

THE MINDFUL CAMPUS: ORGANIZATONAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

A Dissertation  
by  
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## **Abstract**

### **THE MINDFUL CAMPUS: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE**

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Higher education exists to prepare students for their futures and create the next generation of leaders. A growing number of institutions are taking an innovative approach in this mission by focusing education on the whole student through the use of contemplative practices to engage students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing the world. Through contemplative education, used on what might be called a “mindful campus,” students are asked to become more aware of their inner states—physically, mentally, and emotionally—through practices such as journaling, meditation, yoga, deep listening, and others that focus on the present moment. Little has been documented in the literature about how such a campus is operated. Given the continuing need to understand how universities can better educate and prepare students, it stands to reason that a campus implementing contemplative education should be studied. It is reasonable to assume that operating a mindful campus might require a particular organizational structure and culture. However, this assumption was difficult to address since little research on the topic existed.

This case study of a campus known to incorporate contemplative practices inside and outside the classroom explored the primary research question: How is a mindful campus operated? This was

followed by two corollary research questions: What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus? and, What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus? Based on the data collected, I found that “Contemplative State University” is operated as a mindful campus in that it has a key group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators committed to engaging themselves and their students inside and outside of class with contemplative practices found on The Tree of Contemplative Practices from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. Their use of the Tree is supported by a loosely-coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system consisting of specific structural and cultural elements. The structural elements were financial, physical, and non-physical; and, the culture was characterized by an embodiment of the liberal arts, and community and connection. Additional aspects of culture that surfaced in my research to varying degrees using Tierney’s (2008) six-point cultural assessment framework were organizational mission, environment, socialization, information sharing, strategy, and leadership—with strategy being the least present.

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to individuals who are on, entering, or yet to know  
the contemplative path.

## **Acknowledgements**

This project holds a special place in my heart, as it combines two great loves: the personal inner journey and world of higher education. Both have brought me joy and opportunities for tremendous growth. I am honored to, in some way, enhance both for others through this scholarly endeavor.

My doctoral journey did not start with this project in mind. It developed from a casual comment made in class by Dr. Kelly Clark/Keefe about mindful campuses, which I had never heard of before. A simple remark can have a profound influence, if one pays attention. To even have returned to graduate school, however, began further back, in part by the examples set by Appalachian colleagues Dr. Lisa McNeal and Dr. Susan McCracken, who showed me that pursuing a doctorate at Appalachian is possible and can be life-changing. The doctoral faculty opened aspects of my mind and soul I didn't know, or had forgotten, existed. I am grateful to the University of North Carolina system for offering a tuition waiver program for employees, and for Appalachian's Graduate Student Association Senate Travel Grant, which supported me in presenting this research to an international audience.

My deep appreciation goes to members of Cohort 21 and my dissertation committee, Dr. Karen Caldwell, Dr. Roma Angel, and Dr. Chris Osmond, all of whom guided my scholarly growth. I am also grateful for the hospitality shown by individuals at my research site, whose care and concern for students' growth and well-being was so evident.

Above all, this accomplishment would not have been possible without the unfailing support and encouragement of my wife, Dr. Christina M. May, who inspired me to begin the doctoral process and loved me all the way through it.

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## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction to the Problem**

Higher education exists to prepare students for their futures and create the next generation of leaders. The U.S. Department of Education reported 20.5 million students were expected to enroll in colleges and universities in Fall 2016, an increase of 5.2 million since Fall 2000 (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). During the 2016-17 academic year, about 1.9 million bachelor's degrees are expected to be awarded (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). Yet, despite this increasing number of students seeking a college degree, a recent longitudinal study of students' cognitive skills found that more than 45 percent of U.S. college students fail to demonstrate significant improvement in learning during the first two years of college and can be described as "academically adrift" (p. 121) because, while they may graduate, they lack the skills most people in society assume degree-holders should have (Arum & Roksa, 2011). A combination of students' diminishing effort, faculty culture, and organizational decision-making have been blamed for this problem (Arum & Roksa, 2011). In addition, employers have indicated in several studies that they are not satisfied with new hires' general performance in critical thinking and communication skills and the ability to solve complex problems and work in a team (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Arum & Roksa, 2014; Mrig, 2013). Whether higher education can do more to prepare students for life after college remains a legitimate question (Roksa, Arum, & Cook, 2016).

To advance college students' levels of learning and their intellectual and practical skills, the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) champions the importance of a 21st century liberal education. Unlike the traditional liberal arts education that may have been viewed as non-vocational (AAC&U, n.d.a.), AAC&U's liberal education

addresses the whole person and includes high-impact educational practices such as service-learning, study abroad, undergraduate research, internships, learning communities, and collaborative projects that “hundreds of campuses” now use (AAC&U, n.d.b., para. 3). Another supportive component of this 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal education is the use of contemplative practices (Miller-Lane, 2012; Sullivan, 2014; Thurman, 2006). Educators should seriously consider implementing contemplative practices in teaching and learning because research shows they have a positive impact on students’ mental health and intellectual development (Miller-Lane, 2012). For example, contemplative practices have been shown to enhance cognitive and academic performance (Shapiro, Brown, & Astin, 2011); improve students’ leadership development, self-esteem, and ability to get along with people from other cultures (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011); and develop their attention span, emotional balance, empathy, and compassion (Bush, 2011a; Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Zajonc, 2013). In addition, workplace studies have shown that psychological flexibility—the ability to fully connect with the present moment and its related thoughts and feelings—was associated with better mental health and job performance in employees (Bond & Flaxman, 2006; Bond, Flaxman, & Bunce, 2008). Sullivan (2014) said contemplative practices help engage the whole student, while Thurman (2006) said they support “a genuinely humanistic education” (p. 1765).

A movement to better educate the whole student through the use of contemplative practices is influencing higher education, both in the United States and abroad. The movement is often referred to as contemplative education (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Haight, 2010; Holland, 2006; Mahani, 2012; P. F. Morgan, 2015; Naropa University, 2016). Contemplative education incorporates the use of mindfulness meditation, yoga, the

expressive arts, and similar practices to engage students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing themselves and the world around them (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2015a; Naropa University, 2016). Contemplative education is practiced both inside and outside the classroom (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Naropa University, 2016). Other terms have been used in association with contemplative education (Repetti, 2010). Contemplative pedagogy refers to the philosophies of education that drive this type of teaching and learning, inquiry, and construction of knowledge, while contemplative studies refers to the scholarly examination of traditions, epistemology, and effectiveness of particular practices (Repetti, 2010).

### **An Explanation of Contemplative Education**

In contemplative education, students are asked to become more aware of their inner states—physically, mentally, and emotionally (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Naropa University, 2016). Contemplative practices expand “the capacity for knowing through silence, looking inward, pondering deeply, beholding, witnessing the contents of our consciousness, and so on” (Bai, Scott, & Donald, 2009, p. 327). Their use challenges conventional education because this introspective form of self-inquiry can reconnect mind, body, and soul (Bai et al., 2009). This differs from listening to lectures or participating in experiential learning such as volunteering, service-learning, or internships (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Naropa University, 2016). The practices are introduced to students “not as a replacement for but as a complement to” other types of learning such as lectures, often called third-person learning (Bush, 2011a, p. 183). Barbezat and Bush (2014) called contemplative practices “powerful complements for instruction across the curriculum” (p. 19), and also noted, “Contemplative practices place the students at the center of their own learning, shifting the balance of power

in the classroom in a meaningful and engaged manner” (p. 8). In this sense, contemplative education embodies the constructivist understanding of education, which Hinchey (2010) described as a way of knowing that is dependent on human interpretation. Much of university-level instruction has been criticized for its positivist approach in which students acquire information by banking facts and viewpoints, which traps them in a disempowering culture (Alt, 2015); whereas in constructivist learning, all realities are valid and students can use a range of mental tools for exploring and knowing the world, including their emotions (Hinchey, 2010). Yet because contemplative education is so personal, it delves deeper than many constructivist learning models, which Tynjälä (1999) said rely on social interaction and collaboration in meaning making.

### **A Growing Presence**

The number of college and university leaders incorporating contemplative education in their teaching and co-curricular activities has been growing steadily in the past 20 years (The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2014). Zajonc (2013) said the proliferation of faculty engaging in contemplative pedagogy for their teaching demonstrates a “quiet pedagogical revolution” underway (p. 83). In the context of organizational structure, contemplative education has expanded beyond religious studies departments; it is being used by faculty across all disciplines and has grown under the leadership of presidents, faculty members, and academic departments (Simmer-Brown, 2009). “Nearly every area of higher and professional education from poetry to biology and from medicine to law is now being taught with contemplative exercises” (Zajonc, 2013, p. 84). As part of the so-called revolution, Zajonc (2013) further noted, “We are declaring that change, growth, and transformation of the human being are the hallmarks of genuine education” (p. 91). To foster

this shifting culture, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind) created an illustrated Tree of Contemplative Practices, identifying common practices used in education. Rooted in awareness and communion and connection, the tree depicts seven main branches (creative, activist, relational, stillness, generative, ritual/cyclical, and movement) from which specific contemplative forms such as meditation, labyrinth walking, deep listening, volunteering, journaling, and beholding emerge (CMind, 2015b).

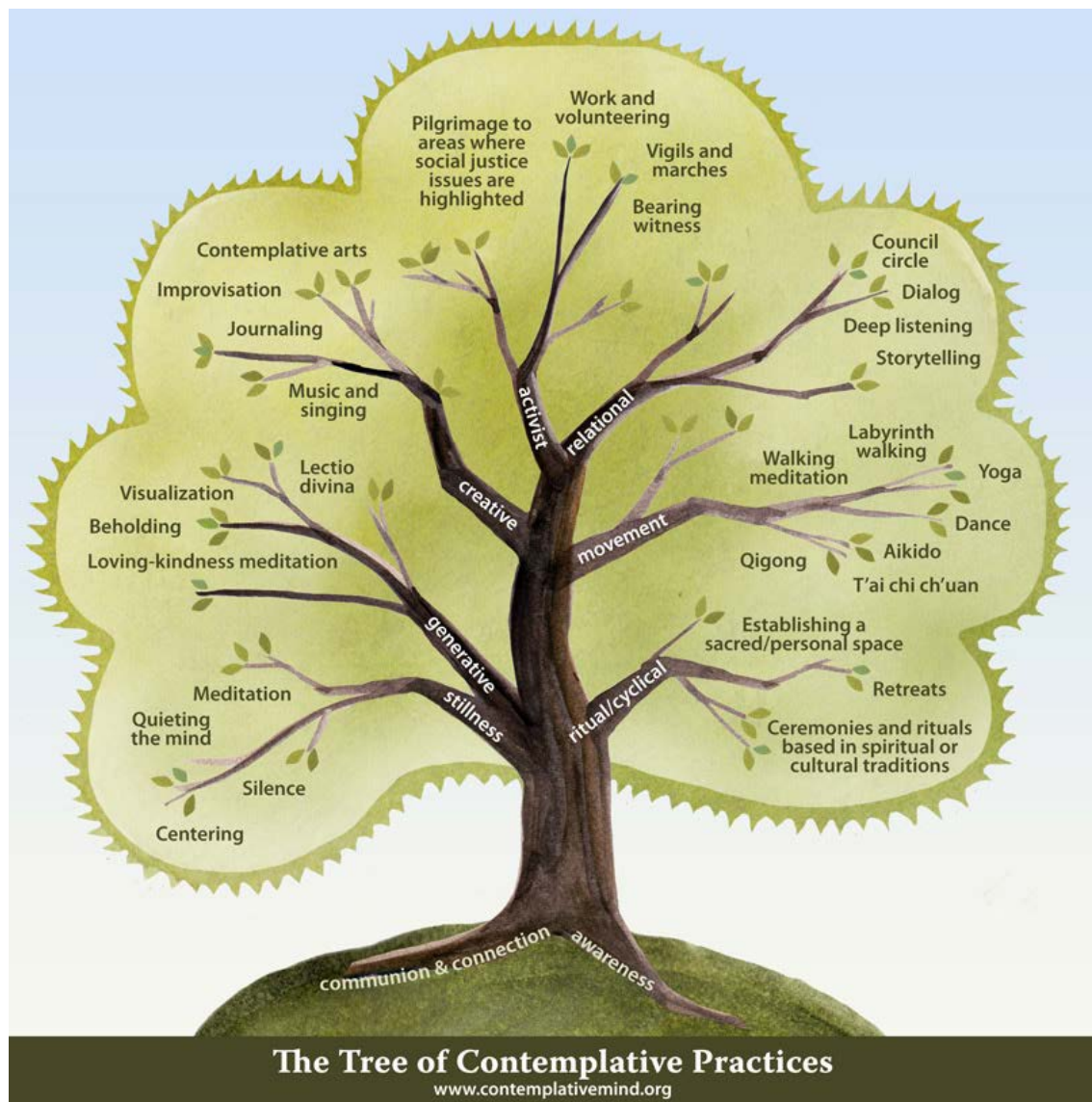


Figure 1. The Tree of Contemplative Practices. Copyright by The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society.



Contemplative education coincides with the growth of two other types of learning (Esbjörn-Hargens, Reams, & Gunnlaugson, 2010; P. F. Morgan, 2015): transformative learning and holistic (also called integrative or integral) education. Mezirow (1997) defined transformative learning as the changing of one's frame of reference by changing a point of view and habits of mind. Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010) said holistic education is in contrast to "mainstream, conventional, or traditional" forms of education that focus on acquiring knowledge, developing cognitive skills, and achieving success as an individual (p. 2). and "aims to integrate a wide variety of educational influences and perspectives" (p. 1).

### **Models for Its Use**

The origins of most contemplative practices are found in the world's spiritual traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Bush, 2011a; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Naropa University, 2016; Zajonc, 2013), as well as the Jewish, Islamic, Native American, and Native Australian traditions (Repetti, 2010). However, contemporary use of these practices is considered secular (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Bush, 2011a; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Naropa University, 2016; Zajonc, 2013). Models for how contemplative practices are incorporated into higher education organizations today include practice-specific courses; coursework of any discipline that weaves in the use of contemplative practices; and on-campus extracurricular activities (Wall, 2014). Some campuses have changed their organizational structure by consolidating various activities into newly created centers devoted to mindfulness and/or contemplative studies (Barlow, 2016; Cannon, 2012; West Chester University, n.d.), while others have developed special academic initiatives (Brown University, n.d.; Mary Washington University, 2016; Syracuse University,

2016; The Curators of the University of Missouri, 2016; West Chester University, n.d.), and conferences (University of North Carolina Asheville, 2015; University of Virginia, n.d.) around this topic. Others are developing networks to support contemplative pedagogy and practice, such as Appalachian State University's Still Point faculty/staff organization (Appalachian State University, 2016) and the Five Colleges of Western Massachusetts network (P. F. Morgan, 2015). Since the term "mindfulness" has been used to embrace a number of contemplative practices (Brazier, 2013; Hanley, Abell, Osborn, Roehrig, & Canto, 2016), I will for the sake of this paper refer to a campus whose leaders incorporate contemplative practices both inside and outside the classroom as "a mindful campus."

### **Problem Statement**

The purpose of my research was to develop a case study of a mindful campus to determine how one is operated and what structures and cultures are in place to support its use of contemplative education.

Given the continuing need to understand how universities can better educate and prepare students, it stands to reason that a campus implementing the growing phenomenon of contemplative education should be studied. It is reasonable to assume that operating a mindful campus might require a particular organizational structure and culture. However, this assumption is difficult to address since little research on the topic exists. Little has been documented in the literature about how a mindful campus is operated by its leaders, or what structures or cultures are in place to support it.

As stated earlier, a mindful campus is a college or university that incorporates the use of contemplative education both inside and outside the classroom. Contemplative education is an approach to learning in which students are asked to become more aware of their inner

states—physically, mentally, and emotionally—through the use of contemplative practices such as yoga, mindfulness, meditation, expressive arts, and others (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Naropa University, 2016; CMind, 2015b). These practices are being called for by scholars to cultivate greater meaning, purpose, and spirituality in students' lives so students can be prepared to find solutions to the world's complex problems (Astin et al., 2011; Awbrey, Dana, Miller, Robinson, Ryan, & Scotty, 2006; Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Burke & Hawkins, 2012; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2003; Grace, 2011; Jennings, 2013; Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Zajonc, 2013), and also to improve students' overall well-being, including the management of stress (American College Health Association, 2015; Greeson, Juberg, Maytan, James, & Rogers, 2014; Oman, Shapiro, Thoreson, Plante, & Flinders, 2008; Rogers & Maytan, 2012). There is compelling evidence that the majority of American college students feel overwhelmed by stress (American College Health Association, 2015), and they are looking for greater meaning and purpose in their lives but are not finding it in college (Astin et al., 2011).

There is a large body of research on the physical, emotional, and intellectual benefits of many of the contemplative practices found in CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices, as evidenced by Caldwell, Adams, Quin, and Greeson (2010), Greeson et al. (2014), Oman et al. (2008), Palmer and Rodger (2009), Sable (2014), Shapiro et al. (2011), and Walsh and Shapiro (2006). Based on this research, scholars have called for further study into how and where higher education organizations can make contemplative practices available to more students across campus (Oman et al., 2008; Shapiro et al., 2011) and why their use may be suppressed at some institutions (P. F. Morgan, 2015). The research contains copious descriptions regarding how faculty use contemplative education in their classrooms, as

evidenced by Barbezat and Bush (2014), Berila (2016), Dietert (2014), Garretson (2010), Huston (2010), Lichtmann (2010), Palmer and Zajonc (2010), Pierson (1998), Shippee, (2010), and Thomas (2011). And there is strong non-scholarly evidence that colleges and universities are creating structures and initiatives to support contemplative education both inside and outside of the classroom, as seen by Appalachian State University (2015), Barlow (2016), Brown University (n.d.), Cannon (2012), Elon University (2016), P. F. Morgan (2015), and The Curators of the University of Missouri (2016).

When considered together, the existing scientific, descriptive, and non-scholarly research indicated there are benefits from using contemplative practices, students have a want and need for these benefits, and educators are already using it. However, there was an obvious void in the scholarly literature of how contemplative education organizationally is offered and/or supported by institutional leaders. Since scholars have requested further research into how and where to expand the use of contemplative education on a college campus, as well as into why there is a perception that some campuses may be suppressing it, it was logical to conclude the necessity of a study of a college or university successfully operating as a mindful campus. Yet, no such study had been found. Therefore, I believed a case study of a mindful campus was necessary to determine how one is operated and what structures and cultures are in place to support its use of contemplative education. I perceived that such data would be the first start in further understanding the growing contemplative education phenomenon and how leaders can cultivate, maintain, or broadly implement this initiative on their campus. The implications of such a study would be that a fully described mindful campus might become a model that could influence or even be replicated on other campuses.

## **Research Questions**

In order to explore the concept of a mindful campus with respect to organization theory, the primary research question of my dissertation research was:

- How is a mindful campus operated?, which has two corollary research questions:
  - What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?
  - What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?

A intellectual goal of the research study was to expand what is known about organization theory by examining how it is being applied in a new setting—a mindful campus. A practical goal of the study was increased awareness among practitioners as to how other college and university leaders could support the use of contemplative practices on their campuses.

## **Methodology**

These research questions were explored using the interpretivist tradition of qualitative inquiry. More specifically, they were investigated using case study, a methodology that can deeply describe and analyze a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Case study investigates contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context and is the preferred methodology when asking “how” or “why” questions (Yin, 2003). The strategic value of case study lies in what can be learned from the case, whether it is a person, place, event, program, or set of procedures (Glesne, 2011).

## **Significance of the Issue**

The purpose of this qualitative, single-case study was to explore a mindful campus and its organizational structure and culture to understand how it is operated by educational leaders. The fact that there was little representation of this phenomenon in the literature, despite the recent prolific growth of contemplative education and evidence that campuses are making organizational changes to embrace it, means that this study of a mindful campus will be valuable to scholars and practitioners. The findings will contribute to what is known about contemplative education, raise awareness about how a mindful campus is structured and supported culturally, and provide a model that could influence or even be replicated on other campuses that want to become a mindful campus.

Organizationally, colleges and universities “must get out ahead of the noteworthy transformations occurring” in higher education in order to know what works and what options exist for success (Manning, 2013, p. xi). The growth of contemplative education has been described as “a quiet...revolution” (Zajonc, 2013, p. 83), so it is logical that institutions would want to know as much as they can about fostering this method of learning that has been shown to benefit students intellectually and emotionally (Oman et al., 2008; Shapiro et al., 2011; Sable, 2014). Therefore, a study of a college or university operating as a mindful campus will be useful in understanding how to make more broadly available the use of contemplative practices, which has been called for by researchers (Oman et al., 2008; Shapiro et al., 2011; P. F. Morgan, 2015).

There are three different kinds of goals for every study: personal, intellectual, and practical (Maxwell, 2013). A personal goal of this study was to meld my long-held interests in meditation and other contemplative practices with my career in higher education. An

intellectual goal was to add to what is known about a mindful campus and what structures and cultures are necessary to help this phenomenon thrive. A practical goal was to raise awareness among scholars and practitioners as to how to lead this type of campus, in terms of structure, culture, resources, management, and other organizational aspects. The choice to use a qualitative research approach was based on scholars' description of case study as being relevant to organization theory and to "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2003) and its appropriateness when seeking insight, discovery, and interpretation, particularly in regard to educational innovations (Merriam, 2009). This study can be a foundation on which additional studies about the mindful campus can be developed, such as exploring the possible differences between private and state-supported institutions or geographic location.

### **Definition of Terms**

Some terms in this dissertation may be unfamiliar to readers. Because the terms are central to the topic, they are defined as follows:

*Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE)* is an international, multidisciplinary academic association of educators, administrators, staff, students, researchers and other professionals committed to transforming higher education through the recovery and development of the contemplative dimensions of teaching, learning, and knowing. ACMHE is an initiative of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind) and publishes the *Journal of Contemplative Inquiry*.

*Contemplative education* refers to a method of engaging students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing the world by becoming more aware of their inner states—physically, mentally, and emotionally—through practices such as journaling, meditation, yoga, deep listening, and others that focus on the present moment.

*Contemplative pedagogy* refers to the philosophies of education that drive this type of teaching and learning, inquiry, and construction of knowledge.

*Contemplative studies* refers to the scholarly examination of traditions, epistemology, and effectiveness of particular practices.

*Education of the whole person* is a way of describing the development of a person's emotional and intellectual capabilities. It is also referred to as *integrated or integral education* or *holistic education*.

*Mindful campus* describes colleges and universities whose leaders use contemplative education inside and outside the classroom with the intention to engage students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing the world around them.

*Mindfulness* is the ability to pay attention to and accept the present moment without judgment. It is among the more commonly used practices on CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices and is often used to collectively describe contemplative practices in general.

*Organization theory* is a way to understand organizations and their processes. Its proponents assume that human organizations can be appreciated, understood, described, and explained for the purpose of knowing how an organization is structured and functions and to assist in managing it more effectively.

*The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind)* is the non-profit organization working to transform higher education by supporting and encouraging the use of contemplative/introspective practices and perspectives. Its goal is to create active learning and research environments that look deeply into experience and meaning in order to create a more just and compassionate society for all.



*The Tree of Contemplative Practices* is CMind's illustrated depiction of 30 common practices that are used in secular organizational and academic settings, such as yoga and mindfulness (CMind, 2015b).

*Transformative learning* is a form of education that changes of one's frame of reference by changing a point of view and habits of mind.

### **Organization of the Study**

This chapter has described the contemporary landscape of higher education and the need for a study on a mindful campus, as well as the significance and purpose of a mindful campus study and its methodology. Chapter 2 presents a literature review of organization theory and contemplative education and how they intersect. Chapter 3 further outlines the selected methodology of case study and details of how the dissertation research was conducted. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the case study, while Chapter 5 contextualizes the meanings of these findings in relation to the literature review and provides recommendations for future study on this topic.

## **CHAPTER 2. Literature Review**

### **Introduction to the Literature Review**

This literature review will begin with an explanation of the conceptual framework for this study. Theory is a way of explaining a construct or phenomenon (Suter, 2012), and it can guide research by providing a framework, guidelines, and priorities to the items being studied (Blau, 1994; Suter, 2012). The conceptual framework I selected for my dissertation is organization theory. I will demonstrate how organization theory was used as a theoretical orientation for examining the concept of a mindful campus. This demonstration includes a brief description of organization theory's foundations and origins, an explanation of its key principles and assumptions, a critique of its use in relation to educational inquiry, and an evaluation of implications as a framework for understanding and analyzing a mindful campus. Then, the literature review will explore historical and current literature related to contemplative education in colleges and universities, with an emphasis on the need to educate the whole student. I also will synthesize the major trends, findings, and debates in contemplative education's historical/contemporary scholarship; and critique the literature for strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Theory is a way of explaining constructs or phenomena (Suter, 2012). It can guide research, particularly in education, by providing a framework, guidelines, and priorities to the items being studied (Blau, 1994; Suter, 2012). Organization theory is a way to understand organizations and their processes (G. Morgan, 1980). It centers on developing ways of conceptualizing how an organization is structured and functions in order to gain insight in how to make it better and how to manage it more effectively (Bess & Dee, 2012; Kast &

Rosenzweig, 1972; Luhman & Cunliffe, 2013; Willmott, 1995). It can be used to address practical concerns such as how to achieve specified goals, as well as more abstract concerns such as “why people feel so estranged from themselves, their actions, and their surroundings” (Luhman & Cunliffe, 2013, p. x). Hatch (2013) described organization theory as an interdisciplinary way of thinking because it is influenced by studies within the sciences, humanities, and the arts. According to Manning (2013), organization theory has a long history in education, sociology, psychology, and business, among other disciplines.

### **Foundations and Origins**

Organization theory formed from a combination of management/administration theory and political-economic and sociology theories during the time of the industrial revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hatch, 2013). The theory later evolved into a more humanistic perspective (Perrow, 1973), with metaphors drawn from ecological systems and greater emphasis on delegation of authority and transformation into a postmodern, quantum paradigm perspective that focused on relationships and collaboration (Manning, 2013; Shelton & Darling, 2003; Wheatley, 2005, 2006; Zohar, 1997). Various models or metaphors of organizational functioning were created in the 1980s and 1990s to help offer more solid understandings about and viewpoints of organizations, upon which leadership decisions can be made (Bolman & Deal, 1997, 2014; Hatch, 2013; Manning, 2013; G. Morgan, 2006).

### **Key Principles and Assumptions**

In organization theory’s broadest form, contemporary organization theorists assume that human organizations can be appreciated, understood, described, and explained (Hatch, 2013). Organization theory comprises the how and why of organizations, which informs leadership and management (Bess & Dee, 2012). A key principle is that organization theory

can open one's mind to new viewpoints and possibilities whether the organization is a for-profit company, government, education institution, faith community, hospital, or other group (Hatch, 2013; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Perrow, 1973), as well as understand its activities and processes (Hatch, 2013). Organizational theorists also assume that organizations can be analyzed on a system level: either alone, as part of a super system, or in relation to sub systems (Hatch, 2013). Scott (1961) said the only meaningful way to study an organization is as a system because of its mutually dependent variables. In this regard, organization is closely tied to general systems theory (Hatch, 2013; Scott, 1961), which addresses how an organization's interconnecting elements can be coherently organized (Meadows, 2008). Whereas systems theory assumes that parts can be understood and interconnections can be seen so that questions about change and redesign can be addressed (Meadows, 2008), organization theory also assumes that appreciating, understanding, and describing an organization can be a foundation of effective management (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Scott, 1961) and provides assistance in decisions regarding the design or change of organizations (Hatch, 2013). Both theories look at organization as an integrated whole (Scott, 1961). For the sake of this study, I will continue referring to the concept of analyzing an organization as organization theory.

Another key principle of organization theory is that it is focused on organizations' macro topics, namely cultures, structures, technology, and environments (Hannah & Venkatachary, 2010). Power is another macro topic (Hatch, 2013). Structure can be both social and physical, and all six macro topics are inter-related (Hatch, 2013). For example, power, structure, or technology cannot operate alone without influence from environment, culture, or other macro topic and vice versa. In education, for example, the educational

climate can be “a manifestation of” environment and curriculum (Genn, 2001, p. 446). What holds the elements of system or organization together is relationships and interconnectedness (Meadows, 2008).

Bastedo (2012) offered three ways of looking at organization theory: (a) as a set of governing laws derived from empirical knowledge that identify patterns of behavior that can be generalized, (b) as a complex “surprise machine” (p. 336) that undermines conventional wisdom and offers paradoxes to what we think is an organized world and inspires a desire to understand instead of generalizing, and (c) as a rich narrative of social processes that are “demonstrably plausible and tested empirically” and can be generalized to similar cases (p. 336). All are valuable, and the narrative approach is especially valuable because it allows for both qualitative and quantitative research (Bastedo, 2012).

### **Colleges and Universities as Organizations**

Scholars have stated that colleges and universities are considered organizations (Bastedo, 2012; Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Bess & Dee, 2012; Birnbaum, 1988; Blau, 1994; Brown, 2000; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Manning, 2013; Sergiovanni, 1994). The structural frames and coordination of education administration—as well as its leadership and how it works—are found in organizational theory (Bess & Dee, 2012; Birnbaum, 1988; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Manning, 2013; Sergiovanni, 1994). Organization theory applies to colleges and universities, but higher education is complex (Bess & Dee, 2012; Brown, 2000; Manning, 2013), and many models of organization from the corporate world do not work and thus require their own models (Manning, 2013). Manning (2013) offered these reasons for why colleges and universities are complex: their various types and the different environments in which they function; multiple organizational structures that operate simultaneously within

the same institution; various professional identities of faculty, staff, and administrators; as well as various stakeholders including students, parents, alumni, and others. Because higher education is different from other institutions, Birnbaum (1988) said colleges and universities can be seen three ways: as organizations, that is “groups of people filling roles and working together”; as systems, “the dynamics through which the whole and its parts interact” (p. 1); and as inventions, which exist simply because people believe in higher education. These three viewpoints differ yet are complementary in that they can blend into “institutional cultures that exert profound influence on what people see, the interpretations they make, and how they behave” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 2).

Universities are constructed through a combination of culture and structure (Bess & Dee, 2012; Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013), two of the macro topics of organizations identified by Hannah and Venkatachary (2010) and Hatch (2013). Case studies or investigative studies related to higher education’s culture and structure have been conducted in relation to internationalization of a campus (Jiang & Carpenter, 2013), assessment (Guetterman & Mitchell, 2016), change strategies (Kezar & Eckel, 2002), and institutionalization of service-learning (Klentzin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiak, 2013). The following subsections will describe more about these two macro topics.

### **Culture.**

Culture is a primary determinant of organizational innovation (Ahmed, 1998) and is a key variable in success or failure of innovation (Ahmed, 1998; Detert, Schroeder, & Maureil, 2000). Culture is “... an interpretation that takes place on a daily basis among the members of a particular group” and is constantly changing and being reinterpreted (Tierney, 2008, p. 2). It is the foundation of the social order and rules people live by (Schein, 2010). Gabriel (2008) called culture the cement holding communities together by shared meanings and

values. Specific to higher education, Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) said the purpose of culture is to offer meaning and context to a group of people. All campuses have a culture (Birnbaum, 1988), and all members of the organization play a role in shaping it (Manning, 2013). Birnbaum (1988) further said a campus culture can be “strong or weak, consistent or inconsistent, and it can inhibit, as well as facilitate, institutional development and effectiveness” (p. 73). Also, culture can differentiate campuses, in that a campus comprised of liberal arts faculty and students will have a culture quite different from that of an engineering school (Birnbaum, 1988). Whatever the culture is, it influences what people do and how they think (Birnbaum, 1988).

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) identified six possible cultures within a college or university: collegial, which finds meaning in the disciplines represented by faculty; managerial, which finds meaning in organization, implementation, and evaluation of work toward specific goals; developmental, which finds meaning in creation of programs and activities furthering the personal and professional growth of all involved in the community; advocacy, which finds meaning in establishing equitable and egalitarian policy and procedures for distribution of resources; virtual, which finds meaning in the open, shared, and global perspective of education; and tangible, which finds meaning in the roots and spiritual grounding of a community and the value of predictability of face-to-face education. The authors offered a 12-statement Academic Cultures Inventory through which to gauge individuals’ thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about their institution based on these six culture types. Determining what type of culture a campus has can help leaders assess how to work with and use the culture’s strengths and resources to accomplish its goal (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008).

An organization can be assessed to pinpoint what culture it has at a particular time. Tierney (2008) offered a six-factor cultural assessment framework for higher education that consists of environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership. How an organization's participants communicate with each other is also important to understanding culture (Tierney, 2008). This framework and its corresponding assessment questions were developed from a case study of one institution's culture (Tierney, 2008) and since then have been applied to strategic enrollment management (Barnes & Bourke, 2014) and data-driven decision making (Kerrigan, 2014). Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) and Tierney (2008) said any organization may have a combination of cultures or perspectives and more than one theoretical type should be explored to fully describe an organization. In addition, Tierney (2008) noted the six-factor cultural assessment framework could use refining through additional research.

### **Structure.**

A structure is something that can support itself (Gabriel, 2008). Organizations can have structures that are formal, referring to how the official and various parts, divisions, or offices work together, or informal, referring to the networks, alliances, and other relationships that develop outside the formal structure (Gabriel, 2008). Organizations can have rigid structures or more flexible structures with soft boundaries and loosely defined roles (Gabriel, 2008). Without structure within organizations, people can become uncertain of their roles which can result in frustration and even conflict (Bolman & Deal, 1997). In effective organizations, people are clear on responsibilities and contributions—"When you have the right structure, one that people understand, organizations can achieve goals and individuals can see their role in the big picture" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 283). Structures



can be simplified by thinking of them as systems (Birnbaum, 1988). A system can be defined as a set of elements coherently organized and interconnected, and the structure of the system is the source of system behavior (Meadows, 2008).

Educational systems, in terms of structure, are loosely coupled systems; that is, units are attached but also retain a degree of separation (Weick, 1976). Birnbaum (1988) said that while loose coupling sometimes can be viewed as weak or inefficient with poor communication, it can also be considered beneficial in that the system's independent parts make it more sensitive to its environment. Loose coupling, therefore, becomes "an adaptive device" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 41). For example, a unit may be more aware of a new type of learner than other areas of campus and respond quickly to evolving needs of students—loose coupling makes it possible to "create and retrain ... novel (and incompatible) solutions to the new situation" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 40). Daly and Garrity (2013) said organizational structure in colleges and universities today is determined in part by how leaders perceive environmental factors, and that structure in turn influences individuals' behavior.

Regarding structure, Birnbaum (1988) proposed five models of how higher education is organized and managed: collegial, bureaucratic, political, cultural, and anarchy. To these, Manning (2013) added three more: new science, feminist, and spiritual. A campus's structure can take on a new meaning depending on which model one views the organization through (Manning, 2013). Specifically, Manning (2013) said the structure under collegial is considered "circular," while under bureaucratic it is considered "hierarchical; pyramid," under political "flat," under cultural "varied," under anarchy "varied," under new science "depends on the purpose," under feminist "roughly circular; web," and under spiritual "varied" (p. 4).

## **Critique of Organization Theory in Relation to Educational Inquiry**

In this subsection, I will critique organization theory in relation to educational inquiry. I will provide reasons for its use and evidence of its use over time through two studies, one from the late 1990s and one from 2012.

As noted earlier, scholars have said that colleges and universities are organizations (Bastedo, 2012; Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Bess & Dee, 2012; Birnbaum, 1988; Blau, 1994; Brown, 2000; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Manning, 2013; Sergiovanni, 1994) and higher education is considered more complex than other organizations (Bess & Dee, 2012; Brown, 2000; Manning, 2013). In addition, leaders of all types of higher education institutions today experience forces requiring them to adjust aspects of their programs, method of delivery, or even their missions (Baker & Baldwin, 2015). Organizational perspectives—also called metaphors or models of functioning—explain how organizations are structured and operate, and by understanding how colleges and universities work in this way, leaders can more easily identify what change is needed, how it can be managed, and why the institution’s players may be resistant to change (Manning, 2013).

Information made available through organization theorizing can be useful when a college or university wants or needs to reorganize for greater effectiveness. For example, there has been an increased importance on academic affairs and student affairs divisions working more collaboratively for greater effectiveness in fulfilling a college or university’s mission, which can go against the grain of long-established hierarchy and departmental silos (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Collaboration among parts can be critical for activities such as creating a research center, interdisciplinary teaching, partnerships among departments, campus-community partnerships, and other initiatives (Kezar & Lester, 2009). With public

concern over “unsatisfactory graduation rates, high tuition, lack of coherence between knowledge taught and job skills needed, excessive executive salaries, inadequate faculty oversight, and content taught that is irrelevant to global needs,” challenges facing higher education today may seem daunting, but using organization theory to shape colleges and universities “into new forms holds tremendous promise for the next era of U.S. higher education” (Manning, 2013, p. xi-xii).

Specific organization models have been developed for higher education. Birnbaum (1988) offered four primary models for viewing organizational functioning for higher education in this context: collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchy. Birnbaum (1988) also discussed the cultural perspective. To Birnbaum’s (1988) five models, Manning (2013) added three more—feminist, new science, and spirituality—to support what the author described as innovation and forward thinking during a time when colleges and universities are under greater scrutiny and criticism regarding rising tuition, increased administrative salaries, and return on investment in terms of graduates’ career preparedness and success. Both Birnbaum (1988) and G. Morgan (2006) said multiple models or metaphors should be integrated to fully analyze how an organization or system operates, since no one metaphor fully captures the essence of the organization. In addition, Manning (2013) said using a combination of old and new models in analyzing an organization and making leadership decisions is preferable.

The models or perspectives offered by Birnbaum (1988) are considered classic understandings of how colleges and universities are operated, while the last three are considered new ways of viewing colleges and universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s challenging times when “innovation, collaboration, and creativity” are especially needed (Manning, 2013,

p. 9). What additionally separates these eight perspectives for higher education is that half fall under the Newtonian paradigm of organization theory, while the rest fall under the theory's Quantum paradigm, which has developed in recent years (Manning, 2013). In writing specifically about educational administration, Fris and Lazaridou (2006) summarized the difference between the two paradigms as follows:

In the Newtonian approach, administrators concentrate on objects—humans, material, contacts—and are preoccupied with techniques for manipulating those objects to achieve goals and results. ... In contrast, in the quantum approach to organization, the administrator assumes that in complex systems prediction is impossible, the leader accepts indeterminacy and ambiguity... (and) relies on intuitive feel for situations, and trusts in the character, creativity, and abilities that she/he and others bring to the organization. (pp. 12-13.)

Despite their differences, the two paradigms complement one another and should both be used in evaluating educational organizations, according to Fris and Lazaridou (2006).

#### **Studies that use organizational theory.**

Applications of organization theory can be used to solve problems (Hatch 2013). What follows are summaries of two studies in which organizational theory was used to explore important issues in higher education. One study demonstrates the model supported by Hannah and Venkatachary (2010) and Hatch (2013) that depicts an organization's macro topics such as structures, environments, and power being interrelated and dependent on one another in the context of program development. The second demonstrates the use of metaphor to describe the culture of an educational institution in relation to a strategic planning process.

*A program study at community colleges.*

How do differences in environmental conditions and organization affect the development of occupational and technical education programs at community colleges? In a qualitative study of Arkansas community colleges, researchers addressed how to assist college administrators in developing career and technical education programs by looking at what environmental conditions and organizational factors influenced the program development process (Doyle, 2012). This study is an example of the model supported by Hannah and Venkatachary (2010) and Hatch (2013) that depicts the macro topics of cultures, structures, technology, environments, and power being interrelated and dependent on one another.

The researchers based the study on organizational theory's assumption that an institution is affected by both internal and external conditions (Doyle, 2012). Through interviews with 22 administrators, chairs, and faculty, the researchers explored the regulative factors, values and norms, and cultural-cognitive aspect that contributed to development of programs, which also was impacted by each school's geographic setting. This combination of elements in turn led to strategic responses by the organization, according to the authors. Regulative variables in order of importance were found to be the colleges' administration, state government, and federal government. The cited values and norms included teacher-centered learning and accreditation agencies. Instructional delivery was a unanimously mentioned cultural-cognitive aspect of program development. The researchers said their study contributed to the understanding of organization theory by showing that a primary factor in program development was a college's geographic setting, and that by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of that setting program developers could establish boundaries

through which to decide which programs to create. Recommendations for further research were to replicate the study in other states, include interviews with state-level administrators and regional economic development directors, and study geographically similar community colleges instead of trying to compare urban and rural schools (Doyle, 2012).

***Metaphor as indicator of change.***

Metaphor relates to language and can strongly communicate shared assumptions about an organization and direct its mode and behavior (Simsek, 1997). In a case study of the University of Minnesota, metaphors of organization theory were used to help determine congruency of perceptions of the university before and after a strategic planning process (Simsek, 1997). The researcher conducted 24 faculty interviews in which the faculty member was to select a metaphor, image, or analogy to describe the institution's size, complexity, and other traits. Previous studies by the author and others had revealed the value of metaphors in explaining perceptions of reality in organizational settings and using them as a catalyst for change (Simsek, 1997). The study's sample represented five departments in the university's four largest colleges. To the questions about the institution before the strategic planning process, 32 metaphors were produced by respondents, and more than one third of them were similar enough to create common metaphor of octopus, elephant, amoeba, and wildly growing garden/vegetable, which the researcher noted commonly translated to "Sturdy, big, very slow, departmentalized, multi-limbed, stumbling, dividing, decentralized, opportunist, unplanned, sloppy, large, ponderous, unruly" (Simsek, 1997, p. 294).

To questions regarding the institution after the strategic planning process, 24 images were produced by 21 faculty, with only three being similar enough to generate the common metaphor of a lion. The researcher noted this meant to the faculty "More (powerful,

aggressive, trimmed down, directed, focused, stabilized), faster, smaller, self sufficient, better hunter, bit ruthless, clever, pruned, coordinated, seeks, searches, scaled down” (Simsek, 1997, p. 298). The fact that the metaphors describing the University of Minnesota after the strategic planning process were not as strong or in consensus as before the process showed, according to the researcher, that the organization was amid change and that the outcomes supported earlier researchers’ speculation that the metaphorical image of “organized anarchies” or “multiversities” as noted by the before questions were typical characteristics of large universities of that time period (Simsek, 1997, p. 305).

### **Summary of Organization Theory**

These two studies mentioned above are examples of how organization theory has been applied to education research in the past. The purpose of this section has been to give readers a greater understanding of organization theory and an appreciation of its place in higher education research in the past and its possibilities for the future. The first half of this literature review has explored organization theory by briefly describing its foundation and origins, assumptions and key principles, and previous use in educational research. As scholars have described, organization theory is a way to understand organizations and their processes (G. Morgan, 1980), and its proponents assume that human organizations can be appreciated, understood, described, and explained (Hatch, 2013). Appreciation, understanding, and descriptions of an organization can be a foundation for effective management (Bess & Dee, 2012; Hatch, 2013; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Scott, 1961). Knowledge of organization theory can also enlighten decisions regarding the design or change of organizations (Hatch, 2013). Organizations consist of and operate within macro topics, and I have offered detailed information on two of them: culture and structure.

A significant education issue to which organization theory can be applied is the growing phenomenon of contemplative education, or the emergence of the mindful campus on which contemplative practices are being used inside and outside the classroom. The next portion of this literature review will introduce this topic more fully.

### **Review of Literature Related to Contemplative Education**

A growing phenomenon in American higher education is contemplative education (Bush, 2011b; CMind, 2014; Ergas, 2016; Simmer-Brown, 2009), and it deserves greater research in terms of administrative structural support and cultural barriers (Duerr et al., 2003). In fact, models of “contemplative educational institutions” are needed for contemplative education to move forward as a field (Bush, 2011b, p. 235). This second half of the literature review will explore the classic and contemporary research around this issue.

### **A Brief Review of Contemplative Education**

As described in Chapter 1, there is an international movement to better educate the whole student through the use of contemplative practices that is influencing higher education organizations in the United States. The movement is often referred to as contemplative education (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Haight, 2010; Holland, 2006; Mahani, 2012; P. F. Morgan, 2015; Naropa University, 2016). Contemplative education is the use of mindfulness meditation, yoga, the expressive arts, and similar practices to bring greater attention to the present moment and students’ inner worlds in that moment (CMind, 2015a). Contemplative education is practiced both inside and outside the classroom as a method of engaging students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing their inner states—physically, mentally, and emotionally—and the world around them (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Naropa University, 2016).



The number of college and university leaders incorporating contemplative education in their teaching and co-curricular activities has been growing steadily in the past 20 years (CMind, 2014a), in what could be called a “quiet pedagogical revolution” (Zajonc, 2013, p. 83) in all academic disciplines (Simmer-Brown, 2009). Dramatic growth has occurred especially since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in what can be called a “contemplative turn” in education (Ergas & Todd, 2016, p. 1). Models for the use of contemplative education include practice-specific courses; coursework of any discipline that weaves in the use of contemplative practices; and on-campus extracurricular activities (Wall, 2014), plus the creation of special centers (Barlow, 2016; Cannon, 2012), initiatives (Brown University, n.d.; The Curators of the University of Missouri, 2016), conferences (University of North Carolina Asheville, 2015; University of Virginia, n.d.), and networks (Appalachian State University, 2015; P. F. Morgan, 2015).

Why engage in these practices in an academic setting? Attention to the present moment in academia creates a space for learning—about subjects, ourselves, and one another (O’Reilly, 1998). It encourages a new and more imaginative form of inquiry that can complement critical thinking (Bush, 2011b). Also, contemplative education contributes to an integrative education that is greatly needed in today’s world for creating whole people with whole minds and hearts who can reduce the fragmentation often experienced in the self and in the world (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). Bush (2011b) said the wholeness that comes through contemplative education contrasts to the “dualistic alienation of body from mind, emotions from intellect, humans from nature, and art from sciences” (p. 233-234) that is often associated with the “modernist tradition” of education (p. 233). Contemplative education is part of a re-envisioning of higher education—one that incorporates what’s been learned about

new science of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in regards to the role of relationships and dynamic processes, in order to meet the immense responsibilities of colleges and universities in preparing students to address current economic, political, social, and environmental challenges (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). In developing the ability to pay attention, contemplative education can raise students' awareness of their own and others' suffering as they learn of obligation, compassion, and global justice (Kahane, 2009). And, it contributes to democratic citizenship by strengthening habits of mind critical to self-regulating thoughts and emotions (Hyde & LaPrad, 2015). Similarly, Noddings (2012) said that attention, particularly through listening to oneself and others, is centrally important in the ethic of care and a moral way of life. "A climate in which caring relations can flourish should be a goal for all teachers and educational policymakers" (Noddings, 2012, p. 777).

### **Synthesis of Major Trends, Findings, and Debates**

The term mindful campus describes colleges and universities whose leaders use contemplative education inside and outside the classroom with the intention to engage students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing the world around them as a way of contributing to the education of the whole person. Education is one of four sectors in which society experienced considerable growth in the use of contemplative practices between 2004 and 2010 and in which such practices have found "a normative place," the other sectors being medicine/science, the military, and technology (Duerr, 2011, p. 28). Despite the proliferation of educators giving attention to this phenomenon across the country, little is known about how such campuses operate—in particular the organizational structures and cultures that help contemplative education flourish. To explore this topic more deeply, this

section will synthesize the historical background of contemplative education and cover its major trends, findings, and debates.

### **Historical background.**

Contemporary use of contemplative practices is considered secular (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Bush, 2011a; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Naropa University, 2016; Zajonc, 2013), but the practices' origins are found in the world's spiritual traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Bush, 2011a; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Naropa, 2016; Zajonc, 2013), as well as the Jewish, Islamic, Native American, and Native Australian traditions (Repetti, 2010). Contemplative practices have long been associated with intellectual inquiry, dating back to the monastic schools that were the predecessors of modern, western universities (Bush, 2011b; Lucas, 1994) and India's early universities that grew from Buddhist monastic traditions (Scharfe, 2002). Therefore, contemplative education is not something "faddish," but rather "an essential part of who we are and how we learn" (P. F. Morgan, 2015, p. 198). In contemplative education, students are encouraged to engage directly in various techniques and then appraise their experience for meaning and significance (Bush, 2011a). The contemplative education movement was inspired by philosopher, psychologist, and education reformer John Dewey and philosopher, psychologist, and physician William James, both of whom called for first-person approaches to study in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Bush, 2011a).

According to P. F. Morgan (2015), contemplative education is in its third wave in the United States. The first wave occurred when Chinese immigrants introduced Buddhism to the United States in the late 1800s (P. F. Morgan, 2015), which also is when William James published *Principles of Psychology* in which he describes use of introspection (Bush, 2011a).

P. F. Morgan (2015) said the second wave of contemplative education began in the 1960s and 1970s with the founding of three educational institutions based on contemplative and/or spiritual traditions: California Institute of Integral Studies, Maharishi International University (now called Maharishi University of Management), and Naropa Institute (now called Naropa University). Also during this time, researchers began conducting scientific studies on meditation and finding many physical and mental health benefits, which led to a “rebranding” of meditation into a secular, stress management tool (Goldberg, 2010, p. 164). The third wave of contemplative education, according to P. F. Morgan (2015), began in 1995 with the founding of CMind, which wanted to explore whether contemplative practices could change people’s thinking and action toward a “more just, compassionate and reflective society” (CMind, 2015c, para. 3). CMind spawned the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) in 2008, which now has more than 840 members in 10 countries and is committed to transforming higher education “through the recovery and development of the contemplative dimensions of teaching, learning and knowing” (CMind, 2015c, para. 1). ACMHE’s membership doubled between 2013 and 2014 (CMind, 2014). Among its activities, CMind holds workshops and retreats, provides grants to support faculty/staff development, and publishes *The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry* (CMind, 2014). Other scholars (Astin et al., 2011; Bai et al., 2009; Bush, 2011a; Zajonc, 2013) also have noted CMind’s significant impact on contemplative education’s growth.

Contemplative education coincides with the growth of transformative learning (P. F. Morgan, 2015), which Mezirow (1997) defined as the changing of one’s frame of reference by changing a point of view and habits of mind. Beer et al. (2015) concurred that contemplative practices support transformative learning. Likewise, contemplative education

also coincides with the growth of holistic (also called integrative or integral) education, which Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010) said “aims to integrate a wide variety of educational influences and perspectives” (p. 1). Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010) said holistic/integrative/integral education is in contrast to “mainstream, conventional, or traditional” forms of education that focus on acquiring knowledge, developing cognitive skills, and achieving success as an individual (p. 2). In further defining this approach, Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010) said integrative education contains 10 characteristics: exploring multiple perspectives; including first-, second-, and third-person methodologies of teaching and learning; weaving together the domains of self, culture, and nature; combining critical thinking with experiential feeling; including the insights from constructive-developmental psychology; engaging regular personal practices of transformation; including multiple ways of knowing; recognizing various types of learners and teachers; engaging shadow work with teachers and learners; and honoring other approaches to learning. Many of these characteristics align with the purposes described for the use of contemplative education: bringing greater attention to students’ inner worlds (CMind, 2014) and engaging students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing the world around them (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Naropa University, 2016).

Dewey’s (1915, 1916) and James’ (as cited in Barbezat & Bush, 2014) calls 100 years ago for better education of the whole person remain today. Burke and Hawkins (2012) said the highest function of education is to develop an “integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole” (p. 39). Other contemporary scholars have said education of the whole person continues to be a necessity, but such an approach is not predominately practiced in our schools (Baker, 2014; Gardner, 1991, 2004; Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2001;

Lynch & Baker, 2005; Noddings, as cited in Nagy, 2012). A chief aspect of educating the whole person is developing emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), which can be strengthened through contemplative practices (Goleman, 2001).

### **Contemporary trends.**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century presents a new culture of learning, one in which education is characterized by personal experience through everyday activities rather than top-down, formal education (Thomas & Brown, 2011). It is becoming more important for students to know where to find information than to know a particular fact (Thomas & Brown, 2011). One place to find information is within. As shown below, education scholars who work with emerging adults—the 18- to 32-year-old age group that represents a distinct period between adolescence and adulthood “demographically, subjectively, and in terms of identity explorations” (Arnett, 2000, p. 469) —are calling for the use of contemplative practices in higher education for two primary reasons.

One reason is to cultivate greater meaning, purpose, and spirituality in students’ lives. Scholars have said college and university leaders need to reintegrate spirit and education so students can be prepared to find solutions to today’s complex problems (Astin et al., 2011; Awbrey et al., 2006; Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Burke & Hawkins, 2012; Chickering et al., 2006; Duerr et al., 2003; Grace, 2011; Jennings, 2013; Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Zajonc, 2013). Their call comes at the same time college students have indicated a strong desire for deeper meaning in their lives and skills to cultivate their inner selves, as noted by a nationwide, longitudinal survey of college students (Astin et al., 2011). The study also found that half the students reported that their professors fail to encourage discussion of spirituality or the purpose of life (Astin et al., 2011). One of the most powerful tools for

reintegrating spirit and education is contemplative education—and while few institutions use it, more should (Astin et al., 2011).

A second reason is to improve students' overall well-being, including the management of stress. In spring 2015, 90% of female college students nationwide and 75% of male college students nationwide, an average of 85%, reported feeling overwhelmed in the past 12 months, with anxiety, sleep difficulties, and stress being the top factors affecting individual academic performance (American College Health Association, 2015). Learning to manage stress and distress is an important developmental challenge for college students; therefore, methods to address stress “is consistent with influential college health promotion paradigms” (Oman et al., 2008, p. 569-570). One tool for helping students manage stress and enhance their lives is mindfulness (Rogers & Maytan, 2012, p. xiii), which is among the contemplative practices on CMind’s Tree of Contemplative Practices. Mindfulness is the ability to pay attention to the present moment without judgment and live “in harmony with oneself” while becoming more in touch with the world (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 3). Mindfulness interventions were associated with decreased symptoms of anxiety, and university administrators are encouraged to make such programs widely available to students (Regehr, Glancy & Pitts, 2013). Momentum is building for colleges and universities to collaborate on developing, implementing, and evaluating mindfulness-based approaches to addressing student resilience, and their best work comes from partnership among academic and student affairs units (Block-Lerner & Cardaciotto, 2016).

### **Research findings.**

The following paragraphs will summarize key scientific findings related to the benefits of contemplative education, as well as some organizational comparison of

contemplative education with another other form of transformative learning and its relation to structure and culture.

*Contemplative education.*

There is solid quantitative evidence that meditation and other forms of contemplative practice benefit students. Walsh and Shapiro (2006) discovered benefits of meditative disciplines and other contemplative practices to include enhanced attention, lucidity, sense withdrawal, thought and cognition, emotional intelligence, equanimity, motivation, moral maturity, and voluntary control of the autonomic nervous system. In a meta-analysis of 40 years of research, Shapiro et al. (2011) found meditation/mindfulness has the potential to enhance students' cognitive and academic performance, management of academic-related stress, and the development of the whole person—which the authors acknowledged are aspects of higher education's traditional goals. Also, Sable (2014) found through a mixed-methods study that contemplative education supports the underlying dispositions for independent critical thinking among undergraduates. In an analysis of student work and feedback, Bach and Alexander (2015) found that contemplative reading, reflecting writing, and deep listening in pairs led to greater meaning-making, academic motivation, and wholeheartedness. Related to wellness, contemplative practices have been found to relieve stress, anxiety, and sleep difficulties (Caldwell et al., 2010; Greeson et al., 2014), and support healthy coping mechanisms (Palmer & Rodger, 2009). All these authors recommended broader use of these practices in education as a result of their findings.

Mindfulness activities have also been shown to benefit particular populations of college students. Quantitative studies revealed improvements for students identified with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), executive functioning disorders, and



emotional regulation issues (Fleming & McMahon, 2012; Mitchell, McIntyre, English, Dennis, Beckham, & Kollins, 2013). Acceptance-based therapeutic approaches, which include mindfulness activities, have been shown in quantitative studies to improve academic success of at-risk students (Sandoz & Mullen, 2016) and the ability of injured student-athletes to meet the challenges of recovery and to re-enter competition (Mahoney & Hanrahan, 2011).

For faculty interested in this topic, there are many descriptive writings of how contemplative practices have been incorporated into various disciplines and courses. Barbezat and Bush (2014) and Palmer and Zajonc (2010), for example, each outlined approaches used by faculty across the sciences, humanities, and arts. Berila (2016) shared how contemplative practices are used in anti-oppression pedagogy. Huston (2010) and Thomas (2011) shared how they implement contemplative practices in communication courses, while Garretson (2010) addressed their application to development of reading and writing instruction. Dietert (2014) explained their use in medical education and research training, Pierson (1998) with nursing students, Shippee (2010) with music majors, and Lichtmann (2010) with religious studies students. Schoeberlein (2009) offered a variety of mindfulness exercises for use with students of any age group, while Rotne and Rotne (2013), Rechtschaffen (2014), and Willard and Saltzman (2015) presented mindfulness exercises for students in K-12 that might also apply to the younger bracket of emerging adults.

### ***Organizational structure and culture.***

Birnbaum (1988) and Meadows (2008) described colleges and universities as systems, with interconnected elements. Success in addressing challenges in higher education and implementing new initiatives depends on the structures and cultures in place on campus,

with collaboration among parts being critical (Kezar & Lester, 2009). In Thurman (2006), the author noted higher education structures that have supported contemplative education, such as study abroad to Asian countries where Buddhist and Hindu practices are common and yoga and tai chi classes. Thurman also encouraged schools to add structures such as contemplative centers, rewards for faculty for using contemplative practices in their teaching, expanded research, and media productions that demystify contemplative practices while informing and instructing educators in their use. Barbezat and Pingree (2012) said campus offices devoted to faculty development, often called teaching and learning centers (TLCs), play an integral role in supporting contemplative pedagogy across an institution; as an infrastructure, they bring legitimacy to new modes of instruction and learning, can facilitate networking and organize working groups of interested faculty, and often have the resources to conduct evaluative research.

Few organizational studies of specific institutions using contemplative education exist. Among the few is a descriptive article by DuFon and Christian (2013) that chronicles how a faculty group and a student group on the campus of California State University-Chico developed independently to promote mindfulness and contemplative pedagogy on campus and later become a unified faculty/student group call The Mindful Campus. Three short organizational studies and historical accounts have been prepared on Naropa University (Burggraf, 2011; Goss, 1999; Simmer-Brown, 2009), which was founded on contemplative pedagogy by Chögyam Trungpa as the first accredited Buddhist-inspired college in the United States (Goss, 1999). At Naropa, contemplative practice is “so woven into university culture that it is completely ordinary” (Simmer-Brown, 2009, p. 95). Because of its

founding, however, Naropa is not considered a “mainstream” institution of higher education (Burggraf, 2011, p. 244).

Among institutions that are considered mainstream, the development of contemplative education parallels that of transformative learning (P. F. Morgan, 2015), which includes service-learning, experiential learning, learning communities, and contemplative education (Duerr et al., 2003). Duerr et al. (2003) surveyed North American university leaders on their use of transformative learning and identified the strategies and interventions that effectively supported their growth. The top strategies were research support/funding and opportunities for faculty renewal, followed by graduate-level fellowships, leadership development and support, national conferences, online resources, and a journal. Barriers were organizational structure and funding, lack of support from administration, and time constraints (Duerr et al., 2003). A decade later, Klentzin and Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiaki (2013) conducted a meta-analysis specific to service-learning and identified eight common administrative elements that led to successful institutionalization of service-learning: inclusion of service-learning language in the institutional mission statement; a centralized service-learning office; internal funding and supplied physical resources, including space; training/development opportunities, including active organizational membership; faculty rewards, including release time; program assessment; and a service-learning advisory board comprised of multiple stakeholders (Klentzin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiaki, 2013). “Like most educational initiatives, service-learning achieves institutionalization when it becomes an ongoing, expected, valued, and legitimate part of the institution’s intellectual core and organizational culture” (Furco & Holland, 2004, p. 24).

It is interesting that in many ways, service-learning has undergone the same organizational stages that contemplative education seems to be going through. On U.S. campuses, Stanton and Erasmus (2013) characterized service-learning as “a grassroots, bottom-up innovation” (p. 88) developed by a “loosely coupled, highly motivated group of independent, and independently thinking, activists” driven by social change and social justice in the 1960s and 1970s (p. 63). Their work sparked a movement that broadened with environmental influences of the 1980s: those internally who questioned the value of education and outsiders concerned with students’ self-centeredness as part of “the me generation” (Stanton & Erasmus, 2013, p. 65). Also, service-learning’s maturation as a field included a discussion shift in published articles and professional meetings from “How to do the work?” to “How to sustain and institutionalize it?” (Stanton & Erasmus, 2013, p. 69). U.S. universities are now ranked nationally in comparison to their peers regarding the extent to which they offer and support service-learning, also called community engagement (Carnegie Foundation, 2015). Stanton and Erasmus (2013) further summarized evolution of this method of transformative learning this way:

Service-learning, which began as a pedagogy... was increasingly embraced, strengthened, and ultimately institutionalized in the context of and by riding the waves of larger, national reform efforts, which were driven by broader, but related, concerns similar to those of the pioneers. Students greased the wheels all along the way. (p. 72)

### **Debates.**

There are debates regarding the secularized use of contemplative practices in higher education, most notably the separation of the practices from their ethical foundations, politics

of empowerment, possible adverse effects, and incompatibility of academics and spirituality. Organizationally, there also are debates over how another method of transformative learning—service-learning—might be operated on a college or university campus.

***Ethics.***

Several scholars (Brazier, 2013; Ergas, 2016; Forbes, 2012; Hyland, 2016; O'Donnell, 2015; Purser & Loy, 2013) have expressed concern that secularizing contemplative practices waters down their meaning and purpose. Secularization was necessary for Buddhist practices to take hold in the West, but as a result “an implicit ethics, even a universal, transcendent purpose: the liberation of all sentient beings from suffering and the evolution toward genuine happiness for all, here and now” has been lost (Forbes, 2012, para. 6). For example, individuals are using these practices to de-stress rather than understand the causes of suffering and develop compassion, ethical skillfulness, and right thoughts and behaviors as described in the Buddhist tradition (Forbes, 2012; O'Donnell, 2015). Purser and Loy (2013) said mindfulness has become so mainstream in schools, corporations, government, and military that is being referred to as McMindfulness. The shadow side of this phenomenon is that the Buddhist differentiation between right mindfulness, a quality of awareness characterized by wholesome intentions that lead to optimal well-being for all, is blurred with its opposite, known as wrong mindfulness; for example, terrorists practice just as much focused attention in their actions as the Dalai Lama (Purser & Loy, 2013). Further, the use of mindfulness by the military contradicts the Buddhist tradition of non-harm (Hyland, 2016; O'Donnell, 2015), while its use to boost profits in corporate America is “no less outrageous and oxymoronic” (Hyland, 2016, p. 22). Mindfulness has become “a commodity sold to and through” many institutions (O'Donnell,

2015, p. 35). In higher education, Burggraf (2011) acknowledged the challenge of maintaining a connection to the “deep well of spirituality” from which many of the practices come (p. 245), while Ergas and Todd (2016) questioned whether education must rely on contemplative practices of East Asia when rich contemplative traditions are also found in Christianity and Greek and Roman civilizations. Without ethical underpinnings, contemplative practices are being used to focus individuals’ attention inward to the exclusion of outer injustices in education (O’Donnell, 2015) and in business (Healey, 2015; Purser & Loy, 2013). In education, cultural shifts are needed because it is insufficient for educators and policymakers to teach students to look at their inner conditions without assessing the outer conditions, for it may be the very educational environment that causes the stress, anxiety, and lack of empowerment that mindfulness interventions are being used to address (Forbes, 2012; O’Donnell, 2015).

### ***Politics.***

There is an argument that the teaching of mindfulness enhances democracy (Comstock, 2015; Hyde and LaPrad, 2015; Thurman, 2006) but that this “radically empowering practice” may not be welcomed by those in power (Comstock, 2015, p. 4). Thurman (2006) said it is inaccurate to describe modern culture as non-contemplative since people’s minds, including students’, are so often focused on television and other media that absorb their attention. Intensifying contemplation in education and other institutions, then, really is about “transferring contemplative energies from one focus to another” (Thurman, 2006, p. 1766). And while educators may want to strengthen students’ attention in developing wisdom, freedom, responsibility, and creativity (Thurman, 2006), there are detractors with commercial, economic, political, and other interests who believe otherwise (Thurman, 2006; Comstock, 2015). Those in power “do not want the ruled to become too

insightful, too independent, too creative on their own; the danger is that they will become insubordinate, rebellious, and unproductive in their allotted tasks” (Thurman, 2006, p. 1767). This makes the teaching of mindfulness “inherently political” (Comstock, 2015, p. 2). Learning to regulate one’s attention, thoughts, and emotions “enhances the democratic ethos” (p. 4), wherein it helps elected officials see different points of view and work more effectively with others; nonviolent activists to remain calm under pressure; or citizens to be able to reflect on their own biases (Comstock, 2015). Hyde and LaPrad (2015) argued that mindfulness complements democracy in that both are self-directed and internally assessed, while Forbes (2012) said it can lead to conflict resolution and positive political change. But, as Hinchey (2010) noted, nurturing empowerment among young people is not comfortable for anyone in power, from parents to politicians. Such shifts in power, however, may become “a vital part of the effort to restore an ailing democracy back to health” (Comstock, 2015, p. 4)

***Possible adverse effects.***

While mindfulness is “an exciting new construct” in the Western mental health field, there is possible misapplication due to “inflated and oversimplified expectations,” poorly clarified definitions, and insufficient research into possible adverse effects (Hanley et al., 2016, p. 111). Brazier (2013) said mindfulness is simply being oversold. The neurobiological research on mindfulness and meditation to date has limitations, according to Britton and Sydnor (2015), in part because of confusion regarding what constitutes meditation, as a range of contemplative practices are collectively being referred to as meditation or mindfulness. Citing Shapiro (1992), Hanley et al. (2016) said adverse effects in a small portion of meditation retreat participants include increased negativity, addiction to

meditation, family conflicts, and alienation. In a recent pilot study of community college students, only one out of 13 students experienced positive outcomes while the rest reported increased anxiety, unusual perceptions of self, and altered states, among other negative outcomes (Burrows, 2016), leading the author to recommend extra support for vulnerable students and greater attention to trauma triggers in educational settings.

### *Academics and spirituality.*

There is also the question of whether academics and contemplative practices originating from spiritual traditions should mix. Outside the academy, Groothuis (2004) and Montenegro (2010a) have said meditation, mindfulness, and yoga—three often-used contemplative practices—are in direct conflict with traditional Christian teachings and therefore should not be used in education. Montenegro (2010b) said Western culture’s emphasis on stress and the so-called need to remedy it through mindfulness is simply an opportunity for those who engage in these practices to impose their religious techniques on others. Within the academy, Mahani (2012) said that some educators “distance themselves” from contemplative education for fear of advocating religious ideology (p. 219). Bush (2011a) made an organizational observation that the use of contemplative practices in religious departments can be problematic if a professor’s expertise in a particular spiritual tradition can be viewed as proselytizing. Some educators prefer to avoid such potential conflicts altogether, using the arguments that academics and spirituality cannot be mixed (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010), contemplative practices threaten the “historical gains” of objectivity over subjectivity (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 47), or that education operates through reason alone and emotion, faith, and inner truths should be “neatly compartmentalized and separated” (Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2008, p. 1).



Thurman (2006) said religion should be viewed cautiously by higher education, but that without religious traditions' deep contemplative and intellectual principles, the liberal arts education is not liberating; rather, students become "informed and certified but not properly prepared to exercise the responsibilities that humanism imposes on the individual" (p. 1771).

*Organizational structure and culture.*

In comparing contemplative education to service-learning as a transformative learning method, there are on-going debates concerning how service-learning fits into the organizational structure of a college campus. These may be useful in predicting discussions about contemplative education or the concept of the mindful campus. Specifically, Stanton and Erasmus (2013) questioned whether service-learning should be a stand-alone academic discipline, be integrated in the disciplines, or be integrated across the disciplines. Klentzin and Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiak (2013) envisioned one of two organizational models developing for service-learning, based on their investigative study of five universities: elevation from a secondary program to a stand-alone academic discipline, or creation of a student engagement model in which service-learning is "bundled" (p. 55) into an overall campus initiative in which students complete a certain amount of engagement-related activities to graduate. Yates (2014) shared the experience of Indiana University East in strengthening its culture for community engagement by building partnerships between library staff and faculty.

Debates also center on what type of students take service-learning courses and how they benefit, which may relate to the structure and culture associated with a mindful campus. For example, research has shown that students who already have an interest in serving others tend to be the ones drawn to service-learning courses (Blyth, Saito, & Berkas, as cited in

Blankson, Rochester, & Watkins, 2015). Also, while studies have shown students who participate in service-learning develop a greater civic awareness, this evidence does not hold true for students at historically black colleges and universities, called HBCUs (Blankson et al., 2015). This is believed to be because the institutional culture of HBCUs already connects to community service, social justice, and communalism, which means that pedagogical modifications may need to be made to service-learning courses to result in significant changes in civic attitudes among students in different contexts (Blankson et al., 2015).

### **Critique of Strengths, Weakness, and Gaps**

The previous subsection synthesized the major trends, findings, and debates in the literature regarding contemplative education, as well as organizational structure and culture in the context of transformative learning. Here, I will critique that information by identifying strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the scholarship. Overall, the literature can be critiqued as being heavy on the specifics of contemplative education—what it is, how it works, and what science tells us about the benefits of various types of practices—and light on the scholarly information regarding the bigger picture of how contemplative education is being cultivated and maintained campus wide or what a mindful campus looks like and how it is operated. More details on this critique are provided below.

#### **Strengths of the research.**

There is solid quantitative evidence that meditation and some other forms of contemplative practice benefit students. As noted earlier, Walsh and Shapiro (2006) discovered benefits of meditative disciplines and other contemplative practices that benefit the whole person. A meta-analysis by Shapiro et al. (2011) of 40 years' of research also found meditation/mindfulness has the potential to enhance development of the whole person,

as well as improve students' cognitive and academic performance and management of academic-related stress. In addition, Sable (2014) found through a mixed-methods study that contemplative education supports the underlying dispositions for students' independent critical thinking. Related to wellness, contemplative practices have been found to relieve stress, anxiety, and sleep difficulties (Caldwell et al., 2010; Greeson et al., 2014), and support healthy coping mechanisms (Palmer & Rodger, 2009). All these authors recommended broader use of these practices in education as a result of their findings. Other authors have noted benefits to special populations of college students using mindfulness (Fleming & McMahan, 2012; Mahoney & Hanrahan, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2013; Sandoz & Mullen, 2016).

As noted earlier, faculty interested in how to lead contemplative education in any discipline can find plenty of examples in Barbezat and Bush (2014), Palmer and Zajonc (2010), Berila (2016), Huston (2010), Thomas (2011), Garretson (2010), Dietert (2014), Pierson (1998), Shippee (2010), Lichtmann (2010), and works by other scholars. Another strength is scholars' acknowledgement of some challenges found in implementing contemplative practices in the classroom and their tips for implementing them successfully (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Berila, 2014). In regards to how to broadly institute new education initiatives on a college or university campus, the organizational theory literature supports the legitimacy of college and universities as systems (Birnbaum, 1988; Meadows, 2008) and the importance of structure and culture to colleges and universities (Bess & Dee, 2012; Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013; Kezar & Lester, 2009). Consideration of these factors already has been given to the implementation and operation of at least one transformative learning method, that of service-learning (Duerr et al., 2003; Furco & Holland, 2004; Klentzin &

Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiak, 2013; Stanton & Erasmus, 2013), which may provide support in applying this theoretical framework to studies involving contemplative education.

### **Weaknesses of the research.**

While the scientific studies strengthen the argument for using contemplative education, they have weaknesses that should be addressed. For example, many of the research studies have been conducted on meditation only. Sable (2014) is the only study I can find that explores a grouping of contemplative practices, in this case mindfulness, journaling, dialoging listening, and inquiry. The benefits of movement practices have been identified (Caldwell et al., 2010), but there are other contemplative practices found in CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices for which research could not be found in relation to contemplative education. This includes beholding and visualization. Despite offering The Tree of Contemplative Practices as an educational guide, CMind said its illustration is "not intended to be a comprehensive list" (CMind, 2015b, para. 1). Indeed, P. F. Morgan (2015) said there are diverse understandings of what constitutes contemplative as well as transformative education "as they are emerging holistic approaches that are changing rapidly and developing across a wide range of disciplines" (p. 210).

Another weakness is a lack of empirical evidence of the benefits of contemplative practice for the meaning-making espoused by Barbezat and Bush (2014), Palmer and Zajonc (2010), and other scholars. As to potential conflict of interest and/or bias, two studies cited in this paper, Oman et al. (2008) and Shapiro et al. (2011), were funded in part by CMind, which advocates the use of contemplative education. Although the researchers indicated this funding source in their reports, the question of possible bias remains. Generalization is also a weakness. In Oman et al. (2008), the population was self-selected students at a Roman

Catholic university, the majority being white female freshmen. The authors acknowledged that generalization could not be made to students of other ages, genders, faith, or skin color. Palmer and Rodger (2009) also said their study of 135 students, while statistically significant, could not be generalized. Sable (2014) did not include any mention of generalization or possible future research, which may raise concerns about the article's quality. In Sandoz and Mullen (2016) and Mahoney and Hanrahan (2011), the sample sizes were small. The study by Mitchell et al. (2013) also was small and included adults up to age 50.

### **Gaps in the research.**

Contemplative education is a “nascent field of investigation,” according to Shapiro et al. (2011, p. 520). Given its newness, the scholarship published to date focuses mostly on how-tos for faculty (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Berila, 2016; Dietert, 2014; Garretson, 2010; Huston, 2010; Lichtmann, 2010; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Pierson, 1998; Shippee, 2010; Thomas, 2011), with very little literature on how leaders can cultivate, maintain, or broadly implement this initiative on their campus, although Furco and Holland (2004), Klentzin and Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiak (2013), and Stanton and Erasmus (2013) offered organizational insight related to another type of transformative learning, service-learning.

As mentioned previously, contemplative education is a growing phenomenon, but there is limited knowledge of how a mindful campus is operated. Because there is an ongoing need for higher education to adequately prepare students for their futures and cultivate the next generation of leaders, it stands to reason that a campus successfully operating as a mindful campus—which incorporates contemplative educational practices shown to be beneficial to cultivating the whole person—should be studied. Further, it is reasonable to assume that operating such a model might require a special organizational

structure and culture. But I could find no studies of mainstream universities that addressed this assumption. Therefore, missing in the scholarly literature was a study that demonstrates how contemplative practices are organized or operated on a campus and what organizational structures and cultures are in place to help contemplative education thrive. I found only two studies, Duerr et al. (2003) and DuFon and Christian (2013), that began to offer any insight into this aspect of contemplative education, and they are either dated or insufficient. Duerr et al.'s (2003) survey of North American universities showed the major use of transformative learning practices at the time, including contemplative practices, was limited to the universities' classrooms by individual faculty. Barriers to implementation of such learning practices at that time were organizational structure and funding, lack of support from administration, and time constraints. The authors stated:

If one is going to move beyond individual action to departments and institutions, especially in mainstream secular institutions, then these issues will need to be addressed carefully. Substantial funding from within institutions of higher education as well as from foundations will be crucial. (Duerr et al., 2003, p. 209-210)

There is no indication these issues have been addressed. Ten years after Duerr et al. (2003), a descriptive research article by DuFon and Christian (2013) recounted how a faculty group and a student group on the campus of California State University-Chico developed independently to promote mindfulness and contemplative pedagogy on campus and later become a unified faculty/student group call The Mindful Campus. However, the article did not offer any generalization of the information or suggestions for other campuses. Studies conducted at Naropa University (Burggraf, 2011; Goss, 1999; Simmer-Brown, 2009) cannot

be generalized to other universities because the institution was founded on the premise of contemplative education.

We know from Wall (2014) that typical colleges and universities currently offer contemplative practices through practice-specific courses, by weaving them into coursework of any discipline, and through on-campus extracurricular activities. I would add to these options a model combining all three, as there is non-scholarly evidence that colleges and universities have established centers devoted to mindfulness and/or contemplative studies (Barlow, 2016; Cannon, 2012), and special initiatives (Brown University, n.d.; The Curators of the University of Missouri, 2016) related to this topic. Elon University has implemented the interdisciplinary Mindful Elon project, which includes several departments, programs, and student groups offering activities for well-being meditation, centering prayer, and yoga; plus retreats and workshops that teach techniques for stress management and mindful well-being; and contemplative pedagogy support for faculty (Elon University, 2016).

After identifying a gap in the literature, I came to realize that a case study focused on campus leaders who are implementing contemplative education inside and outside the classroom could reveal more fully how campus organizational structure and culture support this initiative and make it thrive. Such a case study would possibly reveal a model that other colleges and universities interested in contemplative education could emulate. Bush (2011b) said models of contemplative educational institutions are needed for contemplative education to advance “to the next level” (p. 235) as a field. Since aspects of organization theory have already been used as a framework in analyzing how another transformative learning method (service-learning) has been implemented, I believed the same could be done for the growing phenomenon of contemplative education and the mindful campus.

## Summary

In summary, Chapter 2 has explored contemplative education and the mindful campus through the lens of organization theory. I began the chapter by explaining organization theory as a conceptual framework, including an overview of its foundations and origins, key principles and assumptions, use in relation to educational inquiry, and implications as a framework for understanding and analyzing a mindful campus. Next, I described contemplative education as a method of engaging students in an introspective, first-person way of knowing the world by becoming more aware of their inner states—physically, mentally, and emotionally—through practices such as journaling, meditation, yoga, deep listening, and others that focus on the present moment. The literature review gave an historical account of contemplative education’s roots in many spiritual traditions and inspiration a century ago by John Dewey and William James. The current proliferation of contemplative education at colleges and universities, what Zajonc (2013) termed a revolution, has occurred largely through the efforts of the non-profit CMind and ACMHE. While there were debates from both within and outside the academy about the appropriateness of its use in higher education, scientific studies noted the emotional and intellectual benefits contemplative practices can have on individuals. Higher education supported their implementation both for managing stress management and for making meaning and finding purpose. Despite all the literature bolstering specific practices and how to use them in a classroom, there was limited scholarship on how campuses support contemplative education through their organizational structure or culture. Scholars’ recommendations for future research included how and where college and university leaders can make contemplative practices available to more students and why their use may be



suppressed at some institutions, and I defended why this study of how a mindful campus is operated in terms of organizational structure and culture was undertaken.

## **CHAPTER 3. Methodology**

This chapter is intended to further elaborate on the research design described in Chapters 1 and 2, including my methodological approach, research questions, design, validity, and limitations, and well as a rationale for this design and explanations of the role of the researcher, ethical issues, data sources, data collection, participants, participant selection, interview protocol, IRB procedures, data coding, and data analysis.

The purpose of this study was to explore a mindful campus and its organizational structure and culture to understand how it is operated by educational leaders. This study of a mindful campus is valuable to scholars and practitioners because there was little representation of this phenomenon in the literature, despite the recent prolific growth of contemplative education and evidence that campuses are making organizational changes to embrace it, as well as calls from researchers for further studies into how and where higher education organizations can make contemplative practices available to more students. The findings contribute to what is known about contemplative education, raise awareness about how a mindful campus is structured and supported culturally, and provide a model that could influence or even be replicated on other campuses that want to become a mindful campus.

### **Methodological Approach**

The methodological approach for my dissertation was the interpretivist tradition of qualitative inquiry, in which I sought to understand and to describe an educational phenomenon from the perspective of those who participate in it (Glesne, 2011). This process also involved analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the collected data. Qualitative research was chosen over quantitative research because it is inductive, in that it explains social phenomena through interviews, documents, and observations (Suter, 2012). Quantitative

research, on the other hand, is deductive in that it aims to test hypotheses with numerical and statistical values (Suter, 2012). The interpretivist tradition of qualitative research, sometimes called constructivist, seeks to understand (Glesne, 2011). This approach assumes reality is “socially constructed, complex, and ever changing” (Glesne, 2011, p. 8).

More specifically, this qualitative study was a case study, which is an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” such as a single program or a single school (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Case study is appropriate when seeking insight, discovery, and interpretation and is a particularly beneficial methodology when studying educational innovations (Merriam, 2009). Case studies are more exploratory than confirmatory (Hancock & Algozaine, 2011). They investigate contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Hancock & Algozaine, 2011; Yin, 2003) and are the preferred approach when asking “how” or “why” questions (Yin, 2003). While case study can also be considered quantitative in nature, most case studies in education are qualitative and hypothesis generating, not hypothesis testing (Merriam, 1988). Among possible conceptual frameworks used in case study, organization theory is relevant because as an illustrative theory it can help define research design and data collection and generalize results of a study (Yin, 2003). Among particular aspects of organization theory that can be used in case study is organizational structure (Yin, 2003).

In the tradition of case study, I followed the process Hancock and Algozzine (2011) described as identifying a topic, selecting the appropriate unit to represent it, defining what is known about the case through multiple sources of information, and then reporting the outcomes in a narrative format with intense descriptions. My case study focused on one campus, which is considered a single-case study (Yin, 2004). Yin (2004) said case studies

can also be multiple-case design, which is useful for comparison, but given my time and travel restraints as a doctoral student, I needed to focus on just one. The unit of analysis was a university that considers itself a mindful campus. The university is an example of what Glesne (2011) termed “a bounded integrated system with working parts,” and therefore lended itself to in-depth, descriptive examination. The selected university is a leader in the contemplative education movement, as it incorporates contemplative practices both inside the classroom and through co-curricular activities including student clubs and events, support of faculty/staff who choose to use contemplative education, and a culture that enhances contemplative education.

### **Research Question(s)**

The goal of this study was to understand how a mindful campus operates and what organizational structures and cultures are in place to help its use of contemplative education thrive. My primary research question was:

- How is a mindful campus operated?, which has two corollary research questions:
  - What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?
  - What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?

### **Research Design**

In Maxwell’s (2013) model of research design, a study consists of a conceptual framework, goals, research questions, methods, and validity. The relationships among these parts “form an integrated and interacting whole” with the research questions positioned at the

center informing and being sensitive to the other components (Maxwell, 2013, p. 4). The research questions and goals of this study have been noted above, so the remainder of this research design subsection will describe my study's conceptual framework, methods, and validity.

### **Conceptual Framework**

My case study explored a mindful campus from the conceptual framework of organization theory. Contemporary organization theorists assume that human organizations can be appreciated, understood, described, and explained (Hatch, 2013). Organization theory comprises the how and why of organizations, which informs leadership and management (Bess & Dee, 2012). A key principle is that organization theory can open one's mind to new viewpoints and possibilities (Hatch, 2013; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Perrow, 1973), as well as its activities and processes (Hatch, 2013). Organizational theorists also assume that organizations can be analyzed on a system level: either alone, as part of a super system, or in relation to sub systems (Hatch, 2013). Another key principle of organization theory is that it is focused on organizations' macro topics, namely cultures, structures, technology, and environments (Hannah & Venkatachary, 2010; Hatch, 2013) and power (Hatch, 2013). The fact that universities are constructed through a combination of structure and culture (Bess & Dee, 2012; Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013) made this conceptual framework highly relevant to my research questions. By applying this theory to a new context, that of the contemplative education movement, I was able to refine and add to organization theory and improve understanding of it. As Merriam (1988) said, qualitative case study usually builds theory.

## **Methods**

As noted above, the primary research question was: How is a mindful campus operated? It had two corollary research questions: What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this particular college campus? and What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this particular college campus? The study answered these questions through a descriptive, single-case study, which is a format that presents a detailed account of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1988). It is especially useful in areas of education with little previous research (Merriam, 1988). As stated earlier, case study describes and analyzes a bounded system such as a single program or a single school (Merriam, 2009). Depending on a researcher's interest, case study can be perceived on a deeper level as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Intrinsic means the researcher is interested in that particular case and no other; instrumental means the study is being used to provide insight into a larger issue; while collective means studying a number of cases to investigate a phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009). In the context of a mindful campus, an instrumental type of descriptive case study seemed appropriate since the mindful campus is part of the growing phenomenon of contemplative education.

Flyvbjerg (2006) said disciplines need exemplars to be effective and case study is effective in illuminating exemplary solutions to social science problems. Therefore, a descriptive, instrumental case study of a mindful campus shed light on a campus that can be viewed as a model, exemplary or otherwise, for other schools wanting to become mindful campuses.

In my case study, I explored one university that successfully operates as a mindful campus to help leaders in higher education better understand a mindful campus and what

administrative structure and culture is necessary to help the phenomenon of contemplative education thrive. The identity of the school will remain confidential; however, it is a public liberal arts university enrolling about 4,000 undergraduate students. For the sake of this dissertation, it will be called Contemplative State University. In addition to numerous contemplative activities inside and outside the classroom, the institution hosts an annual conference related to contemplative education which attracts educators from other states. Despite its degrees of involvement in contemplative education, it does not have a designated center or director to coordinate all its mindfulness activities, which means its ability to operate as a mindful campus relies on other attributes. This case selection was a combination of what Yin (2004) considered a concrete affair and an abstract process.

The study explored whether and how particular characteristics, such as leadership practices, environment, resources, or management, contribute to the success of a mindful campus. While interpretivist research does not claim that findings reflect any one, absolute truth (Glesne, 2011), my case study reflected how one institution has found its path to promoting contemplative education.

### **Validity**

Also called trustworthiness, there are validity steps that can compensate for any subjectivity. Validity refers to the correctness of a description, interpretation, or a conclusion in the components of a study (Maxwell, 2013) and the trustworthiness a research brings to the project (Glesne, 2011). I want to be a trustworthy researcher who understands accurately all information shared with me and represents it correctly. In my study, the major threat to validity was researcher bias. This could have appeared both through any preconceived notions I had about my topic, as well as my unfamiliarity with my research site. For

example, I have had positive, personal experiences with contemplative practices and wish they had been part of my undergraduate experience. Therefore, if I entered the project believing that mindful campuses are the solution to all problems in higher education, I might have overlooked potential people to interview or ask leading questions that shed the least objective light on the topic or site. Going into the study, I had spent limited time at the site, so I might not have known enough about that particular campus to ask the best questions. As Schweber (2007) pointed out, I can't know what I am missing when I don't know the culture. My naiveté could work against me when I do not understand “the communally specific images, references, narratives, and mythological stories and communal discourse” (Schweber, 2007, p. 74).

I minimized these risks by first identifying the key individuals who lead and participate in activities that make the sample campus mindful. This is known as purposeful sampling (Glesne, 2011). I also engaged in what Glesne (2011) called network sampling because I asked the campus's chief point of contact for the names of individuals he knew to be most engaged with his campus's mindful movement. I also asked each person for written informed consent to participate in my study. Second, I relied on open-ended questions that would not lead the interview subject or prompt only yes/no answers. Open-ended questions allow for participant's opinion, not researcher's opinions, to shine through and offer detailed information should more fully encompass the campus culture. A third step toward greater validity was the use of a semi-structured interview style that allows me to ask appropriate follow-up questions that illicit thick, rich data. Fourth, respondent validation, which Maxwell (2013) calls “the single most important way” of ruling out misunderstanding (p. 126), was conducted by having interviewees review a summary of my findings and approve



it or recommend changes. I presented these findings in person during a meeting of key individuals involved in the contemplative education phenomenon on this campus, three of whom I interviewed. Other participants had conflicts and were not able to attend the presentation but received the summary via email. Respondent validation, which Maxwell (2013) said is commonly called member checks, helped verify I had accurately and completely conveyed their opinions in the final study.

Triangulation is a fifth step toward validity, which describes the collection of data from diverse individuals and in different formats. In my study, I used a mix of faculty, student, and administrator interviews to learn about the campus's structures and culture related to mindful activities and how the institution operates as a mindful campus. I checked people's answers against another group for consistency. This, however, still relied on self-reporting, which Suter (2012) said is not always the most reliable method of obtaining data, but I supplemented this by collecting documents and observing events, which could verify, support, or denounce the information shared via interviews.

### **Limitations**

Limitations to my study included the inability to spend prolonged and persistent observation time at the site because of the driving distance from my home. Some observation was achievable, but both this and all interviews had to be planned using vacation time from my job, since I had to visit campus during business hours and on days when both my employing university and the unit of analysis are in session. I usually scheduled two or three interviews and an observation per visit, making a trip to the campus about every two to three weeks. Another limitation of the study was that it focused on just one campus, what Yin (2004) calls a single-case study. Yin (2004) said case studies can also be multiple-case

design, which is useful for comparison, but given my time and travel restraints, only a single-case study was feasible for me as a doctoral student. This does not mean that a single-case study would not be useful to better understanding organization theory or the contemplative education movement. As noted earlier, several scholars have said more research should be conducted into how to make contemplative practices more broadly used in education (P. F. Morgan, 2015; Oman et al., 2008; Shapiro et al., 2011). Therefore, I believe a case study of a mindful campus was necessary to determine how one is operated and what structures and culture are in place to support these activities. Such data will be the first start in further understanding the growing contemplative education phenomenon, with implications being that one fully described mindful campus might become a model that could influence or even be replicated on other campuses. Now that a case study established a complete, scholarly description of a mindful campus and its organizational structures and culture, further research questions using organization theory or other theories can be developed.

### **Design Rationale**

As stated earlier, the methodological choice for this research project was case study, a form of qualitative research (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Case study provides an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” and is appropriate when seeking insight, discovery, and interpretation—especially for educational innovations (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Other forms of interpretivist qualitative inquiry were not chosen for this project, and I will explain why. What determines whether a study is a case study is the unit of analysis, or bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Others forms of qualitative research, such as phenomenology and ethnography, are defined by their focus, which typically is not a bounded system although they can be combined with a case study (Merriam, 2009). Reasons

not to choose these types is that phenomenology is the study of people's conscious experience, especially intense experiences such as love, anger, or betrayal (Merriam, 2009); and ethnography can require extended time commitments in the field and typically results in lengthy narrative (Yin, 2003), which is not possible for this researcher. A program evaluation study, which is concerned with assessing the value of a program (Suter, 2012), would not have been appropriate either because it would bypass the opportunity to first describe what a mindful campus is. Case study is distinctive as a methodology not because of its methods used but rather "the questions asked and their relationship to the end product" (Merriam, 2009, p. 44). Case study tends to be more concrete and more contextual than other forms of methodologies (Merriam, 2009).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I was the sole researcher in this study, both gathering and analyzing data. Since I am not a member of the campus I investigated, my perspective would be considered the *etic*—that of an outsider (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Merriam, 2009). My career background is in journalism, so conducting interviews and observations and viewing documents was familiar to me. I knew how to obtain information from the perspective of the participants, not myself, and objectively write up research findings. While qualitative research and journalism are not identical, they have similar techniques (Dilley, 2000), so my professional skills served me well for this study.

As noted above, I have personal experience with contemplative practices and wish they had been part of my undergraduate experience. I will explore this aspect of the researcher role more fully in the next section on ethical issues.

## **Ethical Issues**

As Glesne (2011) advised, researchers should consider the interplay of their subjectivity, embodiment, and positioning with those they researched in terms of data interpretation and representation. In many ways, my interest in the concept of the mindful campus is autobiographical—it lies in my own experiences as a college student with stress, anxiety, and fear over lack of purpose and the solutions I found later in life through contemplative practices. How much more enjoyable would my younger years have been if mindfulness and other practices had been taught at my college? Having worked in higher education marketing/public relations for 20-plus years and having taught courses as an adjunct professor, I've seen how college students often lack a centering practice—whether it is based in movement, creativity, ritual, or other format. As someone also interested in how systems work, I have often wondered why the mind-quieting activities I learned in adulthood through expensive courses or professional counseling could not be part of a holistic education provided to all students. An additional strength I brought to this research is my leadership in Still Point, Appalachian State University's faculty/staff organization that offers support for contemplative pedagogy and mindfulness/meditation activities. I am also a certified teacher of the Koru Mindfulness curriculum for emerging adults, an evidence-based curriculum developed at Duke University that has been shown to improve sleep, self-compassion, and attention (Greeson et al., 2014).

I saw how this positionality could have affected my objectivity in the study. Weaknesses to this study included my belief in the power of contemplative practices in improving health and mental and emotional capacity. This could possibly have swayed my research in terms of which people I chose to interview, what questions I asked, and how I

interpreted their responses. I may even have shaped the research location by sharing what activities my campus engages in or asking questions that the interviewees had not yet considered for their campus. Therefore, I planned to enter this research with “openness, curiosity, and desire and willingness to interact in collaborative ways” rather than “a mindset of entitlement, self-centeredness or control” (Glesne, 2011, p. 157).

### **Data Sources and Data Collection**

To answer each research question, the case study relied heavily on semi-structured interviews, document review, and observation. Semi-structured interviews have open-ended questions and allow for some change in the interview through follow-up questions as the conversation progresses (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Merriam, 1988). This less structured format assumes that participants view the world in different ways (Merriam, 1988). I field tested my prepared interview questions with two faculty members involved in my home institution’s contemplative education activities, one Ph.D. and one M.F.A., to ensure the questions were clear and relevant to my study’s research questions. Then, I conducted interviews with key individuals who lead and participate in activities that make Contemplative State University a mindful campus. This included faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The study also incorporated documents related to the organizing and funding of mindful/contemplative activities and observation of key events. Through these methods, I gleaned a sense of the activities that make this a mindful campus, the challenges and opportunities in this endeavor and the culture that makes it possible, as well as the organizational structures and resources necessary to operate a mindful campus.

## **Participants**

Identifying individuals who may have the best information to address the research questions is important (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The participants in my study included faculty engaging contemplative education in the courses they teach and who in some cases were instrumental in bringing this education innovation to the campus and who participate in a learning community focused on contemplative education. I also interviewed and/or observed program directors and other staff who organized the use of contemplative practices outside the classroom, such as through student affairs activities and wellness initiatives for students or professional development for faculty. Participants also included students who were involved in the planning and implementation of some of the mindful campus events or campus culture that supports them, such as a meditation club. There were also interviews with key administrators who supported and/or funded these activities.

## **Participant Selection**

Participants were selected through a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling in consultation with my main contact at the site. I began selecting participants by emailing recruitment letters to the faculty who organized the annual mindfulness conference held on campus, most of whom I met in person while observing the conference. In the course of those interviews, I asked the participants who else they thought out to be approached about participating in my study. They recommended additional faculty and staff, and I also identified program and/or office directors based on the structures participants mentioned as being important to the support of contemplative education. Campus events related to contemplative education also served as an opportunity to meet and recruit additional faculty, students, and others to interview about the mindful campus.

I visited the case selection site about every two weeks from late spring to early fall 2016 for interviews and to observe its mindful campus activities. I conducted 15 official interviews, with each lasting about an hour, to the point when, as Glesne (2011) said, data collection can stop because redundancy of information appears. These interviews were audio-recorded, and I took notes. I later transcribed these interviews. In addition, I contacted an additional two people through email and telephone seeking necessary documents and/or clarification of information shared with me during the official interviews.

### **Interview Protocol**

All interviews took place during on-site visits to the campus of the unit of analysis, using an individual's office or common area. The people interviewed were determined through purposeful sampling and snowball sampling in consultation with my main contact at the proposed site. The interviews were semi-structured in that they were guided by a list of prepared questions that allowed for flexibility in the wording and order of the questions and also allowed for new questions if necessary. "This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1988, p. 74). All interviews were recorded using a password-protected digital recorder. The protocol also included the following steps recommended by Hancock and Algozzine (2011): I obtained the participant's written permission to be interviewed through signature of a consent-to-participate form and also obtained clear understanding of their wish to remain confidential or be identified; I reviewed with the person the purpose of the interview, how long it may last and if/when the person can expect to receive results of the study; and I also was intent on asking questions and listening to the participant instead of

talking. In addition, audio recordings were kept only until transcriptions were made, and then were deleted.

Given that there are no known studies on a mindful campus in terms of organizational structure and culture, the interview questions were original to this study. For guiding the questions related to culture, however, I used Tierney's (2008) six-factor cultural assessment framework that has been used in other educational studies to help describe particular aspects of culture. These are environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership (Tierney, 2008). Interview questions were developed for faculty, administrators, staff, and students based on the conceptual framework of organizational theory, particularly in relation to organization structure and culture. Questions were developed based on participant type and are attached in Appendix A.

The study followed the protocol of Appalachian State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which reviews and approves all research conducted at Appalachian. Based on Appalachian's IRB policy, appropriate written informed consent was sought from each participant, documented, and confidentiality is being maintained. Participants had the option to remove themselves from the study if they desired.

### **IRB Procedures**

After obtaining approval for this study by my dissertation committee, I sought IRB approval for my study through Appalachian State University's Office of Research Protections before any data collection began. I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) on human subjects research as of Fall 2014.



## **Data Coding**

Coding of data represents the identified themes, characteristics, or dimensions found in analyzing the data (Glesne, 2011). This can be done by the researcher alone, or with the aid of computer software as Glesne (2011) noted to “make comparisons and build theoretical explanations” (p. 194). After experimenting with the software program Dedoose, I chose not to use a software program. Instead, I chose to color code the data within each transcription in Microsoft Word and each electronic or hard-copy document. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended using codes, also called tags or labels, to assign meaning to units of information. As the authors recommended, I attached these color codes to phrases, sentences, or paragraphs across the interviews and documents and used them to organize the chunks of data in separate Word documents related to structures, cultures, and other categories. For observations, I developed an observation record in Microsoft Word before starting my research that included columns dedicated to activity, individuals involved, structural aspects, cultural aspects, and other observations (See Appendix E). This grid format allowed me to code the information as I took notes. Also, I used visual representations such as flow charts and matrices to synthesize the information for greater understanding, which was used in creating the final narrative. I also organized all my Microsoft Word and pdf documents into separate folders associated with my research questions.

## **Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 1988), which means that I sought to analyze information as I gathered it from my interviews and observations. This type of early analysis is beneficial because it

“helps the field-worker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data,” which makes data analysis “an ongoing, lively enterprise” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 50). My data analysis consisted of transcribing each interview and writing detailed field notes of each observation. I read and reviewed the transcripts and wrote memos to myself as I reflected on what I was learning, which further clarified my experiences, indicated any additional paths of inquiry I should follow in relation to what I was learning, and allowed me to describe each structural and cultural element as I learned about it. What I gleaned from early interviews and observations at times impacted how I proceeded with subsequent information gathering in terms of refining questions or selecting additional people to interview. I also gathered documents along the way to verify and more deeply explain what I was learning through interviews and observations.

Hancock and Algozzine (2011) said novice researchers generally prefer to conduct a thematic analysis of their case study, in which each piece of information is reviewed in light of a particular research question to gain a tentative answer to that question. Once all sources have been contacted for information and themes emerge, those themes can be retained and reported as findings (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). As stated earlier, my primary research question was:

- How is a mindful campus operated?, which has two corollary research questions:
  - What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?

- What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?

In my analysis of data, I color-coded each transcript—red for interviewees’ definition of contemplative education, green for activities included on CMind’s Tree of Contemplative Practices, orange for support, purple for structures, brown for culture, and dark blue for events. As I color-coded the data, I also copied and pasted the information into corresponding Word documents, going into deeper analysis by separating structure- and culture-related data into documents related to my interview questions and the emerging themes: “Structures in place,” “Structures needed,” “Cultures in place,” and “Cultures needed.” In this way, I had one Word document that included every interviewee’s comments related to that theme. I did the same for my interview questions related to Tierney’s six aspects of culture by copying and pasting the relevant comments into its own document with subsections for organizational mission, environment in which the organization operates, socialization of new members, information sharing, strategy, and leadership. I then placed all these Word documents and other supporting documentation into folders labeled Structures, Cultures, Events, and Unit of Analysis. This proved to be an effective way to keep all my information well organized as I prepared to write up my findings.

### **Summary**

This chapter has described the methodology I used in a study exploring how a mindful campus is operated by educational leaders, including what structures and cultures are in place. I chose to follow the interpretivist tradition of qualitative inquiry, specifically an instrumental, single-case study design. I have given a rationale for this design, including why other approaches would not have been appropriate and described my role as the

researcher, ethical issues, data sources, data collection, participants, participant selection, interview protocol, IRB procedures, data coding, data analysis, and trustworthiness of this study.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The purpose of my research was to develop a case study of a mindful campus to determine how one is operated and what structures and cultures are in place to support its use of contemplative education. My research questions were:

- How is a mindful campus operated?, which has two corollary research questions:
  - What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?
  - What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?

These questions were explored using the interpretivist tradition of qualitative inquiry, in which I sought to understand and to describe an educational phenomenon from the perspective of those who participate in it (Glesne, 2011). In Chapters 1, 2, and 3, I introduced the research problem, reviewed the literature on both organization theory and contemplative education, and explained the methodology used for my research. This chapter will first describe the institutional setting for my research, the study's research methods and participants, and then report the results of the case study: structures in place, cultures in place, and structures and cultures needed.

### **Research Method**

Descriptive case study was chosen for this research project. Reasons for this selection were discussed in. Here I will present information on how this methodology was applied.

Data for this case study was collected during Summer 2016, beginning in late May and running through mid-September. I began by observing Contemplative State University's

major annual conference that fosters the mindful campus concept, where I connected with key leaders in the institution's efforts related to contemplative education and began conducting my first interviews. I made eight visits to the university, spaced two to three weeks apart, and averaged two or three interviews per visit. To ensure I stayed on task, interviews from one campus visit were fully transcribed before the next visit. In total, I conducted 15 interviews (three students, five faculty, five administrators, and two staff) and observed six events, including a campus tour, classes, and organization meetings. I also gathered more than 50 documents. Emails and/or phone communication occurred with two additional people to verify some information. Summer proved to be an ideal time to schedule my interviews before faculty, staff, and administrators became busy with a new academic year. Some observations needed to be arranged once the academic year began and typical campus activities resumed.

Each interview lasted about an hour, using prepared questions that had been field tested by two individuals who are involved in contemplative education at my home university. These questions were revised slightly based on their feedback (See Appendix A), with wording slightly modified again after I conducted the first few interviews and found interviewees had some confusion about what I was asking, particularly a cultural assessment framework I was using. These interviews were transcribed and coded. For observations, I used an observation record with columns for note-taking on the activity and the individuals involved, structural aspects, cultural aspects, and other observations. Transcripts, documents, and observation records were coded and analyzed, producing the results outlined in this chapter.

## Setting

I conducted my case study at an accredited, public liberal arts university, which I called Contemplative State University. This institution is one of 29 schools in the United States and Canada that comprise the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). According to its website and printed admissions materials, Contemplative State University has about 4,000 students and offers more than 30 majors. During tours for prospective students, admissions staff described the university as offering a private college experience at the lower cost of a public university, with a personal approach to education in which students and professors know each other's names. This description was supported by printed admissions materials. Contemplative State University's admissions viewbook, a term used for the premier, printed booklet describing a college or university, stated the university challenges its students to look at life from many perspectives and see connections among subjects; the undergraduate experience was described as well-rounded and focused on helping students discover who they are. The viewbook also stated the university had been cited as being among the country's best liberal arts colleges by a notable ranking publication. The university's online academic catalog indicated Contemplative State University has also been recognized for quality of life both on and off campus. Demographically, the institution is predominantly white in terms of student and employee populations, with slightly more females on campus than males in both student and employee populations, and a majority of students receive some form of financial aid, all according to its webpage offering at-a-glance facts about the institution.

## Participants

To recruit participants, I used a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling in consultation with the university's main point of contact for contemplative education. Emails inviting individuals to participate were sent to 21 individuals. Three upper-level administrators, one professor, and one student did not respond. Another top administrator declined. I successfully interviewed five faculty, three students, two staff members, and five administrators for a total of 15 individuals. By the time I interviewed the last respondents, the information presented to me was repetitious of what I had heard before, and I felt comfortable concluding my data collection with this number of interviews. I did contact another two people by email or telephone to ask for documents or seek clarification on information I had received through my interviews.

Table 1

*Summary of Participants*

Type	Number
Faculty	5
Administrator	5
Staff	2
Student	3

All of the faculty who responded to my invitation to participate were in the humanities; those who did not respond were in the sciences. Of the staff I interviewed, one was in student affairs and another was in the finance and operations division. Four



administrators who I interviewed were in academics: three in humanities and one in the social sciences. One administrator who did not respond to my request for an interview was in the social sciences. The fifth administrator who I interviewed was in student affairs. All administrators and staff had some level of teaching responsibility in addition to their primary duties. The administrators who teach hold positions such as department chair, dean, or associate vice chancellor. Of the three students I interviewed, one had just graduated and two were rising sophomores. The gender, race, and ethnicity of the participants have not been identified due to the institution's small size in order to protect confidentiality, although their demographics generally reflect those of the institution.

## **Results**

In general, I found that Contemplative State University is operated as a mindful campus in that it has a key group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators committed to engaging themselves and their students inside and outside of class with contemplative practices found on CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices. Their use of the Tree is supported by a loosely-coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system consisting of specific structural and cultural elements. The structural elements found were physical, non-physical, and financial, as outlined here:

- physical structures
  - a walking labyrinth; and
  - a meditation room.
- non-physical structures
  - faculty/staff and student organizations;
  - professional development opportunities;

- annual events;
  - academic and extracurricular courses;
  - student affairs emphasis on self-awareness/reflection; and
  - various levels of authority who support contemplative education.
- financial structures
    - a special professorship;
    - internal and external grants; and
    - academic funds to support an annual conference.

The cultural elements found, based on an open-ended question regarding important aspects of culture on this campus, were:

- embodiment of the liberal arts; and
- community and connection

In addition, when participants were prompted on Tierney's (2008) six-point cultural assessment framework, these additional aspects of culture were found in varying degrees, with strategy being the least present:

- organizational mission;
- environment;
- socialization;
- information sharing;
- strategy; and
- leadership.

All these elements will be further described in this chapter. First, however, I will explain more about the Tree of Contemplative Practices and participants' use of it, which constitutes the bulk of this university's operation as a mindful campus.

### **The Tree of Contemplative Practices**

A significant way in which Contemplative State University is operated as a mindful campus is its use of practices found on CMind's illustrated Tree of Contemplative Practices, shown in Figure 1. The Tree depicts contemplative practices used in secular organizational and academic settings (CMind, 2015b), as part of the CMind's mission to support and encourage the use of contemplative practices "to create active learning and research environments that look deeply into experience and meaning for all in service of a more just and compassionate society" (2015f, para.4). The Tree has two roots: awareness, and communion and connection. It features seven main branches—creative, activist, relational, stillness, generative, ritual/cyclical, and movement—from which specific forms of contemplative practice grow. These include meditation, journaling, the arts, work and volunteering, deep listening, yoga, and more.

When asked which contemplative practices they used or have seen used on campus, my research participants mentioned all activities on the Tree; however, there was more frequent use of activities in the stillness, generative, creative, activist, relational, and movement branches than there were of activities in the ritual/cyclical branch. Reasons for supporting or including contemplative activities in their teaching or events covered six main points. The most frequently given reason, with 12 responses, focused on student growth. This was described in terms such as personal growth, reflection, introspection, and self-awareness. Other reasons, in order of frequency, were: students' connection (to themselves,

the material they are studying, and to each other), openness/awareness, stillness/slowing down, the opportunity to transition to the current class period and to build a sense of community within the class.

While the group of individuals practicing contemplative education may represent a small percent of the campus community, their impact is spreading. This is observed in outsiders' awareness of its mindful culture, which will be talked about more in the Cultures section below, as well as a proposal underway to begin institutionalizing contemplative education through a contemplative studies minor or set of designator courses. This, also, will be discussed more in the Structures and Cultures Needed section.

## **Structures**

Through interviews, observation, and document review, I found the operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus included specific structural elements that supported the use of contemplative practices on this campus. These could be broken down into physical structures, non-physical structures, and financial structures.

### **Physical Structures.**

There were two primary physical structures on campus: a walking labyrinth near the center of campus, and a multi-purpose building that housed health and wellness activities and a dedicated meditation/yoga room. The circular labyrinth measured about 65 feet in diameter in a grassy area framed by pine trees, located amid a cluster of academic buildings in the center of campus. Its shape was outlined in loose stones. At a slow pace, the labyrinth took me about 20 minutes to walk to its center and back out. A student said the labyrinth "doesn't necessarily get used a lot but it's there and they have a little sign that says like 'Take a moment to meditate.' So, it's there, it's in your awareness." When discussing this physical

structure, one administrator added the campus is in “a lovely physical space ... and I don’t know why [but] I think of nature and contemplative learning going together... and I feel as though we have this incredible environment.” The multi-purpose building housed an abundance of recreation, health and exercise offerings including yoga classes, as well as an academic department with faculty who use contemplative education. The building’s circular meditation room was frequently used by faculty and student groups and was pointed out during a campus tour for prospective students and their families, which I accompanied, as a notable and well-used physical structure on campus for yoga and meditation. Cushions and blankets were provided inside the room, which was kept unlocked throughout the day and available for anyone to use when it was not reserved for a class or group gathering.

A third physical structure that no one mentioned in interviews but which I observed used as a teaching tool during a contemplative class was the botanical garden next to campus. A professor who led a 30-minute silent walk through campus included passage through this botanical garden, during which time students had been told to pay attention to their surroundings and notice how the landscape transitioned among the different areas of campus.

### **Non-physical structures.**

Through my research, I identified more than 10 non-physical structures that support the use of contemplative practices, which could be condensed into six themes. These themes were:

- faculty and student organizations;
- professional development opportunities;
- annual events;
- academic and extracurricular courses;

- a student affairs emphasis; and
- various levels of administrative authority that support enhanced teaching and learning.

Aside from a faculty/staff contemplative learning circle, a student mindfulness club, and two annual events related to mindfulness, “I don’t think any of [these structures] were designed to support contemplative education,” a faculty member said. Instead, the professor said faculty “look at ways in which the practices we’re doing and the reasons we’re doing them align with [the institution’s] mission” and find ways to collaborate with existing structures.

Another faculty member concurred: “There’s nothing happening at the highest levels to force us to do it right now.” The following sub-sections will describe these non-physical structures.

#### ***Faculty/staff and student organizations.***

Two campus groups are critical to supporting contemplative education on this campus because of the social networking, collaboration, and awareness building they provide. These groups are the contemplative learning circle for faculty/staff and the mindfulness club, which is run by and for students.

For several years, the university has hosted a learning circle focused on contemplative practices through its teaching and learning center. The circle meets one afternoon every two weeks for one hour. It consists of a 10-minute opening silent meditation, discussion, and short closing meditation. The day I observed, 11 people attended. This was the first meeting of the academic year, and the leader explained to the group that anywhere from two people to 15 might show up at any given meeting, depending on timing during the academic year and other obligations people may have. The circle is open to both faculty and staff, and there is

no obligation to attend each gathering. By the participants' introductions of themselves the day I observed, the represented areas included the humanities; business; and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. The learning circle met in the university's meditation room, and participants sat in a circle on cushions, although participants were invited to sit on chairs if they preferred. For several people I interviewed, this structured form of networking through a learning circle was their introduction to the use of contemplative practices in teaching and gave them a community to support their personal practice as well as their use of contemplative practices in the classroom. One faculty member who participates in the learning circle, and who is relatively new to academia, said the group's members "have been immensely helpful in that they have exhibited what it is to have these kinds of activities, this approach, and then do these activities in their classrooms and in their own personal practices." A staff member said the learning circle "has a certain credibility associated with it" because it is formally recognized by the university as one of several learning circles offered each year through Contemplative State University's teaching and learning center.

The student-led mindfulness club was started by a student three years prior to my research. This student was introduced to contemplative practices through a class taught by one of the faculty in the contemplative learning circle. As one of about 50 official student clubs and organizations on campus, the student mindfulness club receives financial support through the university's student affairs division. The club's constitution described the group as being committed to building a community of self-aware individuals by providing structured time and space to practice mindfulness in various forms. A student said, "Every

mindfulness club meeting, we bring in...different speakers and they share their way of contemplative education and how they bring mindfulness into their daily lives.”

The club meets once a week for an hour in the campus’ meditation room. During my observation of a weekly gathering, four people attended—all female. The leader said at the start that the group would be small that evening because of a conflict with a major sustainability event on campus which involved the mindfulness club leaders. This supported a comment by a staff member who said this particular campus has “actually quite a lot of cross-over between the students interested in contemplation/contemplative practice and the students who are interested in sustainability issues.” Another student concurred, saying “I’ve definitely seen, like, an intersection between the environmental community on campus and the mindfulness community on campus.” Students said the mindfulness club typically attracts 10-20 students each week. The night I observed, participants sat in a circle on cushions. After each person stated their name and responded to the leader’s prompt of “How was your day?,” the students engaged in a 25-minute breathing meditation. This was followed by about 10 minutes of discussion about the experience before the group chose to engage in a body-scan meditation, in which one brings focused attention to various parts of his or her body starting with the feet and working upwards to the head. A couple of attendees said they had never tried this type of meditation before, and the experience lasted about 12 minutes. More discussion followed about sensations, thoughts, and emotions related to the body scan before the event concluded.

***Professional development opportunities.***

In its ongoing effort to enhance teaching and learning, the university offers professional development to faculty. This is supported through two major existing



structures: a teaching and learning center, and a campus-wide initiative to support students' critical thinking.

The teaching and learning center is directed part time by a faculty member. "My job as the director of [the center] is to nurture any sort of pedagogy that people are interested in," the director said. According to interviews and document review, the center supports contemplative education through its sponsorship of a contemplative learning circle, one of approximately 10 learning circles sponsored each semester. A list of all learning circles is shared at the start of each semester through email with instructions for how to sign up. In addition, the list of learning circles is shared during new faculty orientation each fall with a brief introduction by the center's director, according to the event's printed agenda. The list also could be found on the center's website. In addition to the ongoing contemplative learning circle, the center sponsors other shorter-term learning circles that might focus on a particular book related to contemplative pedagogy and meet just a few times during a semester. A professor said:

I asked [the director] if we could try out a learning circle like the one now that's been going on for so many years, and [the director] said yes. And, [the director] has said yes every time I've proposed the learning circle, and all the learning circles I've done have been connected to contemplative practices.

The center also sponsors monthly guest lectures, which feature the topic of contemplative practices in the classroom about once a year, the center's director said. The director also offers one-on-one consultations and stated "in some cases I have recommended a contemplative practice-type technique." The center financially supports the university's

annual public conference that fosters the concept of a mindful campus which faculty described as another form of professional development.

Through a separate structure, the university has been working to strengthen students' critical thinking abilities, and this effort has connections to contemplative education. All faculty are encouraged to go through special training as part of this campus-wide initiative at some point during the program's five-year implementation period, which ends in 2017. Each year, a cohort of 10 faculty have moved together through the training that covers how to foster students' skills in inquiry and reflection, among other qualities related to enhanced critical thinking. From documents and multiple interviews, I learned that for each cohort, a faculty member from the contemplative learning circle has made a presentation on using contemplative practices in the classroom, resulting in a new group of faculty being exposed to this teaching and learning method each year. According to the initiative's faculty director, who also uses contemplative practices in the classroom, the participating faculty member:

...typically leads us through a kind of meditative practice just focusing on breathing and then sometimes [the professor] might have us focus on a particular line of poetry or something extracted from a text, a sort of mantra. [The professor] has had us do communication exercises back and forth with various forms of activity listening...so [the professor] has done a range of different kinds of exercises there. ...By raising campus awareness of the need for reflective learning in general, I think that's probably where [initiative's name] has played a role [in supporting contemplative education].

### *Annual events.*

Annual events supporting contemplative education on this campus consist of a student-organized mindfulness festival and a public conference on the mindful campus concept that attracts educators from surrounding states. The mindfulness festival is an outgrowth of the student mindfulness club and is held each spring. The third annual festival occurred just prior to the start of my research and attracted between 800 and 1,200 people, making it the largest one to date, according to the event's student organizers I later interviewed. As many, if not more, community members than students attended the day-long event, the organizers said. One student described the event as intergenerational, adding:

I think that the whole idea of [the event] is, rather than explain [mindfulness] to people in words, they can come and experience the whole day. This experience is us trying to relate to each other mindfully and to ourselves mindfully.

Held in the grassy center of campus, the event included a main stage with music and yoga instruction, and booths for massage, healing arts, artisans, do-it-yourself art stations, and food and beverage vendors. There also was a woodworking area for building one's own meditation bench, and a special area for slack lining, hula-hooping, and other forms of creative expression.

For the past five years, the university has hosted a public conference related to the mindful campus concept. Held on campus, the conference attracts educators from many states, with about 80 people registering for the spring 2016 event. From my observation, these individuals ranged in age from late 30s to about 70. A few university students also attended. The two-day conference consisted of keynote speakers and both small-group and large-group discussions built around the conference themes, which have included resilience,

technology, and social justice among its topics. Time was also dedicated to formal contemplative practices, such as an hour of movement-based meditation such as yoga or qigong, as well as informal awareness of the present moment. For example, during my observation the introductions time in the opening circle became a contemplative practice: the leader invited participants to notice what was going on with them physically and emotionally as they waited for their turn at the microphone to state their name, where they were from, and why they were attending, and then to reflect on what they observed during that wait. After all introductions were finished, participants paired up and shared their personal observations and then were invited to report out to the whole group. Several faculty interviewed for my research said the annual event encouraged them in their personal and professional use of practices. Participants offered similar reasons for attending, from wanting to learn more about how to incorporate contemplative practices in their teaching, helping students become more resilient, getting a personal “fix,” to helping themselves slow down. One participant said to the full group, “There’s a collective awakening, and I want to be a part of it.”

*Academic and extracurricular courses.*

The university’s for-credit academic courses as well as extracurricular courses in yoga also support contemplative education on this campus. Among the academic courses, most are traditional disciplinary courses in which faculty have woven in contemplative practices, while some are how-tos for forms of meditation or focus on service-learning.

I interviewed faculty who teach in the areas of health, languages, religious studies and philosophy, art, sustainability, anthropology, and psychology and all incorporate contemplative practices into their teaching to some degree. Some of these faculty teach

honors courses or other required, first-year courses that include students from a variety of majors. In one observation of a required humanities course, students exploring ancient worlds had been reading that week about Buddhist traditions. The professor used a journaling/reflective writing exercise from The Tree of Contemplative Practice's creative branch and had them write for five minutes on the concept of suffering, what it meant in the Buddha's time, and forms of suffering experienced today. Then, the students were to pick one of those forms and write for another five minutes on how a person could handle that contemporary suffering from a Buddhist perspective. Contemplative education "is about strategies that help people get into a much better kind of a potential state to learn," the professor said in an interview. The professor further stated:

I actually do a lot of short written assignments that help focus... focusing in on the material or some idea or concept, and it could be brainstorming something from their own experience before we actually get to material or it could be very material-centered.

According to a university webpage titled "Service-learning designator courses," the university also offers specific service-learning classes that integrate meaningful reflection based on a service project with a community partner. The Tree of Contemplative Practices includes volunteering on its activist branch. This same webpage offered criteria for the service-learning courses, indicating that reflection can be in the form of discussion, journals, and class activities. If a student takes enough service-learning courses and completes an additional volunteering project, he or she can graduate with a special academic recognition of community engaged scholar. More than 50 of these service-learning designed courses were identified on the university's website.

The university also offers practice-specific courses. During my research, I identified three such courses, two of which were interdisciplinary. All were special topic courses, meaning they are not offered every year. The first was a one-credit hour, interdisciplinary course co-taught by four faculty, all of whom were involved in the contemplative learning circle. According to the syllabus, the course's goal is to cultivate an understanding of the many forms of meditation, both ancient and modern. Student outcomes included understanding mind-body connections, appreciating various meditative traditions, exploring their use for cultivating awareness and consciousness, and reflecting on any personal transformation. Another interdisciplinary course, this one for three credit hours, drew upon the visual arts, philosophy, and geography for the purpose of expanding inquiry of place. According to the syllabus, student outcomes included using various mindfulness techniques to become more self-aware. The third class, which was discipline specific within the humanities, used Zen as a method of cultivating a beginner's mind, one "open to the wonder, the beauty and the ugliness, of ordinary experience," according to the syllabus.

I observed a meeting of this third course. It met twice a week for one hour and 40 minutes. The class period I attended opened with a 10-minute sitting meditation followed by a brief discussion of the experience. Students were to have read a poem by Japanese poet Basho on journeying to the interior, and two students were assigned passages to read aloud, which was followed by discussion. For the second half of the class, the professor led students on a 30-minute silent walk through campus. Before leaving the classroom, the professor gave them a prompt: "Pay attention to noticing—noticing our bodies, the air, our surroundings." Students were also encouraged to pay attention to how physical spaces transitioned, from manicured lawns and sidewalks to woods, and back again. Upon returning

to the classroom, the professor asked students to spend a few minutes writing on their experience in the form of a haiku. Afterwards they discussed their emotions, senses, and thoughts during the walk. In an interview, the professor said of the course and its activities:

Our minds are so constrained by the concepts we've received, and the liberal education is about trying to bust open the mind so it can see things differently. ... it's trying to free people to think and understand and see and perceive and be aware of new things. And that's what contemplative education is all about. It's not special.

Through its campus recreation area, the university offers about 25 yoga classes per week in the university's meditation room, with about 10 students attending each class. "Our students love it," a staff member said, adding many students take the classes for stress management and introspection. "We have two other additional spaces for yoga, and we've done yoga on the quad too." All classes are taught by students, who have gone through at least a 50-hour, semester-long yoga teacher training led by a university staff member. The staff member said some students are Yoga Alliance Certified. Occasionally, faculty interested in incorporating yoga into their classes as a contemplative practice will call upon campus recreation to help facilitate that, the staff member said. One student familiar with the yoga training said, "It's a very mindfulness-based program that they go through." The university offers other fitness classes as well, such as slacklining, in which students walk or balance on a tensioned strip of webbing between two points. The slacklining class was led by this same student, who said it too "was very mindfulness based."

***Student affairs emphasis on self-awareness, reflection.***

Although the student affairs division does not use the term contemplative education, one administrator said this type of learning has been emphasized at the university for a long

time. “Because we look at the whole development of the student, because we’re working with developmental, transitional levels on a traditional college-age student...that’s not a hard sell for me,” the administrator said. Elaborating further, the administrator said:

We’ve always believed in, always engaged in, experiential learning and reflective practice. Where we’ve really expanded in our understanding of that in recent years has really been around stillness, journaling, storytelling, and... our work in volunteering.

In addition to its offerings in yoga and dance, the student affairs division uses contemplative practices in the following activities, according to the administrator: orientation events for incoming students, leadership programs and retreats for student leaders, multi-cultural programming, housing, counseling, service-learning activities, and student clubs. The practices typically include journaling, deep listening, storytelling, visualization, and bearing witness. One student said, “I feel like the orientation did place a lot of emphasis on reflection and getting to know the other students in our group and stuff, so that was achieved by discussing our lives.” As to the vocabulary used to describe these activities, the administrator said, “If I were to use the word contemplative education, [my staff] would be like ‘What?’ But, if I were to say...self-awareness or reflection or experiential learning, they would be like ‘Yeah, we do that.’”

Contemplative practices are well suited to student life outside the classroom, a staff member and administrator said, because this is where many stressors and opportunities to build resilience are found, such as through living arrangements or finances. Students may not “get the same kind of skill development in their classroom as they might be able to get outside the classroom when they’re trying to work on how to be successful,” the



administrator said. It should be noted that the student affairs unit at Contemplative State University includes the counseling center, and when I asked the director if mindfulness was taught at the counseling center, this person said no, not formally, although the topic may be included in stress management programs.

***Various levels of authority who support enhanced teaching and learning.***

While the university president may not start meetings with a silent meditation, as one administrator told me, the majority of people I interviewed felt supported by various levels of authority for their use of contemplative education. Many participants said they included their contemplative work in end-of-year reports and faculty evaluations and felt rewarded for their efforts. While this direct, tangible support was noted by some participants, others said they felt supported because no one was telling them not to use contemplative education. “My chair, my dean, and all those people support what I do,” one professor said. “And they appropriately ask me to justify what I’m doing but they’re not getting in my way, saying you can’t do this.” Another professor said:

Our associate provost and our provost now are very supportive for contemplative practices and pedagogy on campus, and our associate provost has been very encouraging with the [annual conference], in support financially as well as other ways. There are many faculty who hold different positions on campus that are, I would say, at the very least sympathetic to contemplative approaches.

A third professor said:

I feel really lucky that I’ve been given a lot of support and that the work seems to be recognized in my faculty records and evaluations at the end of every year so I feel

very, very, very, very supported from the highest level of the university all the way down.

In seeking special funding offered by the university related to enhancing teaching and learning on campus, this same professor put forward a proposal focused on supporting contemplative education. The professor recalled hearing the news that a proposal had been accepted by the university:

I was told by the associate provost to whom I report for this...when [the associate provost] congratulated me and told me I'd gotten it, [the associate provost] said, "Yours was the most out-of-the-box proposal," and, "I want you to know you have support of this university at the absolute highest level for what you are proposing."

Other people also mentioned specifically the university's provost, deans, and department chairs as being supportive of, or at least sympathetic to, the cause. Said one staff member:

The provost has been very supportive. I think that we have yet to enter a phase of the movement in which we're really seeing it embedded at that level and there's a difference between, you know, being supportive or okay with something happening and then actually encouraging it.

Another professor relayed a story heard from a colleague regarding one of the deans' support of contemplative practices in the classroom:

[The dean] has told students that they needed to just deal with it when they complained that [the professor] was doing...contemplative practices in the classroom and they didn't like it. [The dean] told them, "No, this is part of your learning

experience and you really need to engage with this; you're lucky to have this and so you just need to deal with it."

This same professor praised the work of another professor who has led the contemplative learning circle: "As a senior faculty on campus, [the professor] had really good connections with the administration and . . . talked to the provost, both the current provost and the previous provost, and that has really, really helped."

One administrator said upper-level administrators are "okay with it," elaborating: If they have money they're always willing to share, but you have to keep putting the pressure on. But do they value it more than any other kind of program? Probably not. But I don't mean that in a negative way, because there's a lot of really worthy programs.

A staff member said, "There's a lot of support from leadership when we do these events, but in a sense we kind of have to come up with it on our own, I guess."

Not all the people interviewed felt fully supported, however. While gratefully acknowledging support received from colleagues within the contemplative learning circle, one administrator indicated no support from peers within the home department. This was attributed to differing approaches to the academic discipline, as well as cultural differences. "My colleagues, they just make fun of me in a kind of a light way," this person said. "After their fourth joke about mindfulness, then it gets tired, right? . . . So, I find I'm very lonely in my department."

### **Financial structures.**

Like the non-physical structures mentioned above, Contemplative State University also has a number of existing financial structures for enhancing teaching and learning that

have simultaneously supported contemplative education. These include a special professorship, internal and external grants, and academic funds that have been directed in support of hosting the annual conference on the mindful campus concept. I found no separate budget line items designated for contemplative education.

The primary source of funding has been a new special professorship on campus. A member of the contemplative learning circle was the first person at the university to hold this position, which gives a tenured faculty member release time from teaching and money to support a special project of his or her choosing. Faculty must apply for the position, and this professor proposed to the university's administration a project focused on encouraging and providing support for the use of contemplative practices on campus. This position seems to have been critical to the growth of classroom use of contemplative education at this university, because it allowed someone to be a point person to dedicate time and money to promoting this form of pedagogy. The professorship is a three-year appointment and is renewable one time. The position comes with a salary stipend plus additional funding for programming. The current holder of the position uses that funding to send interested colleagues to conferences sponsored by CMind, the ACMHE, and other groups. This professor said, "There's probably nothing I've done at [name of school] that makes me happier than being able to support colleagues by, like, saying 'Hey, would you like to go to this? Here's the money.'" The position's programming funds, in partnership with the teaching and learning center, have also supported an on-campus research study undertaken during the period of my data collection exploring what classroom activities faculty use that may be considered contemplative in comparison to The Tree of Contemplative Practices but

which the professor doesn't consider contemplative. The faculty member serving as a principal investigator said:

We go in...and say okay, tell me about the three courses you teach the most, what are you trying to get across to students, and what strategies do you use?... We've had about 25 interviews so far and every single one of them has mentioned among the teaching strategies they think are most effective ...activities that would fit very squarely in what we would think of as contemplative practice.

Such professional development or internal research may not continue much longer, however, because the professor holding this special professorship was quick to explain the next person selected to hold the position may likely have a different educational focus he or she would want to pursue, which would mean the significant source of funding for contemplative education would end.

Some of the contemplative education work by the holder of this special position was supported by a Contemplative Mind-1440 Teaching and Learning Center Grants sponsored by CMind, which the university received for fostering the use of contemplative practices throughout its curriculum. This grant resulted in support for the university's learning circle and faculty members' engagement in experiences to enhance their understanding of contemplative pedagogy: one faculty member attended CMind's Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy, another presented at an ACMHE Conference, and two worked to integrate contemplative practices into their courses.

Financial support from seven units also supported the annual mindful campus event, including academic affairs, four academic departments, the special professorship, and the teaching and learning center. In addition, three faculty members interviewed said they had

received stipends through internal grants to redesign an interdisciplinary course with another faculty member. These funds reportedly came from the academic affairs office to support interdisciplinary work among faculty to create or redesign a course. An administrator confirmed there are discretionary funds available for improving teaching, which could include developing new courses or redesigning a course with contemplative content. “We have liberty to do that,” the administrator said. “I would never turn anybody down if somebody comes to me and says ‘I need time to work this into my courses.’”

## **Cultures**

The operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus also included specific cultural elements. The university’s marketing professionals build the institutional brand on a culture of creativity and collaboration, as noted on a university webpage titled “Our brand.” The brand description states people on this campus as socially aware, open and engaged problem-solvers, innovators, and explorers. Community, growth, and lifelong learning are among the university’s values, according to the brand. Much of this branding is reflected in what I learned about the institutional culture through interviews and observations of the contemplative education community at Contemplative State University. Collaboration was frequently observed in the partnerships the contemplative education leaders made with existing structures, as noted earlier in this chapter, but only one person actually used the term “collaboration” in describing the culture on this campus. “There’s a lot of collaboration,” a professor said. “There’s collaboration across disciplines and collaboration across the ways we can support specifically our students but each other. I think it’s a very positive culture.”

To determine more about the university’s culture in relation to contemplative education, I asked all participants to describe the culture of their university. A follow-up

question was how contemplative education fits into that culture. I noticed two themes emerge: an embodiment of the liberal arts, and community and connection. Secondly, I described to participants the work of Tierney (2008), which said culture is comprised of six elements—organization mission, environment, socialization of new members, information sharing among members, strategy, and leadership—and asked them to indicate which of these were in place to support contemplative education on this campus. The next sections will describe their responses.

### **Embodiment of the liberal arts.**

Nine out of 15 respondents stated the university's liberal arts focus is an important aspect of its culture, which they also said was a natural fit for contemplative education. One student put it this way:

We're a liberal arts university, so we focus on an interdisciplinary approach, which makes the connection between many different subjects, and I think that provides an environment conducive to contemplative education because it's fluid and there's more room for exploration outside of the traditional classroom bounds.

An administrator said the liberal arts means a focus on “critical thinking but also the skills of well-rounded, politically active in some sense, socially engaged ...we bring in students who are really often genuinely interested in learning.” A staff member described the university as having an overt “celebration of the liberal arts and integrative interdisciplinary education.”

An administrator said:

Here we really are very interdisciplinary, very concerned about a liberal arts model of education—our smallness, very student-centered... I feel as though we have a really

good intellectual climate here and I think students are up for different approaches in the classroom. I think they welcome creative approaches to teaching.

In this liberal arts culture, faculty love to teach. “Teaching is at the heart of it all,” said a professor. “For a lot of people that’s what they see, that’s why they chose to be here.” Another professor described this school as having a “very engaged culture” of which teaching is “such an important part.” This same professor elaborated: “The people who want to strictly research within a narrowly defined paradigm stay away from (this school). They go to another school.” A different professor said of faculty, “Folks are willing to work with students to help them in their learning process—whatever their life looks like at the moment.” A fourth professor said, “In a sense, it’s a culture that is interested in promoting creativity and freedom of thought and freedom of expression within certain bounds.” This interest requires a certain level of trust in the “micro-level” cultures within the larger culture, the professor continued:

There’s a kind of trust—okay, people are going to do what they’re going to do and they’re going to do it well. I think there’s a hard work ethic that’s part of the culture here, so people are working hard, and they’re trying to get good and better at what they do, so they’re revising and perfecting and reflecting and they’re doing it by, “Is this working for me, it is working for students,” so I think those are aspects of culture.

Because this institution has a “conscious identity” as a liberal arts-focused public university, “there is a kind of open-mindedness, there is a kind of curiosity maybe,” an administrator said. This openness applies to both students and faculty, according to those interviewed. As to faculty, yet another professor said, “There’s a lot of acceptance of people practicing their work and their studies in different ways.” The typical student drawn to this



liberal arts environment is also eclectic, open, and curious. A staff member said, “We like students who are interested in everything,” and while “not everyone is going to think [mindfulness] is the greatest thing since sliced bread, no one’s going to say that’s too weird for us. That’s not something that happens here.” An administrator said, “Most [students] believe they want to get more out of education than subject knowledge. That’s very clear.”

This participant continued:

More than half of my students have all done meditation or yoga or, you know, something in their background, and it kind of seems to be the culture they’re looking for on campus, so it kind of seeps into each other. And when you have students who come with that background and then you throw these contemplative practices at them, they’re more willing to do it.

Contemplative education fits into this school’s culture because “just looking at this Tree [of Contemplative Practices], there’s a lot of different things here that our students would love,” another administrator said. “The scope of the Tree, for example, and what it includes here would appeal to a lot of different subsets of our students because we are so eclectic.” The students also described their peers in this liberal arts culture as non-competitive and supportive of one another.

### **Connection and community.**

Another emerging theme in participants’ open-ended descriptions of the university culture was connection and community. This was echoed by staff, students, and faculty. A staff member said:

What makes us tick is that we’re in such a rich, outdoor, beautiful place and we tend to get the students who want to do more of that connecting with nature, connecting

with themselves, and they want a little more out of their college experience than just “I’m going to class and I’m learning this material and I’m graduating.”

Students “care about what’s going on in our community and the broader spectrum of the world... [and] really care about learning how to make a difference in what’s going on and then going out and actually doing it,” a student said, noting the university placed high in a recent national ranking for schools making a difference in their community. The same student elaborated:

I really see that here...I think it’s knowing and being mindful of your place in society and that takes a contemplative education and a higher education to understand where you stand, and just being here my one year I’ve learned so much about my privilege and where it’s put me in society and how it indirectly impacts other people. That’s like a whole different level of awareness, you know? Just walking around knowing the privilege that I’ve grown up in. That’s how activism fits into being aware.

Another student concurred:

I think we’re really trying to form connections with the community and be of service to the city of [name of town] and not be this removed institution.... Like I was saying earlier, I think contemplative practices have the ability to, like, create an experience for someone that will produce insight. Rather than just telling someone this is the way life works, this is the way “that” is, you’re “Okay, let’s sit here and focus on our breath and notice where our mind wanders” and you’re like, “Wow, I have all these judgments in my mind about these things” or “I’m so open or not open to this” or like you’ll do, I don’t know, an eye gazing activity and you’ll just be like, “Wow, why do I feel so uncomfortable looking at people in the eyes? What does that say about me

or our culture, our society?” And I feel like, you know, rather than leaving this school ready to like go join society and “Oh, I’m going to get a job and do this,” I think people here are change-makers. I think a lot of people want to like improve society, they want to go improve structures and change institutions. They don’t want to just join one and do the same job that’s been done.

An administrator said a lot of students “come in asking for service-learning opportunities, internships, want to reach out into the community. They’re quite active.” One professor described students’ can-do attitude this way:

When we got these contemplative practices going, suddenly there was a whole cohort who completely jumped on the opportunity to start doing mindfulness-related things. I don’t know that that will last, but it was very strong for the last four years with [student’s name] here. But [student’s name] wasn’t the only one, so we’ve got students who are open to things. Not all our students, it’s a small percentage of our students, but the ones who are into it are really into it, and *they* see the connections between the sustainability work and the environmental studies work and the range of courses they’re studying... they are making the connections maybe faster than the faculty are making the connections.

Students choose this liberal arts institution because “people are wanting to do a broader spectrum of things in the world,” one professor said. This person stated further:

The types of service and volunteering happening is much at the grassroots level and there’s real interest in non-profit work and, you know, kind of working in a way that’s much more connected to communities, I think. So, it changes the questions they ask and the types of things they are using their time for here.

When asked how contemplative practices fit into that culture, this same professor said:

Yeah, I would say the types of activities, the contemplative kind of work being done here may even be seen as a foundation for being able to connect to the needs and not only their own kinds of needs and desire and what it is that they hope and want to be doing in the world but being able to slow down and listen to what others need and want and changing how they're building relationships with co-workers, with family members, with friends, with kind of all sorts of communities that they will eventually be involved in. So in some ways even it feels to me the contemplative kind of exercises create a life-long habit of being able to examine themselves and examine their place in the world and what they can and can't do in the world.

Strengthening community and connection occurs within the classroom, too. An administrator indicated being more connected with students when teaching because:

...doing the contemplative practices in the classroom has, to my mind, helped me be authentic to my students. I'm not a sham, I'm not just producing, you know, I'm not just performing or doing a production. Yeah, I know I've learned these materials, but I care about it. And the one way I want to show that caring is by inviting you to engage with this practice.

Another professor said, "I didn't understand a thing about community when I started doing this. Some of my students alerted me to that when I started doing it." The professor recounted a classroom incident during meditation when one student began quietly crying and left the room. A fellow student soon left to check on her. The professor continued:

A number of the students told me later, not necessarily that day, including the one who cried and the one who went out to see if she was okay, they said, "You know by

our doing this, you're creating a sense where we feel more deeply connected to each other," and I thought it was isolated—like you're doing your meditation, you're doing your meditation—and I didn't realize... She said "We're all vulnerable, we're all closing our eyes in a room together and that's like really risky." So that was the first moment where I started to realize, Oh, this is not just about student A's experience or performance or whatever. This is about all of them in relation to each other as well as independently, individually. And I saw much more, much greater interest in the community aspects of this and looking for more and more ways to build a stronger community of whatever kind of community you can have in a class that's artificial [in that] it only lasts 16 weeks.

Another professor said, "If people are starting to develop more awareness of the self and their environment, then they can be more intentional in contributing to a collaborative environment, I think." A different professor noted the community built within the contemplative learning circle itself: "[The] social, personal support, and network, the community within the larger community that we've built is really meaningful."

#### **Tierney's six aspects of culture.**

After asking each participant to describe the university's culture in their own terms, I shared with them the work of Tierney (2008), which said culture is comprised of six elements:

- organization mission;
- environment in which the organization operates;
- socialization of new members;
- information sharing among members;

- strategy; and
- leadership.

I asked each person which of these elements support contemplative education on their campus. All were in place to some degree, with strategy being the least supportive element. The following six sections summarize participants' responses.

***Organizational mission.***

The university's written mission statement found on the university's website indicated that the institution's liberal arts approach to education emphasizes life skills such as critical thinking, open inquiry, thoughtful expression, personal growth and lifelong learning, and civic engagement. All but two people interviewed said this wording, despite not specifying "contemplative," set the tone for an environment supportive of contemplative education. That is, in a broad sense the mission statement's language could be perceived as embracing contemplative education as part of a liberal arts mission. As noted earlier regarding non-physical structures, a professor said:

I think my colleagues who are active in this look at ways in which the practices we're doing and the reasons we're doing them align with [name of school's] mission, including its emphasis on critical thinking. So, the mission came first and then we're like "See, okay, well, here this works in relation to or alignment with."

An administrator said the mission statement is about "educating the whole person, making them world citizens, socially responsible, and I think that also aligns with...mindfulness." This administrator and a staff member both indicated that in creating new programs, the university's mission statement—and the division- and department-level mission statements derived from it—are taken into serious consideration. The two outliers

regarding the mission statement's alignment with contemplative education were an administrator and a student. The administrator may have been looking for specific inclusion of the word "contemplative" in the mission statement because this person's response was, "No mention as of now." The student said, "The only reason I don't see that is I don't know if it's in place. I'm unaware, but that doesn't mean [the mission statement] doesn't exist."

Combined in several people's responses regarding mission was reference to the university's new strategic plan, which was to be presented to the university's governing board in fall semester after conclusion of my data collection. To me, these responses indicated that mission and strategic plan can go hand in hand in people's minds. As one professor stated:

From what I can tell from the pieces that have started to come out about it, it is that things like critical thinking, community, like especially local community connections, are going to be quite emphasized in a way that probably has been lacking... and there are different reasons for why that's the case. So, I actually think the contemplative practices that help people examine their own motivations or what it is they are, who they are in the world, as they are beginning to be put in situations where they're building community relations, is going to be invaluable. So I actually think that's going to be a key part of the mission. It might not be labeled as contemplative practices at all, but I do think just implicitly within the desire to be more community connected, that's going to be a super important piece of that.

The university's strategic planning website contained reference to the mission statement being revised and said a mission is what leads the plans, strategies, programs, and culture of the university.

***Environment in which the organization operates.***

In addressing this aspect of culture, the students I interviewed immediately began describing the geographic location of the campus, saying the surrounding city is very open minded and activist and social-justice oriented, just like the university. Said one student, “The city itself, is very reflective of [name of university]. I guess [name of university] is reflective of [name of city]. So, same thing.” Another student said, “I feel like [name of city] attracts all the artists, the strange people, or people who didn’t fit into general society. So we have people who identify as...more quirky or odd.”

There was an even split among faculty, staff, and administrators regarding identifying environment as the surrounding metropolis, as opposed to the campus community, administration, or state politics. As with students’ comments, their comments about the city included: “The culture of this area beyond the campus...is supportive of these practices,” “I feel our identity and the identity of the [city’s name] are in some ways linked,” and “There’s a predisposition in this community toward looking at things not just one way but from different angles and not just saying spirituality can only be in a religious setting... this environment really is much more fluid in these definitions.” Said one professor, “In terms of community environment, there are ways it’s happening to some degree very explicitly around contemplation.” Another professor said, “We are a place that totally supports alternative and complementary practices of all kinds.”

Among those faculty, staff, and administrators who identified environment as limited to campus, there were mixed comments regarding whether that environment was supportive. Two people noted the physical presence of a walking labyrinth as indicative of a supportive



environment, with one professor saying, “That’s as important as the library to what we do. It’s a symbol of something. Basically it says think and reflect, be mindful, contemplate. It’s what we do here.” An administrator said “the environment, clearly, because we believe in educating the whole person and part of it is the mindfulness.” Another administrator narrowed environment to mean a specific division in which he or she worked, saying the division was supportive of contemplative education but questioned the rest of campus’s support of that division’s efforts:

If you’re treated like a second-class citizen, which many staff are on college campuses, then you can get that dynamic where you don’t feel you have a supportive environment, where your faculty could engage in this work as a partner.

Another administrator defined environment as the university’s administration and said it was not supportive of contemplative education. A professor referenced environment as meaning all of higher education and said it does support contemplative education:

We’re part, as you know, of a larger national movement with more and more schools going in this direction, so there’s interest in that. In terms of emphasis on educating the whole student, that’s an important part of higher education.

This same person further referenced the state’s politics, saying contemplative practices “can offer some people an opportunity to find some comfort and strength in a very oppressive, unfriendly, and unsupportive political situation.”

***Socialization of new members.***

For this aspect of culture, most participants seemed to perceive socialization of new members as supporting contemplative education on their campus—at least for faculty and students, and this was in large part substantiated in my documents review. The opportunities

for socialization for faculty included orientation for new faculty members where all learning circles are explained, including the contemplative learning circle; the introduction of reflection and contemplation to cohorts in the university's campus-wide initiative to strengthen students' critical thinking abilities; and a faculty mentoring program where a more seasoned professor is paired with a newcomer to help them through their first year on campus. A professor said awareness of contemplative education "trickles in," depending on who serves as the mentor. One administration said, "I do think that new faculty are attuned to having all these learning opportunities." One professor, however, said the campus' socialization around contemplative education is "very self-selective. I think people find out about it not necessarily through the hiring process. I think people fall into it later, when they realize other people are doing it."

For students, even though the terminology used by staff in student affairs differs from that of faculty, move-in day and orientation events were noted as opportunities for staff to learn the interests of students and align them with suitable activities. For example, a staff member who assists with move-in day said, "So, like, if they are really interested in X, Y and Z, we're, like, 'Oh, we have these programs you might like' as we're helping them unload." An administrator said getting students socially engaged is a priority "so they feel like they belong here." This person continued, "If they feel they belong here then they're not going to the meditation class by themselves, or if they are, it's because they're going to meet new friends. That meditation group has become their friends, and that's exciting. We don't want them hanging out in their rooms and not doing anything."

There were mixed perceptions, however, regarding how new staff are socialized around contemplative education. A few faculty indicated they assumed the same

socialization was held for staff as for them, but one administrator said “probably not so much with staff.” A staff member addressed this disparity head on, saying,

It’s being established right from the beginning for new faculty as, like, this is something that we do here. It might not be something you choose to do but it’s something we do. ...Staff usually get forgotten in all this, but the fact that we open the mindful campus workshop, for example, to staff for them to participate—there’s not that many that choose to participate because they’ve been socialized to think those programs are not for them—but, we do open up the opportunity and the faculty learning circle, too, is open to staff and so that’s kind of important as well.

Student affairs staff are more socialized around this topic, even though, as noted earlier, the terminology used to describe it is different. An administrator said,

Every time you get a new staff member, they do our orientation where [we] review our mission statement, our strategic direction. Now, do we sit and show the Tree? No. Do we sit and talk about the term? No. But we talk about outcomes, goals... and our big terms are, the things we do specifically name, are reflective practice and experiential learning—those are the things we’ve bought into whole heart.

One student remembered being socialized about contemplative education through freshman orientation, where there was “a lot of emphasis on reflection and getting to know the other students in our group and stuff...by discussing our lives and definitely more contemplative activities.” Another student didn’t recall much about freshman orientation but said:

Once a student takes the step to join something on campus, then that’s when they can be integrated into the contemplative education that is here. So it’s not necessarily thrown at students to be in the contemplative part of [university’s name], but once

they take the step to join a student organization such as mindfulness club, there you go, you got it [laughs].

***Information sharing among members.***

I observed that the contemplative education phenomenon on this campus has no online web presence hosted by the university, although there is a Wordpress site dedicated to its most recent annual conference. The news office also shared a pre-event news release about the conference's keynote speaker, since the public was invited; the conference was mentioned in the last paragraph. Through interviews, I learned the sharing of information on campus about contemplative education and related activities was a mix of email and personal communication. One professor said, "Various emails, invitations, personal communication, interaction with people. They know who's in the learning circle. I've had people come up to me and say 'What do you do there?' It really runs the whole gamut." A couple of faculty acknowledged an oversaturation of campus email in general: one saying "people still read it," while the other said "whether it's internalized, I don't know."

Students indicated social media as being the most used form of information sharing about contemplative education, particularly Facebook, although the mindfulness club does have a webpage, as do all student clubs, through the student activities website. I observed the mindfulness festival page on Facebook had more than 1,300 likes. A faculty member said the student organization was responsible for getting the word out about mindfulness, more so than faculty: "They're at freshman orientations, they're tabling at student work fairs. That is where a lot of that information is happening and for [name of mindfulness festival] they have huge posters on Facebook and they do all sorts of advertising."

Despite these initiatives, one staff member indicated seeing very little information sharing about contemplative education on campus. An administrator said the campus community doesn't always communicate well:

Our faculty/staff, I think there is a lot of good people and a lot of good work, and very little communication...you don't know what the right hand is doing and the left hand is over here. I don't know how to describe that culturally, but I think that is a piece of our culture where it's like "Oh, they're now saying that, too?" That happens a lot... "Are you doing that, too? Why are we both doing this?" I can't think of the term for that, but that happens a lot.

Another administrator noted information "comes from different conferences, workshops, books people are reading."

***Strategy.***

This aspect of culture garnered a variety of responses. One administrator said "I can't answer" whether institutional strategy supports contemplative education, adding "I guess that's a no." Another administrator said decisions at this university are made "bottom-up, they are not top-down. I find very few things are actually top-down, especially in terms of any techniques or what you do in your classroom... Decision-making comes from the faculty and is then brought up." One professor mentioned shared governance in decision-making. Another professor said:

In so far as the strategy has been in service of the liberal arts, you know, then there's strategic support for contemplative learning. Strategy evokes for me the idea of administrators, and I think sometimes there's a bifurcation between administrators and their interests and faculty and students and their interests, and obviously faculty

interests may be different from student interests and stuff. So there's all sorts of different interests.

Other faculty, staff, and administrators mainly referenced three areas when discussing strategy at this university: the university's strategic plan, operations of the learning circle, and the key person behind this campus' contemplative activities.

Five of the faculty, staff, and administrators mentioned the presence of a strategic plan as guiding the university's culture, a draft of which had been presented to campus and was awaiting final approval by the university's governing board during my data collection. According to the draft, the strategic plan's core values are central to the institution's identity, and these core values included innovation, sustainability, and diversity. Among the plan's strategic directions were student success and community engagement. "It's kind of cookie-cutter," said one administrator. "I don't know that it offers anything unique that some other campus couldn't have exactly the same one." One professor said the strategic planning process was "maybe not as transparent as it could have been." Others seemed more hopeful that the new plan could embrace contemplative education. One professor said, "I'm sure contemplative practices aren't mentioned in the strategic plan but... just like with the organizational mission, I think we'll find ways in which what we do supports the strategic plan." A staff member said contemplative education "is kind of at the forefront of new approaches to pedagogy" and, therefore, could fit the plan's innovation component. The components mentioned here from the strategic plan's draft were later approved following my data collection.

Referencing strategy within the learning circle, an administrator said the group's leaders have been "good and intentional" in their strategy of developing the circle. Another

administrator said the existence of learning circles was effective strategy for contemplative education. One professor described the learning circle as “very egalitarian,” with members following through on what they say they will do. Another professor acknowledged the group is starting to change its strategy:

A lot of the members of the learning circle who started in their second or third year of the learning circle are now sort of stepping up. So there’s been fluctuations in attendance, who comes, who’s gone, who is no longer part of it, because it doesn’t always mean that everybody’s idea or expectations of what this learning circle should be [are the same], so for some they think it should definitely be more of a spiritual practice, for some people it’s not enough meditation and for some it’s not academic enough. So we’re going to try having a chapter from different books with different discussions for the fall, so we’ll try out different things.

As to the leader of the learning circle, one administrator praised this person’s strategy as being inclusive of all people and also being “really good about not pushing people.” Another professor in describing strategy that supports contemplative education said:

I don’t think a mindful campus requires that everybody participates, right? So I think that’s actually central to the vision of this... It’s, you know, it’s an invitation. And it’s something that a lot of people have found useful and helpful and it has created communities on campus that cross faculty/staff and student lines. And I think there are very few places that that’s as fluid depending upon what people are interested in.

Students said they were unfamiliar with strategy employed by the university’s administration, but they said their student club and events strategies were based on small-group input or decision-making made in isolation. Descriptive comments included, “With [name of the

mindfulness club], our strategy and our mission is based and centered on contemplative education” and “I don’t know too much about that just because I’m a new leader...but with [name of mindfulness festival] planning, I was on a planning committee for that and we met weekly and discussed things.” The school’s small size limits group work because leaders are stretched thin, according to one student who said, “It leads people to get stressed out and they’re like, ‘I’ll just make these decisions by myself because not one else is going to do it.’”

### *Leadership.*

Leadership was the last cultural aspect identified by Tierney (2008). Asked whether leadership was a cultural aspect that supports contemplative education, most participants indicated leadership supports this initiative on campus, mainly in administrators’ awareness of it and no actions to stop them from doing it. Participants seemed to agree that the top leadership, including the president, understands what contemplative education is. One administrator said of the president, “I know [the president] is open to it. I haven’t had any discussion just on that with [the president], but from what I understand [the president] is supportive of that.” A professor noted, “It’s helpful when the existing leaders have an idea of what contemplative practice and pedagogy are because they can then support it being used in our classrooms.” Students indicated liking the new top leader and other upper-level administrators, with one student saying, “I don’t think any administration leadership would shoot down contemplative education.”

Participants’ explanations of the leadership culture echoed those made regarding leadership structures in place to support contemplative education, in which participants indicated that various levels of authority support it as they would other methods of enhancing teaching and learning. “This administration basically says ‘Do your thing, be creative,’” one



professor said. Despite this support, though, “we haven’t really had anybody sit with us from the administration,” another professor noted about the learning circle.

The majority of my research participants worked in academic affairs or student affairs where they indicated a supportive culture toward contemplative education in their work with students, but this was less so for one staff member who worked in another area of campus.

This person said:

I wouldn’t say from my understanding of how senior leadership makes decisions or works through problems, that this is being incorporated at their level. ...I mean, I’ve thought about it... It’s funny, when I was at that [name of conference] a couple summers ago we talked about how like we spend so much time talking about how to incorporate this into our classrooms, but who has the courage to incorporate this into a faculty meeting, you know? Who’s going to propose that it’s going to become part of our department gatherings, who’s going to bring this, I mean, am I going to bring this to the next meeting with my colleagues? We’re not really there yet. Not to say that anybody would have a meltdown or anything if we did propose it, but I don’t know if we’re at that level of cultural saturation.

Several participants praised the professor who started the learning circle in creating a supportive culture, in large part because of this person’s inclusivity. That person is “phenomenal,” one administrator said, adding that even though the two haven’t always agreed, the leader has a “quiet and just admirable way [that] has brought us together, kept us excited.” A professor said this leader and the rest of the learning circle has:

Gone to great pains...to reach out to people in physics and biology, people who might see some of that as kind of romantic or not scientific, so that we have people in environmental studies who do this kind of stuff, and biology.

An administrator said, the “leaders are really people like (individual’s name) who organize conferences, and there are probably five or six key people across campus from different departments who have taken on leadership roles for this.”

An observation made while asking participants to comment on Tierney’s (2008) framework was that they did not always understand Tierney’s terms, with three in particular. For example, in my first interviews, I was often asked what was meant by “socialization,” or “information sharing,” or “strategy.” I also learned that when I included the related questions the author provided for each term, participants became more confused. In subsequent interviews, therefore, I shorted my questions to just the keyword, asking participants to talk about the term as they understood it. This proved to be more productive in obtaining responses.

### **Structures and Cultures Needed**

In all interviews, I asked participants what additional structures and cultures were needed, if any, to better support their university as a mindful campus. Again, I received a variety of responses. Many seemed to think something more could be done, either structurally or culturally, to better support Contemplative State University as a mindful campus, while others said it was simply a matter of engaging more people in the structures and cultures that already existed. A summary of their responses for each aspect follows.

### **Structures needed.**

For structures needed, I heard a mix of responses—from no additional structures needed, to more participation in what already exists, to specific physical, non-physical, and financial structures. In explaining his response of “maybe nothing” is needed, one professor said, “...in that some ways I think the institution does its best when it gets out of people’s way.” Two staff members, a student and a professor said more participation by others on campus is what is needed, with one staff member explaining more precisely: “There’s a lot and it becomes getting more people engaged in the opportunities that exist instead of, like, new structures.”

Nearly everyone interviewed recommended an established, on-going funding line to continue existing initiatives, especially considering that the person holding the special professorship position can only do so for a certain number of years. At that point, the position is given to someone else whose academic interests may be different. Other ideas expressed were research into the influence of contemplative education on students, additional outdoor learning space, greater recognition by top administrators, more consistent acknowledgement of faculty members’ work in their annual reviews, and ways to engage more science faculty in the contemplative movement. Among students, one person requested a dedicated space for sitting quietly as the existing meditation room is often booked with yoga classes and not available for drop-ins, another wanted more projects for students to engage in with faculty, and a third wanted more classes centered on meditation and mindfulness.

A comment heard from both faculty and staff was to make available more training on how to incorporate mindfulness into teaching, beyond just the annual conference and existing

professional development opportunities. “I feel like a lot of our faculty are more traditional in the classroom and they don’t take the student as a whole in mind, which is a sad,” one staff member said and indicated hearing complaints from a lot of students about some of the faculty. One professor suggested there be greater emphasis on contemplative education in graduate school so new faculty come into teaching know contemplative skills and how to incorporate them into their pedagogy. Yet, one professor remarked that contemplative education can’t be forced:

I think it has to be somewhat self-driven, the whole venture. It can’t be something that’s forced upon you and that’s where my issue comes up again with what other people think I’m doing or should be doing. You can’t all of a sudden impose mindfulness on somebody. They have to be coming from that place where they’re like I felt: “This is important for myself and because I realize that myself I can also share this with others.”

An administrator suggested greater communication and collaboration with academic affairs to provide these contemplative practices to students, drawing on the yoga expertise and other experience student affairs staff have with leading self-awareness and reflection exercises in developing the whole student. This might also include formalizing contemplative practices into the curriculum, as service-learning has been at Contemplative State University. This person further elaborated:

We have a certain skill set faculty don’t have, so if you’re doing a mindfulness class, for example, and you want them to be quiet and sit still in the woods, well, we have outdoor educators who can take you out into the woods and do those soft skills with your class and talk about reflection... I feel like if we tied those incentives to the

curriculum I think it would not take us long to become a very mindful campus in everything we're doing because we'd have that connection between academic and student affairs much more seamless.

As I concluded my research, a group of faculty was preparing, at the request of the provost, a proposal to the university administration to somehow formalize contemplative education, in the form of either a contemplative studies minor or a cluster of designator courses. One professor who was among the proposal writers, said, "I don't know what [it] would look like exactly, but we're looking at some other ways to create groupings of classes that have some special designation."

### **Cultures needed.**

For cultures needed, again there was a desire by some for greater participation in the existing culture that supports contemplative education. Among more specific suggestions, participants' comments fit into three categories: administrative behaviors, language, and concepts of learning. A majority of participants indicated any cultural change must start at the top, by administration taking a more top-down approach such as inserting contemplative education more specifically into the strategic plan and university branding, endowing a full-time professorship in contemplative pedagogy, becoming a "personal champion" of contemplative practices, working to boost staff involvement, and demonstrating the practices in their meetings and strategies. The latter, especially, would go a long way in "anchoring it in the culture," a staff member said. An administrator summarized administrative behavior this way:

If the chancellor would at some point either show up at [the annual] conference...if she would issue a statement or support it at an all-faculty meeting or something, I

think that would probably be the next official push. And again, you know, we do a lot of bottom-up, but I think sometimes if you kind of have the blessing from above and you see that your leadership is also on board, that kind of pushes it to the next level.

As to language, three people mentioned expanding the conversation about contemplative education, which requires using the same vocabulary across campus, and remaining “open culturally,” as one staff member said, “so that there isn’t a kind of tendency to exclude students who might not be down with all the rest of the [identity] trappings...For students, I think that’s a critical issue.”

Two administrators, one from academic affairs and the other from student affairs, indicated a broader “shift” was needed in how learning takes place. One said:

I think a shift in our emphasis from entirely fact-driven, objective mindedness ... So what I’m suggesting is that what we value as a skill level is what has to change. And as a result of that, the valuing of contemplative education would also change. If we start valuing cultivation of first-person abilities... if we value that, then contemplative practices would become important anyway, right?

The other administrator said students’ educational needs have changed in recent years, and while some areas of campus have changed programming to fit their needs, other areas have not. This person stated:

One of the biggest cultural shifts is we’ve got to change our paradigm for how learning takes place today. [Students] are telling us what’s happening in their classrooms. We know the professors that haven’t changed their syllabus in 15 years. We know the professors that aren’t engaged in more thoughtful ways or teaching, like

flipped classroom or even basic scaffolding, progressive skills—we know who those professors are because they're telling us. ...I don't think we're viewing this as a Tree [of Contemplative Practices] that could be done. So I think that's the biggest cultural shift—that language and that knowledge has to be there.

Two professors seemed to resist top-down inclusion of contemplative education in the campus culture, with one instead saying:

I think we had a pretty good culture here before we started doing this stuff, and so I'm not sure what it would mean for us to be a mindful campus. ...Maybe we could be a mindful campus in the sense that we recognize and include in our toolbox of tools we use as part of the way we teach our students and the way we work with each other, that we draw on these techniques to help realize the deepest goals and vision and inspiration for the university. That's how I would see it. It's not like "Oh, a mindful campus where you encounter mindfulness practices everywhere you go"—yeah, you will encounter those in some places you go, you will encounter other things, but we're all working toward the same goal.

Among answers to this interview question, there seemed to be some overlap in people's thinking of what constitutes structure and what constitutes culture. Two suggestions—increased participation in what already exists and greater number of meditation classes—were supplied by a few participants for both the structures- and cultures-needed questions. It seemed the definitions of structures and cultures became blurred, or maybe closely intertwined. This seemed particularly clear in this student's response to the culture-needed question:

I guess more opportunities to engage in mindfulness practices, so like offering classes that center around meditation and mindfulness. I think this will ultimately make contemplative education and mindfulness, like, an integral aspect of our culture. I don't know if you've heard of Naropa University... Yeah, well, I feel like since they offer a lot of classes, like meditation classes, Buddhism, [inaudible] and all that, I feel it makes mindfulness more a part of their culture. Like, that's what they're known for. So I definitely think we could follow suit and offer more activities like that.

### **Other Cultural Observations**

I made two additional cultural observations during my study of Contemplative State University: 1) Despite contradictions of how pervasive the mindful campus concept is at the university, others considered it enough of the institution's culture to make mindfulness a theme in a large-scale, one-time event on campus and to mention it on campus tours; and, 2) students who take a course incorporating contemplative practices and like the pedagogy make an effort to take more of these courses. Below are further details on these observations.

To keep the number of contemplative education supporters in perspective, a staff member said when talking about culture, "There are many, many, many faculty who have zero interest in this whatsoever [laughs], so we shouldn't overstate how pervasive the culture is, but again it's more about openness to and tolerance of than you would find on another campus." As one professor said, however, "I keep hearing it more and more as a sort of mainstream idea that is intersecting with other important aspects on campus." This intersection crystalized in a major event just prior to my data collection, which I believe is indicative of the perceived culture at this institution, even if it's not explicitly stated by the institution. Five people I interviewed mentioned a three-day national research conference for



students held on campus that drew 4,000 students from across the country, and which had a mindfulness thread woven throughout. The event took place about a month before the start of my research. The planner hired for the event was an outside contractor, and 30 university faculty and staff, including several of the contemplative learning circle members, served on conference committees, according to the event's printed program guide. A news feature on the university homepage written by the university's communications office stated that in addition to the conference's main focus, the upcoming event would imbue "what we do best" as a university: art, mindfulness and sustainability. The printed program stated a variety of contemplative practices would be offered to help event participants "reflect, refocus, and recharge." For each of the three values, a series of special interest events was created. The printed program guide indicated the mindful campus track featured eight presentations related to contemplative practice, and the mindfulness room was open throughout the event, too, for walk-ins needing a quiet respite. The event's program guide also encouraged a culture of listening during the conference. The conference also featured a well-known contemplative scientist as its plenary speaker, who reportedly led the full arena of students and faculty in a moment of silent centering at the start of the talk. A professor said of the hired event planner:

She said that mindfulness is one of the distinctive things about [name of school] and so there was this whole thread where some of our students led sessions and some faculty led sessions and lots of people came. These were not part of the formal presentations, these were an optional thing you could do during your day.

This professor added:

I led one and went to two of them, and I thought who is going to come to this? They are so busy and everybody who's presenting and the students are going to want to explore [name of city], and the ones I went to there was like 25-30 people, mostly students and some faculty. So because of the work we've been doing, the person who organized the logistics and everything to plan [the event] moved contemplative practices into a very prominent position. ...That was like a big stage with high visibility....And I'm sure that came about because we created an environment which somebody noticed. [Name of school] has never said this is one of our distinctive things we do, formally, in any of the promotional marketing materials.

This conference stood out in one student's mind, who said that in addition to "all the things going on," the meditation room and campus quad offered a number of worthwhile and inspiring workshops on different ways of focusing one's attention. These included slacklining, poetry, lovingkindness meditation, in which individuals focus love and kindness toward themselves and others, and insight meditation, in which individuals focus on particular aspects of experience such as breathing, body sensations, or thoughts. "That was really cool," the student said. "It was like a whole community within [name of event] that formed around it." The student summarized the thread as "a lot of fun," and reflecting on his/her time at Contemplative State University, added, "I think in the time I've been here more people know about mindfulness." The student said peers who give campus tours to prospective students and their families have said they use the founding of the mindfulness club and mindfulness festival as examples of how students can really get involved on campus and make a difference. On the campus tour I joined, the student ambassador did not mention

the meditation club or mindfulness festival but did point out the meditation room during the walking tour and said it was well used.

Also related to culture, I observed in my case study that students who responded well to contemplative activities in their classes and who were active in the student mindfulness club sought out additional faculty to take such courses from, even when the courses didn't align with their major. For example, one student I interviewed was a political science major who took a course in health and wellness simply because of meeting the professor at Contemplative State University's annual conference related to mindful campuses. Another student, upon hearing me mention a practice-specific course I observed, indicated wanting to take the course, even though it was not in the student's major. A non-traditional-aged student I met toward the end of my research, who I did not officially interview, was creating an individual degree concentration around end-of-life care and mindfulness under the mentorship of one of my faculty interviewees. This student was also enrolled in the other professor's course that I observed, which was practice-specific. After I met this student, the mentoring professor said, "Now you've had a glimpse of how students interested in [contemplative education] gravitate to these classes."

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 has summarized the key findings about how a mindful campus operates based on interviews with 15 people at a public, liberal arts university I am calling Contemplative State University. The research was conducted during the summer of 2016. My participants consisted of five faculty members, five administrators who also teach, three students, and two staff members. I emailed or telephoned two additional people associated with the university to ask for documents and clarification on activities. Through my data collection, I found this campus to operate as a mindful campus through a key group of people

who engage themselves and their students with activities found on CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices both inside and outside of the classroom, and who are supported by a loosely-coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system that consisted of specific structural and cultural elements. Structural elements were physical, non-physical, and financial. Cultural themes that emerged from participants' description of the campus culture in their own terms regarding contemplative education were an embodiment of the liberal arts, and community and connection. All of Tierney's (2008) points of what constitute culture—organizational mission, environment, information sharing, socialization of members, strategy, and leadership—were indicated as being in place to support contemplative education in this campus culture, albeit in varying degrees and with strategy being the least present.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions**

This chapter presents conclusions from my case study that was undertaken to determine how a mindful campus is operated and what structures and cultures are in place to support its use of contemplative education. During a three-and-half-month period in the summer of 2016, I researched an accredited, public, liberal arts university enrolling about 4,000 students with this primary research question:

- How is a mindful campus operated?, which has two corollary research questions:
  - What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?
  - What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus?

My data collection included interviews with faculty, students, administrators and staff; observations of people, events, and activities; and a review of documents. Chapter 4 presented findings of this research. This chapter will analyze those findings in the context of my conceptual framework, while also addressing the previously identified gap in the current knowledge and how my study helps fill it; summarize limitations associated with this study; review the conceptual framework in greater detail and identify how it did not fully apply in this setting; and, name implications of my study and recommendations for future research.

### **Analysis**

My study exploring how a mindful campus is operated was needed because this topic is a “nascent field of investigation,” according to Shapiro et al. (2011, p. 520), despite the non-scholarly evidence that contemplative education is a growing phenomenon (Appalachian

State University, 2015; Barlow, 2016; Brown University, n.d.; Cannon, 2012; Elon University, 2016; P. F. Morgan, 2015; The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2014; The Curators of the University of Missouri, 2016). In addition, Bush (2011b) said models of contemplative educational institutions are necessary for contemplative education to advance “to the next level” (p. 235) as a field. Most existing literature addressed how-tos for faculty (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Berila, 2016; Dietert, 2014; Garretson, 2010; Huston, 2010; Lichtmann, 2010; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Pierson, 1998; Shippee, 2010; Thomas, 2011). Very little scholarship had been published offering organizational insight. While there were three studies about Naropa University (Burggraf, 2011; Goss, 1999; Simmer-Brown, 2009), which was founded as a Buddhist institution with contemplative education as its core, and one descriptive article of how a faculty/student mindfulness organization got started at a state university (DuFon & Christian, 2013), I could find no studies of how mainstream universities operated organizationally as a mindful campus. Therefore, a major gap in the contemplative education literature was an example of how a mindful campus is operated.

Many U.S. college graduates lack the skills most people in society assume degree-holders should have (Arum & Roksa, 2011), and there may be more that higher education can do to prepare students for life after college (Roksa et al., 2016). Contemplative education has been identified as one innovative way to better educate the whole person (Miller-Lane, 2012; Sullivan, 2014; Thurman, 2006), so it stands to reason that a campus successfully operated as a mindful campus should be studied. This assumption is especially timely as there is mounting evidence suggesting academic benefits of contemplative education (Bach & Alexander, 2015; Sable, 2014; Shapiro et al., 2011; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006); and improved wellness among college students as a result of some contemplative

practices (Caldwell et al., 2010; Greeson et al., 2014; Palmer & Rodger, 2009). It can be assumed that operating such a mindful campus model might require a special organizational structure and culture for contemplative education to thrive, and that is what my study sought to find out.

To summarize the findings presented in Chapter 4, this campus is operated as a mindful campus in that a key group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators engage themselves and others inside and outside of the classroom with contemplative practices found on CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices, and they are supported by a loosely-coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system. The academic group engaged in these practices is a relatively small group in comparison to the overall campus community, while outside-the-classroom activities through student life are more common but are referred to using different vocabulary: self-awareness and reflection, versus contemplative pedagogy using The Tree of Contemplative Practices.

In answering my corollary research questions, I discovered that three types of structures are in place to support contemplative education on this particular campus: physical structures, non-physical structures, and financial structures. I also discovered that when asked to describe the campus culture that supports contemplative education, without a prompt of what constitutes culture, two major themes emerged from participants' responses: an embodiment of the institution's liberal arts focus, and community and connection. When told of Tierney's (2008) six-point framework of what constitutes culture (organizational mission, environment, information sharing, socialization of members, strategy, and leadership), participants indicated all were in place to support contemplative education in varying degrees, with strategy being the least present.

The following sections will compare these major findings and their details to the review of literature found in Chapter 2.

### **Conceptual Framework—Organization Theory**

The conceptual framework for my study was organization theory, which provides a way to understand organizations and their processes (G. Morgan, 1980), and gain insight into how they function (Bess & Dee, 2012; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Luhman & Cunliffe, 2013; Willmott, 1995). A key principle of organization theory is that it can open one's mind to new viewpoints and possibilities (Hatch, 2013; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Perrow, 1973). Organization theory comprises the how and why of organizations, which informs leadership and management (Bess & Dee, 2012), and it assumes that organizations can be analyzed on a system level (Hatch, 2013; Scott, 1961) because organizations have interconnecting elements (Meadows, 2008). This theory also assumes that an organization has macro topics, namely cultures, structures, technology, environments (Hannah & Venkatachary, 2010), and power (Hatch, 2013). I chose to look at structure and culture in particular for this organizational research study because universities are constructed through a combination of culture and structure (Bess & Dee, 2012; Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013).

Bastedo (2012) said one way to look at organization theory is as a rich narrative of social processes that are “demonstrably plausible and tested empirically” and can be generalized to similar cases (p. 336). That is how I see Contemplative State University. Its rich narratives by faculty, staff, students, and administrators involved in its contemplative education phenomenon indicated how a mindful campus can be operated, along with what structures and cultures support this initiative. An instrumental descriptive case study can provide insight into a larger issue (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011), and while the findings of



my study cannot necessarily be generalized to all schools, they can provide a model or at least insight and ideas that other institutions can consider in implementing their own initiatives regarding contemplative education.

Through my participants' narratives, I learned that Contemplative State University operates as a loosely coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system in relation to contemplative education. Meadows (2008) said relationships and interconnectedness are what hold the elements of a system or organization together. Because much of the operation of this institution as a mindful campus relied on relationships and collaboration, the operation represents the postmodern, quantum paradigm perspective described by Manning (2013), Shelton and Darling (2003), Wheatley (2005, 2006), and Zohar (1997). According to Manning (2013), this quantum paradigm of higher education differs from the Newtonian paradigm that focused on objects, and it is an effective method of viewing colleges and universities as organizations when "innovation, collaboration, and creativity" are needed (p. 9). Implementing new initiatives at a college or university depends on the structures and cultures in place on campus (Kezar & Lester, 2009), and my research confirmed this aspect of organization theory. Through my interviews, observations, and review of documents, I found that both structures and cultures were in place to support the operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus. Next, I will address each those components in relation to the literature review.

### **Structures.**

As noted in the literature review, structures are essentially systems (Birnbaum, 1988), and a system can be defined as a set of elements coherently organized and interconnected (Meadows, 2008). The term "loosely coupled system" refers to the fluid structure of

colleges and universities, where units within the organization are attached but retain some separation (Weick, 1976). Birnbaum (1988) said loose coupling can be beneficial in that it allows the system's independent parts to be more sensitive to its environment and work adaptively to changing needs by creating and maintaining solutions to new situations. Furthermore, Kezar and Lester (2009) said collaboration among parts can be critical in fulfilling a college or university's mission, successfully addressing challenges, and especially in creating new activities such as a research center, interdisciplinary teaching, or similar initiatives. I saw this collaboration at Contemplative State University, where contemplative education leaders were partnering with existing non-physical structures: for example, the affiliation between faculty and the teaching and learning center to create professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, including the contemplative learning circle; faculty and staff exposing students to contemplative practices and inspiring them to form their own mindfulness club through the student affairs division; faculty, staff, and students working together with seven offices to create an annual conference around the mindful campus concept; faculty offering through the registrar's office special topics courses on meditation techniques; and an academic building opening its meditation room for a variety of people on campus to use for contemplative purposes. Contemplative State University's loosely coupled system confirms Birnbaum (1988) and Kezar and Lester (2009) in regards to using adaptive, collaborative work for changing needs of the institution.

Kezar and Lester (2009) also said it is becoming increasingly important for academic affairs and student affairs divisions to work more collaboratively for greater effectiveness. For the most part, I did not see this occurring at my research site. While a staff member said some faculty have invited yoga instructors to come to a class to lead students in yoga and

several participants said the student mindfulness club was formed by students intrigued with mindfulness after being introduced to it by faculty, other participants did not mention any formal collaboration between academics and student affairs. In fact, one administrator specifically said greater collaboration between the two sides of the undergraduate experience was a structure needed to better support Contemplative State University as a mindful campus.

Barbezat and Pingree (2012) said teaching and learning centers, which are devoted to faculty development, often play an integral role in supporting contemplative pedagogy because they bring legitimacy, can facilitate networking, and often have the resources to conduct evaluative research. My findings confirmed this, as I found Contemplative State University's teaching and learning center to be among the collaborating non-physical structures identified by my interviewees. Contemplative State University's teaching and learning center was one of six non-physical structures in place supporting contemplative education. It offered professional development to faculty and supported contemplative education through its sponsorship of a contemplative learning circle, one of approximately 10 learning circles sponsored each semester. The center sponsored orientation for new faculty and made it a practice to share with information about all learning circles during that orientation. The center was also co-sponsoring an internal research project related to the use of contemplative practices during the period of my research.

The literature also presented models for how contemplative practices are incorporated into college and universities. Wall (2014) said these models include practice-specific courses; coursework of any discipline that weaves in the use of contemplative practices; and on-campus extracurricular activities. This, too, was confirmed by my findings at Contemplative State University. As noted in Chapter 4 among structures in place to support

contemplative education, this university offered three practice-specific courses—two of which were interdisciplinary and all of which were considered special topics courses, in that they were not offered every year. The university also offered service-learning courses, which represents a section of the activist branch of The Tree of Contemplative Practices. Also, the faculty and staff I interviewed were all incorporating contemplative practices into their discipline-specific courses. While these individuals taught mainly within the humanities, I observed at the learning circle other faculty and staff from business and STEM disciplines who said they, too, were weaving contemplative practices into their courses. On-campus extra-curricular activities were also discovered within student affairs, from yoga classes and the student mindfulness club, to service-learning opportunities, elements within freshman orientation, and training for outdoor educators. Thurman (2006) encouraged the use of centers for contemplative education, and while the non-scholarly literature revealed that some institutions are changing their organizational structure to support contemplative education through centers (Barlow, 2016; Cannon, 2012; West Chester University, n.d.), I did not find this to be the case at Contemplative State University. Instead of having a center, the university utilized existing structures to support contemplative education. It did, however, create a special annual event addressing the mindful campus concept, as seen in University of North Carolina Asheville (2015) and University of Virginia, (n.d.). Unlike Appalachian State University (2015), it has not created an official faculty/staff organization, nor has it joined a regional contemplative grid such as the Five Colleges of Western Massachusetts network (P. F. Morgan, 2015). At the conclusion of my data collection, however, Contemplative State University was moving in the direction of institutionalization by writing a proposal at the request of the provost to create what my interviewees described

as either a contemplative studies minor or set of designator courses related to mindfulness. Other institutions also have created contemplative minors (Mary Washington University, 2016; Syracuse, 2016; West Chester University, n.d.), while Brown University has a contemplative studies major (Brown University, n.d.).

### **Cultures.**

In talking about culture, participants in my study referenced Contemplative State University's liberal arts mission, as well as community and connection. In college and university settings, Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) said culture offers meaning and context to a group of people. It is the cement holding communities together by shared meanings and values (Gabriel, 2008). Culture can differentiate one campus from another, such as a liberal arts institution from an engineering school (Birnbaum, 1988). Based on these scholars' work, I therefore understood the liberal arts, community, and connection to be the foremost shared meanings and values at my research site—the cement that holds Contemplative State University together.

When applying these foremost shared meanings at Contemplative State University to the six possible cultures identified by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), I found three of the authors' six cultures in place to support the operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus. These three were collegial, developmental, and tangible. While the collegial culture is characterized largely by finding meaning in the disciplines represented by faculty, this culture also is characterized by an emphasis on the liberal arts, as well as leadership that emphasizes collaboration and interdependence—all of which were found as part of my research site's operation as a mindful campus. Yet, the collegial culture also includes a dominance of rationality, which I do not interpret as having room to include

alternative ways of knowing that's inherent in the use of contemplative practices. The developmental culture, meanwhile, finds meaning in the creation of programs and activities that further the personal and professional growth of all involved in the community, which sounds very much like the contemplative education community found at Contemplative State University and the reasons given by my participants for using or supporting contemplative practices. According to the authors, development in this context includes both moral development and critical thinking and has led to great learner-centered education, the latter two of which were certainly seen at my research site. The tangible culture is characterized by finding meaning in community and spiritual grounding, and is manifesting itself, according to the authors, through reflection and identity. This portraiture is also reflective of my findings at Contemplative State University. The cultures of Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) that were not found in my research findings in support of Contemplative State University's operation as a mindful campus were managerial, which focuses on goals and purposes; advocacy, which values confrontation; and virtual, which in large part is based on the use of technology. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) said most institutions have a mix of cultures, so it is not surprising to notice this blend of collegial, development, and tangible at my research site.

A cultural viewpoint I explored more deeply in my interviews was the six-point cultural assessment framework of Tierney (2008), and a strong relation was found between some of his points and my research findings. Tierney's six points were mission, environment, socialization, information sharing, strategy, and leadership. All were in place to some degree in support of contemplative education, with strategy being the least supportive element. I was surprised that participants talked easily and freely about

organizational mission and environment when asked open-endedly about the campus culture, but needed to be prompted with an explanation of Tierney's (2008) framework before addressing the remaining four elements: socialization, information sharing, strategy, and leadership. My thoughts on why this is the case will be explained in the Revisiting the Conceptual Framework subsection below. In the meantime, the next paragraphs will address some aspects of mission and environment in relation to my literature review.

***Mission.***

Mission is the first element of Tierney's (2008) framework, and my findings confirmed this to be integral to culture because three-fifths of my participants identified the Contemplative State University's liberal arts mission as a strong part of its culture. As a public liberal arts university, the institution's leaders may be interested in the argument that educators should distance themselves from contemplative education for fear of advocating religious ideology (Mahani, 2012). Yet in relation to the liberal arts, colleges and universities cannot ignore the deep contemplative and intellectual principles that come from religious traditions, according to Thurman (2008). If they do, the author argued, a liberal arts education does not liberate students—rather, it informs students but does not properly prepare them for the responsibilities of humanism. This could support an argument that if Contemplative State University's culture is deeply rooted in its mission of providing a liberal arts education, it is highly appropriate for its leaders to support contemplative education—but they may want to ensure religious traditions are kept in historical context and are not confused with advocating any particular ideologies.

### ***Environment.***

Environment is a macro topic within organization theory (Hannah & Venkatachary, 2010) and is also among Tierney's (2008) six-point cultural assessment framework. More narrowly, Doyle (2012) identified geographic location as a primary organizational factor in one community college's decisions about program development and said this finding contributed to the understanding of organization theory because it showed that knowing the strengths and weaknesses of that setting could impact the success of programming. Again, my findings confirmed these authors' work in organization theory. I found my research participants quickly identified environment as an important aspect of Contemplative State University's culture in terms of support for contemplative education, particularly the geographic setting in a city considered just as progressive, open minded, and social justice oriented as the campus. This community was said to attract people interested in contemplative practices, as evidenced by the strong community support for the student-organized mindfulness festival.

Beyond mission and environment, another aspect of culture revealed in my case study is that students who enjoy the use of contemplative practices in class seek out other faculty who use this pedagogy. This observation relates to an item in the Debates section of Chapter 2 in which I identified research that has shown students with a pre-existing interest in serving others tend to be drawn to service-learning courses (Blyth et al., as cited in Blankson et al., 2015). The concern within the scholarly community was that modifications may need to be made to service-learning courses to make an educational impact on students not pre-disposed to that type of pedagogy. I believe, therefore, that it is plausible that, similarly, modifications may need to be made to courses incorporating contemplative education to have an



educational impact on students who are uninterested in or otherwise not pre-disposed to contemplative practices, which may also impact attempts to institutionalize contemplative education. In reverse, Blankson et al. (2015) found that students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) did not develop as much civic awareness as peers at other schools, in part, the authors believed, because that institutional culture already paralleled one of service. The authors, therefore, recommended different assignments, readings, and institutional support to strengthen the focus on social justice and civic responsibility so the HBCU students could learn beyond what they already know. Perhaps the same should occur with students already familiar with and accustomed to contemplative education.

This section connected literature related to my conceptual framework of organization theory with findings from my study. Since my Chapter 2 also explored the topic of contemplative education, my next section will discuss the relation between that literature and my study's findings.

### **Contemplative Education**

Two main reasons were discussed in the literature review for incorporating contemplative education into colleges and universities: to cultivate greater meaning, purpose, and spirituality in students' lives; and to improve students' overall well-being, including the management of stress. Based on my research at Contemplative State University, I grouped the reasons given by my participants for using or supporting contemplative education at Contemplative State University into six themes:

- student growth (personal growth, reflection, introspection, and self-awareness);
- connection to themselves, the material they are studying, and to each other;
- openness/awareness;

- stillness/slowing down;
- transition to the current class period; and
- building a sense of community.

These reasons confirmed much of what is found in the literature, but not everything.

Reasons given by the scholars I cited for strengthening attention to the present moment in academia, albeit in slightly different terminology, included creating a space for learning (O'Reilley, 1998), encouraging a more imaginative form of inquiry that can complement critical thinking (Bush, 2011b), creating whole people to address today's complex challenges (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010), and awareness of their own and others' suffering (Kahane, 2009; Noddings, 2012). Several of the faculty I interviewed said they used a few minutes of meditation to transition to the current class period; I did not read any mention of this use in the literature, although their actions might align with O'Reilley's (1998) broad concept of creating a space for learning. I found that the highly popular, extracurricular yoga classes were offered on campus for both stress management and personal introspection.

Contemplative education has been called a form of transformative learning, just like service-learning, and development of each pedagogical method is considered similar (P. F. Morgan, 2015). Stanton and Erasmus (2013) characterized service-learning in the United States as "a grassroots, bottom-up innovation" (p. 88) developed by a "loosely coupled, highly motivated group of independent and independently thinking, activists," which is nearly identical language I used in describing contemplative education at my research site. Stanton and Erasmus (2013) further stated that service-learning began as a pedagogy and was increasingly embraced by students and rode the waves of "larger, national reform efforts" (p. 72). This, too, seems similar to Contemplative State University where faculty were using

contemplative education as a pedagogy; student affairs personnel were engaging students in many of the practices, albeit using different terminology; inspired students started their own initiatives related to mindfulness; and there is an international movement through CMind and the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education seeking to transform higher education through the use of contemplative practices. While Klentzin and Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiak (2013) identified eight common administrative elements leading to successful institutionalization of service-learning, none of them have been observed at Contemplative State University in relation to contemplative education, which may indicate that the university's leaders are far from institutionalizing this phenomenon. The elements identified by the authors in relation to service-learning were:

- inclusion of service-learning language in the institutional mission statement;
- a centralized service-learning office;
- internal funding and supplied physical resources, including space;
- training/development opportunities, including active organizational membership;
- faculty rewards, including release time;
- program assessment; and,
- a service-learning advisory board comprised of multiple stakeholders.

While training/development opportunities exist among Contemplative State University's non-physical structures, the other elements were among the structures my research participants said were needed. These facets are not currently in place, and, while there is funding through the special professorship, it was repeatedly stated by several participants during my research that that funding is not permanent because the professorship was established to rotate among people and their preferred projects.

In a North American higher education survey related to the support of transformative learning, which also includes experiential learning and learning communities (Duerr et al., 2003), the same authors said the following strategies need to be in place: research support/funding and opportunities for faculty renewal, graduate-level fellowships, leadership development and support, national conferences, online resources, and a journal. While all exist on a professional level through CMind and the Association for Contemplative Mind in High Education, my research site does not have any of these in place—except for funding for faculty renewal, and, as stated earlier, this funding is not permanent but rather is tied to a special professorship temporarily held by someone with an interest in contemplative education. Barriers identified by Duerr et al. (2003) in their survey were organizational structure and funding, lack of support from administration, and time constraints. Of these, improvements in organizational structure, funding, and administration support were among items that participants said were needed to better support Contemplative State University as a mindful campus.

Further related to service-learning as a similar mode of transformative learning, Klentzin and Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowaki (2013) envisioned one of two organizational models developing, and both were mentioned in my interviews with faculty and staff at Contemplative State University. The two models were 1) elevation from a secondary program to a stand-alone academic discipline, or 2) creation of a student engagement model in which service-learning is “bundled” (p. 55) into an overall campus initiative in which students complete a certain amount of engagement-related activities to graduate (Klentzin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowaki, 2013). The second model is already observed at Contemplative State University for service-learning, and one administrator suggested the same be done for

contemplative education—tie it to the curriculum, which would make the existing work of student affairs and academic affairs more seamless. Steps toward a blended version of both models were observed when several people I interviewed mentioned a pending proposal to craft a contemplative studies minor based on its existing practices of contemplative education or a set of designator courses related to contemplative practices.

Having reviewed my findings related to organization theory, its subsets of structure and culture, and contemplative education in the context of my literature review, I will now revisit the conceptual framework.

### **Revisiting the Conceptual Framework**

A goal of my research was to expand what is known about my study's conceptual framework—organization theory—by applying it in a new setting, that of a university operating as a mindful campus. The Analysis section of this chapter offered rich details of how the findings of my case study confirmed the literature surrounding organization theory. As organization theory's key principles promised, this lens gave me insight into how Contemplative State University functions as a mindful campus and opened my mind to new viewpoints and possibilities associated with its operation. Much of my findings confirmed existing explanations of organization theory in terms of structure and culture. However, I discovered the cultural assessment framework provided by Tierney (2008) did not fully apply to this setting. This section will explain why.

Tierney (2008) developed a six-factor cultural assessment framework based on a single-case case study of an institution that can be used to pinpoint an organization's culture at a particular time. I chose to apply this framework in my study in large part because the author said this framework could use refining through additional research and I was curious

to see if the six factors could be linked to contemplative education. I asked participants about the six aspects—mission, environment, socialization, information sharing, strategy, and leadership—only after first asking them to describe Contemplative State University’s culture in their own terms. I found that in their answers to an open-ended question, only the mission and environment aspects of Tierney’s (2008) framework were addressed in describing Contemplative State University’s culture. Almost all participants talked about the liberal arts mission of the school and the open-minded, progressive environment in which it was located, not the other four elements. After I explained the framework, however, and asked them to elaborate on each element in the context of contemplative education, they were able to talk to some degree about each one. This shed more light on contemplative education on this campus, in that all six elements apply to some degree, with strategy being the least present. Oftentimes, however, the participants did not know what the terms meant and asked me to better explain what I was asking when I inquired about “socialization,” “information sharing,” and “strategy.” For the first seven interviews, I included the detailed bullet points under each aspect of Tierney’s (2008) framework (See Appendix A) and found that several participants became overwhelmed by the amount of text or confused by the author’s sub-questions being asked. For my remaining interviews, I shortened the information about each one to just the key word and encouraged participants to talk about each key word as they understood it, which proved to be more productive.

From this experience, I concluded that Tierney’s (2008) framework was helpful in deciphering culture on this campus, but that its elements were not forefront in my participants’ minds. This means the framework may be incomplete, leading to more questions: Are there other aspects of culture that were not included in the framework, but

which my participants may have responded to if asked? Or is the lack of connection between the framework and my participants' chosen descriptions of culture a matter of vocabulary differences? I learned through my interviews that individuals at Contemplative State University working in academic affairs and those working in student affairs tended to use different terms for the application of activities within The Tree of Contemplative Practices shown in Figure 1 (contemplative education versus self-awareness and reflection), so it may be possible that Tierney's (2008) use of the words "socialization" and/or "information sharing" might be interchangeable with a terms more frequently used by my participants—"community" and "connection." Also, I wondered, is it possible that geographic and/or larger cultural settings affect understanding of various terms? That question is beyond the scope of this research study, but my findings in relation to Tierney's (2008) framework do identify a barrier in applying this framework to all organizational settings—or at least applying the framework in relation to cultural support for a particular topic within an organization, in this case contemplative education. This may be an area that could be explored by additional studies using this framework.

Also, there seemed to less consensus in responses about "socialization," "information sharing," and "strategy" compared to participants' responses to other points in Tierney's (2008) framework or to my open-ended question about culture. This may not have as much to do with Tierney's (2008) actual framework as much as it confirms Tierney's and Bergquist and Pawlak's (2008) opinion that organizational culture consists of a combination of perspectives from the people within the organization.

## **Implications**

There are three primary implications of my study: first and foremost, the findings address a gap in the research; secondly, they offer a potential model for or at least insight into how other colleges and universities can be operated as a mindful campus; and, third, they offer Contemplative State University insight into its own operations. I will explain each implication in more detail.

First, evidence has shown that contemplative education develops the whole person while enhancing cognitive and academic performance (Shapiro et al., 2011); independent critical thinking (Sable, 2014); and attention, lucidity, emotional intelligence, equanimity, and moral maturity among other aspects of development (Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). In addition, an average 85.6% of college students nationwide feel overwhelmed (American College Health Association, 2015), and contemplative practices have been shown in research studies to reduce stress, anxiety, and sleep difficulties (Caldwell et al., 2010; Greeson et al., 2014), and support healthy coping mechanisms (Palmer & Rodger, 2009). Based on this evidence, scholars asked for more research into how and where higher education organizations can make contemplative practices available to more students (Oman et al., 2008; Shapiro et al., 2011) and why their use may be suppressed at some institutions (P. F. Morgan, 2015). An implication of this study is that it offers answers to these questions in the context of how a mindful campus operates. Other than three studies describing how a Buddhist-inspired university founded on contemplative practices was operated (Burggraf, 2011; Goss, 1999; Simmer-Brown, 2009) and an article recounting the formation of faculty/student mindfulness group at a state university (Dufon & Christian, 2013), there were no studies into how a mindful campus operated. This is what made my study necessary.



The second implication of my study is a well-described mindful campus that can become a model for or influencer of the operation of a mindful campus at other colleges or universities. A practical goal of a case study of how a mindful campus is operated was increased awareness among practitioners as to how other college and university leaders could support the use of contemplative practices on their campuses. When beginning this study, I envisioned the data as furthering the understanding of the contemplative education phenomenon as it revealed how a mindful campus was operated and what structures and cultures were in place to support this operation. I have shown that Contemplative State University's operation as a mindful campus is based on its use of activities found on CMind's Tree of Contemplative practices inside and outside the classroom, which is supported by a loosely coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system. This operation includes physical, non-physical, and financial structures; as well as a culture based on the embodiment of the liberal arts, community, and connection. For colleges and universities considering operation as a mindful campus or strengthening their existing initiatives in contemplative education, this study provides a fully described mindful campus and the structures and cultures in place that support contemplative education. While the findings may not apply to all types of institutions, this study is the start of our understanding of the growing contemplative education phenomenon. The campus described in this study can become a model for other institutions or at least presents items for consideration as another school seeks to become a mindful campus.

The third implication of this study is the outsider's perspective it provides leaders at Contemplative State University into how they operate the institution as a mindful campus, something they may not fully see themselves as insiders. This perspective may help them

evaluate their operation and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; this evaluation, in turn, can lead to decisions regarding maintenance or further cultivation of this educational approach on campus. For example, in addition to presenting information on how their mindful campus currently operates, I provided information shared by participants on what additional structures and cultures are needed to better support the university as a mindful campus. These suggestions included physical, non-physical, and financial structures, as well as greater participation in existing structures; and for cultures, the suggested changes related to administrative behaviors, campus language, and shifts in concepts of learning. Two specific—and significant—areas for improvement were permanent funding for contemplative education activities and better collaboration between academic and students affairs. If the institution addressed these two suggestions, I believe the campus could be taken to the next level of operation as a mindful campus in that its efforts could be sustained longer term and have a more conscious, coordinated impact on educating the whole student inside and outside the classroom. This would work toward better meeting the institution’s mission of developing lifelong learners with skills in critical thinking, thoughtful expression, and open inquiry who can succeed and flourish in their communities.

### **Limitations**

As described in Chapter 3, there were limitations expected with my study. Because of my geographic distance from the university I studied, I could not spend frequent or prolonged time there, which limited my opportunities to observe and experience campus life. As a newcomer unfamiliar with the campus and the majority of its employees, I relied on the

campus map for the first few visits and had to adapt to parking regulations, class scheduling, chains of command, and cultural nuances that were different from my home institution.

Also, this study explored only one campus, so, while its information can be useful to other institutions, its findings cannot necessarily be generalized. I expected this limitation to some degree before starting my research, and this angle became clearer during the study. For example, Contemplative State University is a public, liberal arts institution, of which there are only a couple dozen in the United States, and it enrolled just under 4,000 students. It is predominantly white, with slightly more female than male students and employees.

Participants identified strongly with the liberal arts culture and the openness, curiosity, interdisciplinarity, creativity, freedom of thought, and genuine love of teaching inherently found with this educational tradition. In addition, participants also identified strongly with community and connection—within the classroom, across campus, with populations in the larger cosmopolitan area and beyond, coupled with a desire to be change agents to make the world a better place. A collaborative, problem-solving presence among my research participants was evident, despite financial limitations. There also was bottom-up interest in and leadership of contemplative education on this campus, starting first with a meaningful personal practice that led to a desire to share activities on The Tree of Contemplative Practices with others. These attributes may not be present at larger public universities, nor even at all private, liberal arts colleges. If an institution's structures and cultures were similar, however, I wonder if the findings perhaps could be generalized since these attributes seem to provide fertile ground for operating a mindful campus.

Also, my case study is a snapshot of one public, liberal arts university during a particular period of time. I found through my research that the operation of this university as

a mindful campus is not static, as curriculum changes were being considered to begin institutionalizing contemplative education through an academic minor or set of designator courses and as a new institutional strategic plan was being prepared. Also, a special professorship that was providing most of the funding related to this topic would in another year or two be rotated to another faculty member who might possibly have different interests for how to enhance teaching and learning. Contemplative State University's identity as a mindful campus was changing, and there were differing viewpoints among my participants as to what structural and cultural changes, if any, were needed to take this university to the next level. So, another case study on this same campus a few years from now might not lead to the same findings or conclusions. Likewise, a case study at a different type of institution—public or private, larger or smaller—may yield different results.

Another limitation is that I focused my interviews mostly within academic and student affairs, with one person from the university's financial division. I did not interview multiple people in other divisions, and requests for interviews from the top administrative positions were unanswered or declined. Data collected from my participants had become repetitive, an indication of saturation; yet, had I continued interviewing, more informal practicing of mindfulness among individuals on campus may have been revealed. So, a larger scope of how mindfulness is practiced individually may not be known, but, again, my research questions focused on the operation of this university as a mindful campus, and I confidently believe I have covered the structures and cultures present to support the organizational operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus in relation to its work with students.

In spite of these limitations, this study is a beginning of our organizational understanding of the growing contemplative education phenomenon.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

With the establishment of this complete, scholarly description of a mindful campus and its organizational structure and culture, further research questions using organization theory or other theories may be developed. My study examined one public, liberal arts university enrolling about 4,000 students during a particular time in this school's operation as a mindful campus. While the findings can certainly be useful to other institutions, they cannot necessarily be generalized to all types or sizes of institutions. This limitation in my research opens up recommendations for further research. Building on the data collected in this study alone, additional research questions within the public, liberal arts setting could be:

- How might the operation of this mindful campus compare to other public, liberal arts universities operating as a mindful campus?

Understanding that my research site was considering proposing a contemplative minor, which would formalize and institutionalize contemplative education to some degree, could lead to a descriptive case study focusing on how a mindful campus has been operated over time.

Multi-case case studies using qualitative research questions and organization theory as a conceptual framework could explore:

- How does a private liberal arts college operated as a mindful campus differ from a state institution operated as a mindful campus?
- Are mindful campuses in the North or Midwest operated differently from those in the South, or other geographic regions?

Such studies could reveal new understandings of organization theory, possibly supporting one or more of Bastedo's (2012) suggestions that organization theory can be seen as (a) a set of governing laws that identify patterns of behavior that can be generalized, (b) paradoxes that inspire a desire to understand, or (c) a narrative of social processes that can be generalized to similar cases. Based on my study's findings, I offer a fourth viewpoint, which expands Bastedo's (2012) assessment: that organization theory can be seen as an evolutionary state. The operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus is not static. Wheatley (2006) said organizational systems should organize like the universe organizes itself, one that "co-evolves as we interact with it" (p. 9). This is what I see happening at Contemplative State University—a growing contemplative education phenomenon that spurs new relationships and new interconnectedness among people and structures on campus, and, through these endeavors, ideas for new initiatives such as the proposal for a contemplative minor or set of designator courses.

The mindful campus concept could also be explored using other theoretical frameworks within qualitative research:

- Student development theory: How do student government presidents who attend a mindful campus perceive their leadership abilities compared to student government presidents who do not attend a mindful campus?
- Professional development theory: How are faculty determined to be qualified to use contemplative education on a particular mindful campus?

There are other possibilities for future research. For example, quantitative research questions framed by the student access and success lens could address:

- Do entering freshmen on a mindful campus make an easier transition from high

school to college than students who don't attend a mindful campus?

- Do college students attending a mindful campus engage in less frequent use of alcohol or drugs in comparison to students who do not attend a mindful campus?

Mixed-methods research studies might explore a question such as:

- How are faculty professionally developed on a mindful campus and what are their students' learning outcomes in comparison to those of faculty teaching on a non-mindful campus?

All of these research questions would provide valuable data useful in furthering the advancement of contemplative education.

Based on my experience using Tierney's (2008) cultural assessment framework, I also recommend additional studies using this framework to further explore the applicability of its six cultural elements in different organizational settings. This could be conducted in the context of contemplative education or other topics. Such research could potentially identify other cultural assessment elements or explore the vocabulary used for these elements. Tierney (2008) said the framework could use refining through additional research, and I believe this is still the case.

### **Summary**

In concluding this dissertation, Chapter 5 has analyzed the findings of my research, which sought to answer the primary research question, How is a mindful campus operated? I had two corollary research questions: What organizational structures are in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus? and, What organizational culture is in place to support the use of contemplative practices on this college campus? These questions addressed a previously identified gap in the knowledge base. Therefore, I

undertook a three-and-a-half month descriptive case study at a public, liberal arts university using interviews, observation, and review of documents to learn how it is operated as a mindful campus.

My findings were, in summary, that Contemplative State University is operated as a mindful campus through a key group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators who are committed to engaging themselves and their students inside and outside of class with contemplative practices found on CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices. Their use of the Tree is supported by a loosely-coupled, collaborative, bottom-up organizational system consisting of specific structural and cultural elements. The structural elements were physical, non-physical, and financial; and, the culture was characterized by an embodiment of the liberal arts, and community and connection. Additional aspects of culture that surfaced in my research to varying degrees using Tierney's (2008) six-point cultural assessment framework were organizational mission, environment, socialization, information sharing, strategy, and leadership—with strategy being the least present.

Furthermore, while these individuals practicing contemplative education may represent a small percent of the campus community, they tap into and collaborate with established organizational structures and cultures to broaden awareness, understanding, and engagement in this educational approach. For example, faculty look at ways in which their use of contemplative pedagogy aligns with the university mission, including its emphasis on critical thinking and transformative learning. Faculty and staff also have collaborated with established offices to organize a contemplative learning community, create relevant professional development workshops, and introduce contemplative education to new faculty. Student ingenuity supported by existing structures and cultures led to a start-up mindfulness



club and a mindfulness festival. No budget line items are designated for the operation of a mindful campus, but existing pockets of money were being used by faculty and staff to attend or sponsor conferences, host book groups, support course redesign, and develop special topics courses on meditation; and, by students to organize a club and events that raise awareness of mindfulness. Most participants in this integrative effort said they feel supported by top administrators to engage in contemplative education, in large part because the leadership trusts them to do their jobs well, and no one is telling them not to use contemplative education. The inherent openness and curiosity associated with the liberal arts tradition makes the use of contemplative education at this university a natural fit and, through this educational approach, participants are strengthening their community and connection—with themselves, their peers, in the classroom and across campus, with populations nearby, and beyond.

This system operating at Contemplative State University confirms much of the literature surrounding organization theory and contemplative education, as shown earlier in this chapter. It also expands the knowledge base by demonstrating how some of the literature pertaining to organizational theory and contemplative education may be applied in a new setting. In particular, my findings support the loosely coupled system of Weick (1976) and Birnbaum (1988); the collaboration of Kezar and Lester (2009); the quantum paradigm of Manning (2013), Shelton and Darling (2003), Wheatley (2005, 2006), and Zohar (1997); the integral nature of teaching and learning centers as presented by Barbezat and Pingree (2012); and Wall's (2014) models for how contemplative practices are incorporated into college and universities. They did not align with service-learning's eight common administrative elements found to lead to successful institutionalization, as outlined by Klentzin and

Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowiak (2013). My findings supported, in part, three of the six possible cultures identified by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), thus affirming the authors' opinion that most colleges and universities have a mix of cultures. The findings also confirmed the six aspects of Tierney's (2008) cultural assessment framework, albeit with recommendations for further study. I also have expanded the work of Bastedo (2012) by showing evidence to support a fourth viewpoint of organization theory: that because the operation of Contemplative State University as a mindful campus is not static, organization theory can be viewed as an evolutionary state. In the spirit of Wheatley (2006), who suggested an organization can co-evolve as its participants interact with it, Contemplative State University demonstrates continued growth as new relationships and interconnectedness are forming and ideas for new initiatives, such as a possible contemplative minor, are being developed.

I've noted limitations of my study, such as the inability to generalize these findings to all institutions—unless, perhaps, they have similar structures and cultures—and I have recommended several ideas for further research, using organization theory or other lenses, now that a complete description of how a mindful campus is operated has been established. Implications of my study are three-fold: I have addressed a gap in the scholarly research regarding the concept of a mindful campus; I have offered a potential model for or at least insight into how a mindful campus can be operated; and, I have offered Contemplative State University insight into its own operations.

It was reasonable to assume that operating a mindful campus might require particular organizational structures and cultures, but very little research on the topic existed. Ultimately, I have provided much-needed scholarly knowledge into an innovative educational approach being increasingly used at colleges and universities to educate students

more holistically and better prepare them for life after college. My research offers educational leaders information toward enhancing an innovative solution that better achieves the purpose of higher education—to effectively prepare students for their futures and create the next generation of leaders.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Questions**

Interview questions were prepared for faculty, administrators, staff, and students based on the conceptual framework of organizational theory, particularly in relation to organization structure and culture. The questions are as follows, categorized by participant type. In some situations, questions were added for the context of the person being interviewed to gather appropriate information about a program or center. The researcher explained the terms used in this study before beginning the interviews.

#### **Faculty:**

1. What is your understanding of contemplative education? How would you define it?
2. In what way(s) do you use contemplative education in your teaching or other work on campus? (Use CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices as a guide for identification)
3. How long have you been doing this?
4. What got you interested in it?
5. Why do you use contemplative education?
6. How has your perception of contemplative education changed or stayed the same since you've been using it?
7. How would you describe the support you have received, or not received, from the university to use contemplative education?

#### **Structure –**

8. What structures are in place to support contemplative education on this campus (formal, informal, social/physical, financial/non-financial)?
9. In what ways have these structures been useful/beneficial to you? Have they not been useful/beneficial to you?

10. What additional structures are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

**Culture –**

11. Tell me about the culture of your university. What are its important aspects?

12. How do contemplative practices fit into the culture?

13. According to Tierney (2008), culture can be described through six elements. Which of these are in place to support contemplative education on this campus?

Mission:

- How is it defined?
- How is it articulated?
- Is it used as a basis for decisions?
- How much agreement is there?

Environment in which it operates:

- How does the organization define its environment?
- What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)

Socialization:

- How do new members become socialized?
- How is it articulated?
- What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?

Information:

- What constitutes information?
- Who has it?
- How is it disseminated?

Strategy:

- How are decisions arrived at?
- Which strategy is used?
- Who makes decisions?
- What is the penalty for bad decisions?

Leadership:

- What does the organization expect from its leaders?
- Who are the leaders?
- Are there formal and informal leaders?

14. What cultural changes are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

**Administrators:**

1. What is your understanding of contemplative education? How would you define it?
2. How do you see contemplative education being used on your campus? (*Show interviewee CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices as a guide for identification.*)
3. How long have you been aware of this phenomenon occurring on your campus?
4. How would you describe the support you have offered, or not offered, the university for contemplative education?
5. What was your motivation to support contemplative education?
6. How has your perception of contemplative education changed or stayed the same?

**Structure –**

7. What structures are in place to support contemplative education on this campus (formal, informal, social/physical, financial/non-financial)?
8. In what ways have these structures been useful/beneficial to the campus? Have they not been useful/beneficial to campus?
9. What structures are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

**Culture –**

10. Tell me about the culture of your university. What are its important aspects?
11. How do contemplative practices fit into that culture?
12. According to Tierney (2008), culture can be described through six elements. Which of these are in place to support contemplative education on this campus?

- Organizational Mission
- Environment in which the organization operates
- Socialization of new members
- Information sharing among members

- Strategy
- Leadership

13. What cultural changes are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

**Staff:**

1. What is your understanding of contemplative education? How would you define it?
2. How do you see contemplative education being used on your campus? (Use CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices as a guide for identification)
3. What activities does your program area offer that would be considered contemplative education?
4. How/when/where are they offered?
5. Who attends?
6. How well attended are they?
7. Of the events you attend, what would be considered contemplative education?
8. How/when/where are they offered? (Mindfulness Fest, others?)
9. Who attends?
10. How well attended are they?
11. What trends have you noticed in campus community interest, and by who – students, faculty, staff, and administrators?

**Structure –**

12. What structures are in place to support contemplative education on this campus (formal, informal, social/physical, financial/non-financial)?
13. In what ways have these structures been useful/beneficial to the campus? Have they not been useful/beneficial to campus?
14. What structures are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

## **Culture –**

15. Tell me about the culture of your university. What are its important aspects? This may involve first describing its mission and how it is a lived experience for the campus community.
16. How do contemplative practices fit into the culture and/or mission?
17. According to Tierney (2008), culture can be described through six elements. Which of these are in place to support contemplative education on this campus?

### Environment:

- How does the organization define its environment?
- What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)

### Mission:

- How is it defined?
- How is it articulated?
- Is it used as a basis for decisions?
- How much agreement is there?

### Socialization:

- How do new members become socialized?
- How is it articulated?
- What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?

### Information:

- What constitutes information?
- Who has it?
- How is it disseminated?

### Strategy:

- How are decisions arrived at?
- Which strategy is used?
- Who makes decisions?
- What is the penalty for bad decisions?

### Leadership:

- What does the organization expect from its leaders?
- Who are the leaders?
- Are there formal and informal leaders

18. What cultural changes are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?



**Students:**

1. What is your understanding of contemplative education? How would you define it?
2. In what way(s) have you seen your university incorporate contemplative education in teaching or events on campus? (Use CMind's Tree of Contemplative Practices as a guide for identification)
3. Of the events you organize, what would be considered contemplative education?
4. How/when/where are they offered? (Mindfulness Fest, others?)
5. Who attends?
6. How well attended are they?
7. Of the events you attend, what would be considered contemplative education?
8. How/when/where are they offered? (Mindfulness Fest, others?)
9. Who attends?
10. How well attended are they?
11. What trends have you noticed in campus community interest, and by who – students, faculty, staff, and administrators?

**Structure –**

12. What structures are in place to support contemplative education on this campus (formal, informal, social/physical, financial/non-financial)?
13. What structures are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

**Culture –**

14. Tell me about the culture of your university. What are its important aspects? This may involve first describing its mission and how it is a lived experience for the campus community.
15. How do contemplative practices fit into the culture and/or mission?

16. According to Tierney (2008), culture can be described through six elements. Which of these are in place to support contemplative education on this campus?

Environment:

- How does the organization define its environment?
- What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)

Mission:

- How is it defined?
- How is it articulated?
- Is it used as a basis for decisions?
- How much agreement is there?

Socialization:

- How do new members become socialized?
- How is it articulated?
- What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?

Information:

- What constitutes information?
- Who has it?
- How is it disseminated?

Strategy:

- How are decisions arrived at?
- Which strategy is used?
- Who makes decisions?
- What is the penalty for bad decisions?

Leadership:

- What does the organization expect from its leaders?
- Who are the leaders?
- Are there formal and informal leaders

17. What cultural changes are needed to better support your university as a mindful campus?

## Appendix B

### DRAFT Letter of Agreement

This is the drafted letter sent to Contemplative State University's provost for signature. A signed copy on the university's letterhead was received. This draft is included to protect the identity of the unit of analysis.

Note: The pseudonym "Contemplative State University" is used in this appendix to protect the identity of the unit of analysis.

[Date]

To the Appalachian Institutional Review Board (IRB):

I am familiar with Linda Coutant's research project entitled "A Case Study of a Mindful Campus." I understand Contemplative State University's involvement includes allowing 1) interviews of employees and students, 2) review of archival data such as previous surveys, annual reports, etc. 3) observation of classes, student club meetings, and other campus events, and 4) review of institutional documents such as mission/vision statements, strategic plan and organizational charts.

As the research team conducts this research project I understand and agree that:

- This research will be carried out following sound ethical principles and is being submitted to the IRB at Appalachian State University for approval.
- Employee participation in this project is strictly voluntary and not a condition of employment at Contemplative State University. There are no contingencies for employees who choose to participate or decline to participate in this project. There will be no adverse employment consequences as a result of an employee's participation in this study.
- To the extent confidentiality may be protected under State or Federal law, the data collected will remain confidential, as described in the protocol. The name of our agency or institution will **not be** reported in the results of the dissertation.

Therefore, as a representative of Contemplative State University, I agree that Linda Coutant's research project may be conducted at our agency/institution, and that Linda Coutant may assure participants that they may participate in interviews, observations, document collection and provide responsive information without adverse employment consequences.

Sincerely,

*[name & title of agency/institutional authority]*

## Appendix C

### Recruitment Letter

This was the email template used to invite individuals to be interviewed at the unit of analysis. In cases where I had already met the individual and established some rapport, I crafted a more personal email and included this formal letter as an attachment. Each recruitment email also included an attached pdf of the signed letter of agreement from Contemplative State University's provost allowing me to conduct research on campus.

Note: The pseudonym "Contemplative State University" is used in this appendix to protect the identity of the unit of analysis.

Dear (Potential Participant)

My name is Linda Coutant, and I am working on a doctoral dissertation through Appalachian State University, titled "A Case Study of a Mindful Campus." My research is being overseen by my faculty mentor, Dr. Karen Caldwell, who may be reached at [caldwellkaren@appstate.edu](mailto:caldwellkaren@appstate.edu).

My research concerns developing a case study of a mindful campus to determine how one is operated and what structures and cultures are in place to support its use of contemplative education. I am hopeful that my research will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the growing contemplative education phenomenon in U.S. higher education.

I would like to invite you to be a participant in my research study.

I am interested in interviewing and observing Contemplative State University faculty, administrators, staff, and students. Interviews would take place on the Contemplative State University campus and would likely require one or two sessions per person, lasting about 1 ½ hours each. Questions would focus on the understanding and usage of contemplative education and perceptions regarding structures and cultures in place that do or do not support contemplative education. A list of interview questions could be provided before the interviews take place.

I am also interested in observing faculty, students and campus events in the operation of the mindful campus. Observations would be unobtrusively made on only those activities which relate to the interview questions. These observations would help me better understand and "picture" the responses provided during the interview sessions.

I anticipate that my research will begin in summer 2016. There will be at least 10 participants in this study. All participants will be older than 18 years of age.

Any data collected will be kept confidential. In accordance with Appalachian State University policy and best practices for ethical research, neither participants nor sites will be identified in any report of my findings or in my published dissertation.

If you tentatively agree to be a participant in my study, I will offer you further details about my research and ensure that you are provided an informed consent form before I begin collecting data. If you have any concerns or questions about this request to participate, please contact me at the phone number listed below.

I would be grateful if you could let me know your tentative decision about participating in my study by (date).

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Linda Coutant, doctoral student, EdD (ABD)  
828-265-8565  
coutantla@appstate.edu

## **Appendix D**

### **Consent to Participate in Research Form**

Note: The pseudonym “Contemplative State University” is used in this appendix to protect the identity of the unit of analysis.

#### **A Case Study of a Mindful Campus**

Principal Investigator: Linda Coutant

Department: Doctoral Program, Educational Leadership

Contact Information: Dr. Karen Caldwell, dissertation committee chair,  
caldwellkaren@appstate.edu

This research is funded by: n/a

#### **Consent to Participate in Research**

##### ***Information to Consider About this Research***

I agree to participate in this research project, which concerns developing a case study of a mindful campus to determine how one is operated and what structures and cultures are in place to support its use of contemplative education. The interview(s) with and observation(s) by me will take place on the Contemplative State University campus at least once for an estimated 1 ½ hours each. I understand the interviews and observations will relate to my involvement and perceptions of Contemplative State University’s organizational structures and cultures associated with contemplative education.

I understand that there are no foreseeable risks associated with my participation. I also know that this study may contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the growing contemplative education phenomenon in U.S. higher education.

I understand that the interview(s) will be audio recorded and may be published. I understand that if I sign the authorization below the audio recordings of my interview will be secured in a password protected electronic location until transcription, at which point the recording will be deleted.

I give Linda Coutant ownership of the tapes, transcripts, recordings and/or photographs from the interview(s) and observations(s) she conducts with me. I understand that information or quotations from tapes and/or transcripts will be published following my review and approval. I understand I will not receive compensation for the interview.

I understand that the interview(s) and observation(s) are voluntary and there are no consequences if I choose not to participate. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions and can end the interview at any time with no consequences. I also confirm I am at least 18 years of age.

If I have questions about this research project, I can contact Linda Coutant (828-262-2342, coutantla@appstate.edu) or Dr. Karen Caldwell (828-262-6045, caldwellkaren@appstate.edu) or the Appalachian Institutional Review Board Administrator at 828-262-2692, irb@appstate.edu or Appalachian State University, Office of Research Protections, IRB Administrator, Boone, NC 28608.

Appalachian State University's Institutional Review Board has determined this study to be exempt from IRB oversight.

I request that my name **not** be used in connection with tapes, transcripts, photographs or publications resulting from this interview.

I request that my name **be used** in connection with tapes, transcripts, photographs or publications resulting from this interview.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read this form, had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and received satisfactory answers, and want to participate. I understand I can keep a copy for my records.

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Participant's Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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## Appendix E

### Blank Observation Record

<b>Observation Record</b>				
Date _____		Location _____		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Individuals Involved</b>	<b>Structural Aspects</b>	<b>Cultural Aspects</b>	<b>Other Observations</b>



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## **Vita**

Linda Coutant grew up in East Tennessee and holds a B.A. in Mass Communications from Emory & Henry College, an M.A. in Educational Media from Appalachian State University, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Appalachian State University. She is an award-winning communications professional, having started her career in print journalism and later working in public relations/marketing for higher education. She is also a longtime practitioner of meditation and other contemplative practices. She lives in the mountains of North Carolina with her wife and two cats.