. First, this assumption led to a design that included a mix of both types of participants, and to formulating research questions that provided for a review of similarities and differences in responses from the different groups, as well as state-to-state comparisons.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This study of participant perceptions of the state policy-making process was undertaken as a qualitative, comparative case study, essentially exploratory in nature. Policy-making is a dynamic and interpersonal process involving multiple individuals and multiple variables. While the qualitative method introduces potential researcher bias into the collection and analysis of data, it also provides a richer and more complete picture of the phenomena under study. In the final analysis, this method of study appeared more useful to the researcher, given the subject, than an attempt to isolate a single variable or small set of variables out of the many present, and try to draw inferences from analysis of those alone. Research literature reviewed for this study, including both qualitative and quantitative work, reinforced the view that attempts to isolate dependent variables in the policy-making arena led to results that were too narrowly applicable, unreliable, or both. The following commentary describes, first, the basis in research methods literature supporting the study methodology, then the specific evolution of this study and the research questions utilized in the process.

Basis for Study Method Drawn from the Literature on Qualitative Research

Given the differing state-to-state dynamics, and the multivariate nature of policy-making as a process, analysis on a qualitative case study basis is an appropriate and useful method of study. In addition, a few previous studies of education policy-making in the states which utilized such qualitative methods of study also provide some useful ideas on how to perform such work in the subject area of this study.

A qualitative case study design is an appropriate method of study of the policy-making phenomena and perceptions of the participants sought in this work. The basis in literature for
the appropriateness of utilizing this method comes from several key sources, as well as being
drawn from other substantive studies in related areas which utilized such case study methods
and have been referred to previously in the literature review chapter.

In terms of this study's methodology, perhaps the basic notion drawn from literature
that suggests a qualitative method comes from Stake (1995). His description of the unique
characteristics of qualitative research includes several elements incorporated in this study, but
probably none as clearly as the notion of the "interpretative purpose" of the study. Much of the
inquiry in the current research was devoted to interpretation of the meaning participants attach
to actions and events in a dynamic process. In order to provide that type of understanding and
interpretation, qualitative methods are the most appropriate to this study.

Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed criteria for qualitative inquiry, and provide
recommendations for intense field contact, toward the goal of seeking both participant
perceptions and holistic understanding. This is, of course, a part of the basis for determining
direct study "in the field" was needed to enhance views drawn from remote sources.

A purposeful sample selection, the design process described by Lincoln and Guba
(1985) in their description of "iterations" and element of research processes, was utilized in
this study. As to the multiple specific roles of the researcher in this study, the notion from
Miles and Huberman (1994) of "...the researcher as measuring device" (p. 6) was drawn from
the literature of qualitative research design. In this study, the researcher roles included, but
were not necessarily limited to: participant, data collector, and data analyst.

Numerous studies of gubernatorial activity, staffing work in state government, policy-
making processes, higher education policy, and background issues related to the states under
study have been cited earlier. Many, although not all, were inquiries made in a qualitative
framework, and as such were influential in suggesting not only areas of inquiry, but methods of inquiry. In many respects, all the points made about the process suggestions for qualitative inquiry in policymaking processes were best embodied in Garraway’s (1996) study of activities in the state of Maryland, and Sern’s (1997) study of Washington state.

**Case Study Approach of Two Diverse States is Appropriate in this Research**

Michigan and Kentucky, as selected case study sites, are states quite diverse from the perspectives of history, politics, demography, and in terms of higher education policies and priorities, as delineated by Richardson (1999). Table 1 provides a summary of highlighted data from the *Higher Education State Report Card* and the annual *Almanac of the Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Education Week* to this end. The fact that the states selected for study differ in many of the dimensions shown in Table 1 was an important aspect of why each was chosen for the study. In the simplest terms, the literature review clearly indicated a great deal of variation among the states in process, policy, and educational and economic outcomes. In order to make a more vivid comparative study that reflected the reported variations state to state, it would not have been useful to select two sites that appeared to have a high degree of similarity on such metrics. As will be outlined in the narrative below, the decision, then, to best test some of the assertions of the literature was to purposefully select two states for study that did not, on the surface, exhibit high similarity. Details on the selected sites follows.

Michigan has a reasonably positive reputation in terms of higher education, being host to a recognized national research institution in the University of Michigan and a strong network of public and private institutions. At the time of the field visit, the state was lead by a Republican Governor and Republican majorities in both houses of the legislature, although
historically it has been politically competitive. Michigan has historically been considered a relatively prosperous northern industrial state, with a major urban industrial center in Detroit and numerous regional centers. There are significant ethnic minority communities in the state. Higher education in Michigan has less formal structures for coordination than almost any state, in part due to the constitutional autonomy granted state universities, and in part to a mixed system of electing some trustees, while appointing others.

Kentucky, by contrast, traditionally has been considered a low achieving state in education overall, including higher education. The academic reputation of the state flagship, University of Kentucky, is clearly not as high as that of either Michigan or Michigan State in most external evaluations published. The system of public and private institutions has widely varying reputations but, overall, are not considered national leadership level. Participation in higher education has been low as well. At the time of the field visit, Kentucky was lead by a Democratic governor and a legislature with one house controlled by each party. Historically, however, it has not been a particularly competitive state at the level of legislative elections. Kentucky, despite regional urban centers such as Lexington and Louisville, and increasingly the suburban area around Cincinnati, Ohio, is a predominantly rural state, with a southern outlook socially or culturally in much of the state. Incomes are below the national average, and joblessness often has been higher than average. Political considerations—regional, partisan, or otherwise—have historically played a fairly prominent role in higher education in Kentucky. Most recently, in the 1990s, a major restructuring of institutional missions and outcomes tied to funding, as well strengthening of statewide coordination in higher education were undertaken by the Governor and legislature. Summary data distinctions among the study states are provided in Table 1.
Initial Project Planning

In 1998-99, the researcher drafted several versions of a study proposal, for review initially by Professor Duffelmeyer, then by Professor Ebbers, and ultimately by all five doctoral committee members. There were a number of email and telephone conversations on the proposed study at that time, as well as further discussion when the committee met to conduct an oral preliminary exam in 2000. The specific topical focus, based on researcher interest and the feasibility of completion of the work due to the researcher’s employment, was initially on the roles and perceived roles of Governor’s Education Policy Advisors (GEPAs) in state policy-making for education. During this phase of project, the researcher was serving in such as role for the Governor of Iowa, and had conducted some preliminary and informal data collection at several regional and national meetings.

Initial Data Gathering and Pilot Study Planning

The researcher initially worked with staff members at the National Governor’s Association and the Education Commission of the States to identify possible venues for conducting both preliminary survey work and later field study. Extensive literature review was undertaken concurrently to further refine the area of study. An initial pilot survey designed to test some concepts from literature and gather more specific information about the roles and experiences of the GEPAs, was administered, and a discussion followed with a group of GEPAs, at the Education Commission of the States Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in July 2000. The initial instrument was a structured written questionnaire (see Appendix A), followed by a semi-structured roundtable discussion, including both the GEPAs and staff from NGA and ECS.
Site Selection and Study Refinements

After analysis of the data collected above, some further refinements were made to the study design and discussed and approved by the committee. These included narrowing the focus to policy-making activity in higher education, and a preliminary decision to seek two field sites for data collection on specific states. As previously mentioned, the literature review produced assertions that there was a high degree of variation state to state, suggesting that a comparative case study of states perceived to be dissimilar could provide a fuller insight into the policy-making process than would a single site, or two sites perceived to be similar. Early in 2001, further discussions with the NGA staff identified a number of possible sites, based on the following criteria.

- States with experienced Governors and experienced GEPAs willing to participate
- Diverse states in terms of educational achievement, expectations, structure, support
- Diverse states in terms of political, social, cultural, and economic structures
- An expectation of ‘stability’ in Governorship and staff structure during the two years of anticipated field work.

The states that were ultimately selected for study were Michigan and Kentucky, which as a pair admirably met the above criteria. Michigan was the first state chosen. Among the more populous and industrialized states meeting the criteria, Michigan clearly has a good reputation and rankings in higher education, and was served by an experienced Republican governor and a GEPA very willing to participate. Staff transitions and other local issues made Michigan a better choice at the time than Ohio or Illinois based on similar criteria. Other states considered led by Republican Governors such as Wyoming and Idaho were ultimately rejected.
due to their small population base, making them less likely to lend themselves to comparisons with many other states.

Once Michigan was selected for the first field study site, consideration was given to states with Democratic Governors that might be able to balance the set in terms of the types of state diversity described above. Of the choices available, Kentucky was clearly the best fit. Kentucky is dissimilar to Michigan in terms of almost all the criteria described, and while clearly smaller in population, is not as small as other potential choices such as New Hampshire or Alaska.

Both states fell somewhere in the mid-range on size of population, with Michigan toward the top, and in the mid-range on geography, one northern and the other southern in outlook. The researcher, with experience in a smaller state, Iowa, had an additional state perspective.

**Michigan field study, 2001**

Michigan was the site of the initial field study, undertaken in September 2001. During a week on site, twenty-five individuals were interviewed via a semi-structured outline. The outline is provided in Appendix B. Some of these individuals were interviewed in groups of several persons, others one on one. Most interviews were 60-90 minutes in duration, and many were tape recorded, to augment researcher notes. Many interviews were conducted in a conference room at the Romney State Office Building in Lansing, though some were done elsewhere, including one in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as noted in the data. There was also work done during this week by the researcher to attend some meetings organized by others as an observer, and to perform further research at the Michigan State University library.
After the collection of the Michigan data, and further reflection and discussion, additional refinements were made to the focus of the study, specifically to widen the focus to consider the roles and perceptions of the Governor’s Office in state higher education policy-making, not just the individual known as the GEPA. As will be shown in Chapter 4, this decision was foreshadowed by difficulty in the initial pilot study of identification of who exactly to identify as the GEPA in a given jurisdiction. It was also foreshadowed by literature findings about the influence of staff (plural), or staff (a specific individual at a specific site, not a position title). The final determination, to make this change, however, came about as a result of analysis of the participants comments in Michigan. Those comments clearly identified other individuals in the gubernatorial staff as more influential in higher education policy-making than the individual with the GEPA designation. In fact, one participant suggested exactly such a change in the study focus as likely to lead to more useful results. Ultimately, that suggestion was adopted for subsequent phases of the study based on the determination that a more full illumination of the involvement of the states Executive branch leadership in higher education policy-making would be best served by that adaptation of the study methodology.

Additional study refinements, 2002 Kentucky site visit

Early in 2002, the researcher changed employment, leaving his post as the Policy Director for the Governor of Iowa, and becoming Executive Director of the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. This change necessitated at least three modifications of the study plan. The first modification was to establish a process for external review of committee recommendation of the finished dissertation, due to the perceived supervisory role of the Regents staff relative to institutional faculty. The second plan modification was to delay the second field study until
after the initial six months of new employment. The third modification involved delay of the starting of writing until summer 2003, and establishing a late 2003 completion target, due largely to demands related to a Presidential search in late 2002 and a legislative session and special session in the first half of 2003.

Kentucky was the site of the second field study, undertaken in September 2002. The 20 participants who were interviewed during the week in the state were met at many different sites in Lexington, Frankfort, and Louisville, as noted in the data. A revised and less structured outline was used for the interviews, and most of the participants were interviewed one on one. Appendix C is the Kentucky discussion/interview outline. Some of the sessions were tape recorded to augment notes, but several requested that process not be used, a request not frequently made during first field study in Michigan. Again, the researcher also attended some meetings organized by others as an observer during the week, and performed some further background research at the libraries of both the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville.

**Research Questions**

Three basic research questions guided this study. Within each research question are the related interview questions which were developed for and utilized in the field studies:

- What factors seem most important to participants in evaluating their states public policy-making processes for higher education, particularly with reference to involvement by the Governor and their staff, and what does that reveal about these processes within their state?
• What similarities exist in the perceptions of the state policy-making process for higher education by state officials, and higher education leaders within each study state and what does that reveal about these processes in their state?

• What similarities, if any, exist in the perceptions of the policy-making processes for higher education in both the study states and what does that reveal about these processes?

The discussion outlines for interviews with participants during field visits are shown in the appendices, as indicated previously in this chapter.

**Post Field Study Review of Key Methodological Issues**

Drafting an outline for the dissertation and compiling the bibliography were the major tasks undertaken in mid-2003. Production of the written text began in earnest in late 2003, and continued intermittently through the final editing in the fall of 2005.

During final editing, the decision was made on how to identify participants in the final report, given the need to balance some participants’ desire for anonymity with a study goal of being able to differentiate responses from educators and state officials. Four basic categories were selected for qualitative data analysis: (a) higher education administrators; (b) education association officials; (c) executive branch officials, and (d) legislative participants.

The remainder of this section details information on different aspects of the study design and how each variable was addressed: researcher role, participant selection, data collection and management, data analysis, and trustworthiness.
Multiple Researcher Roles Defined

The researcher has multiple roles in this study. The common element might be referred to as “researcher as instrument” in the words of Miles and Huberman (1994). The first of these roles was researcher as data collector and manager. In this role, the researcher will locate, identify, collect, and organize data from multiple sources and at different points in time. The goals of providing meaningful data in an organized fashion as a result of the study were attained based on researcher success in this role. In the data collection and data management roles, a printed outline for discussion was at hand, extensive notes were made of responses at each participant session into a bound notebook to minimize the potential for loss, and tape recording equipment was used, where acceptable to other participants, to provide further documentation when needed.

A second role was that of participant/observer. This role stressed the participation of the researcher interacting directly with participants in the field, and adapting to the environment appropriately to achieve study goals. In this instance, the researcher provided data in the pilot survey phase of the study, as well as conducting the pilot group discussion, and field study site interviews. All but three participants in the state field studies were met face-to-face, in order to be able to make visual observations, as well as auditory ones. Finally, the participant interviews were, as previously noted, conducted from an outline, which was adapted in each instance to provide opportunity for other participants to comment freely on topics they felt relevant to the discussion.

Another key researcher role in this study is data analyst. The study depended on continual review of the data collected, modifying research techniques if appropriate, to elicit useful information, and categorizing data in order to produce the most useful, complete, and
trustworthy findings possible. As should be clear from the commentary to date on modifications in the study methodology and focus throughout the evolving process, the review and action on review of discussion topics was continual. Consistent with anticipated qualitative techniques, participant responses in their own words that seemed most important were collected, analyzed, categorized, and provide the bulk of the findings of the study, which follow in Chapter 4. The researcher utilized his own knowledge and experience in policy-making (in a third state, Iowa), as a check on trustworthiness of responses, as well as using the responses from the other study site, when appropriate, for such purposes.

All participants were made aware the researcher had multiple roles in the study and ethically appropriate actions also included obtaining informed consent from all participants.

**Purposeful Participant and Site Selection**

Participant selection in this study was purposeful in several different ways. Initially, the researcher utilized his own contacts, primarily at the National Governors Association staff and the Education Commission of the States staff in the initial phases of the study in two ways. First, these organizations’ staff were asked to identify and help contact Governor’s Education Policy Advisors who were going to be in a single location at a convenient time to administer a pilot survey. Those who were present and willing to do so (almost all contacted were so inclined) made up the initial group of participants.

The NGA staff, afterward, was asked to help review possible sites for state studies. The ultimate choice of Michigan and Kentucky, however, was made by the researcher, after considering alternatives and verification of the willingness of Governor’s staffs in the two
states to participate. Michigan and Kentucky were the preferred site selections, and each was willing to participate, so no ‘alternates’ were pursued.

Once site selection was complete, the researcher drew up a list of categories of individuals with whom he desired to meet. After consultation with state officials about individuals who might fit within the desired categories and potential meeting places (i.e., legislative member or staff, higher education administrators, higher education board members, education association staff or lobbyists, state agency officials, other knowledgeable observers), the researcher contacted individuals to determine willing participants who were able to fit into the calendar for the site visit. More were willing to participate than time allowed. To some extent, a geographic bias was inherent in this selection in that the researcher was based primarily in the state capital city during site visits in both states. Some efforts were taken, however, to compensate for that factor through finding times to interview when those in outlying areas of the state were in the capital city, a few interviews via phone, and some brief travel out into the state during each visit.

Data Collection and Management

These functions were performed in multiple ways in this study. The study file contains voluminous literature review notes, citations, and copies of cited documents. Additionally, background material on the study states and education and government issues in those states are on file.

After initial literature review, a pilot survey was administered to a select group of Governor’s Education Policy Advisors. The original copies of those data were kept, along with notes on a follow-up interview with a number of those participants, in a large group setting. A
preliminary set of findings from the survey was produced and kept in writing in the study file as well.

Data on the emergent study have been kept in the file as well, from the initial proposal outline through various written updates and modifications prepared for the Program of Study committee on campus. The written informed consent documents from all participants are on file, as well as schedules of interviews and other activities undertaken during site visits in Michigan and Kentucky. Records, including in all cases written notes, and in many cases audio tapes, were kept indicating the content of site interviews. To the extent possible, these were reviewed, at least briefly, on site at the end of each day. Additional contextual documents, such as government publications and local newspapers collected at each site were also filed and cataloged.

Data analysis was performed in various ways through the course of the study, although primarily this was interpretive in nature, and did not utilize inferential statistics, based on the literature review and methodological design. After initial literature review was performed there was refinement of the study topic and research questions to better illuminate gaps in previous research and to better refine areas where validation of previous hypotheses was sought. This analysis also was the basis for construction of the initial pilot survey instrument. In addition to the content analysis of responses, one element of the analysis was that the instrument was too long, the topics too theoretical in nature for the participants.

Researcher analysis of the pilot survey results was the basis for additional refinement of research questions for the field study as well as the study topic overall. The data provided by the GEPAs from Michigan and Kentucky in the pilot survey was of value also in latter stages of preparation for site visits in their home states. This was particularly true in terms of
describing the relevant players in higher education policy-making in the states, as well as in terms of the background and role of the individual GEPA. Further literature and periodical searches were conducted to build analysis of the profile of each site, once site selection was completed. Background questions for researcher examination prior to site visit included identification of the unique characteristics of the public higher education governance system, the reputation of the state system, and the organization and staffing of the executive branch of state government relevant to the study in each state under study. Additionally, consideration was taken into account of the relevant and accessible individuals in the state who might have a meaningful and useful perspective to inform the study.

This included analysis of information on participants, as well. Several times, if not each single evening, during site visits, researcher analysis was done on responses to date, primarily focused on the questions of whether or not desired information had been elicited, and to what extent the discussion could be refocused to better achieve goals in the future. Additionally, questions of interviewer intrusion into participant conversation were considered. In the latter stages of the Michigan visit, some pointed suggestions were made by one participant as to how to more usefully focus the study, which upon further analysis, was generally accepted by the researcher and led to modifications in the focus of conversations at the second site.

At the conclusion of each site visit, an analysis was undertaken to determine what, if any emergent findings emerged from the visit, in the following broad categories:

- Did the participants within the state share common perceptions of the process and personalities involved in higher education policy-making?
- To the extent they did, were those views similar to those at the other site?
- To the extent they did not, were they similar to peers at the other site?
- To what extent do participants feel their views are unique to the particular time and persons involved, and to what extent do they feel their perceptions are systemic observations that would be similar over time (i.e., variable influence theory)?
- To what extent do participants express ideas about particular aspects of their state policy-making process they feel should be preserved, or to what extent do they express a concern with aspects of the process that should be changed.

**Trustworthiness Issues Relative to the Study’s Findings**

While it is qualitative in nature, and researcher-influenced due to the methodology, this study encompasses a number of features to enhance trustworthiness. First, the universe of participants in the pilot survey could have included an individual from all 50 states, and was only limited by availability of the individual to participate at the designated site and time. So, the selection was purposeful, but not exclusionary by any means. A second design feature intended to enhance trustworthiness was the constant refinement of the study, in consultation with the members of the researchers graduate committee, who were able to review and comment on emergent themes and methods as the study progressed.

In terms of the selection of sites to use for field visits, the initial criteria, drawn in conjunction with both campus and off-campus advisors, were determined without state-specific outcomes in mind. Rather, the general criteria, such as two states with diverse traditions in both education and government, and states with willing participants, allowed for several alternative choices. Guidance was sought and received on how to select from the alternatives at a later stage, again utilizing others beyond the researcher to advise on alternative choices. Finally, the
individual Governors’ staffs were free to make a determination on participation, and if they had refused, alternate sites would have been selected.

Hopefully, the peer role of the researcher, both by background and study design, provided a further level of trustworthiness of the data, insofar as other participants were able to determine some affinity of roles and responsibilities and a corresponding level of trust leading to a willingness to be candid in their comments. That professional affinity of the researcher and participants might also be expected to allow the researcher to accurately record and analyze information received.

Triangulation, realized both through multiple participant voices in interviews, different methods of discussion utilized, and through inevitable checks of participant comments with researcher views, is designed to minimize threats to trustworthiness of the data and the findings. Some member checking was also implicit in the design, where follow-up questions were asked, particularly of the Governors staff near the end of each visit, to attempt to clarify points raised by participants.

While individual member checking with all participants, in the classic sense, was not considered either practical or appropriate in this study design, there were periodic opportunities utilized for cross checking perceptions with key participants at several times throughout each site visit. Scott Jenkins in Michigan, Bill Swinford in Kentucky were notable for their willingness to be sounding boards for such purposes throughout each visit. Additionally, the design itself—particularly the flexible framework of the discussion outline, allowed for follow up questions where clarity was needed, and for checking a point raised by one participant with another later, when appropriate. Most importantly, as the study progressed, it became clearer
that there was a reasonably high degree of consensus on many key points rendering a more extensive checking process less critical.

However, as noted by other qualitative researchers, such as the political scientist Richard Fenno, it is difficult in this type of participant observer research to fully satisfy concerns about the validity and reliability of findings. Fenno (1978, p. 294), perhaps, said it best in noting that ultimately “community controls” will produce judgment on the research—most notably through the question as to whether the description rings true to experienced readers. Pre-publication reviewers of this document familiar with both sites have indicated a general sense of consistency between this narrative and their own view of the state policy-making process, which adds some measure of confidence according to Fenno’s description.

In addition to that test, which admittedly came after the fact, an extensive audit trail exists for the work undertaken in this study. The audit trail was done for several reasons, one of which was to provide additional assurance to readers as to the participants’ expressions as provided in this text.

The first audit trail relates to audiotape records. Many of the interview sessions were audiotaped, and those tapes were preserved and catalogued. Additionally, original manuscript researcher notes from all participant sessions were preserved, along with various drafts of interim notes on findings. The paper surveys utilized in the pilot study were also preserved and catalogued along with researcher notes on findings, as well as the group discussion with the pilot study participants. Other documentation in the research file includes documents gathered during site visits, schedules and agendas for meetings, and other relevant resources such as local newspapers.
CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented based on the responses gathered in the field studies presented in chronological order of site visitations. The findings reflect the evolving nature of the interview questions to answer the research questions which guided this research. This chapter contains information on the initial pilot study survey and interviews, conducted in July 2000, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the site visits in the state of Michigan in September 2001 and in the state of Kentucky in September 2002.

Two types of findings were drawn from the initial pilot survey and subsequent discussion with gubernatorial education policy staff members, the first set involving process issues related to the study, and the second relating to substantive findings related to the policymaking process issues for Executive branch staff in the states. The responses of participants, in general, supported the five key assertions from the literature review cited in Chapter 2, including the importance of state-level study, the importance of state governors in policymaking, the potentially important role of gubernatorial staff, the challenges in state/higher education relations, and the notion of differing viewpoints between state officials and higher education leaders. However, there were state to state variations noted in terms of gubernatorial and staff influence in the opinion of participants at each stage of the study. There were similarly some differences in views on the question of whether there were clear distinctions between the perceptions of higher education leaders and state officials regarding the higher education policy-making process that did not emerge in the pilot study, but did at later stages in field site conversations. Additionally, participants, in discussion, supported the key assertions
in the literature review stated in Chapter 3, related to the appropriateness of a qualitative, case study approach to examine state policy-making processes for higher education.

Michigan participants clearly supported the assertion from literature that state-level policy-making processes were important to explore. They most frequently expressed a view that their state process was unique, and that in the view of educators, it was a very satisfactory process. Michigan participants substantially agreed on a definition of a few key players in the policy-making process for higher education—essentially including a few key legislators, the Governor and his budget director, and a number of university presidents and lobbyists, although with upcoming term limits, there was less certainty about the future in this regard. In any event, key assumptions about the Governor being one key player were accepted, although there was general agreement that the Governor’s influence was larger in the K-12 education policy arena. There were somewhat equivocal responses to the question of influence of gubernatorial staff in higher education policy-making, depending on the specific issue and situation. The influence of the individual designated as the GEPA was, in general, considered relevant to higher education policy-making, but definitely subordinate to the larger role for the state budget director in representing the Governor’s wishes. The participants, however, felt the current GEPA (in 2001) possessed many positive attributes to success in that role. While there was no sense from any participants that major structural or governance changes were on the horizon, there was expression of uncertainty about how the policy-making processes might evolve in the future, given general agreement that the statewide demand for greater performance, fiscal challenges, and lack of shared understanding between state officials and higher education leaders noted in the literature review would likely impact Michigan along with other states.
Kentucky participants exhibited a somewhat different approach to the discussions with the researcher and their commentary, described policy-making in their state in ways very distinct from Michigan, and indeed used different language in their responses. As to the approach to discussions, and commentary provided, Kentuckians were much more likely to raise concerns about confidentiality of responses, and also much more likely to engage fully in conversation about specific higher education issues or desired outcomes, as opposed to process questions. Some participants described the former as “our general distrust of outsiders in Kentucky,” while others described the latter as “our pride in the steps we have taken to improve ourselves that is worth boasting about.” The language most utilized to most participants was “postsecondary” education, not “higher education,” possibly due to that language being used in the 1997 reform debate across the state and in the legislature, or due to the unified postsecondary system in the state, including 2-year and 4-year institutions, or both. There was clear agreement among Kentucky participants that key assertions one, two, and three from the literature review—relating to the importance of state activity, the key role of the Governor, and the important role of gubernatorial staff—in higher education policy-making were true in their state. Almost unanimously, participants expressed the view that state Executive branch leadership was key in defining specific needed outcomes for higher education in the state, expressed most commonly in terms of specific economic vitality goals. There was similar agreement on the handful of key gubernatorial staff, including the GEPA, who were very important and influential in higher education policy-making, along with the Governor himself. It was less clear that was total agreement in terms of Kentuckians’ views on the remaining two key assertions in the literature, relating to the challenges in state/higher education relations, and the extent to which the two groups held different views of the policy-
making process or desired outcomes. While most Kentucky participants expressed a reasonably high level of satisfaction with state/higher education initiatives and relationships during the current (2002) gubernatorial administration, concerns were raised by some about how projected fiscal challenges and changing personnel in both the Executive and legislative branches of state government would test their collective resolve to stay on course with the plans underway in the future. Both the general degree of satisfaction with the recent past, and the sense of future concerns, however, were shared by participants in all groups, though most notable among educators.

**Initial Pilot Survey, 2000**

A pilot survey drawing on a number of concepts in the initial literature review was prepared and administered in July 2000 to a group of Governor’s Education Policy Advisors (GEPAs) attending the Education Commission of the States Annual meeting in Minneapolis. Ten surveys were completed, and fifteen individuals participated in discussions on the topic during this time. Included in the group, in addition to the researcher and staff from the ECS and NGA, were Scott Jenkins from Michigan and Ed Ford from Kentucky, who later participated in the field research in their home states. Preliminary analysis of the data from this phase of the study focused specifically on roles and process perceptions of Governors Education Policy Advisors contributed to modifications in the research design planned for the field studies to follow. The remainder of this section describes the preparation, execution, and analysis from the pilot study.

Through late May, June, and early July of 2000, preparations to launch the pilot phase of the study were underway. One primary task during this time was enhancing the literature
and documentary data base upon which the study rests, which was done both in the library and by contacting other nonpublic document sources. In addition, during this time, a specific plan for a meeting with willing participants was devised, and the necessary site permissions and access was obtained. A third piece of the preparations involved obtaining contact information on potential participants then providing them with information on the study and a request to participate. A significant part of the preparation work done during this time was drafting, editing and preparation of a consent form and survey instrument to be used by the participants on site (Appendix A).

At 4:30pm on July 10, 2000, approximately 75 minutes was spent with a group of seven GEPAs, along with a staff member from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and a staff member from the National Governors Association (NGA), in Board Room 3 at the Minneapolis Hilton Hotel. These participants were registered attendees at the ECS Annual Meeting, which was being held at that hotel during that week who had agreed through previous email contact and personal contact on site to participate in the study through completion of a written survey and a brief discussion afterwards. The participants included GEPAs from Alaska, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Utah, in addition to the author and a staff member from the National Governors Association. Two other GEPAs present in Minneapolis for the ECS meeting (from Wyoming and New Hampshire) indicated a willingness to participate at a later time, but were unable to participate that afternoon.
Findings relative to the literature review and key assertions

Commentary from pilot study participants was received on key assumptions identified in the initial literature review and described in Chapter 2, as well as on the two study process assumptions identified in Chapter 3 related to the methodology of the anticipated study:

As state level policy makers it was not surprising to find that there was strong consensus agreement on the importance of state-level activity in this area. Likewise, as the group was largely Governor’s Education Policy Advisors, their view of the importance of state governors was unsurprising. Relative to their own importance in the process, there was some diversity in responses based on several factors, including the structure of their office organization, the relative emphasis on K-12 vs. higher education in their work, and other state or personally specific factors.

There was general agreement, however, on the potential importance of the role relative to higher education policy. There appeared to be general consensus around both the notion of increased mutual expectations between state government and higher education leaders, and of the notion the two groups have some differing perspectives or perceptions of the process. There was also general acceptance of the notion of qualitative research into the study topic, as well as acknowledgement that state differences might make a case study approach logical in the next phase of the research. More specific commentary follows, organized around the key interview questions which were presented to the pilot study participants.

Specific findings relative to the study process

A number of important process issues, both positive and negative, arose in preparation for this session, at the session itself, and in preliminary analysis. First, some positives that were observed relative to the pilot study process.

Technical assistance from national organizations, upon which the research plan was predicated, was forthcoming at or above anticipated level. Staff members from the NGA and
ECS were extremely helpful in providing information and expressed interest in the study itself and what kinds of information might result from it. These individuals were accessible for preliminary telephone and email conversations, sent requested documents not easily available elsewhere, provided counsel long distance and in person, and one of them participated in the interview session. In fact, in a private conversation in Minneapolis, one ECS staffer suggested I seek grant funding through the two organizations to complete the study. One of the authors, Thad Beyle (1985, 1989) was present at ECS in Minneapolis as well, and ECS staff facilitated a brief meeting with him that was helpful. In any case, cooperation and assistance from these organizations, particularly NGA, was an important part of the methodology and was very useful.

Governors Education Policy Advisors generally appeared to be interested in the study topic and willing to participate when asked, although their many competing time commitments made scheduling and logistics concerns an ongoing issue in data collection efforts. The participant GEPAs expressed interest in the study, were willing to assist with little prodding, and offered a number of process suggestions, as well as substantive ones on the topic of study. There was, for example, an interesting debate among several of them at the conclusion of the session, about the advisability of a 50-state survey as opposed to a case study as the study design to obtain the “most useful” or “most interesting” results. The general consensus was that both would be valuable in different ways, but that more deep understanding would emerge from a case study approach. While it was anticipated there would generally be a willingness to assist in the study, the depth of interest in the study design wasn’t expected, although the group contained numerous graduate level educated individuals with similar interests as the researcher. Perhaps the most telling comment was that morning from one participant who
stated, “I spent a lot of years advising Ph.D. candidates as a faculty member, which I really miss in this job—so count on me for anything you need. I’m not only interested, I’ll enjoy it.” Several participants expressed interest in hearing about findings. Another participant referred the researcher to a former colleague in academic research now at a southern university who “is looking to do research in similar areas and is looking for willing governmental practitioners to partner with.” In any case, access to the GEPAs and their willing participation in the study was not an obstacle. In point of fact, seven of the nine individuals approached on site participated during the afternoon session, which seemed an entirely acceptable participation rate. Logistics were always a concern with these busy people, as it was for the two who were unable to participate, who both had their Governor on site creating a competing and compelling demand on their time. The pilot experience indicated the cooperation level was likely to be acceptably high. Of course, had there been no interest or willingness to participate in the pilot, the study would have been ended without meaningful results.

Somewhat mixed positive/negative findings regarding the pilot process were observed related to the survey instrument construction, administration, and subsequent discussion. Use of a survey instrument to gather preliminary data did capture individual data in a useful way for analysis and retention. However, the preparation and administration needed major revision and improvement for any future use to achieve the desired goals, and, as the study evolved, were not considered the best approach. Despite undergoing several revisions, the survey instrument presented was not as user-friendly as intended and would need significant revision for any future use. The problems with the instrument began with the fact it was too long to be completed in the time planned. As a result, the purposes for the session were not fully met as discussion time after completion of the written survey was compressed. Participants were
promised the session would finish in no more than one hour, and the survey was planned to take no more than half that time. The reality was that the survey required 40-45 minutes or so, compressing the discussion period, despite the willingness of participants to go a few minutes past the scheduled hour. Also directly bearing on the issue of time for completion was the fact that some of the questions required clarification either due to a lack of clarity of definitions in questions drawn from constructs in other literature sources, or awkward administration instructions. The combination of these challenges meant not only a diminished period for discussion among participants, but also resulted in some individual survey instruments not being fully completed. More extensive pre-testing and editing would have been useful. The task of putting this instrument into proper form to make administration simple was clearly underestimated. Beyond these unanticipated or earlier unappreciated factors suggesting revisions, some preliminary substantive findings from the pilot study, and some recent literature discoveries suggested other revisions would have been necessary. In any event, such an instrument was not incorporated into later stages of the study where deeper levels of understanding were being sought.

A somewhat negative and unanticipated finding related to the definition/selection of survey and discussion participants. The definition of the subjects/participants in the study needed to be clarified or changed as pilot study field experience proved the original construct did not take into account a number of plausible participants not in the original potential participant data base. A fine-tuning of the definition of GEPA became necessary during the pilot study. This was not an issue fully anticipated, but one that had to have a preliminary resolution on site. The original design and contact list of GEPA s received from the NGA originally assumed a definition of a GEPA as one specific individual within a state, as
identified by the individual Governor to NGA. What I found when cross-checking with the ECS data base on annual meeting registrants was that there were other individuals within the states who considered themselves GEPAs. This became clear when reviewing the list of registrants to the ECS session for Governors Education Policy Advisors, which included a number of individuals not in the NGA data base. These additional individuals fell into one of two distinct categories, the first being individuals who served on Governor’s staff as policy assistants working on education policy, but whose state official NGA-listed GEPA was an administrative department commissioner or a similar official. The second category included persons from US territories—such as the Governor’s Education Assistant from the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Mayor’s Education Assistant from the District of Columbia. My preliminary view, operationalized at the pilot study site, was that inclusion of individuals from the former group in the study would be consistent with the intent to focus on the characteristics, roles, and perceptions of those directly employed by state governors in pursuit of education policy goals. On the other hand, excluded from the pilot was the latter group, due to my view that there are distinct role(s) of the chief executive in these territorial jurisdictions. In short, the decision was that inclusion of the latter group would widen the focus of the study in an unnecessary way, while the inclusion of the former group did not.

In addition, a somewhat mixed but not unanticipated finding of the pilot study was that recording and filing individual participant data and other types of data needed to become more sophisticated in the succeeding stages of the study. The pilot study experience was reasonably successful; however, there were some conscious compromises made in order to initiate the process which ought to be revisited and improved upon in any future studies. Inventory and organization of the two boxes of information resulting from literature review,
including non-public sources, and pilot study responses, in the most useful way to inform an emerging study became a challenge. As to the individual participant data collection, the survey technique as a starting point to hone issues and questions was reasonably successful, and the written data was preserved. The survey technique was chosen initially in part to lessen the pressure on the researcher to schedule, then record and transcribe as much initial information as would have been required if a strictly oral approach had been utilized. In later stages of the study, where deeper or richer information becomes the primary goal, written responses without the opportunity for individual follow-up, probing and clarifications from the author were not considered as useful as one-on-one oral conversations which allow for such processes. Even in this abbreviated pilot study sitting, it became apparent how difficult it is to capture and retain the essence of a detailed conversation through notes, however, and not much easier to have recording devices which work really well, and are comfortable to participants, in that setting. This effort was a focus in latter stages of the study.

Another mixed positive/negative finding on process, not unanticipated, was the importance of family and employer cooperation in planning and accomplishing necessary tasks and would also be key in development of a realistic and sustainable plan and timeline for preparation and execution of the remainder of the study and the written dissertation. The pilot phase of the study was the result of a multi-party agreement between the researcher, his family, university faculty, and his employer. Even with that level of planning, coordination, and cooperation, it was a challenge to meet the necessary demands of time for research activities. Originally it was hoped this experience would lead to the conclusion that a similar arrangement in one or two other academic terms would be a workable way to complete the research and then the writing of the dissertation. The pilot study experience raised doubts about that notion,
and to a series of chronological revisions of future activities, spreading out the study activities, and writing, over a longer period of time.

Findings relative to the substance of potential study topics

After working through a lengthy questionnaire and discussion in the afternoon the researcher spent the evening reviewing the comments received. Doing so immediately, as recommended, was helpful in retracing what seemed to go well or poorly, and get a quick look at the responses to think about. A number of issues were identified about which the participants raised points worthy of further exploration. Further reading of responses and reflection enabled a distillation of some further notion of emergent consensus from the data. These points are presented in the order of the discussion itself, not necessarily in order of significance.

Demographically, the group presented an interesting face—predominantly male, graduate-level educated, and Caucasian, but with a wide range in age, other career experience, and in their previous relationship with the Governor for whom they work.

The diversity in ages—with a range from early 30s to 70, was a somewhat unanticipated development based on the researchers’ own knowledge about some other peers. One participant made a point of saying, “you barely had a place for me on your form, as I just had my 70th birthday, and had I been one year older, I wouldn’t have fit any of the age categories you offered.” Another somewhat unanticipated fact discovered was that several participants reported no previous relationship whatsoever with their Governor prior to taking on the GEPA role. One participant noted that, “I could get hired without knowing the Governor before, but working with the group of staff who have was a big challenge from day one.” The diversity reported in age, previous relationship with the Governor, and previous professional background of GEPAs prior to their appointment appeared the most notable facts discovered in
this phase of the study. As a result of this finding, there was a conscious attempt, in selecting
participants in future site phases of the study, to identify sites where the GEPAs under study
would be of differing backgrounds on these factors.

In terms of the elements of their duties as GEPAs, few reported having a formal job
description, so that will not likely be an item to rely upon in further data collection. Given the
low positive response, it appeared there would not be enough of this information available to
use it as a criterion for sample selection at any later stage of the study. Only one participant
actually provided a job description but with the caveat that “…the following are
recommendations I made earlier this year…it’s not been formalized.” As a result of this
portion of the pilot study, effort to collect extensive ‘job descriptions’ was dropped as a
possible part of the future data collections, given the likelihood little useful information would
be found. As to the job responsibilities reported, most participants indicated they had broad
policy advising responsibilities across various sectors of education, and that their time and
effort devoted to higher education issues was clearly second to the effort expended on K-12
issues, although greater than that expended on pre-K issues. For one participant, in fact, higher
education was not a part of their role at all and another indicated it was “only 5%.”

As a result, the next stage of the research involved a blend of selecting out those
potential participants who did not report any higher education responsibilities, and reframing
some of the questions to the broader topic of education policy-making in general. The states
selected later for the case studies involved one individual from the subset that reports
significant involvement with higher education policy, and another with less direct involvement,
although both were involved in some aspects of such policy.
The findings of this part of the pilot study had several important ramifications on future study phases. First, it became apparent that K-12 education was, for most, a much more highly consuming effort in their job than was involvement in higher education issues. As a result, selection of future study participants/sites was impacted in two ways—first, that any sites where the GEPA reported essentially no involvement in higher education policy would need to be excluded as not useful sites for a study focused on higher education policy-making. At a second level, the researcher became sensitive to the fact that even above that threshold, there were going to be variations in the level of attention paid to higher education by individual GEPA(s), and selection of participants for the next phases of the study needed to reflect that. At a broader level, this finding suggested that the potential influence on higher education policy by Governors and their key staff, as identified in literature, is quite unevenly true in different states.

As potentially related to the question of GEPA influence, responses to the question of time typically spent with the Governor during the workweek definitely suggested significant influence potential. There were many different responses, but it was not uncommon to report 90 minutes to 2 hours per week—significant even in terms of the extended work week both the GEPA(s) in the survey, and Governors in the literature, report. Accepting the consensus of the literature that Governors are important decision makers with very limited time, it is hard to imagine any other state official who would have greater access and time to influence decisions on education policy, whether realized or not. Several participants indicated they had difficulty with the survey question because they had not yet experienced a “typical” week. This section of the pilot study verified the notion that based on their level of interaction with the state chief
executive, GEPAs were, indeed, potentially influential in the policy-making process, as suggested in literature.

In looking at the responses to two distinct inventories on specific roles played in the policy-making process derived from literature, a pattern for future observation and questions did appear in the pilot data. There clearly was a consensus of opinion among participants that the most important GEPA roles in general were: *agency/interagency coordination and liaison*, and *state policy development and planning*. Later, when asked specifically about higher education policy, the same two roles were mentioned, along with the additional ones of *advising Governor,* and *legislative relations.* On a related scale, participants indicated that they felt *information provider, policy shaper, interpreter, or analyst* were roles they often performed. Subsequent inquiries and conversations in these specific categories provided a focus, based on the clear view that these were most frequent and/or most important. This was a somewhat unsatisfactory phase of the pilot study in that there was some lack of certainty among participants as to definitions of some terms. The result of this work in future phases of the study was that the roles most often mentioned were the subject of future inquiry about specific actions participants perform, but there was little specific focus on attempting to get participants to differentiate among their various roles, nor in taking time to provide much definition of specific terms.

For reasons partially a result of the instrument itself, responses in the area of *other policy makers influence* was difficult to summarize and suggested that future research should explore perceptions of participants in a different way. Those most often noted as very influential, however, included trustees, legislators, the Governor, university lobbyists, and higher education administrators. The GEPA’s self-perception was that they were among the top
ten in influence, although no one felt their role was number one. GEPAs also believe those they named as influential would generally share their views on the level of influence the GEPA had as well. At the case study stage these views would be explored with other state policy makers. In planning the site visits, this finding suggested that multiple participants needed to be contacted and included in discussions, and that local participants ought to have a role in suggesting who persons of influence might be who would be worthwhile contacting, as there might not be a clear “pattern” of who those individuals would be in different states.

When considering job satisfaction issues, participants indicated they did not regret accepting the position of GEPA, but almost universally described the time requirements caused both personal and professional tradeoffs resulting in a fair amount of stress. One participant described the biggest challenge as, “staying focused on the Governor’s priorities to the exclusion of other education issues in the face of the demands of both the higher education community and the departments of government.” This comment provided a reminder to set reasonable expectations on the amount of time and attention a GEPA could devote to site study—and suggested that subsequent site selection needed to be reflective of the ability and willingness of the GEPA to fully participate.

As to the question of where do ex-GEPAs plan to go next in their career, the only consensus appeared to be that federal government service and academic instruction were the two areas they did NOT plan to move toward. Two respondents marked the category ‘other’ on the written instrument, and then in discussion let me know that “retirement” is where they are headed next, and in one case is also where they came from prior to this job. Given the need to pursue other aspects of the study, the results of this portion of the pilot study were not pursued,
except as a matter of personal interest and conversation with the researcher, in subsequent study phases.

**State of Michigan**

**Site background research, environmental factors, and process for study**

The researcher was on site in Michigan from September 22-September 28, 2001, during which time fairly extensive library research was performed at Michigan State University in East Lansing, twenty five individuals were interviewed in Lansing, East Lansing, and Grand Rapids, and the researcher spent some time attending other public meetings in and around the state capital.

Several environmental elements of the site study were particularly relevant in terms of the willingness and ability of participants to be involved, or impacted on the researcher in terms of his approach, although most were unspoken.

The first of these was the events happening in the world between the time initial arrangements for the field visit were made and the actual interviews on site. Clearly, the events of September 11, 2001, made travel more difficult for the researcher, made security concerns and related activities higher in all state facilities, and was the subject of much discussion by all participants during this time.

On a more local basis, the Michigan legislature was attempting to resolve budgetary decisions during the last week in September 2001, including several issues related to higher education appropriations, tuition, and tax credits. This was mentioned by some participants, but was claimed not to be a particular barrier since private conferences were proceeding and everyone else was just watching and waiting.
Additionally, with the exception of one relatively clear and crisp day, the weather was unusually unpleasant—cold, windy, and damp throughout the week—with an early snow squall on one day.

In short, it was not an environment conducive to high optimism and enthusiasm for theoretical discussions of higher education policy-making...although the participants were all very gracious and willing to spend time discussing just that in the midst of all that was happening around them.

**Higher education and Governor John Engler**

The state of Michigan has enjoyed for some time a positive reputation in higher education circles. The state has relatively high participation rates, a variety of quality public and private, 2-year and 4-year institutions spread across the state, and some perceived top-notch institutions and programs on a national basis, such as the professional schools at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. A more complete data profile of Michigan higher education and relevant demographic and economic statistics is included in Table 1.

The Governor of Michigan in 2001 was John Engler, a Republican serving his second term. Engler was a recognized leader among Governors nationwide, having served as Chairman of the National Governors Association, and other prominent posts. The Governor was also an active participant in various education-related issues forums during his tenure, including the National Education “summit.”

John Engler’s reputation was that of a highly-engaged executive particularly interested in education and technology issues, such as the computers in the schools initiatives for K-12 education, and the Michigan Virtual University. He was highly regarded for his energy and
ability, even among those who did not agree with some of his policy directions. His staff, as reflected in the highly competitive, two-party environment of state politics, were seen as aggressive and capable partisans for his point of view and direction, although with the end of the Governor’s term on the horizon, some of the staff were clearly beginning to contemplate other professional opportunities.

Engler was limited by law to two terms in office, and so was not able to seek another term in 2002. He was also limited by law and Constitutional provisions from exercising as much direct authority over higher education policy as some of his peers in other states. For instance, trustees for the larger public universities (Michigan, Michigan State, and Wayne State) were elected by citizens, not appointed. There were provisions of the state constitution adopted in 1962 which provided a fairly large degree of autonomy to the universities, and has precluded much formal action to coordinate or provide central governance direction from the state.

**Education Policy Advisor and the Governor’s staff**

Governor Engler’s designated Education Policy Advisor in 2001 was Scott Jenkins, who previously had worked for the Michigan House of Representatives, and earlier for the Florida House of Representatives, in both cases on education legislation. Jenkins described an important aspect of his job as “telegraphing the Governor’s wishes and intentions” to Board members, interest groups, and institutional officials. Mr. Jenkins also indicated his view that providing staff support and advice to Governor was an additional key area of his job. As was mentioned in the pilot study results, many GEPAs described their role as primarily focused on K-12 education issues, as opposed to higher education issues. Mr. Jenkins, while
acknowledging interaction and involvement in select higher education issues, including particularly the Michigan Virtual University, and specific gubernatorial initiatives particularly in workforce issues, was among those who described his role as more often focused on K-12 education issues. He also described his view of Governor Engler’s education focus in similar terms—higher education issues in the mix, but not as prominent as K-12 issues.

Mr. Jenkins reported directly in the organizational model used by the organization to a Policy Director, who in turn reported to the Governor’s Chief of Staff. It was noted by executive branch participants, however, that there was frequent and direct communication by Mr. Jenkins with the Governor, based in part on the Governor’s general interest in education, and affinity with his GEPA on a personal level.

**Specific sites used in the field study**

Scott Jenkins provided important direct assistance and site access to the researcher during his time in Michigan. The Governor’s Office and staff offices for the Governor are spread throughout several floors of the Romney State office Building in downtown Lansing, about one block from the State Capitol. In the eyes of the researcher, the accommodations for the Governor and staff appeared above average in terms of size, configuration, furnishings, and functionality to many other states, in the eyes of the author. All appearances suggested a mature organization, with roles and functions seemingly well defined, and no sense of disorder despite the fact that the site visit corresponded with legislative consideration of the state budget. In fact, one of the conference rooms in the building along with an office space was utilized quite heavily by the researcher while on site, and did not appear to create any problems with other needs for the areas.
The third floor offices and conference room at the Romney Building were the site for the initial interview with Jenkins, interviews with Senate staffers, other Governor’s State Government affairs staff, several legislative and executive agency staff members, representatives of the Presidents Council, the community college association, state university governmental relations staff. Visits to a regional university President, a key legislator, a senior staff member of an education association, lunch at a hotel restaurant with other legislative staffers, and a visit to the Michigan Chamber of Commerce offices for a business education coalition meeting rounded out the sites where discussions and interviews took place. The Governor’s Education Policy Advisor sat in on a few of the sessions, but for most did not do so, beyond making initial introductions in several instances.

Participants

The participants represented a reasonably wide range of roles and perspectives in terms of higher education policy-making. Demographically speaking, there were a number of female participants and a fairly wide age dispersion from young legislative and executive staff, many in their 30s, to others nearing retirement, such as the representatives of the Presidents Council and the Michigan Education Association. There were a number of native Michiganders, as well as transplants such as Scott Jenkins himself, who was previously employed in education policy analysis in the state of Florida. There were self-proclaimed partisan and non-partisan participants, as well as those representing higher education and both the executive and legislative branches of state government. Those participating fit the initial criteria for selection set by the researcher as having some knowledge and experience relevant to higher education
policy-making in the state and being willing and able to participate. Participants are listed alphabetically, at the end of the bibliography.

**Overall perspectives on higher education policy-making in Michigan**

There was significant agreement on the view that the Michigan system (or lack thereof in the language of some participants) of policy-making for higher education was unique, largely due to Constitutional autonomy, but that the budgetary allocations were the significant purview of state government, particularly relative to capital appropriations. Relative to the point of the lack of a higher education “system” in the state, one participant expressed the view that, *"We have a collection of public four-year institutions, not a system"* (Higher Education Administrator). Another participant stated that, *"There is no statewide higher education policy in Michigan--policy is made on an individual institution basis per Michigan Constitution Article 8, Sections 4 & 5"* (Legislative participant).

Taking a very different perspective on a shared understanding of the current process, another participant suggested that *"Universities here are weird. Engler came in with a budget crisis but couldn’t touch these guys despite public perception there was a lot there to cut"* (Legislative participant).

Given participants general agreement there was not a system in higher education in the classic sense, discussion of what the process for policy-making actually was became topical. The process was characterized by one participant this way: *"In Michigan context, balance of power (in higher education policy-making) is a three-way relationship between the executive branch of state government, the legislative branch, and the higher education institutions. And the Michigan way is the right way to do things"* (Higher Education administrator). While there
was a general sense of agreement on the first part of that commentary, another participant expressed some concern that "Both College Presidents and state policymakers are somewhat isolated in Michigan, and find it hard to talk informally about ideas due to a lack of formal and informal relationships" (Executive branch official). There were a number of expressions of strong support, particularly from educators, for the status quo, and no particular sense from state government participants that a major change was neither practical nor being actively sought, as described by one participant this way: "The Michigan way of doing things is not a system approach...it promotes quality and trust of citizens in the schools...which generates ongoing support. There is a unique sense of pride and ownership here which has existed through the terms of the last three governors" (Legislative participant). At the same time, there were concerns expressed by others about how the policy-making processes at times do change, or might do so in the future, "There are huge differences in the level of integration of policy and budget from one administration to the next...at times even from a governor's first to second terms" (Higher Education administrator).

**Who are the influential players in higher education policy-making in Michigan?**

Again in this area, there was substantial agreement on a relatively narrow set of key players in the process. Most participants thought a very small number of key legislators, university Presidents and lobbyists, and the Governor and his budget director are key. It was a consensus that the group is small, and contains those individuals, generally speaking. The only cautionary note expressed was that the term limitations on both the governor and key legislators made it uncertain what the future might look like in this regard.
A small sample of participant views expressed on this topic illustrate the degree of general consensus on perceptions of who those key individuals in the state higher education policy-making process are. There was no question that higher education administrators and their key staff, particularly but not exclusively those at Michigan, Michigan State, and Wayne State were among the most important. Participants also noted the Governor, and at a staff level his budget director played important roles, along with key legislators on appropriations issues. Several participants also mentioned the Governor’s Education Policy Advisor, and the Presidents Council (university presidents’ organization) as at times having some importance in higher education policy-making. A sense of the general agreement among participants on who the most influential actors in Michigan higher education policy-making can be seen in the following selected comments:

"Legislators, university Presidents and lobbyists, Governor and staff are the most important. GEPA is mid-range in influence, along with Presidents Council in terms of higher education." (Legislative participants)

"In budget negotiations, it's the state budget director, key legislators, and university presidents and lobbyists." (Legislative participants)

"University presidents are the most powerful players if and when they 'get it together'." (Executive branch official)

"Strongest influence in higher education policy is the institutions themselves due to their size, prestige, alumni networks, and government relations staffing. After that comes the Presidents Council (especially when they have a united front on appropriations issues). After that comes the Governor—especially through the executive budget and capital outlay processes. Everyone else comes after that." (Education Association participant)

"The most important players in higher education policymaking are the Governor, the State Budget Director, the legislative higher education appropriations chairs, and the 'Big 3' university presidents." (Higher Education Administrator)

"The Governor sets the tone, and for higher education, the state budget director is the key contact with the GEPA secondary. The chairs of the appropriations subcommittees in the legislature would be next. Then the legislature in general." (Higher Education Administrators)
What are the specific roles of the Governor and his staff in higher education policy-making?

There was consensus that the role of the Governor was less prominent in higher education than in K-12 education. One participant group described that observation in this way: "Autonomy (from state constitution) makes the role of Governor and his staff less central in higher education policy than K-12, and they have more engagement therefore with K-12 people and on K-12 issues as a result" (Legislative participants).

There was also consensus among participants, however, that the Governor and his staff, particularly on budget matters, were relevant actors in the policy-making process for higher education:

"Communications from higher education to the executive branch are about framing policy and budget questions...mostly budget questions." (Higher Education administrator)

"Most interaction with Governor and staff generally happens around infrastructure requests than any other budgetary matters." (Legislative participants)

In a few instances, there was a specific role for the Governor and the staff mentioned as important with respect to collaborative state initiatives that might be promoted in external and federal efforts by higher education:

"The state executive branch does call on the universities, from time to time, to help construct desired initiatives." (Higher Education administrator)

"Governor can be particularly helpful in working collaboratively in federal relations (i.e. Internet 2 and Cyclotron projects)." (Higher Education administrators)

As previously mentioned, participants clearly saw the gubernatorial role in budget-setting as important, and noted that in terms of their interaction with staff, their approach would be different depending on whether or not the issue at hand was budgetary in nature:

"Typical higher education contacts with the executive branch are with the GEPA on non-budget or regulatory issues, with the budget office on appropriations matters, and in some high-profile cases with the Governor or Chief of Staff." (Higher Education administrators)
"Higher education governmental relations staff probably spend 80% of their time on legislative or constituency work and only 20% on Governor or their staff. That may not reflect relative importance. In fact, the 'return on investment' of time with executive branch likely higher." (Higher Education administrators)

Finally, there was a fair degree of uncertainty expressed about the potential impact of upcoming legislative term limits shifting the balance of power toward the Governor in future policy-making: "The Governor may become a singular voice in state higher education policy in Michigan in the future due to (the uncertain impact of) legislative term limits (removing currently key members from office)" (Higher Education Administrator).

**What are participant views about Michigan’s GEPA and their role?**

Specific Michigan comments were given about the GEPA and his role in state policy-making. There was agreement around the view that Scott Jenkins was an effective GEPA, although admittedly only peripherally involved in most higher education issues, where budgetary leadership came from the state budget director. There was a fairly similar description of the ideal characteristics for GEPA success among both the education and government participants, and most thought Jenkins was reasonably well matched to most of them, particularly those of representing clearly the Governor's viewpoint:

"I attend some Board and Commission meetings on behalf of the Governor, and can often debate and make motions there which gives me a chance to 'telegraph' the Governors wishes." (Executive branch official)

"Typical roles include preparing Governor briefing materials, staffing meetings, as well as attending events with him and for him." (Executive branch official)

"A good GEPA is one who is on the Governor's 'speed dial' based on the fact the Governor wants to communicate with them often." (Legislative participants)

"Scott spends more time with the Governor than I do...they have bonded well due to mutual issue interests, intellect, and philosophy. This makes him particularly effective, as does his legislative background." (Executive branch official)
"No consistent relationship between higher education leaders and GEPA, in part due to 'revolving door' in the past in that position, and a lack of interest and/or background in some cases by GEPA relative to higher education." (Higher Education administrator)

"The most important success characteristic of GEPAs is whether or not they have demonstrated support from the Governor in serving as their eyes, ears, and at times their voice." (Higher Education administrator)

"The GEPA postsecondary role largely relates to knowledge of the budget recommendations, but little if any oversight. At times it extends to specific initiatives—such as creation of a department or agency. Generally, though, few higher education issues come to the GEPA in Michigan." (Executive branch official)

"Generally, effective GEPAs are good listeners and solicit input, are accessible, and help state government address issues raised. Scott's effectiveness as GEPA, while largely revolving around K-12, seems to come from his clear communications skills and his ability to move on rather than obsess on a single issue." (Education Association official)

"The GEPA has a broad role with interface with different constituencies. To succeed, the GEPA needs an issues background, political savvy, be a known and trusted individual to others in the process, and to have a thick skin. Scott is effective at carrying the Governor's messages, and deals more with legislators than staff. He is charged with figuring out how to implement the Governor's vision, though in higher education, the budget office is often the initiator." (Legislative participant)

"From an agency perspective, criteria for GEPA success involve the roles of the individual as either "the hammer" or "laizefaire," or from the authority granted the GEPA as either "errand boy" or "broker." (Executive branch officials)

"Concern for higher education, a reasonable issues philosophy, and strength of personality are what I think a GEPA must have. They should be able to say to the Governor, '...but this is what I think we need to do.' Scott Jenkins comes closer to this than most." (Higher Education administrator)

How does the business of higher education policy-making get transacted in Michigan?

There was a clear message from some participants that future executive-higher education relationships will best be built on educators taking a broader view of state problems and how they can help solve them, and by adopting a respectful view of the individuals in state government and their roles. Participants generally expressed the view that voluntary coordination mechanisms still appear viable within higher education, rather than externally mandated ones. There was little sense of urgency to change the way of doing business, nor a
sense of likely increases in grassroots and presidential direct advocacy in state governmental processes.

The expressions made by participants on this topic are as follows:

"Higher education is best served to come to the Governor with counsel on the big picture and 'how we can help' as opposed to the 'here's my problem' orientation of some new presidents." (Higher Education administrator)

"How can higher education better influence or impact on Governor? By presenting a clear message, which demonstrates an ability to meet both community needs and gubernatorial priorities, and by engaging the entire university community, not just the President. On the other side of the coin, the biggest challenge to that end is the scientist/academic who thinks policy makers are simply ignorant if they don’t follow the 'obviously rational' advice offered." (Higher Education administrator)

"Integration of broad state priorities, such as economic development, at higher education institutions is always a struggle, but is being done." (Higher Education administrator)

"Presidential involvement, as well as grassroots alumni efforts in state policy-making arena fairly rare in Michigan." (Higher Education administrator)


**Summary of findings based on the literature key assertions**

Michiganders were, on balance, proud of their traditions of somewhat autonomous public universities, based on local culture, tradition, and constitutional and statutory frameworks. As a result, their views clearly supported the first key assumption from the literature review, the notion that state-level policymaking was a unique and important part of viewing U.S. higher education.

On the other hand, Michiganders were only moderately supportive of the notion in the second literature key assertion, relating to the Governor’s importance in the process of policy-making for higher education. To some extent, this was the flip side of their views on the uniqueness and importance of state-level analysis, in that the Michigan system and culture
mitigates against an extremely high degree of gubernatorial impact in higher education policy-making, beyond budgetary issues. Participants did generally agree, however, that the Governor was one of the key people in that higher education policy-making process, if not always the preeminent one.

Not surprisingly, given the view participants held on the role of the Governor in policy-making for higher education, there was also a view that the Governors Education Policy Advisor, while an important part of the organization, and a person worthy of attention, had only moderate impact on the process. More specifically, several expressed the view that in terms of higher education policy-making, it was actually the state budget director who was most likely to be the Governor’s spokesperson on many issues where the Executive branch was involved. There was, however, also a feeling that the current occupant of the GEPA position had many of the attributes necessary to be successful and expand his influence.

There was muted agreement to the point of literature key assertion four, related to the challenges in state government/higher education relations. In this instance, participants agreed there were challenges, but expressed no real sense of urgency about any issues in this regard, no sense of any major initiatives related to this topic on the horizon, nor any particular interest in initiating any major efforts to address such challenges. In fact, more Michigan participants expressed pleasure with the status quo, and/or fear of any major process changes than concerns about challenges in the current processes.

Michigan responses were not conclusive on the point of differing process perceptions on higher education policy-making processes between state officials and higher education leaders. While the participants did not always use the same terminology, and might not have the same substantive policy goals, the degree of consensus on process questions ranging from
who the important actors in the process to what the key elements of the process in which the state executive branch leadership had influence, was striking.

The discussion questions posed by the researcher to Michiganders did not directly address the two research methodology points related to qualitative research techniques utilized in this study, as discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3. However, the researcher observed that most interviews went beyond scheduled time, often due to participants wishing to explain more fully their perceptions of policy-making, which suggested that they found the experience and technique of some value. Further, some of the commentary provided related to participant views about the uniqueness of the Michigan process, suggesting that a state-specific case study approach had value in their eyes. Finally, more than one educator participant diverged from the discussion questions to make specific suggestions on how to refine the study in future activities, again suggesting acceptance of an evolving qualitative approach to the research.

**State of Kentucky**

**Site background research, environmental factors, and study process**

The researcher was in Kentucky from September 22, 2002 through September 27, 2002. During that time, library research was conducted at both the University of Kentucky and University of Louisville libraries, twenty interviews were conducted in Lexington, Frankfort, and Louisville, and the researcher also attended portions of the Governor’s Conference on Postsecondary Education Trusteeship in Lexington.

Kentucky’s Governor provided the major topic of public discussion during the week of the site visit. Paul Patton was the first governor allowed by state law to seek a second term and, in 2002, at the time site research was planned, he was mid-way through his second and final
term. He was, at that time, considered a strong and popular leader, and a likely candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2004. In September 2002, however, his reputation suffered a serious reversal by way of his denial of, then later admission to, an extra-marital affair with a member of a state board, who also alleged the Governor had directed state agencies to retaliate against her business when they broke off their personal relationship. During the second half of September 2002, while the scheduled research was being conducted, all these matters were ‘breaking news’ in the state, and while not always spoken, without doubt at least somewhat impacted the conversations with the researcher. This was the topic of public conversation in the state during the time the site research was underway, and also limited the time the researcher was able to interact directly with the Governor’s staff, given the other demands on their time resulting from the scandal.

**Higher education in Kentucky and Governor Paul Patton’s focus**

Kentucky is a state that has historically had a modest reputation in terms of top-notch programs in higher education, relatively low participation in higher education, and a rather mixed history in terms of higher education governance and coordination structures. In the mid to late 1990s, a clear state government focus on higher education set more ambitious goals for both quality of programs and levels of participation by Kentuckians.

The 1997 reform legislation for Kentucky higher education, often referred to by the legislative name, HB 1, and follow-up legislation and appropriations increases, has been deemed by scholars as among the most significant in decades from any state. The legislation reflected a decentralized governance system balanced with a strong statewide policy leadership structure and a statewide strategic agenda for higher education. The legislation established new
long-term state goals for higher education, in terms of quality of life and economic outcomes, was focused on state citizens not institutions, incorporated pre-school to graduate school into a state system, aligned finance policy with state goals, changed strategic leadership structures, and provided an ongoing fiscal commitment. Among other specific provisions, a state-wide community college system was created to be separate from the state universities. The specific goals were ultimately articulated as five questions to be answered with ongoing data.

1. Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?
2. Are more students enrolling in postsecondary education?
3. Are more students advancing through the system?
4. Are we preparing Kentuckians for life and work?
5. Are Kentucky’s communities and economy benefiting?

However, by numerous standards, the state was still performing below average on a national basis in many such areas at the time of the site visit. Clearly, the pre-eminent institution of higher education in the state is the University of Kentucky, for various reasons, although it is not considered 'top-rank on a national basis in terms of academic programs reputations. Kentucky rates rather low on a number of socio-economic measures of its citizenry as well. A more detailed date profile of Kentucky higher education, economics, and demographics is shown in Table 1.

Governor Paul Patton, a Democrat, served with a legislature in 2002 which was nominally controlled by Democrats in the House, and by Republicans in the Senate. Patton had been a well-respected leader on the national scene, and served as chairman of the National Governors Association, prior to the aforementioned scandal. As a former natural resources-related business executive, Patton had a strong reputation, both in-state, and on a national
basis, as focused on issues of greater educational achievement, particularly postsecondary achievement, linked to economic growth goals for the state. Patton’s reputation as a successful governor was, in large part, based on his success in his first term in office in passing the aforementioned statewide reform and governance reorganization plan for public higher education in the state, and a companion plan providing significant increases in public appropriations tied to specific outcome measures for improvements at these institutions. In this respect, Patton (and, as a result, his staff) was considered one of the nation’s most active Governors in terms of his personal interest and involvement in higher education policy-making within his state.

On a related note, Gordon Davies, the state-level executive director hired to lead implementation of the approved reform initiatives in higher education by the Governor in the late 1990s had a falling out with the Chief Executive in mid 2002, and had left his post at the time of the site study, leaving the state postsecondary education council with interim leadership. While this was not a development viewed favorably by some participants, it did in the expressed views of some, provide yet another indication of the priority placed on higher education issues by the Governor, and his resolve to be actively engaged, with his staff, in their management and implementation.

**Governor’s Education Policy Advisor and other staff**

Ed Ford served Governor Patton throughout his administration as Education Policy Advisor. Dr. Ford is a retired veterinarian, and served for a number of years in the legislature where he focused much of his effort on education issues. Additionally, Dr. Ford serves as Deputy Cabinet Secretary for the Governor, essentially second in command to the Chief of
Staff on policy matters. Ed Ford was instrumental, in the view of most participants, to obtaining legislative approval for the higher education reform program during the first term of Governor Patton. Dr. Ford was a participant in the initial pilot study in 2000, as well as the site study in 2002. At the time of the pilot study, he was one of the relatively small proportion of GEPAs who noted that a significant portion of his time on the job was indeed focused on postsecondary education issues. He described his relationship with the Governor as “close” and his professional role as “line authority” over education policy issues, subject to direction by the Governor or the Secretary to the Executive Cabinet (known in most states as the Governor’s Chief of Staff).

While Dr. Ford was more of a focus in the study, it is worth mentioning two other significant staff participants who were noted by many to have unusual influence in higher education policy-making, as well. Given the direct interest and involvement of the Governor in the subject, and the positions of these two staff members, many participants identified them has having significant impact, in addition to Dr. Ford. Those individuals were Crit Luallen, the Secretary to the Executive Cabinet, and James Ramsey, the Governor’s budget director, who left that post prior to the site study to become president at the University of Louisville. Luallen’s position in state government made her the direct supervisor of Dr. Ford, and an indirect supervisor of Dr. Ramsey, as well as providing great access to the Governor himself. Her official position is not constructed in quite the same way in other states, but clearly encompasses many aspects of a gubernatorial chief of staff. Given the importance of higher education issues to the Governor, and the respect participants had for her personally, as reflected in their comments below, her role was clearly of note in the policy-making process for higher education as well.
Specific sites used in the field study

There was more diversity in the study sites used in Kentucky than in Michigan. Most interviews were held in the offices of participants, primarily in Frankfort, Lexington, and Louisville. Several interviews were also conducted at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Lexington during the annual Trustees Conference. Additionally, several telephone interviews were conducted with participants in more remote locales in western and northern Kentucky not easily accessible to the researcher.

Participant reaction to the research questions and research process

There was a very different tone and flavor to conversations in the two states. In Kentucky, there was a greater wariness expressed by participants about the uses of the data, a greater reluctance (and refusal in some cases) to either be audio-taped or to have comments directly attributed back to the individual. Whether that is an instinctive wariness “to outsiders” as one Kentuckian described it or a more specific commentary on the timing and circumstances of the interviews is hard to say. This was particularly interesting in that the setting of the Kentucky interviews tended, in general, to be on either neutral sites such as a hotel meeting room, or at the participants’ office, where presumably they might feel more comfortable than in a State Executive Office Building, as was used for many Michigan interviews. What is more clear is that it was much easier to engage participants in freewheeling process discussions in Michigan where in Kentuckians were more reluctant to make broad statements, and more likely to opine specifically on the state’s 1997, Postsecondary Education Reform initiatives.
Specific comments from participants from Kentucky, providing the essence of their collective perspective on the issues under review follow, with some general commentary from the researcher thereafter.

**What is your view of higher education and the importance of it to Kentucky?**

There was a striking similarity in responses from essentially all participants in Kentucky around the importance of higher education reform to the state, and also striking similarity in the economic or quality of life rationale they believed was at the heart of that belief. Clearly, there is consensus about the public rationale for a state-wide focus on higher education, as described this way in the voices of a few participants:

"The prosperity of Kentucky depends on an educated citizenry."  (Executive branch official)

"Higher education key to future for our people, and improved education means improvements in many other areas of life...the reform effort will allow Kentucky to compete in the modern economy with both improved research capacity and increased individual opportunity."  (Executive branch official)

"(Improvements in) per capita income and jobs matter most (in sustaining support for state reforms in postsecondary education)..."  (Executive branch official)

"I was attracted to Kentucky in part due to the opportunity created by state reforms to do something new for the long haul. The Governor and General Assembly were courageous in understanding that the future of the state's economy was at stake."  (Higher Education administrator)

"Kentucky is a polarized state politically, but not so much the case in higher education--we're more desperate there for economic reasons."  (Executive branch official)

"It's fundamental as far as our ultimate goal...we expect a more successful economic life for our postsecondary graduates."  (Legislative participant)

**What is the state of higher education policy-making in Kentucky today?**

In terms of the overall view of policymaking for higher education in Kentucky, much of the conversations focused around the 1997 state-enacted reform agenda, also known to insiders as House Bill 1, and how those were viewed 5 years later. In fact, the trustees annual meeting
dinner was designed around a theme of celebrating successes in that regard. Indicators of progress on enrollments, graduation and retention rates, and funding for both academic and research programs and student aid were highlighted there, and later in individual conversations with several participants. General comments on the state of policy in Kentucky heard through the week include the following:

"We can document successes...that have resulted in progress. Funding has been increased for postsecondary education much greater than the rest of state programs in recent years. Reform is here to stay. We must work together to resolve differences and focus on long-term statewide goals and build legislative support." (Executive branch official)

"Kentucky reforms are widely recognized as the most significant change by a U.S. state in 25 years. HB 1 reflects a deliberate choice of decentralized institutional governance balanced with statewide policy leadership and strategic agenda." (Consultant at trustees conference)

"Kentucky's reform in a fundamental shift, but one with shallow roots." (Higher Education administrator)

"We had the good fortune (in the reform effort) to have a reform-minded Governor, a generally supportive legislature, a few good Presidents, and a strong economy." (Executive branch official)

"We had some pretty good ideas in 1997 and if we don't blow it, we'll get pretty close to where we want to be." (Legislative participant)

There were a number of general observations about the policy-making process for higher education in the state as well:

"Policy-making in Kentucky is built on relationships, which we cultivate daily." (Executive branch official)

"Michigan is a better place to be a President, due to deregulated environment and wealth, although some would say there is a need for less duplication. In Kentucky, the constituent base in weaker, but the CPE is important to garner support and resources, though campus-based 'end-runs' still happen." (Higher Education administrator)

"Process is always going to be somewhat political. In 1997, the Governor won the battle for reform because he first took up the issue of workers compensation reform, and business community appreciated that. It became easier for them to support him on postsecondary reform after that. Process may be different, but still political after reform." (Education Association official)

"In this state, people do talk and collaborate." (Legislative participant)
Who are the key players in higher education policy-making in this state?

There was a fairly high level of agreement on the key players in policymaking for higher education in Kentucky. The Governor himself, his budget officer, Jim Ramsey, and his top aide, Crit Luallen, were uniformly mentioned in this regard. Dr. Ed Ford’s name was often mentioned. CPE leadership was also frequently mentioned:

"Crit Luallen is a leader with many years of public service experience. She is tireless, accessible, supportive, and charming." (Executive branch official)

"The Governor personally interacts several times per year with me, and there are regular and frequent contacts also with his Budget Officer and with Crit Luallen. CPE involvement in the process makes the President and Chairman of that group also key today, although their predecessors on CHE were not. There are also some powerful Board members and corporate leaders around the state who matter." (Higher Education administrator)

"It's important to note that in Kentucky we have a situation where a number of powerful legislators also work on our campuses, and they are influential." (Higher Education administrator)

"On the reform effort, Ed Ford, the Governor's liaison to the consultants, was a major player. Jim Ramsey, now serving as both state budget director and acting President at the University of Louisville, is clearly another player." (Higher Education administrator)

"Gordon Davies, while serving as CPE president, was clearly key during the time he held the job." (Education association official)

"We cultivate key staff people...meet with Crit Luallen monthly, and with Ed Ford or Jim Ramsey, depending on the specific issue. We also meet with the Governor several times per year, and also with key legislators and key staff, such as the committee chairs. I more often deal with the President of CPE rather than the members or other staff." (Higher Education administrator)

"The most influential people are Crit Luallen, Jim Ramsey, and the state Finance Cabinet." (Higher Education administrator)

"Who is REALLY involved in state policy, depends on the subject, but often includes Crit Luallen and Jim Ramsey, Sue Moore at CPE, Steve Barger at CPE, Senator Casebier. The true policymakers in my mind also include the Presidents although they are not always a 'plus.' Clearly Norma Adams at CPE and other key members have a role. And, the Governor was a driving force in getting things rolling, with Ed Ford as the 'convener.' There are also key legislators working for the schools which can at times be useful. Institutional trustees have a role that is narrower than the statewide perspective most of the time." (Executive branch official)
"The CPE president and CFO, the institution Presidents, the CPE members, the Governor and his budget officer, the appropriations and statutory committee chairs in the legislature, and legislative leaders." (Executive branch official)

What are the roles and potential roles of the Governor and his staff in higher education policy-making?

Participants had a clear consensus that the Governor’s personal commitment to make higher education reform the top priority of his administration set in motion a series of changes in the process for policy-making for all participants, starting with himself and including the personnel and priorities instilled in his own staff and Cabinet. That personal commitment and prioritization came through loud and clear from participants:

"Frankly, the executive branch role wasn’t all that big until Patton. He didn’t campaign on higher education the first time, but did focus his Condition of the State address after his Inauguration on it. He got off to a good start on higher education because he hired good consultants, has a good Executive branch staff and good legislative cooperation too. Together, they came up with good packaging." (Higher Education administrator)

"Postsecondary reform and all that has followed couldn’t have happened without an engaged Governor, despite the important roles of others." (Legislative participant)

"The personal commitment of the Governor and their staff is absolutely key." (Executive branch official)

"While the legislature is relevant in policy-making for postsecondary, the budget and 'bully pulpit' originate in the Governor's office." (Legislative participant)

Participants were also clear in their view that the role of various staff members from the Executive branch was both an indication of the importance of higher education issues and the importance of those staff roles in arriving at successful policy outcomes:

"The Patton administration has been effective in policy-making for higher education because the Governor has made it the #1 issue and set the tone for the administration and agencies. Therefore, there is an attentive and responsive Cabinet, good coordination between appointees in higher education and the Governor’s office. Additionally, the Governor has chosen quality people to appoint to responsible positions." (Higher Education administrator)

"The Governor's staff, as far as I'm concerned, has been the best and brightest. They represent a good mix of 'brainiacs and politicos' and serve him well." (Executive branch official)
Participants were somewhat less certain, however, about the future direction of gubernatorial leadership in higher education policy-making, both due to the emerging scandal clouding the remaining time of Paul Patton’s term, as well as the upcoming election of a new Governor the following year:

"The leadership of the Governor and CPE is critical for Kentucky. I hope questions about the Governor based on current 'scandal' don't limit candidates willing to come to CPE."
(Legislative participant)

"The Governor--and the candidates for Governor in the meantime--will still be a very key player in these issues."
(Education association official)

Our current Governor is personally invested in the improvements in postsecondary education and understands the link to the new economy and quality of life. It's uncertain as to the depth of the legislative commitment and the new governor is obviously just a question mark at this point."
(Education association official)

What about the involvement and role of the GEPA in the Kentucky process?

Unlike his colleague in Michigan, who was perceived to be mostly focused on K-12 education issues, Ed Ford, the Kentucky GEPA, as reflected in the above comments, was perceived as active in higher education issues. Given the extremely prominent role his Governor was seen to have taken on the issues, however, he appeared to have little independent role in the process, but was viewed as a capable and trustworthy representative. Clearly, the participants felt the most important players were Crit Luallen, Ed’s direct supervisor, and Jim Ramsey, the budget director (and acting President at University of Louisville). Given the proximity and interaction observed in the Governor's office suite, it is relatively easy to see why a distinct role for Ed might not be clear to outsiders. It is less clear, however, why outsiders might not observe that proximity as a pathway to power, however. Clearly, that physical proximity and interaction was very different that in Michigan where the GEPA was on an entirely different floor of an office building.
How does higher education policy-making business get transacted?

Kentuckians had varied comments on the question of how business gets transacted in higher education policy-making. This is an unsurprising finding, given that it was only four years earlier, when an entirely new governance and coordination structure was legislated, the implementation and refinement of which was still underway. The clearly shared view running through all participant conversations, however, was that the power of the state Executive branch leadership, whether expressed through the Governor and his staff, the state budget office, or the Council for Postsecondary Education, was far stronger in the 21st century than it had been previously. Several participants also noted that they felt some traditional views, expressed at various times as distrust of “outsiders,” and in other cases as “geographic disputes rather than partisan ones” being the norm in higher education policy-making in the state, were still relevant notions, despite changes in state organizational and oversight processes:

"CPE is designed to have 80% of the responsibility for the public agenda and policy leadership in postsecondary education, with the Regents and Presidents at the institutions having 20%. In terms of institutional governance, however, the ratios are reversed with CPE having only 20% of the responsibility, and the institutional Regents and Presidents having 80%." (Consultant at trustees conference)

"The Council creates biennial budget recommendations in consultation with Presidents, not institutional boards. The role of the Institutional boards and Presidents that CPE has delegated to them is tuition." (Executive branch official)

"CPE interacts with executive branch of state government most directly with the 2 legislative liaisons for the Governor, then with liaisons from other agencies, then with Cabinet secretaries. With the Governor’s office we are asked to react to legislative ideas on budgets or capitals, meet regularly with Crit and with Jim on budget, provide responses to data requests, or to help provide information useful in public appearances. Direct participation by CPE in Cabinet meetings, except for special activities, considered too political." (Executive branch official)

"Conflicts that arise in Kentucky higher education are most often non-partisan and geographic in origin." (Executive branch official)

"New faces not necessarily good in Kentucky…outsiders may not be trusted, and the political nature of the people in Kentucky won’t change." (Higher Education administrator)
"We've plenty of decisions for the new leader at CPE. We've lost a couple of candidates, based on the uncertainty surrounding the Governor at present." (Executive branch official)

What is the future of Kentucky higher education and higher education policy-making?

While expressing concern with state leadership transitions and projected fiscal challenges, participants were generally optimistic about making future progress toward the expressed state goals for higher education, and for successful implementation of the coordinating and governance changes adopted in the late 1990s:

"We'll not rest until our dreams become reality." (Executive branch official)

"The new Governor will need to come up with a team that understands and appreciates the role for higher education to achieve long term economic growth in a knowledge based economy, understand that the whole--the system--is greater than the sum of the parts (isolated institutions), and be patient in terms of the time it will take to meet ambitious goals." (Executive branch official)

"I'm amazed at the depth of commitment to sustaining the agenda of reform, especially at the political level. More resources, however, will come only with focus on people, not institutions, and not the old way." (Consultant at trustees conference)

"We're at postsecondary crossroads per budget constraints." (Legislative participant)

"The vision is in place, but it's unclear who can drive it--and integrate it into the culture. Much will depend on the new state leadership in both branches of government and the commitment they and the staff they choose share commitment to higher education goals. The last few years have been easy, fiscally, but it will be harder now due to the times and leadership will also need a clear financial understanding and creativity." (Higher Education administrator)

"I'm fairly optimistic. There is general political support for postsecondary education, though the new Governor and legislators need to be on board. Other state needs have 'been patient', and the economic cycles will likely be a challenge. The universities need to have an 'educating' voice in the debate on well-documented need for tax restructuring." (Higher Education administrator)

"I'm optimistic about the future and believe we'll move forward, whether faster or slower, depending...We need a culture change toward a 'system-wide' attitude, and we've not had everything possible from the Executive branch to get that done. Our CPE members are not uniformly strong, but they are independent. As new members come on, they should have more 'gravitas' and of course we need an excellent President as well. We currently don't have Board members with the stature to 'out-stare' institution heads when necessary. I believe we need to really push value-added outcomes measures, despite the typical university response that the students they have are simply dumb." (Executive branch official)
"Looking ahead, there are so many forks in the road, it looks like a tree. The leadership of the Governor, much more than the legislators, will be key. I hope the new Governor looks at policy not politics and doesn't try to make their mark by overturning all that has been done."

(Legisative participant)

"I'm cautiously optimistic that improvements have been made, particularly lasting ones at the community and technical colleges and research universities. The new Governor and CPE will have to wrestle with the regionals, as there is no clear consensus on mission creep and we are not resource rich.” (Education association official)

"I’m optimistic. When I was in the legislature, postsecondary education was always the first hit in tough times. Despite the more adversarial legislative process today, that didn’t happen. I think this is because of six years of institutionalizing change and our efforts to improve postsecondary education. That legislative support is an indicator of public support."

(Executive branch official)

In summarizing his view on a broader basis than the territory within the state, Bill Swinford from the Kentucky Commission on Postsecondary Education provided a comment that seemed to summarize how many participants felt. He stated that, "the Kentucky reform effort is possibly not replicable in other states due to various special circumstances…however, to embrace systemic reform of postsecondary education is good in various circumstances."

Summary of Kentucky findings based on the literature review and key assertions

Kentuckians clearly felt their state had a unique culture, policy-making process, and policies which would validate the notion from literature assertion one about the importance of the state level in examination of policy-making in U.S. higher education. To a much higher degree than their counterparts in Michigan, the Governor was seen as the most important player in state higher education policy-making, validating literature assertion two on the importance of the Governor. Additionally, the Governor’s staff, both Ed Ford, the GEPA, and Crit Luallen, his superior in the organization, were seen as playing very important roles in the process, validating literature assertion three relating to the key roles of Governor’s staff members in the policy-making.
There was a high degree of agreement among all participants about some of the specific policy challenges facing the state. There was also a high degree of consensus about increased expectations of higher education to meet those challenges. As suggested in literature assertion four, however, there was concern about the future and how to address continuing increases of expectations, in light of changes in personalities, fiscal conditions, and public attention. To a large extent, despite some of the unique characteristics of state policy, this point from the literature was borne out by Kentuckians perceptions.

There was little direct evidence among participants from Kentucky that supported the notion that state leaders and higher education leaders had differing perceptions of the policy-making process. To the contrary, there was consensus that there had been some major changes in that process as a result of the 1997 reform efforts, although there was also agreement that vestiges of the former approach still appeared at times, which pleased some participants and was a concern of others. The overall consensus on this point, contrary to the literature strand, may have been the result of the extended public discussion of goals and processes in 1997, which was itself an unusual factor. It may also be relevant that in the policy-making culture of the state, as was observed by many, political process understanding was a skill of high value in the selection of higher education executives in the state.

General findings from the site visit in Kentucky in contrast to the Michigan experience

There was a clear consensus among Kentucky participants on several issues. It was also interesting that there were some clear distinctions in the language used by participants. Kentuckians were clear in articulating the view that economic imperatives for the state and its citizens were the primary motivator of changes in state policy in recent years. Conversations in
Michigan did not contain either the urgent sense of a need for change, or the identification of or enthusiasm for state policy initiatives.

Kentucky participants spoke of specific policies or decisions related to reform most prominently in conversation in almost every instance. The study participants from Kentucky also generally used a shared language, unlike Michiganders in describing higher education. In Kentucky, the term postsecondary education was the most commonly used term, whereas in Michigan, higher education was almost exclusively the term of choice. To the extent that represents merely colloquial language as opposed to a real distinction based on the view of extending the secondary education rather than participating in a higher—or different—experience is hard to evaluate from afar. It seems likely, however, that this may be one difference based in part on state culture and expectations based the historically lower aspirations and achievement of students in Kentucky. It may also, in part, be a result of the public debate on postsecondary education reform in the late 1990s.

Compared to their colleagues in Michigan, Kentuckians viewed their state as having several important problems to address in higher education policy at the state level, including low aspiration, attendance, and completion by students. And, there was significant agreement on the way to talk about these problems and the rationale for tackling them—in economic terms. Michiganders, by contrast, generally seemed to feel there was not an immediate need for any significant structural or policy changes.

A general summary of the participants’ consensus perceptions of the process of higher education policy-making in Michigan and in Kentucky is shown in Table 2. The table provides a summary of the results of the study and additionally offers some available information on the researcher’s state of Iowa for further comparison in two specific aspects of the study topic, and to amplify further perceived state to state variations.
Table 2. Summary of participant responses on the higher education policy-making process in Michigan and Kentucky in selected dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant responses by category</th>
<th>Michigan</th>
<th>Kentucky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensus on current process</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor’s role in the process</td>
<td>Moderate on budget as legislators work directly with institutions on operations. Governor is more involved in capital appropriations.</td>
<td>High on policy (non-budget) as the current governance structure &amp; statewide policy priorities were gubernatorial initiatives. However, specifics of implementation are run through state coordinating board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low on policy (non-budget) in part due to constitutional status of some universities and in part due to lack of a statewide governance or coordinating structure with gubernatorial involvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat higher in specific emergent areas such as virtual university.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on who are the other key players</td>
<td>Yes, generally</td>
<td>Yes, generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear state goals for HE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Gov. staff &amp; GEPA</td>
<td>GEPA duties focus primarily on K-12. HE issues are a very small part of efforts except in specific areas such as virtual university. State Budget Director and some officials are also important in the process.</td>
<td>GEPA role is balanced somewhat between K-12 &amp; HE; at times HE is more prominent. Secretary to Executive Cabinet (Chief of Staff) and State Budget Directors are also key executive officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with current process</td>
<td>Relatively high</td>
<td>Relatively high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief state system is unique</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 1 concern clouding future of HE policy-making</td>
<td>Term limits and other turnover in state government</td>
<td>Fiscal and economic challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they would most like to keep</td>
<td>A structure without great state-level governance or coordination</td>
<td>Focus on citizens on statewide and policy-making HE goals from “reform” effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: HE=higher education; see Appendix D for a summary of Iowa’s higher education policy-making process.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The intended purpose of this study was to determine, in the views of participants in the selected states, how higher education policy-making is conducted, and specifically how state gubernatorial officials are involved and influential in that process. As was anticipated, given the exploratory, qualitative nature of these case studies, the detailed interview and discussion questions and topics used with participants at the different sites evolved over time. This was, in part, a result of researcher analysis of findings from earlier phases of the study, and in part due to the differences in the perceptions and desires of participants at different sites. The ultimate study objectives reflected in the research questions—related to an overall understanding of the state policy-making process for higher education and the involvement of state executive branch leaders in that process—were best served by such ongoing refinements and responsiveness to participant commentary.

The initial impetus for selection of the study topic was based on desire to produce information useful to state-level policy-makers working on higher education issues. Two states were selected as research sites based, in part, on the high degree of differences noted between them in terms of a range of economic, demographic, cultural, and educational dimensions. Stated another way, the two study states had differing structures for governance and policy-making, different levels of educational attainment and aspirations, differing personalities, culture, and partisanship among policy-makers, and different social and economic conditions. The states in the study were also different in many of these respects from the state where the researcher has been involved in policy-making, providing another perspective on the findings.
and conclusions. State participants were selected from both state government and higher education within each state. Key research questions revolved around the extent that clear distinctions or similarities emerged either between the participants in one of those two occupational groups, or between the broader group of participants in one state versus the other. This section of the dissertation provides, in addition to this commentary on purpose, commentary on researcher conclusions, limitations related to those conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Conclusions

Three types of conclusions are summarized in this section. The first section relates to conclusions relative to the broad organizational behavior constructs on which the theoretical framework of the study was based. The second comprises conclusions organized according to the key assertions from the literature review. In this section, a commentary is provided suggesting the degree to which the research appeared to support the literature related to a specific key assertion. Also summarized in this section is the degree to which the research appeared to answer key research and interview questions. Finally, this section concludes with a brief commentary directed specifically toward target audiences—higher education leaders, and state government officials—attempting to recast the conclusions that seem most relevant to each group.

Organizational behavior theoretical constructs

At the macro level, this study was based on organizational behavior literature, specifically open systems and contingency theories suggesting that organizations, in this case Governors and their staffs, exchange information and resources with their environment (i.e.,
their state system of higher education policy-making), and that success comes in part, based on
the “fit” between the organization and its actions and the environment. While there were not
specific research questions testing these theories with participants, the observations made
during this study clearly support the notion that each state environment for policy-making was
unique, that there were exchanges of many types of information and resources between the
governor’s office and the broader state policy-making environment and stakeholders, and that
Governors and their aides were, in part, adjudged by participants more successful partially on
the basis of their “fit” to state-specific environmental norms and role expectations. The
findings of this study appeared consistent with the selected theoretical constructs.

**Relevant key assertions identified in the literature review**

1. The field studies clearly confirmed the point that, in the eyes of state policy-making
   participants, state governments have a prominent, but individually unique way, of
   exercising authority in higher education policy-making. Participants had many shared
general views on this process within each state, one of which was that their system and
their state was unique in their processes. The assertions of Van Horn (1989, p. 209)
regarding the importance of the states role in policy-making as “important and
growing,” and the notion of “an inextricable relationship” between higher education
and the state policy asserted by Hines and Hartmark (1980, p. 12) were supported by
the findings of this study.

2. Participants in field studies agreed that the Governor has an important role to play in
   aspects of higher education policy-making, although the extent of that role and level of
   influence varies from site to site in several particulars. In general, the role of the
Governor was considered much more influential in Kentucky higher education policy-making than in Michigan. Based on this study, the views of researchers such as Vergari (1996, p. 110) who assert Governors play a “key role” in higher education policy-making were confirmed. Likewise, the outcomes of this study were consistent with the research of Ransome (1982, p. 100) and van Asendelft (1997, p. 9) who noted relevant state-to-state variations in the specific roles and influence played by the Governor in the policy-making process.

3. As the specific role of the Governor varies from state to state, the roles and influence of Governor’s staff varied perhaps to an even greater degree in terms of higher education policy-making. While the gubernatorial staff, in general, were considered of some importance in the process in both states, the role of the GEPA in higher education policy-making varied widely between the states, appeared to vary more than other aspects of the GEPA role might have (i.e., compared to a more consistent role in K-12 education in many states). One clearly common element emerged in the two study states relative to gubernatorial staff that being the view that the state’s executive branch budget director was a key staff player in the eyes of most participants. This study supported the findings of researchers such as Rosenthal (1981, p. 86), that state staff have a “substantial impact,” and of Gargan (2000, p. 116) and Hedge (1988, p. 93) that Governors, in particular rely on staff to assist them by providing the advice and relationship maintenance necessary in policy-making. Likewise, this study, particularly in the Kentucky case, tended to confirm the observations of researchers such as Serns (1997, p. 126) who described gubernatorial staff as “very influential and significant.” The participants in this study in either state case did not tend to agree, however, with
the assertions of Glenny (1972) in describing staff as the “main policy formulators in higher education” (p. 10). Instead, this study supported the findings of Garraway (1996) that staff have real, but variable influence on policy-making, depending on the circumstances of the situation under study.

4. There was a fair amount of consensus among participants in both states that there would be a continuing increase in pressures complicating the state government/higher education relationships in the future. Concern about increasing fiscal pressures, term limits or turnover in state officials were of concern relative to the impact on the future of higher education support and policy-making processes was expressed by participants to some degree at all sites. To this extent, participants felt they had relatively little confidence in describing what the future processes might look like, despite great agreement on how the system operated in the past and present within their own state. This study supports the research of Jones (2001, p. 1) and others that fiscal concerns and funding availability are considered an important factor in increasing tensions between state and higher education leaders, although a shared concern of both groups. The specific pressures for increased state control of higher education cited in the literature were not as prominent in the minds of Michigan participants as might have been expected from the commentary of MacLeod (1979, p. 5) and others, although observations such as by Garcia (1995, pp. 1-2), that higher education increasingly has to justify and defend their needs to the states, was supported by participants. “Increased complexity,” in governance relationships between the state and higher education and potential changes in the process for policy-making in the future as noted by Newman (1987, p. 5) and others tended to be defined most often in this study by reference to
turnover among state officials, making future policy-making processes and outcomes more difficult to predict.

5. Leaders within state government and higher education had remarkably congruent views in the two field study states on several aspects of higher education policy-making within their state, including identification of key players, and the notion that higher education was “less partisan” than many other issues. Not identical views, perhaps, from state to state, but more congruent within each state than one might have expected based on the literature, which suggested there would be more clear divergence in the views of educators and state officials on the policy-making process The views expressed by Holsenbeck (1980, p. 15) and Garraway (1996, p. 196), which suggested notable differences in the perceptions of relative influence in policy-making, were not confirmed by the results of this study. Whether or not this was largely a function of mature systems in the selected states where Governors and institutional leaders had worked together over a number of years is a question worthy of consideration. Certainly, turnover in state government executive branches since the time of the field study allows for such a question to be raised.

6. Qualitative interviews and observations illuminated many key factors about each site, and allowed for both some clear distinctions, as well as some key similarities, to emerge, further illuminating the study subject. This methodology allowed for a more holistic view of the multi-variate process under study than would have otherwise been possible.

7. Michigan and Kentucky presented diverse study subjects as anticipated in this research. While there were a number of in-state similarities in participant views, there were
clearly great differences from state to state. Many participants were vocal in stating that “what works here may not work anywhere else in terms of policy-making.”

**Degree of consensus expressed regarding key research and interview questions**

*Factors believed most important in higher education policy-making in each state*

It appeared that the Constitutional autonomy of leading higher education institutions and the lack of a formal statewide coordinating mechanism were the most important factors in how policy-making for higher education is conducted in Michigan, as voiced by participants. In fact, the specific phrase “constitutional autonomy” was frequently voiced and, at other times, participants spoke about the lack of a system or formal coordinating mechanism as a key fact to consider in reviewing Michigan policy-making for higher education. The clear message from participants was a degree of pride in past accomplishments and processes, and a notable lack of strong desire for major change in either their governance structures or policy-making processes, despite some concern that turnover in state government might lead in that direction.

The level of gubernatorial involvement in higher education policy-making in Michigan was somewhat limited, with the exception of certain budgetary allocation issues where executive and legislative branches both are involved with institutional officials, in the views of participants. One participant described a balance in authority between the executive, the legislature, and the institutions. There was a sense that, despite positive evaluation of the current GEPA personally, the only consistently key player in the process for higher education policy-making from the gubernatorial staff was the state budget director.

Kentuckians generally expressed the view that the design of revised coordination and governance structures, enhanced resources, formal and oft-articulated state-wide goals, and
ongoing gubernatorial prioritization were the key factors in state higher education policy-making. The frequent references to “HB 1”, or “the reform plan”, or the “5 key questions”, all related directly to the 1997 process change and outcomes delineation. Kentuckians were clear that these plans and expectations were shared on a statewide basis, and provided the most important perspectives on their policy-making processes for higher education. Kentuckians expressed concern about past levels of achievement, a shared sense of resolve in attempting to make positive change springing from the 1997 governance and policy-making changes. There was a clear consensus that change in higher education outcomes was essential for the state, and a shared way of expressing that need in terms of economic benefits and other quality of life improvements for the citizens of the state. In addition, despite concerns including fiscal challenges on the horizon, there was a fair degree of optimism that improvements would be obtained.

Kentucky participants had a clear consensus on the view of their policy-making process as one with a high level of gubernatorial involvement, initially in proposing and working to approve a structural change in governance, appointing a more powerful state Council, and working to fund specific budgetary initiatives. Many participants were explicit in describing the Governor as the most important player in the state on higher education issues. There was a consensus that several gubernatorial staff were important players in the higher education policy-making process at different times, including the GEPA.

Perceptions of higher education leaders and state officials

Another research question related to the degree of similarity (or distinction) between the perceptions of educators and state officials relative to the process of policy-making for
higher education within each study state. As discussed previously, this study did not reveal many distinctions between the views of state officials and higher education leaders in terms of their views on their state policy-making processes, influential participants, or the roles played by state executive branch leadership. There was also a high degree of consensus expressed as to the potential future process challenges (i.e., fiscal constraints and turnover in state officials). Although there may have been differential level of desire for specific modifications in future policies or processes, these were very muted in the discussions held with participants.

This degree of consensus within each state suggests each had a mature policy-making process, which might be described as one wherein the system is relatively stable and well-understood by participants. In each instance, the state Governor was in their second term in office, had staff in key education policy-making positions who had several years of experience, and the state also had a number of legislative and higher education leaders and staff who were experienced in working with one another in the current system. To use terminology more familiar in organizational behavior work, the level of role uncertainty for individuals within the policy-making process was low in each case, likely due, in part, to those circumstances. Arguably, a part of this stability or maturity in the process is derived from the formal powers and duties of state and higher education leaders, and would remain so until a formal change was made in constitutions, laws, regulations, governance structures. Another relevant source of such maturity and stability in a socially interactive process such as state policy-making, however, could be derived from the knowledge and relationships among the individuals within the institutions, and is subject to change when there is a turnover in key policy-making positions such as those positions held by study participants. In these two cases, both factors had been relatively stable for several years, which would suggest a higher degree of shared process
and influence perceptions might exist with state and higher education leaders than if either had been changed significantly prior to the study.

What similarities or differences were observed between the two study states?

The third research question related to the degree of similarity in perceptions of the policy-making process across the two study states. The participants in this study clearly felt their process and circumstances were unique from any other state. Additionally, they expressed a reasonable degree of satisfaction with the process as it currently existed, although there was some expression of concern about the sustainability of the existing process in the future due to fiscal challenges, and turnover in state government. As stated previously, these findings tended to confirm the importance of state-level activity relative to policy-making for higher education, as well as underscore the importance of state-level research. The fact that this study also noted two specific concerns about future policy-making shared by participants in two otherwise distinct states suggested the need to study those factors—fiscal constraints, and state government turnover—which might have broader applicability across other states as well.

This study also supported the belief of the importance of the Governor and gubernatorial staff in the policy-making process for higher education in both states. Nevertheless, state-to-state variations in the specific roles and influence exercised suggest state-specific study is warranted for an in-depth study of this topic.

It was striking that Michiganders were seemingly satisfied with the overall governance processes and student participation/performance, in their higher education system. There was no expression of an urgent need to make major change in either area. The only process concern expressed had to do with the uncertain future that was ahead based on term limits for state
officials, and the inevitable change in both the Governor’s office and legislative seats, that would result.

In Kentucky, there was a clear expression of support for the general direction of specific statewide improvement goals in terms of student participation and performance in higher education. There was much discussion of the impact of ‘governance reforms’ passed in the late 1990’s, and of other policy and budgetary initiatives. There was a clear expression of not only the specific achievement goals for higher education, but also the broader context of the economic imperative for the state. Success in higher education was almost always defined in economic terms for citizens and the state itself.

**Limitations**

The conclusions of the study should be viewed with caution based on the limitations in conducting the study. As stated at the outset, this qualitative case study used a point-in-time site-specific approach that was not intended to generate replicable nor generalizable results. In addition to the limitations, there were at least two other specific factors at work during this study that are worthy of specific mention.

**Environmental issues at the time of the site visits that may have impacted participant responses**

The Michigan site visit was conducted two weeks after World Trade Center destruction by terrorists; therefore, security issues were a major focus of much public attention during this time. Additionally, in Lansing, legislative conference committees were attempting to complete work on the state budget, although there appeared to be few expectations of major changes as a result, so there was not a great deal of activity or angst expressed about the negotiations either
by participants nor the public during the visit. The general sense from participants, however, voiced specifically by some, was that discussion of “something else” was welcome, and there was no evidence that any participants had difficulty focusing on the topic of higher education policy-making during discussions on site.

In Kentucky, the Governor admitted publicly two days prior to site visit that he had lied about his personal relationship with a member of a state commission, who was claiming she was penalized professionally for breaking off the relationship. The scandal was the predominant topic of conversation during breaks between sessions at the Trustees Conference, held during the first two days of the site visit, and was a newspaper headline each day during the visit. While this topic was brought up in one form or another by most participants, it did not appear to impact the specific research question responses—albeit that it may have tended to make uncertainty about future state direction more topical to some. Inasmuch as the Governor was already planning to leave his post at the end of the current term, however, this was more of an intensified concern rather than a totally new thought injected into the discussion.

There had earlier in the year been a falling out between the Governor and head of the CPE, which resulted in his departure from office. There was a search committee actively working on selecting a replacement, and an interim director in place during the site visit, which was the other topic of expressed concern during the week of the site visit, as the permanent replacement for that post had not yet been selected. Nevertheless, there was no expression from participants that the outcome of that process, while important, would lead to significant change from the policy processes or desired outcomes already identified.
Participant response/interaction during site visits

Michigan participants seemed more open, in general, and more willing to focus on the broader process issues raised by the researcher. To the extent there was any expression of hesitation by participants, it came related to the partisan background of the researcher. That was not the case very often, however, and seemed to be something that, upon discussion, was resolved. Of course, since there was general satisfaction with “the way we’ve done things in Michigan,” there were not many other pressing topics raised by participants.

In Kentucky, some participants seemed much more reticent and less willing to be audiotaped or have comments directly attributed to them. There could be a number of reasons for this, although it may be as simple as what one participant described as “our distrust of outsiders.” It is possible, however, that another reason is the smaller and more intimate setting, where most participants probably interact fairly often, know one another reasonably well, and where more centralized accountability and direction is the norm. Therefore, comments at times seemed less freely offered. An additional distinction was the fact that it was more difficult to focus participants on process issues in the state. There was clearly a shared view that reform and the future substance of reform was their concern, and most of their comments kept returning to that topic, in one way or another. That was a positive in illustrating the point that there was a shared statewide set of concerns, but less so in terms of some of the broader research questions.

Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the study, several recommendations are made for practice and further research.
Recommendations for practitioners of higher education policy-making in the states

For Educators, the study findings indicate Governors clearly have an important and influential role in policy-making in each state, although the specific ways the Governors exert influence vary from state to state and administration to administration. A strategy of participation in the process that excludes or marginalized them and their key staff is illogical. In terms of the “face time” key staff have with these policy makers, as well as in some cases specific topical responsibilities, these staff can also be influential players in the process. Not the least, aspects of this staff participation are in terms of providing information and shaping policy with the Governor. There appear to be more relevance to state specific culture and norms in the process of higher education policy-making than some in the academy, which is often more national or international in perspective, might expect. Additionally, as much as higher educators might wish this to be an enduring and predictable process, ongoing changes in state government leaders and staff and in fiscal circumstances mean that the process is constantly reinvented and needs constant attention, despite the fact that the parameters for state-specific processes and expectations may not change as quickly.

To the Governors and staff, Higher Education policy represents an area of responsibility in which there is widely divergent involvement among your peers. For state governments, however, it appears to be an area of continually increasing importance, and is likely to be one into the future, as imperatives of the “new economy” and fiscal pressures will increasingly likely draw you into these areas more directly than in the past. Clearly, there are many individual distinctions in process from one state to another and one administration within a state to another. To be successful in this area of policy-making will seemingly require a good understanding of not only the desires of the state citizens and knowledge of the process, but
also working relationships with the state higher education partners in the process. There are many divergent roles to play, and influences to exercise in the policy-making process for higher education, dependent on the specific site and circumstances. Finding a right “fit” for the circumstances in which one works is more likely to be an important factor in the ability to successfully move policy in the direction desired.

**Recommendations for further study**

Based on findings and conclusions of this study, as well as the stated limitations, a number of areas seem appropriate for further research recommendations. Based on the literature review key assertions, at least one notion was not fully supported by the findings of this study, and could be a subject for further study in different sites and by different methods. That was the notion of different perceptions of the process by higher education leaders and state policy-makers.

While there was some degree of distinction between state officials and educators on the desirability of certain processes, and certain substantive policies, no major differences emerged in conversations between participants in the two groups within either state on the question of how the process actually worked currently within their state. Further study might be of value to determine if such distinctions appear at other sites and times in ways more consistent with the suggestions in the literature and, if so, under what conditions did such distinctions appear. There is a potential for differences in the process perceptions of state officials as opposed to higher education leaders.

As stated throughout the study, practitioners seeking greater understanding of the policy-making process in a particular state could conduct a study of this type at any point in
time to try to determine the relevant processes in the eyes of key participants, and the level of
shared understanding of that process. In these study states, widely divergent as they are in
many respects, there was a high degree of congruency amongst policy-making participants on
how their state process works. That does not mean that similar processes, nor similar
congruence of process views, exist elsewhere. In fact, due to turnover in personnel and other
environmental changes, there is no certainty that similar results would emerge today from the
states studied in 2001 and 2002. This suggests a whole range of potential future studies.

Final Commentary

A single detailed manual for state government officials or higher education leaders for
use in state policy-making does not exist. Given the different policy-making environments in
each and the expected level of dynamic change in circumstances involved, it would be hard to
conceptualize how to construct a useful one. Given the nature of fifty different state
laboratories, each with a different set of characteristics, processes, personalities, and culture,
and each with great latitude in the U.S. system for providing leadership in this area, there will
likely never be a single, useful manual created. And, even if it was possible to do so, it would
likely be out of date by the time it was prepared, based on the point in time circumstances and
personalities constantly changing in the state processes. However, the outcomes of the
state policy-making processes for higher education are clearly of increasing importance, both
socially and economically for the citizens these officials serve. Therefore, the relationships,
processes, and perceptions these leaders generate in each state are also of increasing
importance. These state-level processes are, as a result, worthy of continued attention and
consideration by both researchers and practitioners.
Thank you for assisting me in this research. This is an initial “pilot” survey which is designed to collect some initial preliminary information that will help focus and direct the multi-part qualitative research on the roles and perceived influence of GEPAs that will be conducted in the next 12-24 months. Your assistance with this research is both critical to the study and greatly appreciated.

**Demographic/professional background**

Gender: 

1. Age: 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70
2. Racial/ethnic: 
3. Educational attainment:
   - High School
   - AA or equivalent
   - BA or equivalent
   - MA or equivalent
   - Professional degree (MD, JD, etc.)
   - Doctorate
4. Year in service as GEPA: 
5. Previous professional positions (make multiple selections if appropriate):
   - Educational institution administration
   - State of local government
   - Political/campaign
   - Private business
   - Other
6. How would you describe any specific areas of expertise in education policy you brought with you to this position (i.e., special education, community college vocational training programs, student aid, etc.): 
7. Years you and Governor knew each other prior to your appointment: 
8. What do you believe was (were) the primary reason(s) for your selection for this position by the Governor? 
9. Did you actively seek appointment to this position, or were you invited to consider accepting the position? 

**Elements of your duties**

10. Do you have a formal job description, and if so, is it up to date? 
11. Please describe the particular elements of your assignment in terms of specific education issues and sectors of education in your “portfolio” of assignments (i.e., K-12 school finance, appropriations for universities, pre-kindergarten standards, regulation of nonpublic institutions, etc.) IF IT IS EASIER, feel free to simply state any areas within education policy NOT in your set of assignments. 
12. How many others within the Governor’s office, if any, also are assigned to education policy? 
13. In 2-3 sentences or so, how would you describe your role as the GEPA?

________________________________________________________________________

14. One author who has studied staff roles in state policy-making, Elizabeth Garraway, has suggested the following roles are performed by staff in the process. Would you please review the list, cross out any you think do not describe your role at all, and assign a ranking to the remainder, with “1” being the role you think best describes your role; “2” the second most relevant, etc.

ANALYST
PROVIDER OF INFORMATION
INTERPRETER
POLICY SHAPER
MEDIATOR
NEGOTIATOR

15. Please describe briefly recurrent activities that you engage in on the job which take significant time and would make up part of a “typical” week (for example, meet weekly with department director(s), chief of staff briefing, attend cabinet meeting, etc.)

________________________________________________________________________

16. Please estimate the percentage of your time and/or effort you devote to each of the following areas over the past 12 months:

Pre-kindergarten issues ___________  K-12 issues ___________
Postsecondary issues ___________

17. How many working hours are there in your typical week? __________

18. What amount of time in a typical week do you spend in direct communication with your Governor?

________________________________________________________________________

19. Scholars who have studied policy-making processes in government have suggested some activities that may be typical for many staff. Would you please review the following list, cross out any items that do not apply to your role, then rank the remaining items, with “1” being assigned to the item you think is most significant in terms of your specific responsibilities, “2” the next, etc.

Agency or interagency coordination/liaison
State policy development/planning
State budget development/planning
Legislative relations
Agency/board/commission appointments
Press relations/speechwriting
Event planning/advance/staffing Governor out of Capitol
Liaison to interest groups
Constituent casework/correspondence/contact
Federal liaison
Internal office administration/planning
Advising Governor/staffing in Capitol

20. Do you believe your role is significantly different than your predecessor? Why or why not?

________________________________________________________________________
21. Did you have a specific mentor or role model to whom you have looked for help in fulfilling your responsibilities, and if so, what was that individual’s background?

________________________________________________________________________

22. Please describe any particular responsibilities or roles you perform in your Governor’s office, related to education, or other responsibilities in policy or administrative areas, which you feel are especially significant OR unique to your circumstances, and which have not been addressed elsewhere in this survey

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Higher education specific issues

23. Using the list supplied below, please rank from 1-10 individuals or groups interested in higher education by whom you are most frequently contacted for information or counsel on higher education policy matters. (FEEL FREE TO SPECIFY “OTHER” IF APPROPRIATE.)

________________________________________________________________________

24. Using the same list, please rank from 1-10 those whom you believe make the best use of the information or counsel you provide to them regardless of how frequently they contact you.

________________________________________________________________________

25. Using the same list, please rank from 1-10 those whom you contact most frequently to obtain information or counsel on higher education policy matters.

________________________________________________________________________

26. Using the same list, please rank from 1-10 the sources of information or counsel on higher education policy most useful to you as GEPA.

________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Higher Education Agency</th>
<th>College/Univ. Administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constituents/Citizens</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Organization</td>
<td>Business Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Legislators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Staff</td>
<td>Faculty/Staff Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts in Field</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Officials</td>
<td>Fiscal/Audit Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>National/Regional H.E. Orgs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees/Board Members</td>
<td>Trusted Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Organizations</td>
<td>College/University Lobbyists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. Using the list on the previous page, rank from 1-10 the groups or individuals most influential in higher education policy-making in your state.

28. In thinking about your own influence in the higher education policy-making process in your state, are you at a level of influence similar to those “top ten” named above? ________________

29. Whether or not you put yourself in the “top ten”, rank yourself within the group of 20 in terms of your influence in the policy-making process. ________________

30. Do you believe those you characterized as most influential would share your view of your own level of influence in the process? ________________

31. Could you please briefly describe 1 or 2 specific higher education policy issues you have been directly involved in as GEPA which you believe resulted in the desired outcome(s) and in which you feel you performed your duties effectively?

32. Please describe briefly your role(s) in bringing about the outcome described.

33. Was your role described above “typical” or extraordinary?

34. Thinking specifically about the part of your responsibilities related to higher education policy, could you please rank the following roles in terms of their importance in successfully performing your duties?

   ANALYST PROVIDER OF INFORMATION INTERPRETER
   POLICY SHAPER MEDIATOR NEGOTIATOR

35. What are the most frequent types of questions or concerns of the Governor regarding higher education policy in your state to which you must respond?

36. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the most prominent, how would you estimate the prominence of specific higher education initiatives in the Governor’s 2001 program? ________________

37. Please characterize the higher education policy issues you feel you devote the most time and attention to:

38. If you were to rate your own influence or effectiveness in higher education policy-making within your state on a 1-10 scale, what number would you assign yourself?

39. In think about the sectors within postsecondary education, please indicate which two of the following are most challenging for you to work with in your role as GEPA.

   COMMUNITY COLLEGES PROPRIETARY VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
   PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES PRIVATE YEAR COLLEGES
40. Considering various aspects of the staff role you may perform related to higher education, in which 3 or r of the following do you feel are most effective or influential? Please rank them, with “1” being the one in which you believe you are most influential.

Agency or interagency coordination/liaison
State policy development/planning
State budget development/planning
Legislative relations
Agency/board/commission appointments
Press relations/speechwriting
Event planning/advance/staffing Governor out of Capitol
Liaison to interest groups
Constituent casework/correspondence/contact
Federal liaison
Internal office administration/planning
Advising Governor/staffing in Capitol

41. Are there any other relevant issues in terms of your work in higher education policy, or your effectiveness in that arena which you feel are important in understanding your position which have not been addressed elsewhere in this survey? If so, please describe:

42. Do you feel you made the right decision to accept the role of GEPA?

43. How is your role different—either in a positive way or a negative way—from your expectations?

44. What are the biggest barriers to your effectiveness or influence in the policy-making process, or stated another way, what are the biggest professional challenges you face as a GEPA?

45. What are the biggest personal challenges you face in serving in this position?

46. How long do you anticipate serving in this position?

47. Thinking about your anticipated career path, in what kind of career setting do you envision yourself when your tenure as GEPA ends?

EDUCATION INSTITUTION—ADMINISTRATION
EDUCATION—INSTRUCTION/ACADEMICS
INTEREST GROUP/FOUNDATION
STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCY
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
CAMPAIGN/POLITICS
PRIVATE BUSINESS
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
Thank you again for your assistance. If you have any further comments that would help describe your roles and influence in the policy-making process in your state, they are welcome...as are your general comments on the survey itself. Please use the space provide for those purposes.

Please sign here so that, if necessary, I can contact you to get clarification of responses to assure I have an accurate picture of your responses;

Name_________________________________________ Date__________________
Consent Form

Governor’s Education policy Advisors Study
Greg Nichols, Iowa State University

You are invited to participate in a research study on the roles and perceived influence of Governor’s Education Policy Advisors in the process of state higher education policy-making. The results of this qualitative research project will become the bases of a dissertation of be presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree from Iowa State university. Data collection for this qualitative research will begin in July 2000, and will likely continue in phases through the fall of 2001.

For the purposes of data collection, you will be asked to fill out a written questionnaire related to your specific background, knowledge, and attitudes on the subject of the study. You will also be asked to participate in one to three scheduled interview sessions. These interviews will be documented through researcher notes and, in some cases, on tape. You may be asked to allow the researcher to observe you while you are performing your professional duties. You may also be asked to provide any documents, such as job descriptions, memoranda, or other background information relevant to the topic of the study to which you have access.

The data you provide is confidential, and this confidentiality will be maintained through storage of data and notes in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Comments will not be directly attributed to you in any publicly accessible documents without your prior review. You will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on preliminary research results prior to publication.

There are no foreseeable risks to you as a participant in this project. Your participation will help provide a better insight to the state education policy-making process for both fellow GEPA as well as the broader public interested in making an impact on that process. Your participation is voluntary, and you may decline to participate at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study at a later time, data pertaining to your specific participation will be returned to you.

If, at any time, you have questions about this research or your participation, you may contact me by telephone at either 515-281-0130 or 515-224-2094, or via email at greg.nichols@igov.state.ia.us. You may also contact Dr. Larry Ebbers at Iowa State University by telephone at 515-294-7001 or email at lebbers@iastate.edu.

I consent to participate in the research study names and described above.

Name (printed) ________________________________ Date ________________

Participant Signature ________________________________

Researcher Signature ________________________________ Date ________________
How would you describe the higher education policy-making process in Michigan today and key elements of that process?

"Universities here are weird. Engler came in with a budget crisis but couldn't touch these guys despite public perception there was a lot there to cut." (Legislative participant)

"Higher education budget is not done based on policy, it's determined by how much is 'left over' and usually doesn't have much language attached." (Legislative participant)

"Higher education gets dollars depending on revenues--after mandates are fulfilled." (Legislative participant)

"In Michigan context, balance of power (in higher education policy-making) is a three-way relationship between the executive branch of state government, the legislative branch, and the higher education institutions. And the Michigan way is the right way to do things." (Higher Education administrator)

"In Michigan, local K-12 boards have only the power granted by legislature, in higher education it's the reverse except for funding." (Education association official)

"The mixing of authorizing legislation and appropriations is troublesome and leads to a lack of good policymaking." (Education association participant)

"Both College Presidents and state policymakers are somewhat isolated in Michigan, and find it hard to talk informally about ideas due to a lack of formal and informal relationships." (Executive branch official)

"Michigan has the perfect model of higher education policymaking." (Higher Education administrator)

"Could theoretically adapt budget process more directly to policy-making if separate authorization from appropriation...but no move currently to do that." (Higher Education administrator)

"There are huge differences in the level of integration of policy and budget from one administration to the next...at times even from a governor's first to second terms." (Higher Education administrator)

"Most of the policy (in higher education) that results in behavior change comes through the Boards of the institutions themselves." (Higher Education Administrator)

"We have a collection of public four-year institutions, not a system." (Higher Education Administrator)

"It is more accurate in some cases to say we 'blended' our work on certain priority initiatives (i.e. life sciences initiative with UM, MSU, Governor) as opposed to saying we 'coordinated.'" (Higher Education Administrator)

"There is no statewide higher education policy in Michigan--policy is made on an individual institution basis per Michigan Constitution Article 8, Sections 4 & 5." (Legislative participant)

"The Michigan way of doing things is not a system approach...it promotes quality and trust of citizens in the schools...which generates ongoing support. There is a unique sense of pride and ownership here which has existed through the terms of the last three governors." (Legislative participant)
Michigan higher education administrators have a high level of responsibility for their own decisions as a result of autonomy from the state...outsiders are often flabbergasted at what they find. From a personal point of view, if you have a clear aspiration for the institution the work can be ‘more fun than anyone should be allowed to ever have.” (Higher Education administrator)

"Most state policy is controlled through the appropriations process." (Legislative participant)

"Wide range of state support per student at various Michigan universities an example of how legislative leaders 'take care of their own' and everyone else gets fixed level of support. Tiered funding system per student (at 'big 3', at regionals, at special schools) finally blew up in the face of this system." (Higher Education administrator)

Who are the influential players in higher education policy-making in Michigan?

"Legislators, university Presidents and lobbyists, Governor and staff are the most important. GEPA is mid-range in influence, along with Presidents Council in terms of higher education." (Legislative participants)

"Budget office important in working with lobbyists, Presidents Council, and others on certain fiscal issues, rather than having those people work directly with Governor or his staff." (Legislative participants)

"The Governor—Engler specifically due to his knowledge and power (although he has less power in the higher education area than he'd like), university presidents due to constitutional autonomy, then legislators although their involvement often has a parochial flavor." (Legislative participants)

"In budget negotiations, it's the state budget director, key legislators, and university presidents and lobbyists." (Legislative participants)

"University presidents are the most powerful players if and when they 'get it together'." (Executive branch official)

"State universities and the Presidents Council has special niches...but independent colleges not particularly involved." (Executive branch officials)

"Strongest influence in higher education policy is the institutions themselves due to their size, prestige, alumni networks, and government relations staffing. After that comes the Presidents Council (especially when they have a united front on appropriations issues). After that comes the Governor—especially through the executive budget and capital outlay processes. Everyone else comes after that." (Education Association participant)

"The lobbyists run education in Michigan, even though Governor Engler more successful than most." (Executive branch officials)

"The most important players in higher education policymaking are the Governor, the State Budget Director, the legislative higher education appropriations chairs, and the 'Big 3' university presidents." (Higher Education Administrator)

"There is a limited circle of people truly involved in decision making on these issues—with no commission or formal policy network to pursue coordinated policy although there is interest by Governor and legislators to do so." (Higher Education Administrator)

"Local governing board members COULD BE important in policy-making processes..." (Education Association official)
"The Governor sets the tone, and for higher education, the state budget director is the key contact with the GEPA secondary. The chairs of the appropriations subcommittees in the legislature would be next. Then the legislature in general." (Higher Education Administrators)

"Policy is discussed, but not made, between Governor and legislative chairs of the higher education appropriations committees. The Presidents Council and Executive Director are also important actors in the process." (Legislative participant)

"Governor, State Budget Director, 1 legislator, university lobbyists on capital outlay projects." (Legislative participants)

"The role of the community college council is structurally weak, but not necessarily more so than the presidents council. They just haven’t played the same roles." (Executive branch officials)

"Community college association rarely takes position on Governor’s recommendations until bills come forth in legislative process…though their role is to interface with state government, and do meet with budget director while recommendations being prepared. Generally reserve contacts with executive branch to broad areas where we are called upon…not in details of capital budget negotiations, for instance." (Education Association official)

What are the specific roles of the Governor and his staff in higher education policy-making?

"Autonomy (from state constitution) makes the role of Governor and his staff less central in higher education policy than K-12, and they have more engagement therefore with K-12 people and on K-12 issues as a result." (Legislative participants)

"The Governor has a very small ‘stick’ in higher education, so he uses ‘carrots’ more often now due to several factors, and at times that works well." (Executive branch official)

"The Governor may become a singular voice in state higher education policy in Michigan in the future due to (the uncertain impact of) legislative term limits (removing currently key members from office)." (Higher Education Administrator)

"Department directors often the ‘front person’ but the GEPA sometimes makes public appearances as well.” (Executive branch official)

"Senate committee chairs have direct access to Governor due to longstanding personal relationships, so Governor’s staff often less relevant in their eyes." (Legislative participants)

"Most interaction with Governor and staff generally happens around infrastructure requests than any other budgetary matters.” (Legislative participants)

"Role of the Governor’s staff in policy-making is ‘traffic control’…inundated with information and need to sort, sift, determine flow and which bits need to get to the Governor." (Executive branch official)

"The Constitution limits the number of Governor appointees in state agencies, so constant contact and coordination is needed to avoid surprises and keep Governor initiatives moving.” (Executive branch official)

"Contacts between higher education leaders and state executive branch include formal meetings regarding issues relevant to Governor’s preparation for annual budget message, and frequent contacts with the state budget office by both the Presidents Council and individuals representing institutions.” (Higher Education administrator)
"Michigan's system presents an interesting question to Governors about their role in shaping and implementing higher education policy and how to optimize their objectives in this area." (Higher Education Administrator)

"Frequent, perhaps weekly contact with Governor's office is a goal for education advocates, but is at times difficult to maintain in part due to staff turnover." (Education Association official)

"Due, in part, to political conflict with local boards, and also to conflict with Governor at times, the role of state department of education has eroded over the years." (Executive branch official)

"Much of interface with state departments in the higher education and workforce area and the Governor revolves around development of issues for inclusion in his agenda and state of the state address." (Executive branch officials)

"The coordination function for higher education, to the extent it exists here, has largely been taken over by the legislative committees and state budget process." (Higher Education administrator)

"The state executive branch does call on the universities, from time to time, to help construct desired initiatives." (Higher Education administrator)

"Many individual relationships between the state and the institutions do exist--staff to staff and otherwise. The Presidents Council then is well advised to work on 'consensus' issues." (Higher Education administrator)

"We call them more than they call us (Governor's office), although that pattern may be different depending on the legislative majority party status and the need to negotiate." (Legislative participant)

"Communications from higher education to the executive branch are about framing policy and budget questions...mostly budget questions." (Higher Education administrator)

"Executive branch communications with higher education are often either 'intelligence gathering' or 'trial ballooning' in nature. The other type that happens at a particular point in the budget process after committee action is to seek consensus between legislature and executive branch on higher education budget priorities." (Higher Education administrators)

"Typical higher education contacts with the executive branch are with the GEPA on non-budget or regulatory issues, with the budget office on appropriations matters, and in some high-profile cases with the Governor or Chief of Staff." (Higher Education administrators)

"Higher education governmental relations staff probably spend 80% of their time on legislative or constituency work and only 20% on Governor or their staff. That may not reflect relative importance. In fact, the 'return on investment' of time with executive branch likely higher." (Higher Education administrators)

"Governor can be particularly helpful in working collaboratively in federal relations (i.e. Internet 2 and Cyclotron projects)." (Higher Education administrators)

"Many candidates for Governor may not understand that higher education is the 'horse that got us here' in economic terms--despite the fact that it won't determine electoral outcomes." (Higher Education administrators)
What are your views about Michigan’s GEPA and their role(s)?

"Build the boat, then let it float (focus involvement on front end of process of policy-making)." (Executive branch official)

"The Governor inevitably finds out what went bad in our work at cocktail receptions." (Executive branch official)

"As a legislative staffer I could be more entrepreneurial by shopping for interested sponsors, but the work was essentially reactive in nature, rather than the proactive potential as a GEPA." (Executive branch official)

"The biggest 'draw' in recruiting staff for the Governor is the promise of a chance to be a part of something historic." (Executive branch official)

"I attend some Board and Commission meetings on behalf of the Governor, and can often debate and make motions there which gives me a chance to 'telegraph' the Governor's wishes." (Executive branch official)

"There is an expectation of 'after 5:00 volunteer work' based on the Governor's role as political party leader. Help frame rhetoric regarding education, for example. Understanding of the politics helps during the daytime part of the job, too." (Executive branch official)

"Typical roles include preparing Governor briefing materials, staffing meetings, as well as attending events with him and for him." (Executive branch official)

"A good GEPA is one who is on the Governor's 'speed dial' based on the fact the Governor wants to communicate with them often." (Legislative participants)

"A good GEPA is one with interest in and familiarity with the issues in education, a flexible problem solver, a 2-way communicator, and one who is accessible and unassuming." (Legislative participants)

"Since Cabinet officials generally have more status, a familiarity with and interest in education by those individuals tends to have an inverse relationship to GEPA influence." (Legislative participants)

"Communication with Governor's staff and budget office mostly informational in nature." (Legislative participants)

"Governor in recent years has usurped legislative role in administrative rules." (Legislative participant)

"[We strive to] never surprise the GEPA." (Legislative participants)

"Scott spends more time with the Governor than I do...they have bonded well due to mutual issue interests, intellect, and philosophy. This makes him particularly effective, as does his legislative background." (Executive branch official)

"GEPA effectiveness traits include...knowledge, practicality, connections, humor, vision of the 'big picture', ability to deal with diverse interests, ability to build consensus." (Executive branch officials)

"No consistent relationship between higher education leaders and GEPA, in part due to 'revolving door' in the past in that position, and a lack of interest and/or background in some cases by GEPA relative to higher education." (Higher Education administrator)

"Personal observation of GEPAs nationally is that they are all over the map in terms of personality, character, and experience. It's up to the individual to demonstrate what they can do. The key question is: who writes the job description?" (Higher Education administrator)
"The most important success characteristic of GEPAs is whether or not they have demonstrated support from the Governor in serving as their eyes, ears, and at times their voice." (Higher Education administrator)

"A good GEPA has an appropriate background or experience, good character, open-ness, and access to the Governor." (Education Association official)

"The GEPA postsecondary role largely relates to knowledge of the budget recommendations, but little if any oversight. At times it extends to specific initiatives—such as creation of a department or agency. Generally, though, few higher education issues come to the GEPA in Michigan." (Executive branch official)

"The world is run by those who show up, and an effective GEPA does that, and also is bold enough to try to make a real difference." (Higher Education administrator)

"Generally, effective GEPAs are good listeners and solicit input, are accessible, and help state government address issues raised. Scott's effectiveness as GEPA, while largely revolving around K-12, seems to come from his clear communications skills and his ability to move on rather than obsess on a single issue." (Education Association official)

"The GEPA has a broad role with interface with different constituencies. To succeed, the GEPA needs an issues background, political savvy, be a known and trusted individual to others in the process, and to have a thick skin. Scott is effective at carrying the Governor's messages, and deals more with legislators than staff. He is charged with figuring out how to implement the Governor's vision, though in higher education, the budget office is often the initiator." (Legislative participant)

"From an agency perspective, criteria for GEPA success involve the roles of the individual as either "the hammer" or "laizefaire," or from the authority granted the GEPA as either "errand boy" or "broker." (Executive branch officials)

"A great deal of effort towards new Executive branch staff usually results in 'status quo' formal relationships." (Executive branch officials)

"Higher education background, specific Michigan experience and knowledge, ideas of their own, and good character are what I think are necessary for a GEPA to have." (Higher Education Administrator)

"Concern for higher education, a reasonable issues philosophy, and strength of personality are what I think a GEPA must have. They should be able to say to the Governor, '...but this is what I think we need to do.' Scott Jenkins comes closer to this than most." (Higher Education administrator)
How does the business of higher education policy-making best get transacted in Michigan today, and or in the future as you see it?

"Higher education is best served to come to the Governor with counsel on the big picture and 'how we can help' as opposed to the 'here's my problem' orientation of some new presidents." (Higher Education administrator)

"How can higher education better influence or impact on Governor? By presenting a clear message, which demonstrates an ability to meet both community needs and gubernatorial priorities, and by engaging the entire university community, not just the President. On the other side of the coin, the biggest challenge to that end is the scientist/academic who thinks policy makers are simply ignorant if they don't follow the 'obviously rational' advice offered." (Higher Education administrator)

"Others who approach the GEPA will do best when they: have done their homework on the issues, take a direct approach, and are respectful." (Legislative participant)

"Most people would be surprised, knowing how UM and MSU compete in athletics, just how much we work together elsewhere." (Higher Education administrator)

"There is a good deal of personality-based cooperation and coordination on a voluntary basis among higher education institutions, particularly at the Presidents and Provosts levels...and at times in governmental relations, both state and federal." (Higher Education administrator)

"Integration of broad state priorities, such as economic development, at higher education institutions is always a struggle, but is being done." (Higher Education administrator)

"Presidential involvement, as well as grassroots alumni efforts in state policy-making arena fairly rare in Michigan." (Higher Education administrator)

APPENDIX C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND SELECT PARTICIPANT RESPONSES – KENTUCKY SITE STUDY

What is your view of higher education and the importance of it to Kentucky?

"The prosperity of Kentucky depends on an educated citizenry." (Executive branch official)

"Higher education key to future for our people, and improved education means improvements in many other areas of life...the reform effort will allow Kentucky to compete in the modern economy with both improved research capacity and increased individual opportunity." (Executive branch official)

"For Kentucky to succeed we must raise educational expectations and be committed to getting them done." (theme of Executive branch trustees conference)

"(Improvements in) per capita income and jobs matter most (in sustaining support for state reforms in postsecondary education)...." (Executive branch official)

"I was attracted to Kentucky in part due to the opportunity created by state reforms to do something new for the long haul. The Governor and General Assembly were courageous in understanding that the future of the state’s economy was at stake." (Higher Education administrator)

"Kentucky is a polarized state politically, but not so much the case in higher education--we’re more desperate there for economic reasons." (Executive branch official)

"Low aspiration (for postsecondary education by students) in Kentucky makes higher education a political imperative." (Higher Education administrator)

"I hope the next Governor and their team understand that postsecondary education is the link to success in the new economy and improving the quality of life." (Education association official)

"The Governor understands you need a quality workforce, not just incentives, to attract and expand business." (Executive branch official)

"This Governor has been a champion for the quality of life that comes from economic growth." (Executive branch official)

"A chance to change Kentucky’s future is why I decided to take on this job (President of the University of Kentucky) instead of stay in the private sector. I spoke in my inaugural address about the need to address Kentucky uglies in order to reach ‘top 20 status’ for our university.” (Higher Education administrator)

"It’s fundamental as far as our ultimate goal...we expect a more successful economic life for our postsecondary graduates." (Legislative participant)
What is the state of the higher education policy-making process in Kentucky today?

"We are making progress, and board members will continue to be watchdogs to make sure spirit of HB 1 stays alive. We'll not sacrifice goals for political or budgetary reasons." (Executive branch official)

"We can document successes...that have resulted in progress. Funding has been increased for postsecondary education much greater than the rest of state programs in recent years. Reform is here to stay. We must work together to resolve differences and focus on long-term statewide goals and build legislative support." (Executive branch official)

"Kentucky reforms are widely recognized as the most significant change by a U.S. state in 25 years. HB 1 reflects a deliberate choice of decentralized institutional governance balanced with statewide policy leadership and strategic agenda." (Consultant at trustees conference)

“Kentucky’s reform in a fundamental shift, but one with shallow roots.” (Higher Education administrator)

"We had the good fortune (in the reform effort) to have a reform-minded Governor, a generally supportive legislature, a few good Presidents, and a strong economy." (Executive branch official)

"We had some pretty good ideas in 1997 and if we don't blow it, we'll get pretty close to where we want to be.” (Legislative participant)

"The job of Board members is to see the mail comes through no matter what the conditions--our job as faculty is to make sure the mail is worth it when it arrives and is opened." (Faculty presenter at trustees conference)

"Policy-making in Kentucky is built on relationships, which we cultivate daily." (Executive branch official)

"Michigan is a better place to be a President, due to deregulated environment and wealth, although some would say there is a need for less duplication. In Kentucky, the constituent base in weaker, but the CPE is important to garner support and resources, though campus-based 'end-runs' sill happen.” (Higher Education administrator)

"Process is always going to be somewhat political. In 1997, the Governor won the battle for reform because he first took up the issue of workers compensation reform, and business community appreciated that. It became easier for them to support him on postsecondary reform after that. Process may be different, but still political after reform." (Education Association official)

"I think many would concede that higher education is an overbuilt system, which may be a waste of some state money, but at least higher education offers a good return on investment compared to other state programs.” (Higher Education administrator)

"We need a balancing act. In the past higher education institutions were left alone too much compared to the state investment they received and the right to assert public purposes and set agendas. Kentucky can’t afford to have so many students flunk out or drop out. We need them all and simply can’t afford to let them go.” (Education Association official)

"Today the CPE is the group which submits a unified budget request to the state on behalf of all the institutions. Prior to reform, the CHE was only allowed to make recommendations, and was largely ignored in the budget process.” (Higher Education administrator)

"In this state, people do talk and collaborate.” (Legislative participant)
Who are the key players in higher education policy-making in this state?

"Crit Luallen is a leader with many years of public service experience. She is tireless, accessible, supportive, and charming." (Executive branch official)

"The Governor personally interacts several times per year with me, and there are regular and frequent contacts also with his Budget Officer and with Crit Luallen. CPE involvement in the process makes the President and Chairman of that group also key today, although their predecessors on CHE were not. There are also some powerful Board members and corporate leaders around the state who matter." (Higher Education administrator)

"It's important to note that in Kentucky we have a situation where a number of powerful legislators also work on our campuses, and they are influential." (Higher Education administrator)

"The players are very different now than 30-40 years ago. There is not a statewide press presence as prominent as the Courier-Journal used to be, for instance. Within government, though, there are some obvious players in higher education policy-making. On the reform effort, Ed Ford, the Governor's liaison to the consultants, was a major player. Jim Ramsey, now serving as both state budget director and acting President at the University of Louisville, is clearly another player." (Higher Education administrator)

"Gordon Davies, while serving as CPE president, was clearly key during the time he held the job." (Education association official)

"We cultivate key staff people...meet with Crit Luallen monthly, and with Ed Ford or Jim Ramsey, depending on the specific issue. We also meet with the Governor several times per year, and also with key legislators and key staff, such as the committee chairs. I more often deal with the President of CPE rather than the members or other staff." (Higher Education administrator)

"The most influential people are Crit Luallen, Jim Ramsey, and the state Finance Cabinet." (Higher Education administrator)

"Who is REALLY involved in state policy, depends on the subject, but often includes Crit Luallen and Jim Ramsey, Sue Moore at CPE, Steve Barger at CPE, Senator Casebier. The true policymakers in my mind also include the Presidents although they are not always a 'plus.' Clearly Norma Adams at CPE and other key members have a role. And, the Governor was a driving force in getting things rolling, with Ed Ford as the 'convener.' There are also key legislators working for the schools which can at times be useful. Institutional trustees have a role that is narrower than the statewide perspective most of the time." (Executive branch official)

"The CPE president and CFO, the institution Presidents, the CPE members, the Governor and his budget officer, the appropriations and statutory committee chairs in the legislature, and legislative leaders." (Executive branch official)

"Presidents are generally trusted by legislators, and legislators view higher education lobbyists as somewhat important in process, but more likely to seek out Presidents themselves." (Legislative participant)

"I think on some issues the Chamber of Commerce and affiliates play a role, the Prichard Commission and Advocates for Higher Education members make a difference in public ways. Within government, the CPE leadership, Ed Ford, and Commissioner Wilhoit make a difference in policy-making." (Legislative participant)
"Gary Cox has had influence and input into policy, as has Jim Ramsey, Crit Luallen, and Jack Conway and myself. Obviously, CPE leadership and members have an increasing role, as do members of the SCOPE committee including legislators." (Executive branch official)

"In 14 months there will be a new administration in state government...both Governor and legislative leaders. You in the room (CPE members and institutional trustees) are key to success and continuity in efforts to sustain and build on success in postsecondary education." (Executive branch official)

What are the role(s) and potential role(s) and influence of the Governor and his staff in higher education policy-making?

"The reform of postsecondary education has been the single most important act of this administration." (Executive branch official)

"Postsecondary reform and all that has followed couldn't have happened without an engaged Governor, despite the important roles of others." (Legislative participant)

"There have been few issues on an ongoing basis where Patton has been as directly involved as he was in 1997...beyond checking in periodically on reform. Still engaged, though, in implementation, which is in a different way." (Legislative participant)

"Prior to 1997, a number of things leading toward reform in postsecondary education failed, in part because the Governors then weren't directly engaged in the issues." (Education association official)

"The Governor, prior to 1972, was the head of the UK board, so the statewide or system perspective was shaped by that." (Education association official)

"The jury is still out on some of the process changes we've undertaken as a state at CPE...it seems likely the process will still be dominated in the future by the Governor and their staff." (Education association official)

"The Governor--and the candidates for Governor in the meantime--will still be a very key player in these issues." (Education association official)

"Frankly, the executive branch role wasn't all that big until Patton. He didn't campaign on higher education the first time, but did focus his Condition of the State address after his Inauguration on it. He got off to a good start on higher education because he hired good consultants, has a good Executive branch staff and good legislative cooperation too. Together, they came up with good packaging." (Higher Education administrator)

"The Governor's public role was crystallized the day he debated Wethington from the UK on public television. Patton's position was that we needed to make change, and newspaper headlines the next day read "Who is more powerful?" Ultimately, the public supported the Governor being more powerful than the UK leadership." (Higher Education administrator)

"People supported reform in 1997 because it wasn't the UK's plan." (Education association official)

"The Patton administration has been effective in policy-making for higher education because the Governor has made it the #1 issue and set the tone for the administration and agencies. Therefore, there is an attentive and responsive Cabinet, good coordination between appointees in higher education and the Governor's office. Additionally, the Governor has chosen quality people to appoint to responsible positions." (Higher Education administrator)

"The Governor's staff, as far as I'm concerned, has been the best and brightest. They represent a good mix of 'brainiacs and politicos' and serve him well." (Executive branch official)
"The Governor has an impressive vision...which makes the current personal situation with him so tragic." (Executive branch official)

"Before our swearing in as Board members, there was a two hour meeting with the Governor. He told us he’d not interfere after this, but would stick to the big vision. Changes in leadership at CPE may be an exception to that." (Executive branch official)

"The first and second Patton administrations were 'night and day' due probably to his Senate ambitions. Relationships with the legislature seriously deteriorated by early in his second term. And his firing of the CPE President came 'out of the blue' in the eyes of the legislature." (Legislative participant)

Our current Governor is personally invested in the improvements in postsecondary education and understands the link to the new economy and quality of life. It's uncertain as to the depth of the legislative commitment and the new governor is obviously just a question mark at this point." (Education association official)

"In postsecondary policy, the Governor is a hands-on guy. His experience as Lt. Governor and Secretary to the Cabinet for Economic Development convinced him of the importance of this. He thought he knew what changes were needed, got NCHEMS to validate it, and then we got to work. On a daily basis, I constantly interact with Crit Luallen and Jim Ramsey as well as the Governor. The Presidents come in once in a while, but not too often any more, save with McCall who has a different role. We work with CPE staff as needed, but our basic relationship with members is to nominate them, encourage them to support the President of CPE. Most of what we do is 'verbal' and face to face, rather than big memoranda. I believe any Governor should approach building his team by getting people with a blend of experience in legislative work, budgeting, and education policy...not just political allies. He should get the strongest possible Cabinet, even if some of them make political supporters unhappy. He should tell all his people that a really great week in really good times is 50-55 hours." (Executive branch official)

"The Governor's team needs to have a programmatic understanding, as well as understand legislative process. They must inspire trust, have respect for the roles of others in the process, and have a public service mentality." (Legislative participant)

"The personal commitment of the Governor and their staff is absolutely key." (Executive branch official)

"The leadership of the Governor and CPE is critical for Kentucky. I hope questions about the Governor based on current 'scandal' don't limit candidates willing to come to CPE." (Legislative participant)

"While the legislature is relevant in policy-making for postsecondary, the budget and 'bully pulpit' originate in the Governor's office." (Legislative participant)
How would you describe how higher education policy-making business gets transacted in this state, particularly the importance of the coordinating board?

"The role of the system board in policy-making here is unique in that it’s new and people have different levels of buy-in to the vision. The specific role, I think, is to make sure a skeleton of good policy exists for institutions to work with, as well as the state." (Executive branch official)

"Ideally, CPE is a filter, and only 10% of institutions time in lobbying is spent on individual efforts or projects, and 90% on shared strategic priorities." (Executive branch official)

"CPE is designed to have 80% of the responsibility for the public agenda and policy leadership in postsecondary education, with the Regents and Presidents at the institutions having 20%. In terms of institutional governance, however, the ratios are reversed with CPE having only 20% of the responsibility, and the institutional Regents and Presidents having 80%." (Consultant at trustees conference)

"The Council creates biennial budget recommendations in consultation with Presidents, not institutional boards. The role of the Institutional boards and Presidents that CPE has delegated to them is tuition." (Executive branch official)

"CPE interacts with executive branch of state government most directly with the 2 legislative liaisons for the Governor, then with liaisons from other agencies, then with Cabinet secretaries. With the Governor’s office we are asked to react to legislative ideas on budgets or capitals, meet regularly with Crit and with Jim on budget, provide responses to data requests, or to help provide information useful in public appearances. Direct participation by CPE in Cabinet meetings, except for special activities, considered too political." (Executive branch official)

"We don’t have a football team at CPE, so it’s hard to get much grassroots support." (Executive branch official)

"Conflicts that arise in Kentucky higher education are most often non-partisan and geographic in origin." (Executive branch official)

"Current situation with Governor wreaked havoc--not just on conference, but more importantly on CPE search. It’s a real problem." (Executive branch official)

"New faces not necessarily good in Kentucky...outsiders may not be trusted, and the political nature of the people in Kentucky won’t change." (Higher Education administrator)

"Institutions of postsecondary education are at times frustrated with CPE processes. Mission of the whole state is important, but we’re doing so much so well at some institutions, it’s hard to be held back.” (Higher Education administrator)

"Gordon Davies had to leave CPE on a 'turf' basis, not a partisan basis.” (Legislative participant)

"While originally he was right for the job, Gordon Davies didn't understand organizational behavior and appreciate the need to involve 250 people in decision making on important matters--like an orchestra conductor does. He didn’t understand that consensus building is not always a straight line progression and that there was a need to allow debate and discussion at various times." (Executive branch official)

"CPE is becoming more effective. Still an education job to do, however, with legislators and educational institutions to understand 'system' perspective. Still working to transition organizational cultures. There is quite a bit of informal communication going on outside of meetings on this among those involved. Everyday folks in the state, however, don’t think about this too much. However, since enrollments keep rising, it appears there must be some sense of opportunity being communicated. We
may have missed, however, real opportunities to develop a strong constituency or grassroots base for the future." (Executive branch official)

"CPE only gets into a few legislative bills each session directly...such as human cloning regulation or Bucks for Brains initiative. We are not, don’t desire to be, nor are likely to become a governing body." (Executive branch official)

"We’ve plenty of decisions for the new leader at CPE. We’ve lost a couple of candidates, based on the uncertainty surrounding the Governor at present." (Executive branch official)
What is the future of Kentucky higher education and higher education policy-making?

"We'll not rest until our dreams become reality." (Executive branch official)

"The new Governor will need to come up with a team that understands and appreciates the role for higher education to achieve long term economic growth in a knowledge based economy, understand that the whole--the system--is greater than the sum of the parts (isolated institutions), and be patient in terms of the time it will take to meet ambitious goals." (Executive branch official)

"I'm amazed at the depth of commitment to sustaining the agenda of reform, especially at the political level. More resources, however, will come only with focus on people, not institutions, and not the old way." (Consultant at trustees conference)

"We're at postsecondary crossroads per budget constraints." (Legislative participant)

"The vision is in place, but it's unclear who can drive it--and integrate it into the culture. Much will depend on the new state leadership in both branches of government and the commitment they and the staff they choose share commitment to higher education goals. The last few years have been easy, fiscally, but it will be harder now due to the times and leadership will also need a clear financial understanding and creativity." (Higher Education administrator)

"The challenge of advancing the agenda in a resource limited environment will also be a responsibility of CPE and the Presidents Council. It can be tough in Kentucky because perceptions vary outside the Cincinnati/Lexington/Louisville triangle about the importance of college education." (Higher Education administrator)

"Incentivizing the system is more important than the governance structure itself. Federal research agenda is one example of how behavior can be driven regardless of state structures." (Higher Education administrator)

"The new Governor will have to pick independent CPE members, and choose a staff than understands and appreciates CPE." (Education Association official)

"The future challenge is continued stability necessary to work as a system and change the 'corporate culture'." (Higher Education administrator)

"I'm fairly optimistic. There is general political support for postsecondary education, though the new Governor and legislators need to be on board. Other state needs have 'been patient', and the economic cycles will likely be a challenge. The universities need to have an 'educating' voice in the debate on well-documented need for tax restructuring." (Higher Education administrator)

"Things will probably rock along--the current Governor scandal a complication, but the Cabinet is still doing the work. New CPE director an issue, and their experience and knowledge will be key. New Governor on the horizon a concern. Enrollment pressures will keep building for many institutions, regardless. The new 'team' could profit from having a background, and campus experience, which some at CPE currently don't have." (Higher Education administrator)

"I'm optimistic about the future and believe we'll move forward, whether faster or slower, depending...We need a culture change toward a 'system-wide' attitude, and we've not had everything possible from the Executive branch to get that done. Our CPE members are not uniformly strong, but they are independent. As new members come on, they should have more 'gravitas' and of course we need an excellent President as well. We currently don't have Board members with the stature to 'out-stare' institution heads when necessary. I believe we need to really push value-added outcomes measures, despite the typical university response that the students they have are simply dumb." (Executive branch official)
“We must grapple with challenge of efficiency in delivery through multiple institutions, and the need for smooth coordination and transfer agreements. This will be a challenge due to resource concerns and enrollment increases, but overall I’m optimistic. The next Governor should work on reforming taxes, make everyone play by performance funding rules, minimize partisanship, and tie outcomes to inputs.” (Executive branch official)

"Looking ahead, there are so many forks in the road, it looks like a tree. The leadership of the Governor, much more than the legislators, will be key. I hope the new Governor looks at policy not politics and doesn’t try to make their mark by overturning all that has been done.” (Legislative participant)

"I’m cautiously optimistic that improvements have been made, particularly lasting ones at the community and technical colleges and research universities. The new Governor and CPE will have to wrestle with the regionals, as there is no clear consensus on mission creep and we are not resource rich.” (Education association official)

"I’m optimistic. When I was in the legislature, postsecondary education was always the first hit in tough times. Despite the more adversarial legislative process today, that didn’t happen. I think this is because of six years of institutionalizing change and our efforts to improve postsecondary education. That legislative support is an indicator of public support." (Executive branch official)

"The ’04 legislative session will tell the tale. We’ll have new leadership in both branches of state government, and I hope they will maintain the commitment to this area.” (Executive branch official)

"We’ve had some success. There are still challenges, such as making the scope committee work, dealing with the problems at KSU, and fully integrating the community and technical college systems. I think it’s a good sign that those constituents who are exposed to the postsecondary system are generally more satisfied. I’m hopeful we don’t end up with a more politicized system in the future.” (Legislative participant)
## APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY-MAKING PROCESS IN IOWA IN SELECTED DIMENSIONS

Table D1. Summary of the higher education policy-making process in Iowa in selected dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensus on current process</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor’s role in the process</td>
<td>Fairly high on budget matters as a clearinghouse for recommendations through departments and State Board of Regents for both operating &amp; capitals. Moderate on policy (non-budget) due in part to deference to departments &amp; Board of Regents to pursue changes consistent with the Governor’s direction in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on who are the other key players</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear state goals for HE</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Gov. staff &amp; GEPA</td>
<td>GEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duties encompass both K-12 &amp; HE, but more emphasis on K-12. Board of Regents, State Budget Director/Dept. of Management, and DE director are also key state executive officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with current process</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief state system is unique</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 1 concern clouding future of HE policy-making</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they would most like to keep</td>
<td>(untested)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: HE=higher education.
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