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GOVERNORS AND PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY
OF GOVERNORS BILL HASLAM AND PAUL PATTON

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership, and Research
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Shannon Gilkey

May 2020

GOVERNORS AND PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY
OF GOVERNORS BILL HASLAM AND PAUL PATTON

Date Recommended 3/26/2020

AntonyDNorman Digitally signed by AntonyDNorman
Date: 2020.03.27 08:16:14 -05'00'

Antony D. Norman, Chair

H Randall Capps Digitally signed by H Randall
Capps
Date: 2020.04.02 14:33:19 -07'00'

Randy Capps

Felice Billups Digitally signed by Felice Billups
Date: 2020.04.03 12:58:25 -04'00'

Felice Billups

Martha Kanter Digitally signed by Martha Kanter
Date: 2020.04.05 11:37:31 -04'00'

Martha Kanter

Cheryl D Davis Digitally signed by Cheryl D Davis
Date: 2020.04.06 10:16:40 -05'00'

3/06/2020

Dean, The Graduate School

Date

DEDICATION

To Dr. Barbara Burch for her lifelong commitment to student-first higher education, not
for its own sake, but for the betterment of society

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was made possible by the dedication of many people. First, was the commitment of the committee which included, Dr. Felice Billups, Dr. Randy Capps, Dr. Martha Kanter, and Dr. Tony Norman. The tremendous expertise each member brought to this project drove the quality of the work and I am indebted to each of them for their willingness to guide my education and professional development.

During this dissertation, we lost an invaluable committee member and friend, Dr. Barbara Burch. Her passing was a tremendous loss to the field, the University, and the community. Dr. Burch's passion for her work, and dedication to higher education will live on through the many lives she impacted.

Finally, I would like to thank my children, Jack and Clara who joined our family during my time as an 'adult student' and sacrificed many weekends with love and support. Most importantly, my partner Dr. Meghan Riddle, who somehow navigated medical residency, a fellowship, while becoming a new mom and supporting my education and work. I'll never figure out how she juggles with such grace, love, and patience, but I will always be in awe.

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GOVERNORS AND PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF GOVERNORS BILL HASLAM AND PAUL PATTON

Shannon Gilkey

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Directed by: Antony D. Norman, Randy Capps, Felice Billups, and Martha Kanter

Department of Educational Administration, Leadership, and Research

Western Kentucky University

Governors can impose tremendous influence on public policy. In their attempt to address issues that their states face, and in order to sustain and improve the present and long-term health of its citizenry, some governors invest significant resources to shape the direction of their state's postsecondary system of education. This study examined the critical elements that led two different governors to enact large-scale impact on state postsecondary education by investigating three research questions through a qualitative multiple-instrument case study: (a) How do governors' vision for their state intersect with their view of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state? (b) What role(s) do governors play during the policy-making process? (c) What conditions during the formation, adoption, and implementation process allowed for long-term sustainability of reform efforts?

In the case of Kentucky and Tennessee, Governors Patton and Haslam respectively chose higher education as a significant pillar for reform during their administration; they then engaged in a variety of strategies to ensure that it was adopted, implemented, and sustained. Key findings were elements that comprised each governor's viewpoint, the roles each governor played throughout the policy setting and adoption phase, and the conditions that were set to ensure long-term sustainability. Collectively, these governors shared many similarities throughout the design, adoption, and

implementation of their reform agendas. While some differences were noted, they mostly resided in reactions to contextual circumstances. Ultimately, the viewpoint, role, and conditions established to ensure long-term sustainability of both governors strongly impacted their state's ability to adopt and execute their postsecondary reform efforts.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I've learned governors have great latitude defining parts of their job. As governor, you don't have latitude in passing a budget. You gotta do that. You don't have latitude in managing state departments; that's constitutionally mandated. But there's this other part of their job you get to define, and he chose higher ed. (Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, personal communication, 2019)

Statement of the Problem

Governors have tremendous influence on public policy. In their attempt to address issues that face the state, including sustaining and improving the present and long-term health of its citizenry, some governors invest significant resources to shape the direction of their state's postsecondary system of education. Consequently, the label "education governor" has become more commonplace, as patterns of gubernatorial involvement within education policy reform are emerging in policy research (Stallings, 2010)

How governors prioritize education, particularly higher education, can translate into the state's investment into its public postsecondary system. During economic downturns, states will oftentimes reduce public higher education investment (SHEEO, 2019). Furthermore, attention turns to immediate public needs, such as programs that offer safety-net services. During the past three decades, state support for higher education institutions has significantly declined, with a marked drop of over 30% since 1980 (Clelan & Kofoed, 2017).

Indeed, states across the country are still recovering from the 2008 economic recession, described by Ben Bernanke as the worst financial shock since the Great Depression (Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, 2009). However, finding the devil within public investment of higher education charges investigators to understand the details of each state's story. For example, the state executive and legislative branch of

Illinois experienced a two-year stalemate, causing public institutions to lay off hundreds of employees and face the possibility of running out of capital (Palmer, 2016). Yet, according to Grapevine’s annual report for 2017-2018, the percent of total state fiscal support for higher education, nationwide, has steadily increased over time [Figure 1] (Palmer, 2018).

Annual Percent Changes in Total State Fiscal Support for Higher Education Nationwide, Fiscal Year 2014 - Fiscal Year 2018	
Fiscal Year	% Change from Previous Fiscal Year
2018	+1.6%
2017	+4.2%
2016	+2.4%
2015	+5.0%
2014	+5.9%
<i>Note.</i> Each year, <i>Grapevine</i> asks states for data on initial appropriations in the new fiscal year as well as revisions to data reported in previous years. Because of these revisions, the percent changes reported here may differ from those detailed in earlier <i>Grapevine</i> reports.	

Figure 1. Annual Grapevine report (Palmer, 2018).

Although this an encouraging trend nationally, a more precise picture is painted as states examine their public investment (SHEEO, 2019). Examining how governors understand and prioritize postsecondary education within their state’s agenda can provide insight on how funding public higher education can fall within competing budget priorities.

The economic benefits for states that have more significant numbers of citizens with some form of a postsecondary degree or certificate have led to states’ placing a greater emphasis on postsecondary attainment. Therefore, postsecondary attainment has become an increasing priority across the United States (Carnevale, Strohl, Cheah, & Ridley, 2017). This may be largely attributed to an increased understanding by

gubernatorial candidates, and sitting governors, in terms of maintaining a greater appreciation for benefits important to citizens who participated in and completed some form of higher education (Florestano & Boyd, 1989). Through an effort led by the Lumina Foundation in 2009, over 40 states have established postsecondary attainment goals. Of the state attainment goals set from 2009 to present, a substantive number of these have been established by the governor or jointly developed between the education sectors leaders and the governor's office (Lumina Foundation, 2013).

The relative power held by the executive branch is another reason to better understand the interplay between governors and higher education. The gubernatorial office can wield tremendous powers to shape the direction of higher education; this occurs through traditional formal and informal powers of the office, policy formation, and by steering state investment. In addition to leading the state budget process in most states, governors can call special sessions, veto bills, and employ public tools such as popularity, charisma, and skill when dealing with legislative leadership (Dilger, Krause, & Moffett, 1995; Ferguson, 2003, 2013). In accordance with the nature of their high-profile office, governors, along with increasingly professional staffs, can approach their agenda through multiple means during legislation.

Legislation toward building an educated workforce oftentimes becomes a focal point for a governor's agenda to prioritize higher education. According to Georgetown's Center for Education and the Workforce, 65% of jobs will require a postsecondary degree or credential of value by 2020 (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). Substantial benefits to the well-being of the state's citizens may be realized by understanding the intersection between higher education and governors.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to examine the critical elements that lead to the large-scale impact of state governors on postsecondary education through a review of artifacts, a theoretical lens of public policy development, the perspectives of two governors, state higher education executive officers, and other state public policy leaders. The central goals of this study were to provide additional understanding of the specific milestones that occurred within the agenda-setting process, particularly when a governor decides to prioritize postsecondary education, and to describe the tools governors employ to make sweeping policy changes to the governance and strategic activity of public systems of higher education. The current study sought to fill the gap in literature that addresses the intersection between gubernatorial power and higher education.

In order to meet its central goals, the current study proposed three aims. First, this study sought to enhance the understanding of gubernatorial perspectives on higher education and its role to achieve the interests of state government. As stated by Portelli (1991), we should not only know what people did, “but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did” (p. 50). These career experiences, viewpoints, strategies, motivations, and institutional knowledge that makeup governors’ perspectives before, during, and after intentional disruptions are noticeably absent from the body of literature within the study of higher education policy.

Second, the current study sought to provide insight for state higher education executives, institutional leaders, and policymakers to engage with newly elected and sitting governors to advance their agenda as parties continually attempt to improve the livelihood of their organizations, constituents, and the entire state. It is reasonable to

suggest that all states have to compete for internal priorities, with higher education being one of many (National Governors Association, 1981). The results of the current study should help lawmakers and higher education executives align postsecondary priorities, when possible, for more extended periods of time.

Finally, this study sought to apply aspects of policy-making research and theories with emphasis on how the agenda-setting process influences the state policy priorities and long-term state investments. Policy research provides theoretical logic models to illustrate how governors influence various facets of higher education. For researchers and practitioners, facets of theoretical policy research become a useful lens to help provide greater understanding to phenomena.

Research Questions

The current study sought to answer the following research questions.

RQ1: How do governors' vision for their state intersect with their view of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state?

RQ1a: What are the sources of information or strategies employed to gather information that inform their perspective on higher education?

RQ2b: What environmental conditions enable governors to prioritize higher education over other state policy systems?

RQ2: What role(s) do governors play during the policy-making process?

RQ2a: How do governors utilize their role and their administration to set the policy agenda?

RQ2b: How do governors leverage their office to ensure their agenda remains intact through adoption?

RQ3: What conditions during the formation, adoption, and implementation process allowed for long-term sustainability of reform efforts?

RQ3a: How intentionally was long-term sustainability built into the design of reforms?

RQ3b: What methods were employed to ensure policy reform efforts are sustained after the sitting administration left office?

Importance of the Study

The motivation for investigating specific examples of when and how governors decide to prioritize higher education is based upon an assumption that governors hold tremendous influence over the direction of state systems of higher education. This belief is grounded in the following conceptual understanding:

- Governors maintain substantial power to influence state higher education.
- Higher education governance, particularly in states with decentralized governance structures, is more susceptible to gubernatorial influence.
- Evidence indicates governors are becoming more active within state higher education arenas.

A review of the literature reveals the activities of governors' interaction with higher education can be categorized into two areas; finance and governance (National Governors Association, 1981; Woods & Baranowski, 2007). Higher education finance for public institutions includes activities surrounding tuition price setting, subsidized funding

through state budgets, and tax policies that influence these public-funding streams (SHEEO, 2019).

Governance structures based on their state configuration can lead to gubernatorial interaction. This may include appointments of institutional or statewide governing boards, direct or indirect impact on institutional presidents, and state agency or multiple campus system leaders. In some cases, governors are directly involved with the design and implementation of the public higher education governance model (McGuinness, 2007).

Although these significant governance structure shifts include many policy actors, the role and influence of the state executive office are essential to analyze for the current research review. Through their well-established powers of the state executive branch and an established track-record in the areas of governance and finance, governors take increasing roles of influence within higher education (Florestano & Boyd, 1989). At the same time, within the last 60 years, the higher education governance landscape has become more amenable to accepting policy innovations from governors (McLendon, 2003; McLendon & Ness, 2003).

Centralized postsecondary governance models were the majority trend during the 1950s-1970s (Marcus, 1997; McLendon, Heller, & Young, 2013). During the 1980s-1990s, a vast, diverse reshaping of state postsecondary governance structures, which have continued to occur, caused some observers to label the movement as “deregulation” or “decentralization” (McLendon, 2003). This shift in postsecondary governance resulted in less authority from the state-level to increased levels of local campus control (Leslie & Mactaggart, 2008). Critics of this deregulation, or decentralization, movement across the

national postsecondary landscape suggest these new environments provided increased opportunity for governors to distribute authority across the state through the power of board appointments.

Governors may be serving the role of the “policy entrepreneur,” which for some public policy theories is a requirement for significant policy change to materialize (Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996). At the same time, McLendon et al. (2013) suggest there is not enough research that explain governors roles. Finally, McLendon et al. describe governors as increasingly more active as postsecondary policymakers, particularly in the areas of governance and student financial aid policy. Those observers and investigators of patterns of gubernatorial disruption in relation to the matters of higher education state policy may gain additional understanding through the examination of more details about the role governor’s play in postsecondary policy innovation.

This importance of the current research lies in its case study approach of the gubernatorial impact of sizeable postsecondary policy reform in two states, Kentucky and Tennessee. Focusing on theories of the policy development process, particularly the agenda-setting process, the current investigation attempts to describe in detail the one or more roles a governor may have played to ensure large-scale postsecondary policy reforms were adopted, implemented, and sustained over time. Central to the current research is an exploration of the historical context of gubernatorial influence within education policy within each state before involvement in shaping the trajectory of public higher education.

Delimitations

A delimitation for the current study was the selection of Kentucky and Tennessee in the Southeast region. The identification of these two states intentionally excluded all other states in the southeast in order to narrow the focus and scope of the study. Focusing on southeastern states was also determined for access purposes including in-person interviews with participants when feasible. The decision to look specifically at public education reform allowed for an investigation that focused on the mass education systems for each state.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that could offer greater insight for further research. First of these was the interrelationship between the elements that informed each governor's vision, role, and conditions for sustainability. Due to time and resource constraints, the current study sought to establish these categories independently, and thus, cross-analysis of how these categories interact is limited. For example, how did Governor Patton's and Governor Haslam's prior experience in government impact the role they played during policy development and adoption?

Second, this study did not investigate the role of the legislative branch for each of these governors. For both governors, the activity of the legislature was critical to passing the required statutes necessary to establish the reform agenda as a long-term effort for the state. For Patton, the legislature was resistant at first but ultimately passed House Bill 1 in a bipartisan way. For Haslam, the support from the legislature on all higher education statutes was far greater.

Finally, the current study did not seek to establish a theoretical framework for future testing. This study only sought to enhance the understanding of the role governors play in shaping postsecondary reform in hopes to contribute towards a future theoretical model.

Definitions

The following definitions of terms will serve as an interpretation for the current study.

Last Dollar Scholarship – *Last dollar scholarship* refers to a financial need-based scholarship that is awarded, by the state, to the student after the usage of all available need based, non-loan, federal financial aid such as Pell or Perkins student financial aid (“First-Dollar vs . Last- Dollar Promise Models,” 2020).

Long Term Sustainability- the ability to enact policy reform that sustains itself for the entirety of the gubernatorial administration that immediately follows

Policy – A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business, or organization (Simpson & Weiner, 2005)

Senior Staff Member – For the purpose of the current study, this term referred to a direct report to the governor in the states of Kentucky and Tennessee.

SHEEO – SHEEO stands for the *state higher education executive officer*. This term is inclusive of a variety types of higher education governance systems but often refers to the state government agency that reports to the governor and legislature on behalf of the public colleges and universities in the state (McGuinness, 2003).

Summary

The priorities governors take up to address issues that their states face matter. The current study sought to examine why some governors invest significant resources to shape the direction of their state's postsecondary system of education. To this end, this study sought to understand the critical elements that led two different governors to enact large-scale impact of state governors on postsecondary education.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Governors' influence in higher education is not a recent phenomenon; colleges and universities have a long tradition of engaging the executive branch of state government. One early example is the well-documented disagreement between President John Wheelock and the Dartmouth College boards of trustees in 1815, which focused on the authority of institutional control between the two parties (Richardson, 1932). Wheelock elevated this disagreement in the public arena, inviting the state legislature of New Hampshire to investigate the college, angering the Board of Trustees, who subsequently voted for his immediate removal as college president.

Meanwhile, the Republican party won the New Hampshire gubernatorial election and, at the same time, rallied behind President Wheelock in 1816 (Rudolph, 1962). Later that year in his inaugural address, the newly elected Republican governor confronted the issue at Dartmouth College. Within this first term, the New Hampshire legislature passed a law that effectively brought the institution under more state oversight as well as changing its name to from Dartmouth College to Dartmouth University (Richardson, 1932).

But the saga continued. In 1817, the Superior Court of New Hampshire agreed that Dartmouth University was a public corporation, and its administrative officers were responding to the citizens of New Hampshire and, therefore, the state legislature. After elevation to the US Supreme Court, a landmark decision in 1819 reversed the state's decision, laying down a judgment that Dartmouth College was not a civil or public property but a private institution to benefit the public (Rudolph, 1962). This landmark

case, although not successfully decided in favor of the Republican Governor, illustrates an early example of willingness by the state chief executive, as well as the state legislature, to intercede into matters of higher education when viable opportunities arise.

Historical accounts of the shared public arena between governors and higher education institutions are useful; however, this review of literature does not attempt to provide an inventory of these instances over time. The purpose of this review of literature was to understand the public arena higher education and the executive branch share by exploring illustrative research of the environmental conditions that provide the opportunity for gubernatorial influence and existing theory related to the policy-making process. Furthermore, existing conceptual frameworks purporting to identify “Education Governors” in the US were also reviewed as a potential lens to apply within the current study. Finally, this chapter reviews literature that outlines significant education reform initiatives in Kentucky and Tennessee, which provide a rationale for the proposed investigation of Governors Paul Patton and Bill Haslam, respective governors of these states.

This review of relevant literature lays out the following findings that provide a rationale for the proposed research questions:

- Documentation confirms many governors’ involvement within the matters of higher education frequently center on the allocation of state spending and the governance and leadership of institutions.
- When capitalized upon, a governor can play a critical role within the policy process, from agenda-setting to being a policy entrepreneur.

- Environmental conditions, ranging from the formal and informal powers of the governor, party control, and the evolution of the legislature to national trends in education reform, provide multiple variables for which to account when examining gubernatorial involvement.
- The governor-led higher education activities in Kentucky and Tennessee provide rich data to explore how governors may choose to engage with higher education.

Although these findings offer insight into this area of higher education, there is still much more to explore. To this end, a critical gap found throughout the review of the literature was an understanding from the perspective of governors of their vision of postsecondary education as a key priority for the state. This gap became the foundation for this study.

The Public Arena Governors and Higher Education Share Governance, Leadership, and Public Spending on Higher Education

Since the 1950s, the authority of the executive branch has increased as state government has become more centralized (Hines, 1988). Moreover, states have incrementally reorganized their higher education systems, with over a hundred separate efforts considered in the 1990s alone (McLendon, 2003). During this same period, the presence of the governor has been demonstrative, raising a considerable gap in understanding what role the executive branch plays in these instances (McLendon & Ness, 2003).

Some of the most controversial examples of the interactions between governors and higher education fall into three areas: finance, allegations against higher education

officials, and the selection of leadership at higher education institutions (Hines, 1988; Jaschik, 1987a). As state finance is one of the chief responsibilities of the executive branch, it is reasonable to understand where misalignment may occur. During periods of budget reductions, higher education finance frequently causes the most public disagreement amongst higher education leaders and governors (Jaschik, 1987d). During these occasions, public disagreement highlights a range of negative issues, which include the scale of the financial shortfall, timing of reductions, and a trail of negotiations among higher education leaders, state legislators, and the executive office (Jaschik, 1987b, 1987c; Mooney, 1987).

Governors have frequently become involved in the selection of institutional leaders. McCain (1986) noted that instances of public disagreement over the selection of a particular institutional president were increasing at both the system and campus level. In particular, the case of former California Governor Ronald Reagan and the University of California President Clark Kerr illustrates the ability of a governor to reshape postsecondary education through a combination of several outlined public activities: the state budget, the political appointment process, and the replacement of higher education leadership.

Before Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial election, under the leadership of Clark Kerr, the University of California had enjoyed decades of expansion and growth. Guided by California's *Master Plan* passed in 1960, Kerr led the restructuring of the state's postsecondary system of higher education into three systems: The University of California, the California State College (CSC) system (now the California State University), and the California Community College system. Also known as the Donahue

Higher Education Act, this new structure also served as a sorting system based on the academic merit of students—the highest achieving students attended the UC system without paying tuition; the remainder attended the CSC system (also tuition-free) or community college system, depending on their K-12 level of achievement. This plan instantly defined the role of each postsecondary system and structured three respective governing boards, which were responsible for the direction of each system. At the state level, a coordinating council facilitated and organized communication between the state government and the three institutional boards.

Seeking the Republican nomination for governor in 1966, Ronald Reagan claimed California's higher education system to be an extension of the welfare system. While campaigning, Reagan often referred to students as “welfare bums” and vowed to “send them back to work” (Boyarsky, 1968).

In 1967, Ronald Reagan became the 33rd governor of California after defeating Edward G. “Pat” Brown, which included, among his responsibilities, a seat on the University of California Board of Regents. On January 3rd of 1968, Governor Reagan's finance director, Gordon Smith, informed higher education officials of a 10% budget cut to higher education and a request for students to begin paying tuition. This budget-driven reform agenda aimed at curbing public spending on higher education and called for an end to free tuition for state college and university students. This budget also instilled annual across the board cuts, including construction projects.

According to Clark Kerr, “It was the worst setback to higher education since the Great Depression” (Boyarsky, 1968). Three weeks after Governor Reagan took office, The University of California Regents voted 14-8 in favor of dismissing Kerr as president

of the University of California. After the dismissal of Clark Kerr, Ronald Reagan would state in a televised address,

Currently the taxpayer foots a bill that averages \$2900 (in 1967 dollars) a year per student at the university level. And he pays it whether or not he is able to afford to send his own children to College, whether or not he is educating them in private or whether or not he has children at all.... As Governor, I am determined to maintain and protect that resource for those currently attending one of the many campuses, for those who will attend in the future and for those who foot the bill-you and I. (Boyarsky, 1968)

While some higher education reform is due to a campaign-based election, as with Governor Reagan, other governors have picked up the agenda from their predecessor. Governor Christine Todd Whitman's (New Jersey) successful abolishment of the New Jersey Board of Higher Education began almost 10 years before her election. The restructuring of the state's higher education system began under the previous governor, Thomas Kean, and the presidents of New Jersey's state colleges. Before 1986, the nine New Jersey institutions were governed by several state executive agencies that oversaw "college business practices in operational areas like financial affairs, personnel management, purchasing, outside contracting, and managing investment income" (Novak, 2008, p. 5). The New Jersey Department of Higher Education provided oversight to each agency and coordinated monitoring efforts.

Governor Thomas Kean, a Republican and champion of educational reform throughout his election and into office, viewed "autonomy as a key to the colleges' growth and success" (Leslie & Novak, 2003, p. 111). When a university president

provided a reasonable argument of increased postsecondary efficiency through decentralization, Governor Kean took advantage of an opportunity to reshape New Jersey's higher education system. After winning reelection in 1986 with Republican control of the New Jersey General Assembly, legislation passed that significantly freed state colleges from government oversight (Leslie & Novak, 2003).

In 1993, Christine Todd Whitman, also a Republican Governor who campaigned on reducing the size of state government, targeted higher education as the first area for reduction of oversight. In her 1994 budget address, Governor Whitman eliminated the Board and Department of Higher Education (Greer 1998). These reforms were suggested by New Jersey's state college presidents who prepared a 10-page strategy to increase policy autonomy for their institutions (Novak, 2008).

Gubernatorial Responsibilities, Powers, and Priorities

Being governor requires individuals to fulfill a rather long list of functions. The National Governor's Association (NGA) 2018 handbook, published to help newly elected governors acquaint themselves to the office, details duties of legislative leader, head of the executive branch, party leader, family member, national figure, and ceremonial chief (Ferguson, 2013; NGA, 1978). Other broad roles and responsibilities such as policy leader and intergovernmental actor may also require the governor's attention (Morehouse, 1987). Ferguson (2014) also notes the narrower role of crisis manager, which has gained recent attention since the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

During interviews with former governors, the NGA (1981) identified multiple themes as they investigated the role of the governor in the policy-making process. Governors can take up an issue provided by the public and shape it into executable

action. This focusing of public policy also arises from governors' ability to observe policy issues that emerge from state-level conflicts. A smaller portion of governors interviewed in the NGA study saw their role as a responder to unanticipated events, such as significant accidents (Ferguson, 2013; NGA, 1981).

According to Ferguson (2013), changes in the governor's office and related extended offices as contributors to the governor's role as a policy leader. These changes include the increased size, structure, and abilities found within the governor's private office within recent years. There is also an increasingly closer shift of extended offices and agencies to the governor. Modeling after the federal move to create an Office of Management and Budget for state-level policies, governors have become more aggressive policy managers by creating offices that can provide advice on a range of state policy issues (Ferguson, 2013).

By nature of the tools available to the executive office and the political environment, governors play an active role in the activities conducted by the legislative branch. However, the office is not a formal member of the state legislature (Ferguson, 2013). Tools such as the power to call a special session, the ability to veto, and the authority to prepare and administer the budget form the bulk of the formal powers. Informal tools such as popularity, charisma, and skill when dealing with legislative leadership, and assembling a reliable, professional staff provide governors with multiple means to accomplish their goals during legislation (Dilger et al., 1995; Ferguson, 2003, 2013). This legislative leadership role, according to Ferguson (2013), takes on two phases: first, setting the policy agenda, then finding and articulating the solution.

The governor's responsibilities, authority, influence, and priorities can have powerful implications for higher education institutions (Adler & Lane, 1985). Governors traditionally serve as the chief budget officer, prevailing opinion, and political party-leader for their states, frequently appointing small armies of individuals to a variety of boards across the state. Many governors maintain the ability to approve or veto appropriation bills within the state. An evaluation of governors' powers in five specific areas (i.e., budgetary oversight, length of the term, appointment, organizational control, and veto) allows for measurement of a governor's influence over state affairs (Beyle, 1983).

When considering the formal powers of the governor with higher education, Zusman (1986) offers to view these as "semi-hierarchies"; each entity is partially subordinate to the other, and, therefore, maintains a semi-hierarchical relation. This "semi-hierarchy" notion is particularly important in states such as California and Michigan, where the institutions have constitutional autonomy to governance of their institutions and have authority to make academic decisions while the state legislature holds budgetary and legal authority (Hines, 1988; Zusman, 1986).

Party Control and Election Proximity

Research suggests the degree of party-control during policymaking maintains influence over the types of policies adopted (Bibby & Holbrook, 1999; Ranney, 1976). In research cases where governors are perceived to have involved themselves in higher education policy and legislation passed, the party controlled by the executive office also controlled the state legislature. The influence of statewide elections as newly elected

governors take office combined with the available formal powers of the governors can influence public policy outcomes (Berry & Berry, 1992; Berry & W.D., 1990).

Higher Education as a Gubernatorial Priority

As Mahatma Gandhi pointedly stated, “Action expresses priorities.” While all chief executives may value their systems of higher education, the relative importance of higher education *to the governor* may have a considerable impact on motivation to become directly involved. A governor’s attitudes about higher education, frequency of communication with university presidents—the leaders of state higher-education agencies or systems—and legislative leaders, and history between the governor and higher education may signal the importance higher education holds with a chief executive (Hines, 1988). Some governors have previous experience in education, either K-12 or higher education, such as a former member of an institution’s governing board or a schoolteacher, which may shape their outlook when entering office. Gilley and Fulmer’s (1986) survey of 32 governors confirmed the importance of higher education as a critical policy issue. Forty-two percent of those governors that placed education at the top of their agendas did not perceive institutional leaders or national higher education organizations as the best source of information, instead placing greater emphasis on gathering education-related information from the Education Commission of States, the National Governor’s Association, and internal staff and appointed education aides. Other researchers found governors in more than one third of states appointed aides for education and higher education (Davis, 1998).

The Governor and the Legislature

Substantial scholarship concerning the dynamics between the legislature and governor has focused on the impact of the governor's ability to veto during the budget-making process. Historically, most states have placed the development and execution of the budget in the hands of the executive office (Abney & Lauth, 1985; Gosling, 1985, 1986; Gross, 1980; Moncrief & Thompson, 1980; Sharkansky, 1968). Although rarely used, a veto can illustrate the governor's failure of leadership to accomplish budgetary priorities and goals (Beyle, 1990; Rosenthal, 1990). Governors may tactically use the veto during a moment of government divide or disagreement or lame-duck periods (Wiggins, 1980; Wilkins & Young, 2002). Research on item vetoes, which provide the governor with the ability to strike out specific elements of a bill, has not been investigated as in-depth as the budget veto (Ferguson, 2013). Bernick and Wiggins (1991) note that the item veto is a potential useful tool to shape legislative action and suggest further inquiry can enhance this area of the governor and congressional leadership.

In addition to understanding how support through legislative coalitions and veto powers can shape legislation, researchers also have explored the links between specific legislative enactments and gubernatorial proposals. Ferguson (2013) notes this line of gubernatorial inquiry sheds some light on governors' ability to lead the legislature successfully. A primary asset in this work is the relative strength of the governor's party (Hall, 2002; Morehouse, 1987). Hall (2002) discovered that during election years, opposing party members become less supportive, and the gubernatorial partisans are more favorable, which can create uncertainty and lack of guaranteed success. In addition

to serving as a policy generator and leader in the legislative arena, a third primary role the governor must play is that of executive officer who must also work to control the bureaucracy that runs the state operations. Ferguson (2013) describes this role as the chief executive, with the responsibility of implementing the laws enacted by the legislature.

Potoski and Woods (2001) also explain the shifting nature of legislatures, who have become more professionalized by maintaining longer terms and establishing more legislative staff, has increased their influence over the bureaucratic arena. Still today, governors' authority in this arena continues to increase, as shown by comparing survey data taken from agency heads in the 1960s and 1990s (Bowling & Wright, 1998; Wright, 1967). In the 1960s, heads of state agencies reported the legislature as the primary host of influence over their activities. In contrast, by the 1990s, over half of state agency heads believed that governors exercised more control over the direction of the policy process.

Board Appointments

In addition to historical accounts of governors exercising authority over higher education governance, leadership, and public spending, there has also been substantial attention paid to gubernatorial influence via the power of appointment. This power is a critical factor in considering the role of the governor, particularly within higher education. This connection to government within higher education can provide pockets of political alliances to push forward the governor's agenda across the state. In most states today, the governor is responsible for a substantial number of appointments throughout each state.

Elling (2004) describes this as a shifting environment, where many states are giving the governor more appointment power by *shortening the ballot* or removing the

top-level official from the election cycle and placing them as gubernatorial appointees. Scholarship within the subdomain of bureaucratic control also describes increasing empowerment of the executive branch by the continued growth of the governor's office. The historical perspective within literature again provides background to the traditions established over time.

The earliest governing boards in the United States traced back to the beginnings of American higher education. Rudolph (1962) writes about four particular colleges: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and William and Mary. In general, private colleges are perceived to enjoy less state influence than their public counterparts. However, early Harvard was supported by the General Court through state funding, land acquisition, and even assistance in the investigation and dismissal of one of its presidents. The College of William and Mary had similar ties to public resources and connections. Rudolph explains Virginia's tobacco tax privilege written into William and Mary's charter as well as direct oversight of the colony's land appropriations. Even the College of William and Mary's campus location, at the other end of the city table (Duke of Gloucester Street) with the capital building at the other end, suggests a symbolic and visual connection between College and state. Understandably, state officials maintained varying amounts of authority over these institutions. For example, state officials held "guaranteed representation on the board of overseers" (Rudolph, 1962, p.14).

The Yale Corporation, Yale's governing board, established initial independence from state legislation by designing a board entirely made up of clergymen. This design not only permitted Yale to uphold the conservative values set forth by the institution's founding but also symbolically staked an autonomous claim. For better or worse, the

request to remain independent was more symbolic than real. According to Rudolph (1962), ties to the state remained constant and useful. Early Yale students were spared from both military service and taxes while enrolled at the College. Yale also received financial support from the state, and state legislation assisted the administration in the mid to late 1700s in a case that provided the increased authority of Yale Corporation (Rudolph, 1962). In sum, the relationship between the governing board and government, although without direct representation, remains influential in Yale's early beginnings.

Princeton University added the Governor of New Jersey and four members of the governor's council to its board of trustees in 1748 (Rudolph, 1962). According to Rudolph, this decision was the result of increased concern over religious controversies rather than financial stability. Princeton did not receive state financial appropriations. During this time, church and state relations were "politically dangerous," especially those relating to finances (Rudolph, 1962).

Based on traditional relationships with local, state, and federal government, today's public and private college and university governing boards, carry out specific activities of the state's higher education agenda. According to Bowen and Shapiro (1998), governing boards maintain a unique role and subsequent authority at institutions in the US. In general, governing boards have "broad responsibility for the activities of the institution it governs" (Bowen & Shapiro, 1998, p. 29). Boards appoint the institution's president, define its mission, and sometimes closely monitor capital projects and university budgets. The governor and legislature will have a tremendous interest in coordination activities with other state-supported systems.

The Policy Process as Opportunity for Gubernatorial Activity

Governors can play a substantive leadership role throughout the process of policy development and adoption. This role becomes more evident when the process plays out in public arenas, particularly within local, state, and even national media. Theories of public policy development provide a thoughtful approach to examine this sometimes messy process during the various stages of policy formation and are useful as reduction agents to complex, political activity (Dye, 1966). These theoretical models help researchers better understand the roles governors play within policy development and adoption, particularly during agenda setting. These models include the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), Multiple Streams Theory (MST), and Agenda Setting, Alternatives, Choice, and Implementation (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007).

Models that explain the policy process offer insight into how governors may insert themselves in meaningful ways, particularly as large organizations such as state systems of government have “limited bandwidth,” i.e., the *capacity to carry out* a limited number of issues at one time (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). As organizations set priorities to address several problems they deem viable to their direction, the governor’s influence, power, and authority play important roles in prioritization.

Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) discuss the limited carrying capacity of the public arena and its relationship to social issues. Moreover, many situations arise in society that may turn into potential social problems that alter an organization’s carrying capacity. For practical purposes, the agenda list, or what Mauss (1975) calls “prime time-space” (p.43) is quite limited. Limitations are due to several factors, but a limited space exists, and, thus, only a certain number of items will make the prime time-space list. Hilgartner

and Bosk explain further that different public arenas will maintain different spaces. For magazines, space is defined by columns, inches, and word types; for the House of Representatives, space may be measured by a specified budget or hours that congress may be in session.

Factors Influencing the Agenda-Setting Process

Kingdon's (2003) research on public policy describes the agenda-setting process as narrowing "the conceivable subjects to which government officials and those around them are paying special attention to" (p. 47). The items that make this list or the hierarchal positioning of each piece will maintain significant influence over the direction of the organization. Understanding the agenda-setting process and the factors that may influence how an item makes the agenda becomes a powerful tool. Kingdon also suggests there are three general categories of agenda influences: problems, politics, and knowledge. For all organizations, particularly state government, there is a flood of issues ready to be solved in any arena at any given moment. Since there is typically no shortage of problems, each item must compete to either make a list or receive a higher priority.

As expected, information holds substantial power to influence which issues make the agenda. An influx of new knowledge can offer a unique, competitive advantage for an item to make the organization's agenda or elevate itself as an organizational priority. As an example, Kingdon (2003) explains that in the public area of transportation, new information or regulation on the airline industry may lead to an addition or subtraction of a direct or indirect agenda item listed as a public priority. For Sabatier and Weible (2007), policy learning has the most effect on secondary beliefs, also affecting the agenda. Similar to Kingdon's notion of new knowledge, finding further information that

informs a specific issue is a viable mechanism to influence an agenda. For example, in the case of Michigan education reform (Mintrom & Vegari, 1996), a policy entrepreneur discovered charter schools as a viable option to meet the needs of his constituents after seeing information on the adoption of charter schools in other states.

Policy indicators, based on a gradual accumulation and tracking of information, as described by Kingdon (2003), stem from monitoring activities or research studies by both government and non-governmental agencies. These indicators can shed light on changes in events such as highway deaths, disease rates, etc. and are also used to assess the magnitude of a problem. For Stone (2002), these numbers and indicators from monitoring activities are used to tell a story and bring an issue into government and public attention. Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) note that these indicators, studies, and facts are often dramatized by coupling with “emotional rhetoric” to increase public attention.

Symbols used to represent ideas or legislation, such as Proposition 13 (Kingdon, 2003), can pose a shift in perception and also bring attention to a problem. Stone (2002) describes the role of symbols in explaining how the world works, drawing comparisons through metaphors, using small cases to represent wholes, highlighting problem ambiguity, and, ultimately, affecting problem definition by pushing indicators into public attention.

Feedback of information can influence the policy process (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). These feedback loops may stem from social networks linking the public to problem arenas and calling attention to programs that are not working, have budget challenges, or are failing to meet goals (Kingdon, 2003). Feedback can amplify or dampen problem attention in public arenas and additionally cross over into multiple areas

(Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). Kingdon suggests this feedback will often bring problems to attention as programs are administrated and evaluated and as complaints are registered to address a particular issue.

Finally, the political process will significantly influence the agenda. For Kingdon (2003), this includes the national mood or public opinion, election results, and changes in administration. A considerable degree of shift in the agenda occurs when a top-level administrator, in most cases the President or a gubernatorial election, brings forth new or revised issues to the table. Sabatier and Weible (2007) suggest that changes in the political system are one of many possible external shocks significantly impacting the agenda-setting process. Other external shocks are not limited to governmental regime changes but also include disasters and outputs from other systems. These shocks attract the attention of decision makers, refocus public attention, and shift agendas. Policy venues, used for changes or innovation (i.e., new federal funding given to states for education), may be disrupted or even closed due to external shocks (high levels of rainwater/flooding) (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

The timing of problems and policies, referring to the length of time an issue is debated and how issues can move into the public attention, can also affect the dynamics of institutional rhythm (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1998). Hilgartner and Bosk define *institutional timing* as public officials' fixed terms in office. Policy entrepreneurs may monitor these developments within the public arena for opportunities to promote their ideas. A second feature for analysis may include the way budgets are timed, as well as the elected officials responsible for developing, debating, or approving budgets. Particular political parties and policy entrepreneurs may search for misalignment in budgets, lulls in

the economy, or other financial deficiencies to form coalitions for political change. Discovery of these gaps can then generate public, negative feedback for future use against a particular legislative group.

Factors Affecting Whether Problems Fall Off the Agenda

Issues that once made the agenda can fall from their degree of priority or even be deleted from the agenda altogether. This change may occur because of the contribution of one or more several factors. The most straightforward method is the issue gets addressed (Kingdon, 2003), e.g., legislation passes to solve a transportation issue. On the other hand, if a problem brought forth over and over again reaches saturation, this issue loses its novelty. Novelty is also a high commodity for problem attention (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988), and levels of originality can cause attention to fade as public levels of “boredom” change. Kingdon compares policy in Washington to the fashion industry, where items come into and out of vogue like new lines of clothing. The overuse of repetitive symbols (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988) may also contribute to saturation, leading to a diminishing of dramatic value. Particularly, if a problem is receiving constant negative feedback, policymakers may grow tired of the debate and shift attention to another idea.

Budget constraints (Kingdon, 2003) are often a driving force for problems to fade from view. Kingdon furthermore explains that some issues never make it to the agenda as budget constraints prohibit any serious consideration of solutions. Budget constraints also focus attention on inexpensive programs, promoting expensive policy changes such as healthcare to be shelved for better times (Kingdon, 2003). In addition to fiscal constraints, other expendable resources that may cause an issue to fall off the list include time and the political likelihood of legislation activity.

Applying the lenses of *agenda setting* and *carrying capacity* to better understand the direction of the state policymaking is useful for synthesizing the role of the governor. In relation to the postsecondary system of education, these lenses can offer a more robust method to understand how governors may use their office to shape the direction of public higher education. Gubernatorial agenda setting permits the executive branch to elevate preferred problems to the attention of the legislature.

Gleiber and Shull's (1992) analysis of the presidential influence on policymaking indicates that issues that have the potential impact on large numbers of people often make the public agenda. During the setting process of the public agenda, governors have the potential to make significant contributions (Bernick & Wiggins, 1991; Herzik, 1991; Rosenthal, 1990). Several studies illustrate the governor's role as agenda setter using essential tools (e.g., preparing the budget), presenting State of the State addresses, and calling individual sessions to flex their will upon activities carried out in the legislature. Beyle and Muchmore (1983), Bernick and Wiggins (1991), and Rosenthal (1990) posit that the ability of governors to claim credit for a policy undertaking, mainly through access to the media, can often build momentum towards a specific agenda.

As the policy process transitions from placement on the agenda to actually persuading the legislator and public for passage, the governor's role shifts to coalition builder, persuader, and negotiator. Bargaining also becomes essential for governors to exercise when building coalitions of supportive legislators, beginning with the party leaders (Neustadt, 1980). This coalition-building can also occur in the form of creating goodwill by raising money, making campaign appearances, and assisting legislatures with problems or issues amongst their constituents (Rosenthal, 1990).

Kentucky and Tennessee Research Advancing Understanding of Governors and Higher Education

Key Postsecondary Policies of Kentucky (1995-2003)

While serving as the 59th Governor of Kentucky, Paul E. Patton presided over some of the most substantial postsecondary policy changes during the Commonwealth's 200-plus year history (McGuinness 2008). As described in McGuinness's (2008) account, a significant shift took place two years into Patton's administration when the legislature passed the 1997 Postsecondary Education Reform Act (House Bill 1), setting the state for four other policy changes that occurred in 1998 and 2000. These included the following:

- Establishment of the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES), which was funded by the proceeds of the state lottery system and provided merit-based scholarships based on high school academic performance
- Establishment of a matching investment initiative called, "Bucks for Brains" designed to increase research activity by funding professorships, research scholars, staffs, fellowships, and scholarships
- Passage of the Kentucky Innovation Act of 2000 which created the Kentucky Innovation Commission, designating a pool of "special funds and programs to spur innovation and commercialization efforts"
- Passage of Senate Bill 1 (2000) that committed to "substantially increasing the state's commitment to improving the educational attainment and adult literacy" (p. xx)

In addition to the aforementioned House Bill 1, which led to subsequent postsecondary policies, two sets of goals were also adopted into Kentucky Statute.

McGuinness (2008) describes these goals as *Goal A* and *Goal B*, which the current study will continue to use for consistency. Goal A included an overarching aim to create a “seamless, integrated system of postsecondary education strategically planned and adequately funded to enhance economic development and quality of life,” establishing five institutional sub-goals:

- Improve Kentucky’s land-grant research university, the University of Kentucky, to become a nationally ranked top 20 public university
- Improve status of the University of Louisville to become a nationally recognized metropolitan research university
- Improve Kentucky’s regional universities by establishing nationally recognized programs of excellence
- Establish a comprehensive community and technical college system
- Develop a coordinated system to deliver educational services, comparable to or exceeding the national average, to adult Kentuckians (McGuinness, 2008, p. xx)

The second goal or Goal B, which McGuinness (2008) described as the ultimate goal for Kentucky to achieve by 2020, is for Kentucky to significantly increase its postsecondary attainment and research capabilities. Leaders hoped. that by establishing postsecondary reform efforts, this plan would lead to an increase in the level of economic development and per capita income for its citizens. Achievement of this goal would mean this increase should meet or exceed the national average of postsecondary completion by 2020. Trombley (2000) summarized that in just three years, the postsecondary education system in Kentucky had

- increased spending for higher education by 48% in four years;
- established an incentive fund to attract “top” scholars, increase the number of endowed faculty chairs, and create competitive fellowships for graduate students;
- removed all but one of the fourteen community colleges from the governance of the University of Kentucky, and merged those institutions with the existing technical schools by establishing a new Kentucky Community College and Technical College System; and
- strengthened the state coordinating agency, The Council on Postsecondary Education, to increase its ability to provide systemic statewide planning.

The significant changes that occurred to Kentucky’s postsecondary education system during 1990s have largely remained intact and have provided a foundation for additional policy changes in the ensuing decades. Subsequently, several changes in leadership have occurred within the branches of government, as well as the state’s higher education agency.

Key Policies Relevant to Tennessee (2011-2018)

One year before Bill Haslam became the 49th Governor of Tennessee, the state passed a comprehensive reform plan to make significant changes to public higher education in the state through changes to government policy. This agenda, coined the *Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010*, is known to have set the table for a series of significant postsecondary policies that have been adopted during Governor Haslam’s administration, which began in 2011. Those policies currently include the DRIVE TO 55 initiative, which established a statewide postsecondary attainment goal of 55% to meet

Tennessee’s projected workforce needs by 2025. Establishment of this goal and passage of this bill (Complete Tennessee, 2017) led to the following:

1. **FOCUS ACT:** This act removed the governance of the state’s comprehensive four-year institutions away from the already established Tennessee Board of Regents, establishing local institutional governing boards, and reset the direction of the Tennessee Board of Regents to focus directly on community colleges and technical schools (Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology).
2. **LABOR EDUCATION ALIGNMENT PROGRAM (LEAP):** This program was established to align the skills and credentials with the needs of the workforce and to build a data-driven, coordinated approach to reducing the “skills gap.”
3. **TENNESSEE PROMISE:** This was established in 2013 to build a last-dollar, scholarship program to ensure all Tennesseans have the first two years of community or technical college tuition free.
4. **TENNESSEE RECONNECT ACT & TCAT RECONNECT:** This declared an extension of DRIVE TO 55 and provided another last dollar scholarship program aimed at adults that have not previously earned a college degree. This Act ensures eligible adults in Tennessee have the first two years of community and technical college tuition free.

In late January 2018, during his final State of the State address, Governor Haslam proposed House Bill 2114/Senate Bill 2259, also called the *Complete to Compete: Complete College Tennessee Act of 2018*, as an update of the Complete College of Tennessee Act of 2010 that would accomplish the following:

- Require students who receive either the Tennessee Promise or HOPE scholarship to complete a minimum of 30 academic hours in 12 months
- Require the community college and technical college system of Tennessee to implement structured, ready-made scheduling for all entering freshmen based on each student's academic program
- Provide additional financial supports for institutions and students by (1) increasing college advisors at each community college; 2) deploying a college coaching network across the state to work directly with college students; 3) expanding the Tennessee SAILS program to reduce the need for remediation; 4) expanding bridge programs that offer intensive pre-college orientation and remediation support for Tennessee Promise students; and 5) creating a mobile, modular lab that can be used to provide training in some of the higher education deserts in Tennessee, where students are not readily able to access post-secondary opportunities.

Literature Conclusions

As Bernick (2016) explains, “Governors are the most prominent political actors in state politics and subject of continuous study by scholars” (p. 5). While decades of research on governors provide a significant foundation of knowledge in some areas (e.g., how governors engage within the budgetary process or the executive branch's relations with the legislative branch), there has been much less attention paid to the role of governors in the policy process (Bernick, 2016). Pockets of literature have been well examined regarding the role of the governor in the budgetary arena, their formal powers, and the role of the governor as party leader (Ferguson, 2014).

Given insufficient understanding of the gubernatorial role in public higher education and an increasing observation of more gubernatorial activism in this policy arena (McLendon et al., 2013), an investigation that examines the vision, role, and conditions established for long-term sustainability of governors' policy priorities within this public policy arena can offer readers a unique opportunity to learn more about this underexplored space of state governance. Moreover, investigating as case studies two gubernatorial administrations that exhibited significant higher education policy reforms will illuminate facets of the state policy process.

Governors with limited experience in higher education are reshaping the direction of state systems of postsecondary education for millions of students. Investigation of this phenomenon from the governor's perspectives of their role within the process may offer insight for policymakers, future governors, and higher education leaders to consider as future generations of Americans utilize postsecondary education.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

To satisfy the central goal of the current study, which was to provide insights regarding how governors leverage their state's public higher education system to shape the future of their state, this research employed a qualitative instrumental multiple case study design to understand the causes, conditions, and roles governors play during the development and execution of significant postsecondary education changes. This process followed four phases. The first phase included a wide-ranging review of literature on gubernatorial powers, roles, and executive leadership with an emphasis on significant postsecondary policy reform. The second phase included a review of education reform trends specific to Kentucky and Tennessee as well as their associated environmental conditions. The third and fourth phases continued this exploration, leading up to and through the two gubernatorial administrations, the focus of this study. Specifically, the third phase sought to construct an evidence-based narrative through media accounts, informal interviews, and existing research to paint an environmental picture for the particular state. This picture was useful for gathering original data and analyzing those data during the final stage, providing the foundation for answering the primary research questions for this study.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions.

RQ1: How do governors' visions for their state intersect with their view of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state?

RQ1a: What are the sources of information or strategies employed to gather information that inform their perspective on higher education?

RQ2b: What environmental conditions enable governors to prioritize higher education over other state policy systems?

RQ2: What role(s) do governors play during the policy-making process?

RQ2a: How do governors utilize their role and their administration to set the policy agenda?

RQ2b: How do governors leverage their office to ensure their agenda remains intact through adoption?

RQ3: What conditions during the formation, adoption and implementation process that provided allowed for long-term sustainability of reform efforts?

RQ3a: How intentional was long-term sustainability built into the design of reforms?

RQ3b: What methods were employed to ensure policy reform efforts are sustained after the sitting administration left office?

Each research question was established from existing gaps in the literature and, therefore, are directly linked to the existing research from the field.

Research Design

Utilizing qualitative methods to investigate governors within the public policy process has been identified as a promising approach to understand the role governors may play, particularly as policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1998). Understanding the context that surrounds the events leading up to, during, and after each governor's activities during the time period studied allows the researcher to explore the

patterns within these contexts and uncover the complex policy environment (Neuman, 1997).

The qualitative instrumental multiple case study design provides a useful approach to investigate the causes, conditions, and roles governors play during the development and execution of significant postsecondary education changes. This approach “was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations” (Stake, 2006, p. 3). In order to study each case intimately, the researcher must understand the situation in order to develop an image of the phenomenon, then carefully articulate that image for others to understand (Stake, 2006).

Browne (1999) advocates that researchers do “no good to study agents of influence if you have no context for what they attempt to influence” (p. 72). To follow Browne’s advice, the current research adhered to rigorous practice of qualitative case study, drawing on multiple sources of information outside and inside the field. The researcher had access to people within the studied time frame who greatly influenced the shaping of the policy and political environment. Browne (1999) that separating the passage of a statute or policy from the interests of those involved is difficult if not possible. Few policy researchers have sought out complex answers to those involved in the policy process, possibly due to the lack of access to the credibility challenge necessary to find and understand evidence of factors that led to policy formation (Browne, 1999). The current study sought to establish that credibility through reviewed literature, data collection and analysis, and the researcher’s prior experience working within state higher education policy formation.

Given the significance of each state's postsecondary reform efforts, each state might stand alone as single case study investigation. Although single cases pay some attention to other cases to enrich the description of the single case, a multiple case study design, with specific attention paid to comparison, provides unique opportunities to understand individual cases clearer (Stake, 2006). Dye (1966) argues that states provide clear units of analysis for a multiple case study approach because within a common federal system of government, all 50 states share aspects foundational to explaining public policy. Since case studies allow the researcher to investigate the how and why, particularly over a period of time (Stake, 2006), this research design provides opportunities to understand conditions over time and across multiple cases.

For the purposes of understanding Kentucky and Tennessee, particularly the administrations of Governors Paul Patton and Bill Haslam, this qualitative instrumental multiple case study deployed three qualitative methods within its four-phase process: historical comparative research, field research, and comparative case-study. These qualitative methods allowed the researcher to understand the history, process, and reform efforts in Kentucky and Tennessee in context of each governor's ability to shape them over time.

Procedures

Data Collection and Sources of Evidence

Among the different types of qualitative data collection strategies, document analysis, interviewing, and observation were utilized during the current study. Within each of these data source types, several types of data were explored: media reports, speeches, legislation, oral histories, and primary and secondary interviews. Electronic

sources of information were easily accessible for the Tennessee case, due to its more recent time period; however, for the Kentucky case, electronic sources were not as well established during that time period. In order to explore the variables related to each research question, the research used a matrix of multiple data sources for each state (See Table 1).

Documents

To understand the role governors play during the policy-making process, Gross (1989) suggests seeking out two document sources: state-of-state-addresses and accounts of governors' positions on legislation and other proposals. Fusarelli (2002) suggests researchers to date have not been able to utilize political biographies and autobiographies

Table 1

Multiple Data Sources

Data Sources	<u>Information Sources</u>	
	Kentucky	Tennessee
Information Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with elected and appointed officials • Observations of recorded videos • Interviews with Staff of Council • Transcripts of legislative proceedings • State Budget Documents • Economic and Demographic Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with elected and appointed officials • Interviews with Staff of Council • Transcripts of legislative proceedings • Observations of recorded videos • State Budget Documents • Economic and Demographic Data

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Data Sources	<u>Information Sources</u>	
	Kentucky	Tennessee
Gov. Role – Agenda Setting and Policy Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper Accounts including • Observations of recorded videos • Dissertations & Articles on the higher education in Kentucky • Interviews with elected and appointed officials • Interviews with Staff of Council • Media Accounts including Newspaper and Recorded Interviews (audio and video) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Accounts including Newspaper and Recorded Interviews (audio and video) • Interviews with elected and appointed officials • Interviews with Staff of Council
Sustainability conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Accounts including Newspaper and Recorded Interviews (audio and video) • Dissertations & Articles on the higher education in Kentucky • Interviews with elected and appointed officials • Interviews with Staff of Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Accounts including Newspaper and Recorded Interviews (audio and video) • Interviews with elected and appointed officials • Interviews with Staff of Council • Interviews with Staff of Council

of governors due to their lack of availability. Studies focused on the education governor (Krotseng, 1987; Stallings, 2010) consulted speeches specific to education, public papers (official and unofficial), meeting agendas, proposals, and related materials to provide insights on gubernatorial perspectives, beliefs, and values (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Khademian, 2002; Stallings, 2010). These types of documents permit the researcher not only to understand the environmental context surrounding key decisions made by the governor's administration but also provide evidence for establishing key areas for further investigation through data collection procedures.

Media Accounts

Involvement of media throughout gubernatorial administrations can provide additional context and accounts of events for validation of facts. In particular, local and statewide media may offer varying sides of specific accounts throughout each state's passage of a particular policy or statute. Marshall and Rossman (2006) acknowledge the utility of secondary sources such as media portrayals but suggest carefully evaluating their accuracy. To this end, media accounts, like newspaper description of events were explored but using the advised caution.

Observations

Televised recordings of governors' speeches permit the usage of observations as a method of data collection. This allowed the researcher to watch the governor at specific moments during the policy process for each case study. In order for these unstructured observations to become useful pieces of evidence, the researcher took a disciplined approach by developing a specific data collection instrument that employs constant questioning of the governor within the specific recorded setting (Pauly, 2014).

Secondary Interviews

Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggest unstructured, in-depth, open-ended interviews within the field can provide references to critical moments in time, people, and other contextual details. When employing interviews in this manner, the researcher sought out descriptions that provide background, unveil complexity of a problem, and identify those involved (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The researcher explored understanding of structural components of the field: e.g., the governance structure of the public higher education system. Furthermore, the researcher sought to ascertain from these interviews verification

of facts across multiple sources. The current research employed field research interviews for each of these purposes. Field research interviews were also part of the research strategy to earn credibility prior to embarking upon a series of elite field interviews. The potential interview pool for secondary interviews included but was not limited to the following individuals in Kentucky and Tennessee:

- Chief of Policy Staff of the Governors
- Private Consultants and National Experts
- State Higher Education Executive Officers
- State Government Agency Employees
- College and University Presidents and System Leaders
- Faculty Members

Primary (Elite) Interviews

Elite interviewing, as Fitz and Halpin (1994) describe, particularly as it relates to education policy, is used to gather information typically not available within reports from media or traditional document review. Moreover, access to elite interviews provides more colorful description of accounts of governors, particularly interviews with each governor, available to the general public. In addition to aiding the researcher's ability to describe a series of events, elite interviews identified and provided access to organizations and individuals that were instrumental during the policymaking process through direct or indirect influence exercised during the studied time period (McPherson & Raab, 1990).

Critics of elite interviews warn about the potential subjectivity of these interviews with risk of a participant formulating the policy situation with bias, particularly during a heightened political or policy environment (Pipho, 1988). While the current study relied

on select elite interviews, these data were substantiated through evidence found by reviewing documents and conducting field interviews to paint a vivid picture of each case. The opportunity to interview the governors involved within significant postsecondary reform agendas, from two different states, provided the researcher with a unique opportunity to understand the gubernatorial perspectives (See Appendix C for data collection instruments).

Data Collection Considerations

Site and Sample Selection

Since one of the primary goals of this research was to ascertain the role governors play during moments of significant postsecondary policy reform, the sample selection process became multi-layered. First, the states studied should have experiences with significant postsecondary reform through statute, policy, and/or governance restructuring. Second, the current study chose to focus on the executive branches to shape reform. Finally, this study sought to focus specifically on each individual governor through an effort to dive deeper into how each individual dedicated a significant amount of time, while in office, to focus on postsecondary reform efforts.

In both Kentucky and Tennessee, each state has experienced significant policy reform during the selected time periods as explained in previous sections. In both cases, it has been well-documented, through prior research, statutes, and media accounts, that each governor has played a role from policy creation to adoption. Finally, the researcher was provided access to each governor and key figures surrounding the governors during the policy formation and adoption, which permitted a deeper investigation into each individual governor. For these reasons, Kentucky and Tennessee were chosen for study

over other states in order to employ a qualitative instrumental multiple case study that allowed for deep cross comparison of the causes, conditions, and roles governors play during the development and execution of significant postsecondary education changes.

Interview Strategies

The interview process demands careful consideration to establish an effective interview environment for gathering information to answer each of the research questions during the provided time. To accomplish this, several strategies were employed during the current study. First, adequate background research, as described above, about the topic to be discussed and the interviewee was conducted to inform the interview process (Aberbach & Rockman, 2004; Phillips, 1998). Second, an interview protocol was designed that included the development of a concise articulation of the research to build trust with the participant (Marshall, 1984).

Primary interview questions developed for this study followed a semi-structured process, providing ample opportunity for those interviewed to shape the data in unexpected ways (Dean & Eichhorn, 1967). To this end, an open-ended questioning approach with follow-up questions designed to probe in specific ways was utilized when interviewing elite participants (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Bogdan & Biklan, 2003; Kezar, 2006). Secondary interview questions were developed and utilized during the interview when circumstances arose during the interview, such as conversation stalls or the interviewee became hesitant to answer the primary line of questioning.

This study is sensitive to Marshall and Rossman's (2006) advice to record interviews by first ensuring the recording device was unobtrusive before considering its convenience. A small digital audio recorder was the preferred method of the primary

method. A second, identical recording device was also used during elite interviews to ensure the audio recording is captured. All cell phone or other electronic devices were powered down during the interview to prohibit disruptions and to minimize interviewee suspicions of recordings accidentally transferred through email or social media. In the event the interviewee denied the use of the electronic recording device, a manual interview transcription tool was available to the interviewer. Analog and digital backups of all data were made on a monthly basis after the conclusion of the data collection.

Data Management and Analysis

To analyze the collection of documents, media accounts, field research interviews, and elite interviews, the current study employed a multiple case analyses approach. Developed by Stake (2006), this approach utilizes the concept of the “quintain” to establish a common focus for the group of individual cases to explain. As Stake (2006) describes, the process works like this. Categories identified through the findings originate with the those studying the individual cases. When analyzing the findings, the research has an opportunity to “consolidate and extend” the understanding the quintain (Stake, 2006, p. 40).

This researcher utilized Stake’s cross-case analysis procedures and pre-established worksheets when reading reports, analyzing, and utilizing their findings for each case in relation to the main research questions and their sub-questions driving this proposal (Stake, 2006). This process included the following:

- Developing a graphic design of the multiple case study
- Incorporating the research questions of the multiple case study
- Developing and utilizing analyst’s notes while reading case reports

- Rating the expected utility of each case for each theme
- Establishing and utilizing a matrix of generating theme-based assertions from case findings
- Generating multiple case assertions for data findings
- Planning the final multiple case findings and discussion. (Stake, 2006, p. 93)

Triangulation and Trustworthiness

For Stake (2006), triangulation for multiple case studies can act similarly as single-case studies, reducing doubt about the validity of the research methods by ensuring a picture that is as clear as possible. The purpose of using three sources of data collection was to enhance the rigor of the current research by establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This was accomplished by the following qualitative data collection and analysis objectives:

- To ensure the current research establishes credibility or internal validity, this study utilized the three data sources to (1) establish triangulation, (2) search for disconfirming evidence, and (3) seek out subject review from its research participants (member checking) (Baxter & Jack, 2008).
- To establish external validity or transferability, the current study utilized these three data sources and instruments to provide a detailed description of the study's context and how this context influenced the findings from the research questions and to insure that data collection tools facilitated the collection of thick, rich description from all data sources (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Stake, 2006).

- To ensure the current research was reliable, the researcher created a code generation trail with clear descriptions of the coding schemes employed throughout the analysis. This ensured those readers not directly connected to this research could review each primary document and coding scheme and evaluate how the findings and conclusions link to the data and the original research questions (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).
- To reinforce current study’s objectivity, the researcher not only employed strategies such as triangulation, data archiving, negative case making, etc. but also practiced reflexive journaling. Reflexive journaling allowed the researcher to acknowledge and document his role in the research, as well as understand and elevate personal feelings, biases, and other characteristics in relation to the phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Table 2 illustrates the usage of instruments to build trustworthiness throughout the study (See Appendix C).

Table 2

Data Collection and Instruments

Data Sources	<u>Instruments</u>			
	Document Analysis	Observations	Interviews	Reflexive
State and Local Media Accounts	X			
Speech Transcripts	X			
Oral History (KY only)	X			
Legislative Bills	X			
Gubernatorial Budget (proposed)	X			

Legislative Budgets (approved)	X		
Televised inauguration address		X	
Televised state of state addresses		X	
Secondary Interviews			X
Primary Interviews			X
Reflective Practices			X

Note. Data sources collected for both case studies unless otherwise noted.

Role of Researcher

Patton (2015) suggests acknowledging the researcher's place within the investigation and develop the researcher's understanding of the phenomena, positioning it appropriately within the research. In light of this, the following two sections will highlight some of these aspects using a critical lens of reflexivity to discuss issues in the current study. This consideration has two purposes. First, this study sought out the critical elements which lead to the impact governors have on postsecondary education. In order to acknowledge any biases or influences, it is important to understand influences from the researcher's personal background.

Throughout the current study, I attempted to understand my role as the researcher and make explicit decisions to ensure personal biases are acknowledged. For example, substantive research questions were justified and presented as personal deductive reasoning and clear connections with literature.

Methodological decisions have been identified and justified through the previous sections of this chapter, and the following chapter will address all analytical procedures. Motivation of this topic included a personal experience working in the field as well as an interest in understanding the complex nature of statewide postsecondary reform. Two

areas that need consideration, which are included in the subsequent two sections, concern my background as a researcher and roles that I have undertaken in the field. As a researcher, this position was considered as each phase of data collection was conducted. Reflexive tools were built into each dataset, and when interviewing, personal experiences were disclosed to the participants to ensure the researcher's assumptions were balanced with the perspective of the interview participant.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), researchers must be aware of their personal values to ensure research methods and techniques are not biased. The current research has additionally led me to further develop perspectives, opinions, and interpretations of gubernatorial powers, the role of state postsecondary agencies, and private consultants. As I have served professional roles within a state postsecondary agency, as well as a private consulting practice focusing on postsecondary policy, the connection to how these particular organizations influence the intellectual development and behavior of gubernatorial decision making during the policy process were particularly brought to life. Realizing this during the design of the current study led to specific maneuvers to prevent bias. For example, interview design allowed the participants to consistently express their perceptions through open response questions. Additional reliability practices included the employment of reflexive notetaking within the data collection toolsets (See Appendix C).

Delimitations

A delimitation for this study was the selection of Kentucky and Tennessee in the Southeast region. The identification of these two states intentionally excluded all other states in the southeast in order to narrow the focus and scope of the study. Focusing on

southeastern states was also determined for access purposes, including in person interviews with participants when feasible.

Limitations

While Kentucky and Tennessee mark significant achievements in postsecondary reform with each governor playing a critical role, these states are not the only ones to have elected a governor who enacted statewide policy changes on higher education. The study was also limited to two states due to the scope of this research project, the fulfillment of a doctoral dissertation requirements. A larger-scale research project, and design could enable more than two state comparisons. Furthermore, the current study did not spend significant time understanding the background of the individual. A deep understanding of the personal dispositions, and their personal circumstances, may further illuminate the decision making while in office.

Summary

Careful consideration has been placed on the methodological framework for this study. Like a well-built home or office building, a credible, reliable, valid set of findings is the product of a solid foundation and building frame. The current study sought to establish a research framework that is built on such a foundation so the audience will have greater insight into the crucial role governors can play when one of society's key pillars of education changes over time.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

As concluded through the literature review, there is minimal understanding of the governor in public higher education and increasing instances of more gubernatorial activism in this policy arena (McLendon et al., 2013). There is also a need for an investigation that examines the vision and role of a governor within the higher education arena that can offer readers a unique opportunity to learn more about this underexplored phenomenon. Moreover, investigating two governors as case studies who exhibited significant higher education policy reforms illuminated facets of the governor's role within the state policy process.

The current multiple instrumental case study design sought to understand the viewpoints of these governors, the roles governors play, and the sustainability conditions established during the development and execution of significant postsecondary education changes. To this end, this study sought to identify the critical elements that lead to the large-scale impact of state governors on postsecondary education through a review of artifacts; a theoretical lens of specific components of public policy development; and the perspectives of two governors, state higher education executive officers, and other state public policy leaders.

As a review, the postsecondary reform efforts that took place while both Governor Haslam and Governor Patton were in back to back administrations were significant. In 1997, Kentucky passed the 1997 Postsecondary Education Reform Act (House Bill 1), which

- established a statewide lottery system-based scholarship;

- created a matching investment designed to increase research activity;
- led to passage of Senate Bill 1 (2000) that committed to increasing educational attainment and adult literacy;
- charged Kentucky's land-grant research university, the University of Kentucky, to become a nationally ranked, top-20 public university and sought to improve the status of the University of Louisville to become a nationally recognized metropolitan research university;
- improved Kentucky's regional universities by establishing nationally recognized programs of excellence;
- established a comprehensive community and technical college system; and
- strengthened the coordinating authority of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (McGuinness, 2008, p. 101).

While the passage of the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 (Tennessee, 2018) gave Governor Haslam a policy window for strategic planning in postsecondary, his administration decided to use it as a central tenant of his eight years in office.

Tennessee's reform agenda ultimately included the adoption of a statewide

- postsecondary attainment goal of 55% to meet Tennessee's projected workforce needs by 2025;
- program to align the skills and credentials with the needs of the workforce and to build a data-driven, coordinated approach to reducing the "skills gap";
- last-dollar scholarship program to ensure all Tennesseans leaving K-12 education have the first two years of community or technical college tuition-free;

- additional last-dollar scholarship programs aimed at adults that have not previously earned a college degree;
- revision to the higher education governance model, removing the governance of the state's comprehensive four-year institutions away from the already established Tennessee Board of Regents; and
- establishment of local institutional governing boards and reset the direction of the Tennessee Board of Regents to focus directly on community colleges and technical schools (Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology). (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2011)

Research Questions and Data Sources

Given the significance of the postsecondary reform that occurred under both Governor Patton and Governor Haslam, as well as limited information about the potential impact the executive branch may have, the central goals of the current study were to provide new insights. Specifically, this study sought to highlight specific governor-related milestones that occurred within the agenda-setting process and to describe the tools governors employ to make significant policy changes to the governance and strategic activity of public systems of higher education. To this end, this multiple case study sought to answer the following overarching research questions:

- RQ1: How do governors' vision for their state intersect with their views of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state?
- RQ2: What role(s) do governors play during the policy-making process?

- RQ3: What conditions during the formation, adoption, and implementation process allowed for long-term sustainability of reform efforts?

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the synthesized elite interviews of two governors, interviews with senior staff of both administrations, document analyses, and observational data gathered from media accounts, televised speeches, and interviews. The data analysis for both interview strategies followed Stake's (2006) analytical approach to categorize, aggregate, and directly interpret multiple case study findings.

Specifically, the current study's analysis employed a series of cross-case analysis tools. These tools included developing a multiple case study graphic design, incorporating the research questions, utilizing analyst's notes, developing a utility rating scorecard, and establishing a matrix to answer the research questions from case-findings (Stake, 2006).

Across both case studies, these findings were a result of cross-analyzing a set of rich data sources that included documents, observations, and interviews. For Patton, this included analyzing speeches (both documented and on video) and media accounts. It also included analyzing a rich series of oral histories from individuals that included senior staff within the governor's office; administrators within the state budget office; education leaders from the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. To aide in understanding Patton as the policy entrepreneur in Research Question Two, the researcher reviewed two previously published doctoral dissertations analyzing Kentucky's reform effort. One dissertation (Garn, 2005) conducted a theoretical policy

analysis of the 1997 reforms, identifying Governor Patton as the primary policy entrepreneur. The current study, therefore, built on Garn's findings, expanding on the governor as part of the agenda-setting and policy champion. In sum, these studies explicitly called attention to Patton's activities as governor. Finally, data also included specific interviews with Governor Patton, as well as other education and government leaders from that time, to call attention to Patton's viewpoint, specific role, and conditions established to ensure sustained postsecondary reform.

For Haslam, a rich oral history and related dissertations were not located for this study; therefore, this analysis relied heavily on data collected from media accounts, speeches, legislation, and higher education policy analysis. Also, Haslam's administration, like many others in the 21st century, communicated with the general public through the usage of online videos and other social media. As a data source, these observations helped to understand how Governor Haslam explained and advocated for his reform agenda, while validating both documents and interview accounts of his work. Finally, studying Haslam's administration required interviews not only with Governor Haslam but also with senior staff within his administration and with key leaders within the postsecondary community, including the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Tennessee Board of Regents.

For both governors, data collection and analysis continued until patterns began to emerge and reoccur throughout the multiple sources of the documentation, observation, interviews. Table 3 provides a summary of patterns that were generated for each case and the corresponding multiple data sources the researcher established as a threshold for their inclusion as a finding as advised by Stake (2006).

Table 3

Research Findings and Data Sources

Main Research Question	Findings	Data sources to validate findings
RQ1: How do governors' visions for their state intersect with their view of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state?	Haslam: Outside Experts, National Movement, K-12 Reform, Previous experience in Government, personal experience, Internal staff, SHEEO Agency, other state models, connection to workforce and economic development, Legislative mandate	Documents, Observations, Interviews,
	Patton: Outside experts, K-12 Reform, other state models, previous experience in government, personal experience, connection to workforce and economic development,	Documents, Observations, Interviews,
RQ2: What role(s) do governors play during the policy-making process?	Haslam: Agenda setting, policy entrepreneur, policy champion	Documents, Observations, Interviews
	Patton: Agenda setting, policy entrepreneur, policy champion	Documents, Observations, Interviews,
RQ3: What conditions during the formation, adoption and implementation process that provided allow the long-term sustainability of reform efforts?	Haslam: Utilization of Statute, Postsecondary governance restructure, funding, Business and community feedback loop	Documents, Observations, Interviews,
	Patton: Utilization of Statute, Postsecondary governance restructure, funding	

Given the background of the researcher as a higher education consultant, working with governors (not TN and KY) to establish statewide postsecondary attainment strategies, it was also helpful to acknowledge the researcher's perception during both data collection and analysis. This constant reflexive acknowledgement, through employment of reflexive notes within the data collection toolsets (See Appendix C) added a fourth

dimension of analysis, validating the findings with the researcher's experience working with governors outside of Kentucky and Tennessee on similar reform efforts.

Findings for Research Question 1

The objective of this research question was to understand more deeply how a governor's view for his state's postsecondary education system was informed and how it became a key priority area for the needs of the state. This section of the study, therefore, focused on two key areas: (a) understanding which information source helped shape each governor's view and (b) which environmental conditions existed (e.g. preexisting experiences, personal background, and current state context) that may have shaped each governor's perspective on higher education.

Patton's Perspective on Higher Education

For Governor Patton, his view of postsecondary education and specific reform mechanisms included personal experiences and external (to Kentucky) experts. Also, Governor Patton sought insight from other states' efforts to improve postsecondary education and understand education and their linkages to the state economy. This viewpoint became evident through the data found in speeches, televised debates, and interviews. As Davis (2001) describes Governor Patton's experiences, he was "a former House member, and he was Lt. Governor of Kentucky for a term and Secretary of Economic and Community Development in the Jones' administration cabinet. With a very practical view toward government, his ultimate objective was to raise per capita income in Kentucky, and he believed that postsecondary education would drive the economy" (p. 98).

The first of those experiences dated back to Governor Patton's modest upbringing. Blanchard (2004) of the Kentucky Historical Society described Patton's upbringing:

To say that Patton grew up in very modest circumstances in Lawrence County would be an understatement. His tenant house had no electricity and no plumbing, and Paul did not use a telephone until after he graduated from high school. However, his father, who had been a teacher before he took a railroad job, apparently appreciated the value of an education because he'd set aside money each month for his son's college fund—even before the family owned a refrigerator. This enabled Paul Patton to attend the University. (p. 69)

Governor Patton left the University of Kentucky, returning back to Pike County to work in the coal industry, first as an operator and later an owner. As Blanchard describes,

Patton owned several coal companies throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but the largest was the Chaparral Coal Company, which he bought in 1972. At its peak, Chaparral was mining around 750,000 tons of coal per year. The coal boom of the early 1970s, set off by the 1973 Arab oil embargo, raised the price of coal more than 500 percent, making Patton a wealthy man. By 1976, he had become a national figure in the coal industry as president of the National Independent Coal Operators Association. (Blanchard, 2004, p. 70)

From a modest upbringing to a wealthy coal operator, Patton connected his achievement through the utilization of a college degree (P. Patton, personal communication, February 5, 2011). By the late 70s, Patton turned to public service becoming the appointed Deputy Secretary of Transportation for Governor John Y Brown,

then county executive judge for Pike County. As Gary Cox, the former President of the Council on Postsecondary Education describes, Governor Patton's viewpoint broadened during his time as the county executive judge in Pike County. "Big issues in Pike county as county judge was finding jobs for people and developing that. And I think he became more and more convinced that postsecondary education was an economic development issue." (Garn, 2000)

While Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky from 1991 to 1995, he guided the state through implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, a statute passed as a result of the *Rose v. Council for Better Education* (1989) Kentucky Supreme Court ruling that found Kentucky's education system unconstitutional (Rep & Court, 1989). The Kentucky Education Reform Act focused on K-12 reform strategies that significantly reshaped Kentucky's financial support and performance of public K-12 education.

Governor Patton describes the relationship to KERA and his education plan as building blocks for his signature higher education reform bill, 1997's House Bill 1. "So, in '96, you worked to preserve KERA, in '98, you--there were some revisions, in financing. Right smack in the middle, you decide you're going to build on KERA, with, through House Bill 1. -- and A lot of the information that developed during the KERA reforms was helpful to us as we went about building a case" (Garn, 2014, p.#). Houston Davis' (2001) study focusing on Kentucky's education reform efforts during this time describes KERA's influence this way,

As of the 1996 gubernatorial campaign, the State of Kentucky had put five years of KERA behind them and thus had established a pretty solid template of reform, implementation, and evaluation. Because the leadership of Kentucky had seen that

major governmental reform was possible, the same reform strategy could, in theory, be replicated in other areas of government, (Davis, 2001, p.101)

In sum, Patton viewed reform in higher education as a natural next step in Kentucky's focus on education and the workforce. It should also be noted that Governor Patton consistently viewed his reform efforts from the state's vantage point. This perspective was evident in how Patton described Kentucky's current economy to compete in an increasingly knowledge-based, global landscape; his public debates with educational leaders and legislatures that included his rationale for restructuring Kentucky's higher education system; and even his early address to the Commonwealth as a newly elected governor (Garn, 2014; Patton, 1995)

As governor, Patton used external organizations, consultants, and other state models to understand how Kentucky could better position its postsecondary education system to improve its outcomes (Garn, 2002). Aims McGuinness and Dennis Jones, consultants for the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), played an influential role within the governor's inner circle (Savage, 2014). Governor Patton also sent a team of aides to Minnesota to study its efforts to reorganize its postsecondary system (Ky, Muhs, Writer, & Page, 1997).

Haslam's Perspective on Higher Education

Governor Haslam's viewpoint of postsecondary education was shaped by personal experiences, previous work experience in local government sector, and outside technical experts. First of these was the education of his father, Jim Haslam II. Specifically, Governor Haslam understood the benefit his education at the University of Tennessee had been to Jim Haslam II's success at starting and building one of the largest

privately held corporations in the United States (Flory, 1948). As one senior staff member described, “Governor Haslam recounted the influence of his father describing his time at the University of Tennessee, sometimes sleeping at the football stadium, to eventually earn his degree and have tremendous success in business” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

As the Mayor of Knoxville, Governor Haslam witnessed the success of programs such as Knox Achieves, which laid the groundwork for Governor Haslam’s programmatic decision making for initiatives such as the TN Promise program. Carruthers (2019) wrote that the “Tennessee Promise was not built from scratch” (p. 3). The Ayers Foundation, local philanthropic group within the Knoxville, Tennessee community, began providing grants up to \$4,000 in 1999 for students from two counties in Tennessee. A not-for-profit out of Knox County, Knox Achieves, began offering tuition for any Knox County senior wishing to attend community college in 2008. The Knox Achieves program required participants to file and utilize financial aid from the federal government by filing a Federal Application for Student Financial Aid (FASFA), meet with a volunteer mentor, enroll in community college after graduating high school, consistently make progress towards their academic degree program, and complete a set amount of volunteer hours each year. By 2014, this program substantially increased, changing its name to TN Achieves and expanding to over 27 counties in Tennessee (Carruthers, 2019).

When asked about his experience as the mayor of Knoxville and seeing the results from Knox Achieves, a not-for-profit Governor Haslam helped launch in 2008 with co-board member Randy Boyd, Governor Haslam explained, “While in Knoxville, I was sort

of a reluctant convert . . . but once I saw how well I worked and how it changed the conversation around dinner tables . . . we came into a conversation that asked, well what if we did that statewide and then worked backward” (Personal Communication with Bill Haslam, 2019).

Others described Governor Haslam’s experience as mayor as a catalyst who connected the linkages between higher education and economic development, critical to building his viewpoint as governor. Specifically, Governor Haslam relays a strong belief that Tennessee’s economy could not compete on a global scale if the workforce pipeline, through postsecondary attainment, were not dramatically strengthened (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). This viewpoint was affirmed again when Haslam conducted a fly-around tour after his election with business and industry to listen to employers about the education and training system in Tennessee not living up to the workforce needs of the state (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member November 15, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). One senior-level Haslam aide described Governor Haslam’s disposition as a contributor saying, “With those two kinds of foundational underpinnings, his mayoral experience (as an economic developer) and his father’s experience (referring to his father’s background), I think it made him more open to really park higher ed at the center of his agenda” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

A key feature of Governor Haslam's interest in higher education related to the fact that Tennessee had recently undergone a massive education reform agenda under the implementation of the Race to the Top legislation during Governor Phil Bredesen's first and second term. Race to the Top was a federal education initiative launched by President Barack Obama and the US Department of Education in 2012 (2009). Given the success of the Race to the Top reform efforts, Governor Bredesen also wrote and passed the Tennessee Complete College Act (Tennessee, 2018) during the special legislative session in 2010. During this time, the United States economy was still recovering from a recession, and many states were divesting higher education, as well as many other budget areas, to balance state budgets until their state economy improved. When Governor Haslam was inaugurated in January of 2011, he received questions from the media about his intentions to continue the education reforms passed by Governor Bredesen's administration. This led to a convening of education leaders at Vanderbilt University in the spring of 2011. Governor Haslam explained his full support of the Complete College Act and specifically the need for an outcomes-based funding formula for higher education (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

While the bill did not specify postsecondary reform activities that should be included, it did charge the state to focus on higher education to some extent. Specifically, the law charged the state's Higher Education Commission to

“engage public universities, community colleges, and technology centers for input during the creation of the master plan. The commission shall construct a statewide master

plan that directs higher education to be accountable for increasing the educational attainment levels of Tennesseans” (Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, 2010, p. 3).

The momentum created by the Bredesen administration to focus on higher education provided a window of opportunity for a new administration to establish a significant reform agenda. Governor Haslam’s experience in Knoxville, leading to an understanding of the connection between economic development and higher education, provided a confluence of influencing factors to set the reform stage in Tennessee. Furthermore, Governor Haslam believed that higher education reform in Tennessee was well-timed, particularly given the emphasis placed on K-12 in Tennessee and around the country (Personal Communication with Bill Haslam, 2019; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

Important in the Tennessee case is the mention of national movement and outside the state investment that focused on higher education reform in Tennessee. Specifically, this included the launch of Complete College America (CCA) and Tennessee acquiring a \$1,000,000 grant from CCA and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for implementing its agenda that provided the state with capacity and additional technical assistance for implementing its reform efforts. Several senior leaders referred to CCA’s influence on the direction of Tennessee’s postsecondary agenda during both the Bredesen and Haslam administration (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019) serving both as an information source and as outside consultants for an objective

evaluation of the performance of the state's higher education system. Led by Stan Jones, former commissioner of higher education and legislature in Indiana, CCA worked closely with the Bredesen administration to investigate and understand Tennessee's postsecondary completion rates. Multiple senior advisors to Governor Haslam agreed that this outside advice for Bredesen led to the development and passage of the Complete College Tennessee Act in 2010 (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019; Personal Communication with Tennessee Senior Education Leader 3, 2019). While CCA continued to work with Tennessee, during Governor Haslam's administration, the Georgetown Center for the Workforce also played a significant factor in Haslam's understanding of the connection between education and the workforce (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Similar to CCA, the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce made the workforce an economic impact case for state leaders in Tennessee, serving as an information source for the governor's higher education team inside the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the governor's office, and eventually the legislature (Personal Communication with Tennessee Senior Education Leader 3, 2019).

At the same time, the Lumina Foundation's State Policy Agenda (Lumina, 2007) began establishing a national postsecondary attainment goal. Lumina believed that 60% of Americans needed to have at least one postsecondary credential by 2025. While not backed by empirical evidence of its impact, senior Tennessee officials believed Lumina's efforts to shape the postsecondary attainment plan across the country, and this aided in building momentum on state decision-making, particularly as states focused on

increasing postsecondary completion (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019; Personal Communication with Tennessee Senior Education Leader 1, 2019).

In addition to utilizing outside experts, Governor Haslam also worked behind the scenes with the previous administration staff to help understand the prior work and leverage it (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018). Additionally, Governor Haslam hired someone from the business community and his former town, Knoxville (Randy Boyd), to spearhead the development of his postsecondary agenda. While Mr. Boyd's office resided in the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, he reported directly to Governor Haslam. In reflection, Governor Haslam described Mr. Boyd's outsider viewpoint as "somebody with an entrepreneurial mindset like Randy does was really critical in helping us think about the possibility of that (scaling Knox Achieves to a statewide model)" (Personal Communication with Bill Haslam, 2019).

Another senior staffer in Governor Haslam's administration described Haslam's decision to create this role as "I think we've got to have somebody that's got the day to day capacity to make this wake up in the morning, think this is going to be what they're going to be about" (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018).

In summary, both governors, as shown through the data, leveraged a variety of information inputs to organize their perspective on higher education and its position as part of the state's ability to move forward. These inputs of information made up the

criteria that established each governor's viewpoint on postsecondary education throughout the development of their reform agenda, the adoption, and the implementation.

Findings for Research Question 2

To understand the important role a governor can play in the process to reform postsecondary education, a second research question focused on understanding how each governor impacted the agenda-setting and adoption process. The data analysis for this research question focused on the activities of the governors during the agenda-setting, revision, and adoption process of their state.

Patton's Role as an Agenda Setter, Policy Entrepreneur, and Champion

For Governor Patton, his role within the agenda-setting and policy-adoption process began with establishing postsecondary reform from the beginning of his first term. This activity began with Governor Patton's 1996 inauguration address (Lane, 2007a) as Patton set the agenda by announcing postsecondary education as a critical priority for his administration. Governor Patton's address laid out his intentions to focus on higher education, saying,

Our system of higher education, and in that term, I include all post-secondary education, must meet the challenge of a changed world. We are no longer in the heartland of a great nation protected by two vast oceans from military, political, or economic competition. Kentucky workers now compete with workers the world over. We can only compete and win with mental power. Only our institutions of higher education can equip our people with the knowledge and skills which will make us productive in this new economy. Just as business and

industry have had to change to survive, just as I intend to change the way Kentucky state government works, I challenge the institutions of higher education to throw off the shackles of the past, use the instruments of modern science, emulate the techniques of progressive business, and change the way you transfer knowledge. . . . We must have a system of higher education which is more responsive, more efficient, and more relevant to today's realities and tomorrow's needs. Our people deserve no less, and I will accept no less. (Patton, 1995)

When asked about the speech during an interview on House Bill One and how the inauguration speech influenced his administration's agenda, Governor Patton explained, "I very pointedly made that (higher education) the objective of my administration. I made that clear in the first inaugural speech. . . . I wrote the speech" (citation). In this way, Patton drove the agenda from initial design to adoption and execution, often referring to it as "my plan." Other state leaders, journalists, also assigned it to him, with legislators, reporters, institutional leaders in terms of both menace and affection calling it "Patton's Plan" (Lane, 2007b)

During the period when Governor Patton, his aides, and external consultants developed a postsecondary reform plan that would eventually become House Bill 1 of 1997 (General Assembly, 1997), Governor Patton remained intimately involved in the development of the reform package. The bill included both structural changes to the state's postsecondary governance system and specific institutional initiatives that included a customized funding package for the public institutions (Garn, 2005). Jack Conway, who served as legal counsel to the governor, described Governor Patton

explaining his commitment to the community college governance change to education advocates at a dinner at the governor's mansion:

Look, I'm going to stay devoted to this. I can't stay devoted to it to a degree where it consumes every day, but we are going to personally oversee the creation of the KCTCS board. We are going to personally be involved in the budgeting for KCTCS. We are going to be looking at the personnel systems in KCTCS as equitable you know from a budgeting standpoint. (Garn, 2001a p. #)

Davis (2001) summarized these elements of Governor Patton as a potential policy entrepreneur:

- A confluence of a task force report and Governor Patton's bill would later become House Bill 1 were endorsed by two significant advocacy groups focused on higher education as well as leaders from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.
- Governor Patton appointed members of the task force that were also critical seat holders of the General Assembly and 'instrumental' in passing the bill.
- Governor Patton continued to use outside consultants to work alongside him and aides.

In his theoretical policy study, Garn (2005) found the interpretation of Patton as a policy entrepreneur to be best captured by Ron Carson, former Deputy Budget Director in the Patton administration:

I think this was a gubernatorial driven process from start to finish frankly. . . . It was a transformation of the higher education system, but the head of the then Council Gary Cox was not a major driver; it was a method by which to change the

way we view economic development in this state, but the Secretary of Economic Development, Gene Strong, was not a driver; it was a way to alter the role of the state's flagship university, but the president of the University of Kentucky was not a driver; it was something that ultimately involved legislative change in a dramatic way, in terms of House Bill 1, but the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate were not drivers; so, by default, I come back to – it was the governor. (Garn, 2005, pg 124)

Both Davis and Garn conclude Governor Patton's involvement with Kentucky's K-12 education reform and his ability to connect higher education and the future state's economy became a critical force for moving the state's policy agenda down this path (Davis, 2001; Garn, 2005): When asked about Governor Patton's role as a policy entrepreneur because he was governor, Conway responded,

Sure. He brought profile to it. He could create such a dialogue about higher ed that you had debates on KED about it. That you had public forums where the chair of the Jefferson County Republican party stood up (Patton was a Democratic Governor) and said this is too important to be partisan on – that we're with this Democratic governor. He could bring a certain . . . he's got on a smaller scale on a state level bully pulpit; he's got a ready-made press conference anytime he wants to call one. Yeah, absolutely. (Garn, 2001a, p. 125)

Conway's description adds value to Garn and Davis's findings as it speaks to the ability of the governor's office to elevate an agenda item, at the right time, in the public arena.

In addition to setting the agenda and becoming the center of gravity for the development of Kentucky's postsecondary reform package, Governor Patton focused on

ensuring the policy was crafted and elevated at the right time. Governor Patton toured and campaigned the state heavily during the winter of 1996 and spring of 1997 after the reform agenda was announced listening to college leaders and engaging with a variety of organizations. This campaign included meeting with local, regional, and state business leaders organized by local chambers of commerce, farm bureau chapters, local school districts, and postsecondary education institutions.

The intensity of this statewide tour increased as the debate of removing the community colleges from the University of Kentucky's governance took center stage. As the Lexington Herald described it:

UK, a force to be reckoned with in Frankfort, mustered its alumni and launched a statewide media campaign against the idea. Patton, a UK engineering graduate, threw himself into the fight. He showed up at civic clubs and business groups statewide. He toured community colleges and sometimes was received with boos and catcalls. He was a fixture at 7:30 a.m. strategy sessions. (Muhs, 1997, p. 45)

In his dissertation studying Governor Paul Patton as a policy champion, Davis (2001) summarized several findings that grounded Governor Patton's role as a Policy Champion:

- Patton had earned the respect of legislative leaders and business leaders with the Worker's Compensation Reform in 1996.
- Patton's total involvement in the process sent a message that this was the top priority of state government that year.
- Patton Staked his legacy as governor to whether or not he could get these reforms done for the betterment of Kentucky. (p. 171)

Moreover, Governor Patton “personally lobbied scores of legislators, persuading them of the need for the kind of higher education reform he was proposing” (Blanchard, 2004, p. 78).

In sum, Governor Patton’s activities through the policy formation and adoption process included three significant types of roles. First, Governor Patton used his office to set the agenda. This began initially with the governor’s 1995 inauguration address and continued as he enlisted a variety of internal and external advisors to form the postsecondary reform agenda. Governor Patton’s agenda-setting role evolved as a policy entrepreneur, connecting his reforms to the state’s need for significant shift in its workforce and economic trajectory. Governor Patton believed he could convince the state that Kentucky needs to transition into a “knowledge economy.” In Patton’s view, this economy should be built by a postsecondary education system that permitted significant research growth from the four-year institutions and focused workforce training from the community and technical colleges (Garn, 2002). Finally, Governor Patton championed his reformed postsecondary policies, taking on this role around the state.

Haslam’s Role as an Agenda Setter, Policy Entrepreneur, and Champion

Governor Haslam’s role within the agenda-setting and policy process included adopting the previous administrations’ efforts to reform education in Tennessee but prioritizing postsecondary reform as a key policy area for a new administration (Personal Communication with Bill Haslam, 2019; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Haslam was credited admirably by education leaders, national

experts, and internal staff for adopting the foundation that Governor Bredesen had established on education reform, particularly in postsecondary through the Complete College of Tennessee Act (Tennessee, 2018). In 2011, Governor Haslam described the job of the governor in this way:

I see the job of the governor as being part of a historically significant relay race. I was handed the baton four years ago and it is my job to be intentional about advancing that baton during my eight years in office and handed it off to the next governor in a better position than it was handed to me. (Haslam, 2011, p. 3)

As he began his first term, workforce and economic development through education became a critical priority for his administration's agenda. In 2011, Governor Haslam's inauguration speech offered several windows of insight into the emphasis he placed on Tennessee's workforce and postsecondary education system:

Offering hope through workforce development, technical training and work keys are building blocks on the road to job recovery and job security. But equally important is the individual determination and drive to invest the time and energy and hard work to be more. . . . The expectations and standards of education for EVERY STUDENT in Tennessee are high. This is the time to continue significant education reform - and shame on us if we let this moment escape without meaningful action. The path for better jobs now and into the future requires more than the current 1 out of 5 Tennesseans over the age of 25 who have a college degree. (Haslam, 2011, p. #6)

During his first public remarks as governor in an address at Vanderbilt University in the spring of 2011, Governor Haslam spoke more directly to Governor Bredesen's

passage of the Complete College Tennessee Act, specifically confirming that he supported Governor Bredesen's approach for implementing the outcomes-based formula for funding and building a plan to address college completion in Tennessee (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Specifically, the Complete College Tennessee Act mandated that Tennessee accomplish the following:

- Develop a statewide master plan for future development of public universities, community colleges, and technology centers with input from the board of regents and the University of Tennessee board of trustees.
- In consultation with the respective governing boards, approve institutional mission statements concurrent with the adoption of each revised statewide master plan.
- Make recommendations to the governing boards of the various institutions and the governor, as well as the general assembly, through the Education Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives on the implementation of the master plan.
- Develop, after consultation with the board of regents and the University of Tennessee board of trustees, policies and formulae or guidelines for fair and equitable distribution and use of public funds among the state's institutions of higher learning that are consistent with and further the goals of the statewide master plan. (Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, 2010, pp.1-3)

This early declaration of the importance of education, workforce, and the economy effectively established the continuation of education reform for Tennessee under the Haslam administration. This activity continued as Haslam invested his time and

his office's capacity during his first term to the development of Tennessee's broad tactics to evolve Tennessee's access and delivery of postsecondary education.

As previously mentioned, this first became apparent when Governor Haslam assumed the responsibility to help develop Tennessee's master higher education plan, a mandate passed by the legislature in 2010. Governor Haslam's policy window opportunity came when he decided not only to support a traditional approach to create a higher education plan but to connect it to what he learned from business and industry. Specifically, Governor Haslam toured the state with business leaders, visiting college campuses and employers' workplace, such as a manufacturing plant. This "flyover tour," as described by former senior staff to Haslam, allowed business leaders to talk to the governor about the successes and shortcomings of the postsecondary education system in delivering the necessary workforce for the state (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Haslam's second step in bringing his postsecondary intentions to life placed internal staff in the higher education's coordinating office, as previously discussed (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

The passage of the Tennessee higher education plan, in response to the Complete College Tennessee mandate, began with the establishment of a statewide postsecondary goal. The Haslam administration, working closely with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, established Drive to 55 (Education, 2016), where 55% of Tennesseans would acquire some form of a postsecondary credential by 2025. Governor Haslam and his internal higher education team then moved on to statewide initiatives they believed

would position Tennessee to meet that attainment goal. The passage and implementation of Drive to 55 received broad support from both legislatures and the education community. According to a senior staff at the time (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, 2018), this was in large part due to Governor Haslam's efforts to bring in these constituents and connect his higher education plan to their priorities. One senior administrator described Governor Haslam's explanation to the four-year institutions:

You've got to play your piece. That's why you have attainment goals, and you break them down. So, everyone (two and four-year institutions) can help move the state along and then by turn will, it will attract industry and employers. And I think it goes back to the unique role of the governor, which is people; people generally want to be on the governor's team, right? Everyone I think was willing to step back and say, "Okay, I'm going to give us a try." (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019)

For Haslam, this was a statewide agenda, not just for one educational sector, nor for the benefit of higher education, K-12 education, or the business community alone. As a governor, Haslam could bring the state agenda perspective to the conversation with constituents and this became central to creating a groundswell of support (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

As Drive to 55 became the state's north star for higher education, Governor Haslam and his well-established higher education team of internal staff working with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission developed its second tactic to reform. This

reform became a last dollar scholarship program that projected to dramatically increase the transition of students from K-12 into higher education. This program, commonly known as Tennessee Promise, committed the state to ensure that all Tennesseans, through a combination of federal and state financial aid, could attend the first two years of community and technical college education tuition-free.

Besides personally communicating and advocating for Drive to 55 and Tennessee Promise, Governor Haslam enlisted surrogates from all sectors. As for many governors, the power of appointments helped Governor Haslam bring along a cohort of influencers around the state. For example, Tennessee's K-12 Commissioner Kevin Huffman played a crucial role in helping establish the messaging and communication (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Furthermore, Commissioner Huffman provided a critical voice to help the general public understand that K-12 education that fails to lead to some form of postsecondary participation becomes a significant challenge for Tennesseans wishing to compete in today's economy. The Tennessee Department of Education, the Tennessee Board of Regents, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission frequently used the same talking points, visuals, and even presentations when speaking about Drive to 55, Tennessee Promise, and other postsecondary reform efforts during the Haslam administration. The governor's vision for Tennessee became central to the state leadership of higher education reform (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

Commonly noted throughout the interviews with senior leaders in Tennessee, this first tactic was not always warmly received by education leaders, particularly the private higher education community and the four-year institutions (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Leadership from the four-year institutions, in particular, were concerned this would only benefit the two-year institutions. At the same time, the governor also chaired (until the passage of the FOCUS ACT) the board of all of public institutions, holding significant influence. In early summer 2014, Governor Haslam held roundtable discussions with four-year institutions, convening groups of 10 or less to sit down and discuss the state's workforce, economic, and higher education opportunities and challenges. Governor Haslam also sought their advice and feedback on the nature of operationalizing a plan to address these challenges. For several senior staff members, these roundtable meetings were helpful moments of coalition building from the higher education community (Personal Communication with Bill Haslam, 2019; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

In addition, Governor Haslam and his team offered incentives for four-year institutions to come along with Tennessee Promise and closely connected it to the priorities of those four-year institutions. This tactic, among others, ensured that his policy agenda translated into opportunity for all higher education leaders and received a broad commitment from the higher education community (Personal Communication with Tennessee Senior Education Leader 1, 2019; Personal Communication with Tennessee Senior Education Leader 3, 2019). Haslam's role during the time of policy adoption was

described by education leaders as “central” (Personal Communication with Tennessee Senior Education Leader 1, 2019). By the time of adoption of both Drive to 55 and Tennessee Promise, the legislative pump was primed. The legislature had just passed the Complete College Tennessee Act in 2010, and the education community, as well as the business community, were behind the Haslam administration. Tennessee had achieved broad support for continued postsecondary reform.

After the state adopted the Tennessee Promise, which was met with little to no resistance from education leaders as well as the legislature, Haslam remained intimately involved in its execution. First, Governor Haslam established the TN Promise office inside the governor’s office, moving Mike Krause, then a staff member at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, as a direct report and naming him the program’s Executive Director (Reporter, 2014). One senior education leader described Krause’s appointment and the office’s creation as a clear signal across Tennessee that TN Promise would see Governor Haslam’s week-to-week attention and that he cared about the state’s complete adoption of the initiative. Operationally speaking, Governor Haslam’s chief of staff held biweekly “Countdown to Promise” working group meetings that led to briefing the governor every few weeks on the status of TN Promise. As one senior staffer put it, “I was emailing the governor sometimes every other day on TN Promise application numbers . . . he wanted to know (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Governor Haslam also conducted “fly arounds” for both the moments when students were arriving at community colleges to apply for the TN Promise program and then when those students came back in the Fall of 2015 and

enrolled into classes (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

In addition to establishing the TN Promise office and showing up to college campuses during the roll out, Governor Haslam began widely touring across the state. This tour consisted of meeting with rotary clubs, K-12 districts, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations. According to one senior staffer, “Governor Haslam [is] talking about TN Promise in every venue,” as it became part of his daily dialogue with the public (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, 2018) and with the state recruiting business and industry. Several senior staff members described Governor Haslam’s communications of *Drive to 55* and its key initiatives such as *TN Promise*, *TN Reconnect*, and others as central to his vision for Tennessee. As one senior staff member described, “He would go talk to a road builder’s group and end up talking about Drive to 55” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Governor Haslam would keep his communication channels to the business community and the colleges open throughout his administration. This channel led to establishing the Drive to 55 Alliance, a collection of “private sector partners, and community and nonprofit leaders” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019) to help support the state’s postsecondary attainment goal as well as the initiatives like TN Promise and others that would drive the date to reach its postsecondary attainment goal.

Furthermore, Governor Haslam’s senior advisor for higher education, Randy Boyd, transitioned to the Commissioner of Economic Development (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, 2018). As Governor

Haslam stated in a press release, “To put it simply: without Randy, there is no Tennessee Promise or Drive to 55 or a comprehensive approach to job growth via workforce development” (“Haslam Announces Randy Boyd to Return to Private Sector,” 2017, p. #).

With Boyd transitioning in overseeing the state’s economic development agenda, the reforms Tennessee was making to its workforce pipeline quickly became part of the state’s recruitment for outside investment into the state’s economy. Under Boyd’s leadership as commissioner from 2015 to 2017, Tennessee saw outside investment reach nearly \$11,000,000,000, with commitments of approximately 50,000 new jobs (Whetstone, 2018).

A final example of Governor Haslam playing roles as both a policy entrepreneur and champion came when his administration decided to rethink Tennessee’s higher education governance model. “About a year into implementing TN Promise, we realized that there were some community colleges that were doing better than others in their progress towards implementing promise but also improving their outcomes that would lead to meeting our postsecondary attainment goal” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). More specifically, the Haslam administration became increasingly focused on ensuring continued progress towards the attainment goal and realized the community college sector was going to be instrumental in meeting that goal. There was a belief that the Tennessee Board of Regents was placed into an untenable position of being responsible for operating a wide range of missions that spanned from “running a medical school to a Tennessee applied technology school” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). The

Haslam administration also believed that a stronger community college system would lead to increased consistency of effectiveness towards outcomes across the state. As one senior administrator described, “There’s also this notion that there needed to be more system-ness. That when you figured out one way to do something right one place, that’s how you do it everywhere” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, May 1 2019).

Finally, the Haslam administration realized that when the Tennessee Board of Regents was created in 1972, the six four-year institutions had changed significantly over time. These colleges originated as primarily teacher’s colleges, but beginning in the 1970’s and 80’s, they began offering a wide range of educational services from a core liberal arts education to a large urban undergraduate institution with a research mission (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, November 15 2018). Understanding this evolution, and the organizational design of the Tennessee Board of Regents, became a path into a proposal for restructuring in Tennessee.

Reportedly, the four-year colleges, particularly the University of Memphis, had long wished for greater independence from the Tennessee Board of Regents. In fact, one senior staff member explained that the previous administration had made an earlier campaign promise to leaders from the Memphis area to explore the notion of independent boards (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018). Those involved during the Haslam administration repeatedly claimed that while the four-year institutions were supportive about the proposal to establish independence from the Tennessee Board of Regents, the decision to shift the governance model for the Haslam administration began with the commitment to improving the overall effectiveness of the

community colleges to focus on the delivery of the Drive to 55 initiatives. The Haslam administration also argued that the colleges would be held to increased accountability because a college's local board would spend all of its time focusing on the performance of the institution rather than a statewide board monitoring many institutions (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, November 15 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, May 1 2019). As one senior staff member put it, "The FOCUS Act ultimately seemed like the logical next step . . . establishing a win-win for the two-year colleges and the four-year institutions to zero in on their contribution to the state agenda" (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018).

During the implementation of Drive to 55 and TN Promise, Governor Haslam met separately with all the four-year college presidents to determine their preference for local governance and how it would impact their ability to increase progress towards the newly established state postsecondary goals. With the exception of one college, all Tennessee Board of Regents presidents believed this was in the best interest of the state and the colleges (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). The primary rationale became a focus on the difference of mission the community colleges serve within the higher education sector versus the four-year colleges in the state. Similar to other reforms, Governor Haslam was personally involved in the design of the FOCUS ACT policy; he facilitated brainstorming sessions with senior staff, guided major decisions, and then became intimately involved in its implementation after it passed

through the legislature in 2016. Governor Haslam personally interviewed and appointed new board members, “many of them in person” (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019). Governor Haslam also participated in the training of new board members, reviewing curriculum, and attending the in-person training sessions (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 2, November 15 2018).

This focus on governance also resulted in dramatic changes regarding the function of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). This occurred primarily in three key ways:

- From recommending tuition to setting a tuition range that became legally binding;
- From evaluating and approving a University of Tennessee capital project and a Tennessee Board of Regents capital improving project list to also evaluating an additional capital request for six newly independent colleges; and
- THEC became the destination for approving every new degree. (McCormick, Williams, Johnson, Ragan, & Cameron, 2017)

Finally, the FOCUS ACT also led to a large increase in the convening power of the Commission. THEC under the FOCUS ACT with the authority to convene higher education CEOs and the boards of eight independent colleges, became a substantial enhancement of direct communication to state higher education leaders, versus convening only the Tennessee Board of Regents and the University of Tennessee. For education leaders in Tennessee, this was a dramatic shift in THEC’s oversight of the state higher education system. One senior Haslam staff member credits Governor Haslam’s view that

the state coordinating agency, which reports directly to the legislature and the governor, has a unique role to play as manager of the state's higher education system (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Consultant 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

In sum, while the contexts differed, both governors played significant roles during the policy formation, adoption, and implementation of their respective reform efforts. Moreover, it also establishes the role of Governor Patton as both a policy entrepreneur and champion throughout the policy-adoption and execution phases. In response to Research Question 2, both governors played multiple roles as a governor throughout the policy development, adoption, and execution and from setting the agenda to policy entrepreneur and champion.

Findings for Research Question 3

The final research question for this study sought to understand each governor's intentions in ensuring each postsecondary reform effort sustained across time and to map out key elements or methods that were employed to deliver upon that intentionality. Specifically, this research question attempted to investigate the tools at the governor's disposal, either intentional or in reflection, that positioned each state to continue the postsecondary reforms long after the governor left office. This research question did not attempt to evaluate whether or not the reform packages were successful in reaching their intended outcomes; its primary interest was whether or not the governor positioned the reforms to last over time.

Sustainability Conditions Established by Governor Patton

Since Kentucky's reforms took place in 1997, there has been considerable time between the passage of its landmark legislation, 1997's House Bill 1, and the current study. The two signature reform efforts from Governor Patton's administration, the establishment of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the significant strengthening of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, are still intact. Kentucky would later see another significant education reform agenda. In 2009, Governor Steve Beshear signed into law Senate Bill 1, the first significant education bill since 1997. This bill directed postsecondary education to do the following:

- Plan and implement a process to develop core academic content standards for reading and mathematics for introductory courses (p. 2);
- Collaborate with the Kentucky Department of Education to plan and implement a comprehensive process for revising academic content standards with input from teachers, postsecondary faculty, considering national standards where available (p. 2); and
- Align core K-12 content at all levels including alignment of academic core content with the expectations for postsecondary education (p. 4). (Senate Bill 1 Highlights, 2011)

In review, Kentucky's 2009 Senate Bill 1 built upon rather than reversed the 1997 reform legislation. Senate Bill 1 charged K-12 and postsecondary institutions to align K-12 and postsecondary academic standards, assessments, and related processes to smooth the transition for students transitioning into higher education. Kentucky's expectation that all students need some form of postsecondary training was strengthened in 2009. The intention was to ensure that the Kentucky education system became more proficient at

providing Kentuckians with a more streamlined education pipeline (Senate Bill 1 Highlights, 2011).

For Governor Patton, his intent to ensure sustainability went beyond his tenure as a first-term governor. While Patton would serve a second term in Kentucky, he did so as only the second governor in the history of the Commonwealth to serve two consecutive terms, the previous being James Garrard (1796-1804) (Blanchard, 2004). This intent was evident in the conversations, speeches, and interviews during the time of the postsecondary reform (Garn, 2001b, 2002, 2014). These long-term strategies included significant changes in the state's organization and governance and in its current investment of state resources in higher education. Governance changes were designed, advocated for, and eventually passed into state law. The first of those long-term levers was the intent to place the reform in law. The substance of House Bill One 1997 specifically called upon the higher education system to accomplish significant milestones by 2020, well beyond Governor Patton's tenure:

- A major comprehensive research institution ranked nationally in the top twenty (20) public universities at the University of Kentucky
- A premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university at the University of Louisville
- Regional universities, with at least one nationally recognized program of distinction or one nationally recognized applied research program working cooperatively with other postsecondary institutions to assure statewide access to baccalaureate and master's degrees of quality at or above the national average. (House Bill No. 1, 1997, p. 2)

Governor Patton’s administration also utilized new investments in higher education funding to support his postsecondary agenda and also to ensure his efforts were sustained over time. For that era, this was one of the largest per capita investments in higher education (SHEEO, 2019). The total investment in Kentucky postsecondary education during the passage of the reforms was approximately a 48% increase during his four-year term. To put that in perspective, as shown in Figure 2, the average investment in Kentucky higher education from 2013-2018 has decreased by approximately 3% even as the national economy has substantially grown during that time period (SHEEO, 2019).

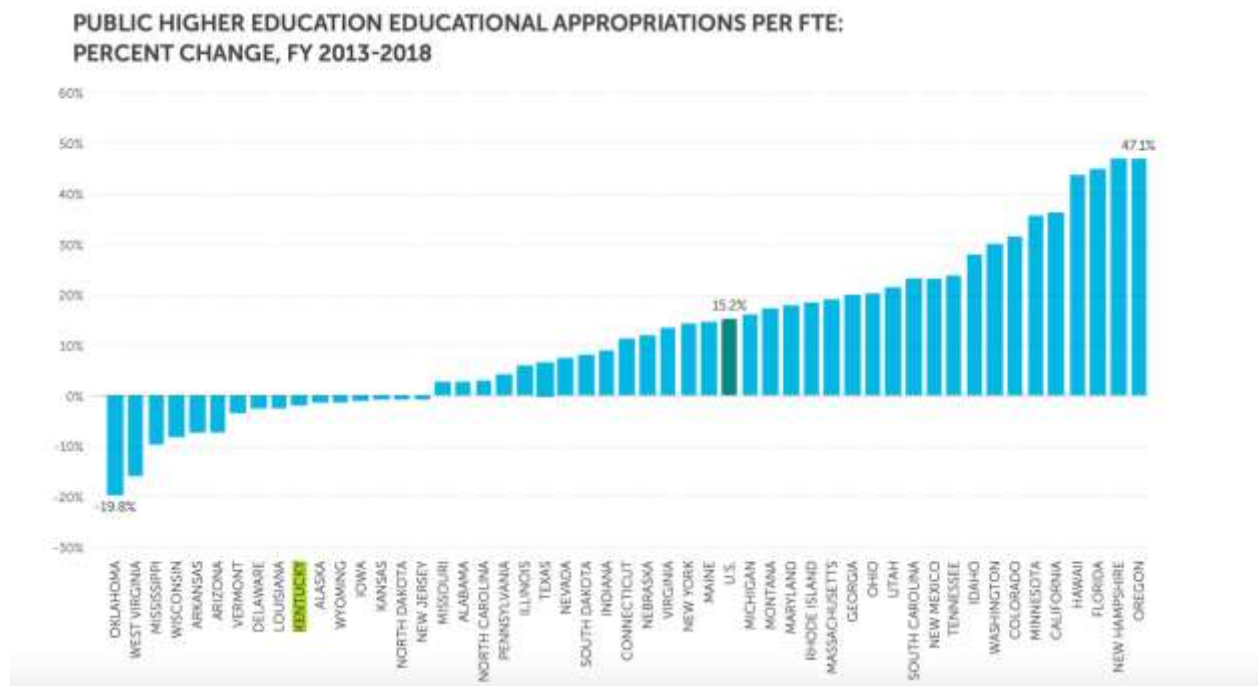


Figure 2. State public higher education appropriations FY 2013-2018.

Governor Patton packaged new investment into higher education and at the same time altered the funding model. In House Bill One, McGuinness (2007, p.103) explained,

“Beginning in the 1998-2000 biennium, the Council on Postsecondary

Education’s budget recommendations included – in essence – these components:

- The base budgets for the previous fiscal year, plus a “current services” (inflationary) increase and technical adjustments (e.g., for changes in debt service)
- Recommendations for funding of trust funds under the newly enacted Strategic Investment and Incentive Funding Program. The original trust funds were:
 - Research Challenge Trust Fund
 - Regional University Excellence Trust Fund
 - Physical Facilities Trust Fund
 - Technology Incentives Trust Fund
 - Student Financial Aid and Advancement Trust Fund”

During the mid- to late-90s, Governor Patton had strong economic winds at his back. As Blanchard describes, “During the 1998 (legislative) session, a \$200 million budgetary surplus gave Patton an opportunity to invest into higher education and offer his legislative allies, both Democrats and Republicans, something tangible for their districts” (Blanchard, 2004, p. 79). This injection of resources into higher education resulted in Governor Patton’s ability to fund the 1998-2000 budget proposal. As McGuiness describes,

“The policy tool of trust funds was a critical element of the 1997 Postsecondary Education Improvement Act designed to provide the Council on Postsecondary Education with the leverage of financial incentives to drive reform toward the Strategic Agenda and the long-term goals defined by the Reform Act. Appropriations to these trust funds are made directly to the Council on

Postsecondary Education, which is responsible for establishing criteria for the distribution of funds to the institutions” (McGuinness, 2007, p.103).

Finally, Governor Patton’s 1997 postsecondary reforms sought to alter the governance structure of higher education as a primary source of long-term, sustainable improvements to higher education. Chief among the reorganization of Kentucky’s higher education system was the strengthening of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, then called the Council on Public Higher Education, and the removal of the community colleges from the University of Kentucky. This led to a merger of the community and technical schools within a new, independent system: the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (McGuinness, 2007).

The new Kentucky Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, would oversee the following:

- Develop and implement the Strategic Agenda with the advice and counsel of the Strategic Committee on Postsecondary Education.
- Develop a system of public accountability related to the Strategic Agenda by evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the state’s postsecondary system.
- Review, revise, and approve the missions of the state’s universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.
- Determine tuition and approve the minimum qualifications for admission to the state postsecondary educational system.

- Devise, establish, and periodically review and revise policies to be used in making recommendations to the governor for consideration in developing recommendations to the General Assembly for appropriations to the universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.
- Devise, at the sole discretion of the Council, policies that provide for allocation of funds among the universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.
- Lead and provide staff support for the biennial budget process.
- Review and approve all capital construction projects covered including real property acquisitions, regardless of the source of funding for projects or acquisitions.
- Eliminate, at its discretion, existing programs or make any changes in existing academic programs at the state's postsecondary educational institutions, taking into consideration these criteria: (a) Consistency with the institution's mission and the Strategic Agenda; (b) Alignment with the priorities in the strategic implementation plan for achieving the Strategic Agenda; (c) Elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs within and among institutions.
- Develop a financial reporting procedure to be used by all state postsecondary education. (McGuinness, 2008, p. 102)

Sustainability Conditions Established by Governor Haslam

Conditions that were set during the Haslam administration that focused on long-term sustainability of the postsecondary reform efforts included the application,

implementation, and appropriations established by state law that directed government and institutional policy, funding, and governance restructure. This, furthermore, led to establishing new alliances between higher education and business and industry. While Governor Haslam's administration embraced the previous administration's Complete College TN Act of 2010 that evolved the Tennessee higher education funding formula, the new administration passed additional policies to execute CCTA. These tactics took the long view approach past an initial first or potentially second term for the Haslam administration.

Initially, the administration established an attainment goal, Drive to 55, that charged the state with a target to obtain at least one postsecondary credential by 2025 (Tennessee, 2018). Second, the administration passed a series of acts that would focus the education systems on a series of high impact strategies for reaching the newly established attainment goal. These acts included its last dollar scholarship program, The Tennessee Promise, and its Tennessee and TCAT Reconnect Act, which, like Promise, provided resources for adult population students that had not previously earned a postsecondary credential. These two investments placed state resources into higher education, particularly through the community colleges, and offered an opportunity for all institutions to see increases in both student enrollment and graduation over time.

During Governor Haslam's second term, his administration continued its long-term postsecondary reform efforts by reshaping the governance structure of the state's two-year and comprehensive four-year public education institutions. The passage of The FOCUS ACT, as one senior staff member described below, was a product of ensuring the reform efforts were achieved:

Could the current structure facilitate or impede to carry out this agenda long term?

We came to believe it (the Tennessee Board of Regents) was impeding its ability, trying to serve a student from Johnson City vs Dyersburg and is this structure long term helping MTSU reach its goal vs Austin Peay its goal? (Personal

Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, May 1 2019)

As previously discussed, Tennessee's community college, technical schools, and four-year institutions had reported to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). The FOCUS ACT removed the state's comprehensive, four-year colleges away from the TBR and established a local governing board for each institution under the guidance of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (McCormick, Williams, Johnson, Ragan, & Cameron, 2017).

Finally, the Haslam administration sought to establish a long-term voice in the matters for higher education from the business and not-for-profit community in Tennessee. For senior staff and education leaders, this was a testimony to the value Governor Haslam placed in the feedback on higher education from the business community, and its effectiveness at producing the necessary workforce, which he once received during a "flyover tour" at the beginning of his administration. To this end, Governor Haslam established the Drive to 55 Alliance, a regularly-convened group that included CEOs from the business community and the not-for-profit community Governor Haslam believed would be the long-term "torch bearers" of the Drive to 55 attainment goal and its major initiatives. For multiple senior aides to the governor, Haslam's vision was grounded in the belief that business leaders were critical to sustaining his postsecondary reform agenda (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior

Staff Member 1, 2018; Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019).

Summary

The key findings that emerged from each case study were elements that comprised each governor's viewpoint, roles each governor played throughout the policy setting and adoption phase, and the types of conditions that were used to ensure long-term sustainability. Collectively, these governors shared significant similarities throughout the design, adoption, and implementation of their reform agenda. While some differences did occur, those variances mostly resided in reactions to contextual circumstances. Ultimately, the viewpoint, role, and intent of long-term sustainability of both governors policy priorities significantly impacted each state's ability to adopt and execute their postsecondary reform efforts.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

There were several reasons why a multiple case study of two governors that enacted significant postsecondary reforms might be useful for further understanding. First, the economic benefits for states that have more significant numbers of citizens with some form of a postsecondary degree or certificate has led to states' placing a greater emphasis on postsecondary attainment. According to Georgetown's Center for Education and the Workforce, 65% of jobs will require a postsecondary degree or credential of value by 2020 (Carnevale et al., 2015). For this reason, postsecondary attainment has become an increasing priority across the United States (Carnevale et al., 2017). Second, governors that prioritize education, particularly higher education, can translate into the state's investment into its public postsecondary system. The relative power held by the executive branch is another reason to better understand the interplay between governors and higher education.

In response to organize the data into three categories: criteria that made up the governors' viewpoint, roles each governor played during the policy process, and conditions that were set by each governor to sustain their efforts over time. This organization is a product of a collection of findings derived from the data collected on behalf of the research questions.

Discussion of Findings

Findings across both cases were categorized into broad categories highlighting the governor's viewpoint, role, and conditions for sustainability during the instances of significant postsecondary reform. Direct interpretation of the data led to an understanding of the findings, which includes the right mix of circumstances, not too broad or too

narrow, providing content to explain three questions: Why did Governor Haslam and Patton go to great extents to focus their administrations on higher education? What part did they play to accomplish substantial reform? What groundwork did they establish to place their ideas on a sustainable path? This became what Stake (2006) identifies as the *quintain* for a multiple case study: the right balance between identifying criteria that can be attributed to both cases that is neither too broad or narrow in scope.

Criteria Making Up Governors' Viewpoint

The key finding for the first research question is that multiple factors contribute to the both governors' viewpoints of their state's postsecondary system. The findings also include the level of importance both governors placed on higher education. It is insufficient to say that both Haslam and Patton valued postsecondary education. Many state leaders across the country would agree that higher education is an important system for contributing towards a positive direction for the state. These governors, as the study suggests, went well beyond that notion. Bill Haslam and Paul Patton, governors from different political parties (Haslam a Republican and Patton a Democrat), who led their state with 15 years between their administrations, held state higher education as a higher priority than any other issue for their eight years in office. The findings from this study showcase each governor's viewpoint from the viewpoints of stakeholders, internal staff, external collaborators, and supporting documents and artifacts that support the actions of each governor.

First, the data illustrated that both Governor Haslam and Governor Patton had a personal connection to significant success in the business world and attributed that success to the value of a college degree. Governor Haslam experienced this through

watching his father build the Pilot Flying J Corporation and Governor Patton by using his success in the eastern Kentucky coal industry. Prior government experience also provided additional insight to the connection the governors perceive between the benefits of postsecondary education has on the individual, as well as local and state governments. Haslam learned this as mayor of Knoxville, Tennessee and Patton as county executive judge and lieutenant governor of Kentucky. Second, both states had significant reform frameworks established in K-12 education that charged the state to prepare students for greater success beyond high school. Due to the early 90s KERA reforms in Kentucky and the Race to the Top reforms in Tennessee, both governors were able to build their postsecondary reform viewpoint by extending the evaluative lens taken from the state's K-12 reform efforts and turn it towards higher education.

Relying on external experts and national organizations to inform the technical components of a postsecondary agenda, both governors placed these outsiders as direct reports within their inner circle. These voices heavily contributed to the early formation of the governors' ideas about higher education. Furthermore, these advisors impacted how both governors developed connections to the state's economic trajectory; the organization and structure of its two-year, comprehensive four-year, and research college and universities; and the coordinating bodies that provided oversight to the state higher education system.

Moreover, from the perspective of establishing a rationale or justification for reforming postsecondary education to constructing a set of strategies or tactics to tackle the state's higher education challenges, Governors Haslam and Patton embraced a perspective that issues of economic and workforce development and the state's higher

education were intermeshed. Both governors established and promoted a critical sense of urgency in this regard not only to increase short-term economic returns but also to continue to invest in the state's future. As the higher education governance landscape has become more amenable to policy innovations from governors (McLendon, 2003; McLendon & Ness, 2003) and the connection between the economy and postsecondary training has more closely connected (Carnevale et al., 2015), this gap in understanding needs further description.

Roles as a Governor through Policy Development, Adoption, and Execution

Analysis of both cases revealed that Haslam and Patton's abilities to significantly shape higher education in their states became apparent through their individual activities while holding office. This fell into three key areas: agenda setting, policy entrepreneur, and policy champion. As governors, both Haslam and Patton were personally invested in establishing postsecondary reform as a key part of their first term as governor based on viewpoints they established both before and while in office.

Haslam and Patton declared higher education as a key priority early on in their administrations; both signaled to their states during their first inaugural address that change in higher education was coming. While Patton's plan was built without an existing mandate from the previous administration, Haslam fully adopted the previous administration's agenda and "doubled down." In Haslam's case, this included adopting a reform agenda from a different political party.

In addition to establishing higher education as the administration's key agenda, both governors remained involved in the development of the reform package from its design to adoption and implementation. This included finding the right opportunity to

place higher education reform in the public's viewpoint as an important issue to take up as a policy priority. Both governors made the case that higher education and the state's economy were interlinked with the ability of Kentucky and Tennessee to adapt to a fast, changing world. Tactically speaking, each governor led with different approaches. Patton focused on restructuring Kentucky's higher education system, including establishing new goals for the state; Haslam led with establishing a new higher education goal for the state and then later on addressed the state's governance structure.

Finally, both governors spent significant amounts of personal time explaining, persuading, and advocating for their respective reforms. Governor Haslam's administration called these "fly-overs" with business and industry, education leaders, local and regional not-for-profit organizations, and civic groups essential to bringing the state along. Throughout the policy formation, adoption, and implementation process, the higher education agenda became part of both governors' weekly communication strategy and lasted throughout their administrations.

Conditions for Sustainability

Three key strategies built into the postsecondary reform agendas for both governors centered on long-term sustainability of state policies for their state: the use of policy, new investment, and restructuring organization and governance. This was evident in not only how the governors constructed and explained the reform agenda but also how the strategies were placed into the state government arena.

Both governors used the legislative branch, establishing statutes to cement their agenda. As noted from the literature (Kingdon, 2003), this lever can establish the reform agenda over time, requiring specific government agencies and policymakers to remain

connected to its performance and measures of success. It can also form coalitions of those that build deep-rooted connections to the agenda, its purpose and its sustained implementation (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996).

Second, both governors coupled the legislation to specific increases in budget. For Patton, this came as the largest investment in education Kentucky had seen since the GI Bill (McGuinness, 2008), while in Tennessee, this included incremental increases in postsecondary funding when many states were divesting (SHEEO, 2019). Strategically, the new investment connected the legislative branch to the reform efforts, which charged government agencies and the higher education institutions to execute the agenda overtime. It also required institutions to report back on improved progress (General Assembly, 1997; Tennessee, 2018).

Finally, both administrations dramatically shifted the postsecondary governance structure of the state. For Kentucky, this meant stripping a large community college system away from the state's land grant research university. For Tennessee, this meant stripping the comprehensive four-year institutions away from a centralized governing board and allowing them to operate independently. It also included significantly strengthening the coordinating authority of the higher education agency in both states. These added functions, mostly through approving tuition raises, capital projects, and approving programs, substantially increased the ability for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to play a larger role as the intermediary between the governor, the legislature, and the states' respective colleges and universities (General Assembly, 1997; McCormick, Williams, Johnson, Ragan, & Cameron, 2017).

The bottom line for both Governor Haslam and Patton is that, by placing such an importance on higher education; serving critical roles through the policy formation, adoption, and execution process; and building in key ingredients to promote sustainability, both governors were able to reshape dramatically their state's higher education arena. A particular quote from a senior Haslam administration best describes how a governor is in the position to accomplish something so substantial:

I've learned governors have great latitude defining parts of their job. As governor, you don't have latitude in passing a budget. You gotta do that. You don't have latitude in managing state departments, that's constitutionally mandated. But there's this other part of their job you get to define, and he chose higher ed.

(Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019)

This is important to note in reference to McLendon et al. (2013) that suggests there is not enough research to explain governors' viewpoints and roles particularly as governors are increasingly more active as postsecondary policymakers. Governors that utilize this part of their office to focus on postsecondary education set the agenda can serve the role of the "policy entrepreneur," which for some public policy theories is a requirement for significant policy change to materialize (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996).

Delimitations

A delimitation for this study was the selection of Kentucky and Tennessee in the Southeast region. The identification of these two states intentionally excluded all other states in the southeast in order to narrow the focus and scope of the study. Focusing on southeastern states was also determined for access purposes including in person

interviews with participants when feasible. The decision to look specifically at public education reform allowed for an investigation that focused on the mass education systems for each state.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that could offer greater insight for further research. First of these was the interrelationship between the elements that informed each governor's vision, role, and conditions for sustainability. Due to time and resource constraints, this study sought to establish these categories independently, and thus, cross-analysis of how these categories is limited. For example, how did Governor Patton's or Governor Haslam's prior experience in government impact the role they played during policy development and adoption?

Second, this study did not investigate the role of the legislative branch for each of these governors. For both governors, the activity of legislature was critical to passing the required statutes necessary to establish the reform agenda as a long-term effort for the state. For Patton, the legislature was resistant at first, but ultimately passed House Bill 1 in a bipartisan way. For Haslam, the support from the legislature on all higher education statutes was far greater.

Finally, this study did not seek to establish a theoretical framework for future testing. This study only sought to enhance the understanding of the role governors play in shaping postsecondary reform in hopes to contribute towards a future theoretical model.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Policy

States should consider the policy perspectives of Governor Haslam and Patton with their approach to aligning postsecondary education and the state's economy. These two administrations are regarded as visionary in their ability to position their state's higher education system as an economic driver. For both governors, this began with a deep understanding of the state's context, especially in regard to the state's current system of postsecondary education and its shortcomings in relation to adequately addressing student degree or certification completion. Second, both governors understood that the workforce, essentially supplied as a product of all postsecondary providers (two- and four-year), would steer the state's ability to compete on an increasingly global economic development stage. Governor Patton extended this view to the research universities, calling specific attention to their ability to (a) recruit the brightest minds for knowledge creation and management through research and (b) apply entrepreneurial transfer of that research into the private sector. In sum, both governors believed that higher education, as a well-directed, organized, and governed driver, is a tremendous asset to ensure the greater livelihood of the state and one that the state policy arena needs to reflect.

Recommendations for Practice

For public postsecondary leaders, particularly each state's coordinating board, this study provides greater explanation regarding how these agencies conduct their work in tandem with the governor's office. This was best summed up by a senior staff member in the Haslam administration:

The nature of the SHEEO (referring to the state higher ed coordinating agency) with the governor should function as a direct postsecondary advisor to the governor, the legislature, and its colleges. Dr. Richard Rhoda, as the executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, had a vision in 2004-05 that the SHEEO agency would become a think tank, an entrepreneurial proving ground for the state's postsecondary agenda. In 2007-08 THEC became tightly coupled to the governor's office, as an apolitical, competent think tank. (Personal Communication with Governor Haslam Senior Staff Member 3, 2019)

Not all state higher education systems are organized like those of Tennessee or Kentucky. Moreover, the resources that support other states' agencies are tightly coupled to the state's higher education budget, often declining in their operational budget and capacity. The recommendation for postsecondary leaders in this space is to consider the value proposition that state leadership places in the coordinating board. Consider applying the notion described in Tennessee to build a higher education agency that is technically capable of being an objective, honest broker of changes the government and the postsecondary institutions continually need to make to advance the interests of the state.

Implications for Further Study

While this study builds on research that was already conducted and focused on Governor Patton, particularly research grounded in theoretical lens associated with political and policy theory (Davis, 2001; Garn, 2005), there was limited research of that nature for Governor Haslam's administration. Applying a theoretical lens such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), Multiple Streams Theory (MST), and Agenda-

Setting, Alternatives, Choice, and Implementation, from a political and public policy found in perspective to Governor Haslam's administration may be a useful tool for cross-case analysis (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007). While this study only applied a specific aspect of policy theory, the activity of agenda setting, policy entrepreneur and champion, an in-depth policy analysis of Governor Haslam may offer additional insight to the reforms in Tennessee.

Second, a study could be conducted regarding the relationship between the state higher education agency and the governor's office, with particular attention to the notion of the role strong coordinating boards play versus weak ones in the development of setting educational reform agendas. This was relevant in how both Governor Patton and Haslam viewed the current status of their coordinating board and the restructuring changes that took place to strengthen those organizations.

This study also uncovered the existence of influence from Complete College America and the Lumina Foundation as they have been part of a growing national network of not-for-profits and large philanthropic foundations dedicated to shaping the state public education arena. Specifically, a study could be conducted regarding the emphasis national organizations, particularly large philanthropic organizations, play in the development of state agendas.

Many national organizations and states during the time period of the Tennessee case received large grants that funded the operations and projects which provided technical capacity to the state. Furthermore, federal resources from Race to the Top, contributed to incentivizing reform throughout the Haslam administration, but also the prior administration in Tennessee. As philanthropy in education has evolved, larger

foundations have hired program officers who have increasingly evolved as education experts in their own right, shaping the types of issues the foundation uses their resources to fund directly to the state, or with organizations that provide technical assistance to the state. The intentions of both suggest that this will define particular education issues on which the state chooses to focus its policy and programmatic efforts.

Further research should consider how these types of national organizations have not only increased in numbers and size but also how their influence has shaped state education reform from both the executive branch and legislative branch, as well as the construction and delivery of K-12 and postsecondary strategic plans.

Conclusion

As previously discussed, governors can impose tremendous influence on public policy. In their attempt to address issues that their states face, and in order to sustain and improve the present and long-term health of its citizenry, some governors invest significant resources to shape the direction of their state's postsecondary system of education. The current study sought to examine the critical elements that led two different governors to enact large-scale legislation and policies that have an impact on postsecondary education. This study found that in the case of Kentucky and Tennessee, Governors Patton and Haslam respectively chose higher education as a significant pillar for reform during their administration, then engaged in a variety of strategies to ensure that their higher education policies were adopted, implemented, and sustained.

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APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

DATE: July 29, 2019

TO: Shannon Gilkey, EdD
FROM: Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1280735-3] Working Title: Impact of Governors on Public Higher Education
The making of a Higher Education Governor

REFERENCE #: IRB 19-072

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: July 29, 2019

EXPIRATION DATE: April 1, 2020

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this project. The Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a *signed/implied* consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of April 1, 2020.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Pyles at (270) 745-3360 or irb@wku.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

APPENDIX B: Data Collection Instrument Templates

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT		
DOCUMENT TITLE/SOURCE	(INSERT DOCUMENT TITLE)	
DATE OF ANALYSIS	(INSERT SOURCE)	
RESEARCHER	(INSERT DATE OF ANALYSIS)	
RESEARCHER	SHANNON W. GILKEY – EDD DOCTORAL STUDENT WKU	
RESEARCH QUESTION	CODES UTILIZED	SPECIFIC QUOTES EXTRACTED FROM TEXT
RESEARCH QUESTION 1A		
RESEARCH QUESTION 1B		
RESEARCH QUESTION 2A		
RESEARCH QUESTION 2B		
RESEARCH QUESTION 3A		
RESEARCH QUESTION 3B		
REACTIONS FROM THE RESEARCHER'S EXPERIENCE		

OBSERVATION ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT			
OBSERVATION TITLE/SOURCE	(INSERT OBSERVATION TITLE E.G. TELEVISED ADDRESS, SPEECH, ETC.) (INSERT SOURCE)		
DATE OF ANALYSIS	(INSERT DATE OF ANALYSIS)		
RESEARCHER	SHANNON W. GILKEY – EDD DOCTORAL STUDENT WKU		
FIELD NOTES: SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION – QUICK REACTION RESEARCHER/OBSERVER COMMENTARY OF OBSERVATION QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP -			
RESEARCH QUESTION	CODES UTILIZED	SPECIFIC QUOTES EXTRACTED FROM VIDEO SOURCE	TIME OF SLIP (WITHIN VIDEO TEXT)
RESEARCH QUESTION 1A			
RESEARCH QUESTION 1B			
RESEARCH QUESTION 2A			
RESEARCH QUESTION 2B			
RESEARCH QUESTION 3A			
RESEARCH QUESTION 3B			
REACTIONS FROM THE RESEARCHER'S EXPERIENCE			

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT			
INTERVIEW	(INSERT INTERVIEWEE NAME/TITLE ETC.)		
ALT. INTERVIEW NAME	(INSERT ALT INTERVIEW NAME – E.G. SENIOR ADMIN 1, ETC.)		
DATE OF ANALYSIS	(INSERT DATE OF ANALYSIS)		
RESEARCHER	SHANNON W. GILKEY – EDD DOCTORAL STUDENT WKU		
RESEARCH QUESTION	CODES UTILIZED	SPECIFIC QUOTES EXTRACTED FROM VIDEO SOURCE	TIME OF QUOTE/CLIP (WITHIN AUDIO/TEXT) OR PAGE NUMBER FROM TRANSCRIPT
RESEARCH QUESTION 1A			
RESEARCH QUESTION 1B			
RESEARCH QUESTION 2A			
RESEARCH QUESTION 2B			
RESEARCH QUESTION 3A			
RESEARCH QUESTION 3B			
REACTIONS FROM THE RESEARCHER'S EXPERIENCE			

APPENDIX C: Sample Data Collection Charts

Main Research Question		Key Influences Shaping Governor's view of postsecondary education	Data Sources to validate themes
RQ1: How do governors' visions for their state intersect with their view of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state?	Governor Bill Haslam	Outside Experts/National Movement	
		K-12 Reform,	
		Personal experience, previous experience in Government	
		TN Higher Ed Commission agency	
		Internal staff	
		Other state models	
		Legislative mandate	
	Governor Paul Patton	Outside experts, National Movement	
		K-12 Reform,	
		Other state models,	
		Previous experience in government	

APPENDIX D: Research Questions Code Index

Research Questions & Code Index (Table X)		CODE INDEX	
Main Research Question	Variables to be explored	Code Level 1	Code level 2
RQ1: How do governor's vision for their state intersect with their view of postsecondary education as a key policy priority area to address the current and future needs of the state?	Information sources such contract consultants, national governor and education organizations, etc., internal staff, or Gov personal perspective on state	RQ1aI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RQ1le – Experts • RQ1alno-National Organizations • RQ1alis – internal staff • RQ1alpe – personal perspective/experience
	Environmental conditions such as economic status of state, ongoing lawsuits, legislative directive, status of established coalitions, workforce status	RQ1bE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RQ1bEec -economic status • RQ1bEol-ongoing lawsuit • RQ1bEl -legislative direction • RQ1bEw-workforce • RQ1bEk -K12 driven
RQ2: What role(s) do governor's play during the policy-making process?	Governor's role during agenda setting	RQ2aG R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RQ2aGRpc-Policy Champion • RQ2aGRas- Agenda setter • RQ2aGRb- Bargaining • RQ2aGRp- Persuasion • RQ2aGRpe- Policy Entrepreneur
	Governor's role during agenda/policy adoption	RQ2bG R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RQ2bGRbpc- Policy Champion • RQ2bGRbas- Agenda setter • RQ2bGRbB- Bargaining • RQ2bGRbp- Persuasion • RQ2bGRbpe-Policy entrepreneur
RQ3: What conditions during the formation, adoption and implementation process that provided allowed the long-term sustainability of reform efforts?	Intentionality of short-term vs long term state commitment	RQ3aSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RQ3lst-short term • RQ3llt-long term
	Methods to sustain or protect agenda for long term sustainability	RQ3bS M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RQ3bSMs-statute • RQ3bSMg-governance • RQ3bSMf-funding • RQ3bSMp-policy

APPENDIX E: Sample Interview Questions

Senior TN Governor Staff Member Interview Questions

The first half of the conversation, I'd like to focus on the postsecondary reform agenda established leading up to Gov Haslam's inauguration. Then turn to questions regarding its execution.

Given your background and the timing of Governor Haslam's announcing this agenda in 2011, you have had a unique vantage point while at THECC as the interim ED, and Director of Fiscal Policy for 9 years.

Question 1 – Can you give me a little bit of context, given your vantage point, how Governor Haslam went about setting this higher education reform agenda?

Question 2 – In Governor Haslam's 2011 inaugural address, he said the following lines about postsecondary education

There is the vibrant hum of a new economy, that is growing, that encourages learning, and that taps the educated. Others feel left behind, struggling to gain a foothold and wary of having the tools to compete.

In the new economy there is room for those who prepare for the challenges of a changing workforce. Some come equipped with the right education and skills while others reach out to re-train, re-educate and re-enter a competitive marketplace.

How did this resonate at the time? Was this a common belief within the postsecondary education community?

Question 3 – After Governor Haslam's inauguration as Governor, how soon did you begin hearing about his plans to reform the postsecondary system? Where was he drawing information and ideas from?

Question 4 - Once Governor Haslam laid out his postsecondary reform agenda, how would you describe his use of his office to see his ideas become law? How did he leverage THECC? Was this viewed within the office as a Haslam agenda or a THECC agenda

Question 5 – After the Complete College TN Act was passed was established, how soon did you begin serving as the Interim Executive Director? What was the mandate given to you from the Haslam administration?

Question 6 – The Focus Act – Describe the Process of you becoming aware of the Governor's intentions and the formation and adoption of this portion of the agenda