Work and Life Integration: Faculty Balance in the Academy

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Work and Life Integration: Faculty Balance in the Academy

By

Holly Ehrens

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Education Leadership Management and Policy
Seton Hall University
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Doctoral Candidate, **Holly Ehrens**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ph.D.** during this **Fall Semester 2015.**

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Abstract

Faculty work life integration has evolved as an important area of research in the academic workplace. The evolution in thinking about faculty work life integration has progressively shifted focus from the problems of women and parents to research that considers both men and women, married and single, with or without children as participants in the quest to integrate both personal and professional lives.

Though many studies still include the challenges faced by parents and this study is no exception, a more recent focus includes the influence of work group norms and social dynamics in shaping the experiences of faculty in the academy.

This study which was conducted at a small tuition driven college in the northeastern United States, looked at faculty work life integration through the lens of academic discipline, role identity and cultural norms.

The study findings note the increasing influence of marketization for enrollment and the financial pressures that support managerialism and detract from faculty work life integration.

Key Words

work life integration  work life balance  tenured faculty  full time faculty
tuition driven college  marketing for enrollment  identity theory  role identity
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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Background

The demographics of the American workplace radically changed in the five decades following World War II. The period between 1950 and 2000 witnessed an explosive growth in the number of men and women who entered the workforce, as the civilian labor force increased from 62 million to 141 million workers in 2000, (Women in the Labor Force: A Databook, 2011). The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the factor most responsible for the high growth rate was the rapid increase in the number of women who entered the work force during that time frame, at an annual rate of 2.6%. Between 1950 and 2000, the actual number of women in the labor force grew from 18 million to 66 million (Women in the Labor Force: A Databook, 2011). By 2011, women made up 46.6% of the U.S. workforce, according to a report from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics entitled Women in the Labor Force: A Databook.

American households have continued to change as well, due to the economy, changes in societal norms, and higher rates of divorce. Dual-earner households, where both partners are employed outside the home, represent 79% of married and/or partnered couples (Galinsky, Aumann & Bond, 2008). The number of households where both parents work outside the house has also increased to 70% (Harrington, Van Deusen, & Ladge, 2010). Additionally, the number of single-parent households increased to approximately 28.3% by 2005 (Family structure and children’s living arrangements, 2014).

Increased numbers of people employed outside the home has led workers to experience greater demands on their time from their families and employers. Increased demands from employee’s professional and personal lives have placed work and life in a competition, which persists to the present day. Work-life conflict affects millions of employees in the U.S., who are
attempting to juggle the ever-increasing demands of their jobs with the crucial responsibilities of their personal lives, (Gerkovich, 2006; Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003).

American corporations were among the first employers to experience the conflict felt by employees, especially women with children. This awareness was raised by two seminal works, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Kanter, 1977) and *The Second Shift* (Hochschild, 1989). Kanter revealed the inequities for women in a workplace designed for the ideal worker, who was male and likely had a wife at home to take care of the family. Hochschild’s book used a series of interviews with couples in dual-career households to demonstrate the inequality of women who worked outside the home. Hochschild was one of the first scholars to identify that in two-career households, women were still responsible for the majority of childcare and housework, even though they also held full-time jobs.

During the 1990s, many researchers and writers began to raise the public’s awareness of work-life issues. In response to the revelations of workers’ travails, companies began to incorporate work-life policies and practices into their employee benefits packages in the belief that employee “balance” was a tool for recruitment and retention of high-quality talent. These policies, which included flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, and support for childcare, were widely publicized but modestly used until the early 2000s. At that time corporations began to see the benefits of support for work-life balance begin to pay off, by providing a competitive advantage for recruitment, retention of talent, increased employee productivity, and higher levels of employee engagement.

Although the works of Kanter and Hochschild were instrumental in raising awareness of the work-life dilemma in corporations, and many of the researchers who studied work-life
dynamics were part of the academic community the academy was slow to identify the need for work-life policies within the academic setting.

Then in 1999, the Center for the Education of Women (CEW), funded by the Sloan Foundation, conducted the Michigan Faculty Work-Life Study. This study presented findings derived from a survey of over 1,000 Michigan faculty members concerning career satisfaction, workload and productivity, family work-life issues, climate issues, and faculty retention (Blackburn & Hollenshead, 1999). The 1999 study gave credibility to work-life issues in the academy. The CEW continued to expand its agenda to focus on research related to women's lives and their personal aspirations, (Hollenshead, C., Waltman, J., August, L., Bailey, J., Miller, J., Smith, G. & Sullivan, B. 2005). In 2007, the CEW published *Family-Friendly Policies in Higher Education: A Five Year Report*, which assessed the changes and progress in the provision of family-friendly policies by U.S. institutions of higher education from 2002-2007. The survey measured the progress of work-life policies at 225 institutions in 2002 and 189 institutions in 2007 (August, Miller, Hollenshead, Bell, Moorman & Waltman, 2007). Both the 1999 and 2007 reports represented some of the first research that documented and quantified the lack of faculty work-life balance policies in the academy. What came out of the 2007 report showed that for all Carnegie classifications represented in the survey sample, the average number of family-friendly policies for all participating institutions was 1.90 policies per institution, (August, et al., 2007).

While the results of the CEW 2007 survey confirmed an absence of institution-wide and formal work family-friendly policies in all categories of schools, (August, et al., 2007), it also served to stimulate interest in the topic.
Following the CEW survey, the University of California at Berkeley conducted a Climate Survey that queried faculty on topics including work-life issues, career satisfaction, and career support. This survey was conducted in 2009, and the results were published in May 2011. This Climate Survey was only the second of its kind done at Berkeley, suggesting that faculty climate and work-life issues had become an important topic.

Faculty Work and Personal Lives

Many faculty members in higher education report that their lives are out of balance when it comes to work and family demands. The 2007-2008 faculty survey conducted by the University of California Los Angeles – Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) reported that only 34% of faculty felt they had established a healthy balance in their personal and professional lives. To the contrary, the majority of respondents—both male and female, 61.3% and 72.7% respectively—indicated that their personal and professional lives were not in balance (DeAngelo, Hurtado, Pryor, Kelly, & Santos, 2009).

The results of the HERI faculty survey reflect a broader reality: both men and women across workplaces face difficulties balancing work and family. A 2008 survey by the Families and Work Institute reported that 60% of men and 47% of women had a hard time managing work and family responsibilities, (Aumann, Galinsky & Matos, 2011). Similarly, Boston College’s Center for Work and Family, funded by the Sloan Foundation, released a report in June of 2010 that indicated that both men and women in dual-earner households with children under age 18 experience work-life imbalance. According to this survey, both men and women felt significant levels of work-life conflict, (Harrington, Van Duesen & Ladge, 2011).
Over the past twenty years, work-life balance research has successfully described the lack of balance found in the American workplace (Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Drago, Colbeck, Stauffer, Varner, Burkum, Fazioli). Study results, like those in the preceding paragraphs, have reported on the negative outcomes when balance of work and family is absent. What the data show is that work-life issues impact the quality of American faculty life (Hochschild, 2003; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Gappa et al., 2007).

More recent research has sought to verify the value that workers place on balancing their work and personal lives. Several large surveys have questioned existing faculty, early-career faculty, doctoral students, and professionals on the importance of work-life balance in academic careers (Goulden, Frasch & Mason, 2009; Stacy, Zedeck, Goulden & Frasch, 2011). The University of California Berkeley Faculty Climate Survey (2009) reported that nearly all (87%) of the men and women surveyed felt their job interfered with their family lives, and “almost all but a few” respondents were supportive of the university’s family-responsive policies (Stacy et al., 2011, pp. 58, 62, 68). When work demands interfere with personal responsibilities, one’s quality of life is negatively affected. When personal demands interfere with work, performance and job satisfaction are impacted.

Using National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) 1999 data, Rosser reported that faculty members’ perceptions of work-life-balance have a “direct and powerful impact on their satisfaction” and intention to leave their position (2004, p.1). In a survey of 8,373 doctoral students in the California University system, nearly all the students (84% of women, 74% of men) were concerned with the “family friendliness” of their career choices (Goulden et al., 2009, p. 11). The evidence seems clear on one point: men and women value work-life balance and
view it as a critical aspect of their everyday lives. These findings have clear implications for recruitment and retention of faculty talent.

**Work-Life Integration and Balance**

Work-life balance was first described by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) and later depicted in a model by Patricia Voydanoff (1987). Voydanoff conceived the work-life model as two separate spheres of people’s lives. Workers attempted to balance between the demands of one sphere and the other, so that each set of demands was met. Both Kanter (1977) and Voydanoff (1987) confirmed that true balance was sought but rarely achieved in the American workplace, and that one’s work life did not operate in total isolation from one’s personal life. This led them to conclude that the idea of separate spheres was a myth (Kanter, 1977).

Recognizing that there was an area where life and work overlapped, both Kanter and Voydanoff advocated the integrated study of work and family (Kanter, 1977; Voydanoff, 2007). Recently the interconnections between work and life pursuits have received greater recognition, and the term *integration* has gained wider use in describing the relationship between work and life demands (Poelmans, Stepanova & Masuda, 2008; Kossek & Lambert, 2005).

Advocates for the use of the term work and life *integration* point out that technology has created a modern workplace that operates 24/7. Parents may use their electronic devices to read e-mails from work or to check voice messages after the children have gone to bed. So, that work may be done in the office and at home, interspersed with several hours of family time in between.

For the purposes of this paper, *integration* is used because it acknowledges the overlapping spheres of work and life and the lack of complete separation between the two, even
when the worker is engaged in activities belonging to a single sector. You are playing with your child, but your mind may be working on finding a solution to a problem at work.

At present, balance is not a true 50/50 split in terms of time and resources, but a distribution that is comfortable to the worker (Gerkovich, 2006; Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003; Kofodimos, 1993). Each person will likely find the right distribution (balance) between work demands and life demands that will suit their own work role and personal preferences. Current usage of the term balance has evolved based on changing societal standards, cultural norms, and advances in work-life research.

References in this paper to work-life balance describe a relationship that may not be perfectly distributed in an equal split, but rather in a distribution that is comfortable for the participant, (Greenhaus et al, 2003). The use of the term integration refers to the areas of work and life domains that are interconnected, overlapping, or interspersed throughout the day, which may be a source of positive spillover or negative conflict for people in the workplace.

**Work-Life Conflict**

Work-life conflict is the absence of balance between one’s work and personal life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2005; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The anxiety, stress, and frustration felt by workers whose work and personal lives are in conflict yields negative impacts on their effectiveness at work and on the quality of their personal lives (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw asserted that people whose work and family lives are in balance “experience low levels of stress” and “less depression” (2003, p. 515).

When work-life conflict occurs, it usually results in an imbalance between time spent on work-related activities and time spent on personal needs (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999; Voydanoff, 2007). Friedman and Greenhaus, reporting on the results of a study conducted with 800 business
professionals, related that “conflict between work and family life has real consequences and significantly affects the quality of family life and career attainment of both men and women” (2000). High levels of employee stress can lead to poor productivity in the workplace (Lockwood, 2003). And a study funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at Santa Clara University that assessed work-life balance for faculty found that faculty who experienced lower levels of work-life balance reported higher levels of work burnout and diminished career satisfaction (Sullivan and Nichols, 2011). Either way, the individual feels he or she is giving more to one priority at the expense of the other one, potentially causing the individual feelings of frustration and lower job satisfaction (Carlson & Frone, 2003). And depending on the needs and requirements of the work environment, this imbalance may cause problems for supervisors and department chairs to manage (Carlson & Frone, 2003).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover how tenured faculty members at one four-year liberal arts college experienced work-life integration and balance and how their experiences were influenced by the institution’s workplace norms, social dynamics, subcultures, and the professional roles with which they identified.

Individuals’ perceptions of work place flexibility are constructed through their interaction with organizational and social structures, (Kossek & Lambert, 2005). With regard to the study of work-life integration, “the roles of the workgroup and workplace social dynamics are often ignored” and are less studied aspects of work-life integration (Kossek & Lambert, 2005, p. 5). Consequently, I was interested in comparing and contrasting faculty members’ approaches to managing balance and conflict to see how the workplace norms of the institution and social contexts of their departments influenced the experiences of the faculty members who were the
subjects of my study (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Schein, 2004; Gerovich, 2006; Ruderman, 2005, Becher & Trowler, 2001). I was also interested to learn how faculty members’ self-perceptions and role identities influenced their ability to achieve balance or mitigate conflict (Burke & Stets, 2009; Kossek & Lambert, 2005).

Workplace norms are standards for behavior that exist within a group or category of people (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Norms have group approval and will set guidelines for behavior among group members. Through a series of interviews, the workplace norms that set the standards for the faculty at this four-year institution were identified and helped to provide the context for the study.

A subculture is a group that has beliefs and behaviors that are different from the main groups within a culture or society, as Kuh and Whitt described in “The Invisible Tapestry” (1988). The subculture of academic discipline is often the setting for most of the social dynamics and interactions that occur in the faculty work group (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Clark (1963) described disciplines as the centers around which “faculty subcultures increasingly form” and further said that, “disciplines exist as separate estates, with distinctive subcultures” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 45). If we think of an individual discipline as a subgroup, we can follow the categories of academic disciplines as described by Becher and Trowler (2001) to assess how and to what degree members of different disciplinary groups will exhibit behavior deemed to be characteristic of their group and how these behaviors influence work-life integration and balance.

In order to better understand the connection between one’s disciplinary group and one’s ability to manage work and life demands, I solicited faculty members from the biological sciences and from the social sciences to discern if their work-life integration experiences varied along disciplinary lines as suggested by Becher and Trowler (2001). Both groups were tenured
faculty members who had been with the college for at least five years. Most of the faculty members interviewed were married, but not all, and many, but not all of the faculty members had children. The liberal arts institution that was the site of my study focused on pedagogy, student advising, scholarship, and service to the school.

The third level of assessment used in my study was based on a theoretical model known as identity theory, a framework rooted in sociology (Burke & Stets, 2009). The concept of role identity in social interactions, particularly in the workplace, is important because it helps us to understand how self-perception of one’s role assists in determining how one meets the behavioral expectations for one’s job. Social interactions assist in role verification and can either support one’s performance or deny one’s efficacy in the role.

Faculty experiences can shed light on 1) how workplace norms create an environment in which faculty balance is negotiated, 2) how one’s department influences his or her attitudes and behaviors that guide social interactions that either support or discourage work and life balance, and 3) what one envisions their individual role identity to be, which will set the limits on how their role is performed against a preconceived set of specifications, that will either support or discourage work-life integration. This framework allowed me to analyze the interview content from vantage points at different levels within the setting: from the institutional norms of the work group, the social interactions within different departments, and the role identities of individual faculty members.

**Research Questions**

This study investigated the experiences of tenured faculty managing work-life integration and balance in their academic careers, from three separate but interactive vantage points within their workplace setting: the work group, the discipline (subculture), and the individual. The study explored three important research questions.
1. What are the ways in which institutional work group norms, social interactions, and individual role identities shape faculty members’ experiences as they try to find balance and integrate their personal and professional lives?

2. How are the experiences of tenured faculty in the biological sciences and the social sciences at a four-year liberal arts college similar and different when it comes to managing work and life demands?

3. In what ways is role identity influential in faculty members’ experiences integrating work and life demands and managing balance?

The Study

Founded in the mid-1800s, Waverly Hills College\(^1\) is a private four-year school, located in the Northeast United States. The student body is composed of 94% full-time female undergraduate students, with the remaining 6% of the student population comprised of male and female students enrolled in continuing education or graduate-level programs.\(^2\) The faculty at Waverly Hills College consists of 84 full-time professors, about half of whom are men. There is limited use of adjunct and part-time faculty at Waverly.

The absence of formal work-life policies at Waverly affords an opportunity to discover how faculty members manage work-life balance when no policies exist. Since the average

\(^1\)Pseudonym.
\(^2\)Both men and women graduate students.
number of work-life balance policies that are offered at all types of institutions is 1.9 polices per institution, according to a 2007 University of Michigan survey funded by the Sloan Foundation, over two-thirds of the work-life balance situations encountered by faculty have no policies in place designed to mitigate their impact. This means that on average, most work-life issues faced by faculty are managed without the benefit of policies that support balance. When this gap in existing policies across the spectrum of institutional types is layered with a well-documented faculty resistance to utilizing polices that are in place, the result (non-use) is as if no policy existed at all (O’Meara, Terosky & Neumann, 2008). I therefore see a college like Waverly Hills, where no policies are in place, as a relevant environment in which to discover how faculty members integrate work and life demands to achieve balance. Waverly Hills is also a fertile research site for exploring how workgroup norms, individual disciplines, and individual role identities influence the ways in which work-life balance is enacted at this school.

The University of Michigan’s 2007 survey, which gathered data from 189 institutions, reported that the liberal arts respondent group had an average of 1.9 policies out of the 11 queried on the survey (August, Miller, Hollenshead, Bell, Moorman, & Waltman, 2007). This is less than 20% of the possible family-friendly policies that could be implemented by that group, indicating that there is room for improvement when it comes to helping liberal arts college faculty to manage work and family demands. The findings from this study may help liberal arts institutions gain a comparative perspective on their own work-life environment. Since there are no work-life integration and balance studies that have looked specifically at small liberal arts colleges, academic departments, and role identities, this study may have applicability to other small liberal arts institutions.

3 “Types of institutions” refers to the Carnegie classifications of higher educational institutions, including doctoral-extensive and baccalaureate-liberal arts.
Significance of the Study

The study of work-life balance has evolved from looking at each source of demands through a lens that isolates work from life to a conceptualization of work and life as overlapping and integrated (Voydanoff, 2007). The evolution in thinking about faculty work and life integration is reflected in the research, which has progressively shifted its focus from the problems of women and parents to research that considers both men and women, married and single, with or without children as legitimate participants in the quest to successfully integrate professional and personal lives. Though many of the studies still include the challenges faced by parents, and this study is no exception, a more recent focus includes the influence of work group norms and social dynamics in shaping the experiences of faculty in the academy. This study puts the challenge of integrating work and life demands into the arena of social structures and group interactions, a less studied area of inquiry in faculty work-life balance research, (Kossek & Lambert, 2005).

Starting in the early part of the new millennium, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) raised interest in the need for “the development and implementation of institutional policies that enable the healthy integration of work responsibilities and family life in academe” as requiring “renewed attention” (Hollenshead, Sullivan, Smith, August & Hamilton, 2005, p.25). Prior to 2001, a study conducted in 1996 by the Foundation of the College and University Personnel Association and the Families and Work Institute provided the first summary of policies and programs available to faculty and staff in the 1990s (Hollenshead et al., 2005). Subsequently, studies previously mentioned in this paper, conducted by the University of Michigan’s CEW in 2002 and again in 2007, added to information regarding workplace policies
aimed at helping faculty to manage their professional and personal lives, (Hollenshead et al., 2005).

However, the existence of work-life policies for faculty does not guarantee their use (Drago, Colbeck, Stauffer, Varner, Burkum, & Fazioli, 2004). This phenomenon, termed “bias avoidance,” was first used to describe the non-use of policies by faculty (Drago et al., 2004). It was found that the reason for non-use was based on fear that using those policies would “jeopardize their job security, assignments, or opportunities for promotion” (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1997). Researchers also found that employees will avoid using work-life policies if the organizational culture has not endorsed the new policies and if there is an absence of support within the organization (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1997). By identifying behaviors and norms that influence the faculty’s decisions to use or not to use existing work-life policies, the study can help to advance the utilization of existing and future policies designed to support work and life integration and balance.

Work-life conflict occurs when no acceptable balance between work and life demands is achieved and people’s lives are in a state of imbalance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The anxiety, stress, and frustration felt by workers whose work and personal lives are in conflict yields negative impacts on their effectiveness at work and on the quality of their personal lives (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw assert that people whose work and family lives are in balance “experience low levels of stress” and “less depression” than those who lives are out of balance (2003, p. 515). Friedman and Greenhaus, reporting on the results of a study conducted with 800 business professionals, related that work and family conflict has a significant impact on the family life and the career achievement of both men and women (2000). High levels of employee stress can lead to poor productivity in the workplace.
And a study funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at Santa Clara University that assessed work-life balance for faculty found that faculty who experienced lower levels of work-life balance reported higher levels of work burnout and more life stress, (Sullivan and Nichols, 2011).

Literature suggests that personal and professional satisfaction results when one’s resources (energy, time, and commitment) are well distributed across work and life domains (Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000). Kofodimos (1993) suggests that the outcome of work conflict is high levels of stress that detract from the quality of life and reduces individuals’ effectiveness at work). The advancement of successful work-life integration has important implications for faculty performance, productivity, and retention. In the current culture of marketization in higher education, better balance that allows for faculty scholarship delivers benefits to students via classroom learning and to the institution in terms of prestige and rankings.

The power and influence of the American faculty has declined over the last several decades, starting in the 1990s, in part due to the growth of managerialism, and the burgeoning ranks of contingent faculty in higher education (Cummings & Finkelstein, 2012). According to an article in Academe (2014), between the years 1975-1976 and 2014, the rate of growth of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty was 23%, which was dwarfed by the rates of growth in full-time non-tenure-track faculty at 259% and by part-time faculty at 286% (Curtis & Thornton, 2014). The increased rates of non-tenured faculty that are hired no doubt reflects an effort on the part of administrators to cut spending in the academy.

If one looks at the percentage change in average salaries in higher education for the period 1978-1979 through 2013-2014 in both public and private institutions, salaries for professor, associate professor, and assistant professor positions increased incrementally while
administrators’ salaries soared (Curtis et al., 2014). Despite the ascendancy of the administrative personnel in higher education and seeming descent of the faculty by comparison, the importance of the faculty cannot be overstated. One important fact remains that “who the faculty are and what they do define higher education’s center” (Finkelstein et al., 1998). Further, “it is indisputable that no college or university can accomplish its mission without a dedicated and competent faculty. To repeat: who the faculty are and what they do is the heart of the enterprise” (Finkelstein et al., 1998, pp. 3-4). Given the importance of the faculty to each institution’s health, academic freedom, and governance, the faculty’s ability to successfully integrate work and life demands should become ever more important to the institution. It should be noted that the liberal arts college where the study was conducted employs very few contingent faculty members, and most classes are taught by full-time tenured faculty.

The qualitative study I conducted put the challenge of integrating work and life demands into the analytical arena of social structures and norms, group interactions, and individual self-perceptions. The study holds significance in the following ways. This study adds to the knowledge of faculty integration and balance from the alternative perspective of social interactions and role identity. The findings increase our understanding of the faculty work environment with its direct impacts on faculty performance and satisfaction, which ultimately influence student engagement and retention, a clear concern for faculty and administrators alike.

**Definition of Terms**

Work-life balance is used interchangeably with work-life integration throughout most of the paper. The use of the term balance implies separate and equal domains, in isolation from each
other, related to one’s personal and professional lives. The term integration comes closer to reality, as individuals’ priorities shift back and forth during the course of the day between their work demands and their personal responsibilities. For more detail, see pages 6-8 of this paper.

Identity theory is used in this paper as the theoretical framework that provides a rubric or lens with which to examine the topic of faculty work and life integration. The lens (identity theory) through which we view work and life integration helps to explain the source of the conflict between faculty work and life roles and helps to shape our understanding of the conflict. See Chapter V for an expanded discussion of the theory.
Chapter II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Work-life balance literature has described the lack of balance found in the American academic workplace since the 1990s (Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Drago, Colbeck, Stauffer, Varner, Burkum, Fazioli, Guzman & Habasevich, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). Study results, like those cited in the preceding paragraphs of this paper, have reported on the negative outcomes when balance is absent and have verified that work-life issues and balance are regarded by workers as important to their everyday lives (Hochschild, 2003; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Gappa et al., 2007). As mentioned earlier in this paper, more recent research has sought to verify the value that workers place on balancing their work and personal lives and to measure faculty’s level of satisfaction with their workplace. Several large surveys have questioned existing faculty, early career faculty, doctoral students, and professionals on the importance of work-life balance in academic careers (Quinn, 2011; Goulden, Mason & Frasch, 2009; Quinn, Lange & Olswang, 2004; Stacy, Zedeck, Goulden & Frasch, 2011). What is abundantly clear from the survey data is that work-life integration and balance have a “direct and powerful impact on their satisfaction” with their professional lives (Rosser, 2004, p. 1) and that they view work-life balance as critical components (Galinsky, Bond & Friedman, 1993).

The research on the academic workplace has predominantly pursued three separate but related paths of focus: 1) symptom-based research that seeks to analyze and describe the problem in terms of its negative consequences when work and life demands are out of balance, 2)
solution-based research that seeks to assess the use of work-life policies and to propose policy solutions to the dilemma of imbalance, and 3) context-based research that seeks to analyze the organizational norms and social dynamics as they relate to constructing a work environment in which individuals try to balance their professional and personal lives. In addition to the three divergent themes within the research on work-life balance, research methods diverge as well, with some studies using a quantitative and others a qualitative method of inquiry.

**Symptom-Based Research**

Symptom-based literature seeks to analyze and describe the problem of work-life integration in terms of its negative consequences for women and parents, and more recently men, when work and life demands are out of balance. The literature in this genre is focused on documenting the realities of work-life conflict, and initially highlighted the role of women in this regard (Edwards & Rothbard, 2005; Grzywacz, Almeida & McDonald, 2002; Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003), the inequities for women on the tenure track (Mason & Ekman, 2007; Mason & Goulden, 2002), the “leaky pipeline” of women leaving the STEM disciplines (Goulden, Frasch & Mason, 2009), the struggle for academic parents (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007, and more recently the problems for men who are juggling multiple roles (Harrington, Van Deusen & Ladge, 2010; Aumann & Galinsky, 2011; Galinsky, Aumann & Bond, 2008).

The early literature of work-life balance in the academy was predominantly focused on the conflict experienced by women, because women were and continue to be the primary caregivers of children and managers of the household (Gerkovich, 2006; Hochschild, 1989, 2003). Women in the 1970s entered a workplace that was predominantly populated and managed
by men. At the time, the accepted concept of an ideal worker was an employee totally dedicated to his job, with no family responsibilities, and who was male (Kanter, 1977). The dynamics of the workplace changed as women began to be hired into jobs previously held by men, propelling issues of work-life balance to the attention of employees and employers alike (Gerkovich, 2006; Kanter, 1977). The resulting conflict for faculty that became apparent in the 1970s persists today and poses important challenges for higher education.

Work-life researchers have described the problem for faculty in terms of equity issues for women in higher education, related to promotion, tenure, and performance demands built on the concept of the ‘ideal worker’⁴ (Kanter, 1977). The implication for women has been that demands from home coupled with a lack of support for balance at work have prevented women from fully participating in the required criteria for promotion, tenure, and performance expectations, resulting in fewer women in tenured positions or at the senior levels of the faculty.

Researchers such as Mason, Goulden, and Wolfinger and Curtis and Finkel have a well-documented argument that suggested that the organizational structure of academe (tenure process) contributes to the inequities and negative outcomes for women that are manifest in the academic workplace. These inequities revolve around the pursuit of tenure, which takes place at the same time many women are attempting to form families and have children (Mason & Ekman, 2007). The structural barrier and timing of tenure is seen as the reason women “opt out” of the tenure track and “leak from the academic pipeline” to accept jobs in the “second tier” (i.e., contingency or part-time) jobs of academe (Wolfinger, Mason & Goulden, 2008, pp. 396-399). The number of women who leave the tenure track has increased, Mason and Goulden asserted,

⁴ The ‘ideal worker’ was based on the male model of the corporate employee, who was typical in the organizations of the 1950s and 1960s. The ‘ideal worker’ was characterized as if they had “no family or personal demands that competed for their primary identity and attention during working time” (Kossek & Lambert, 2005, p. 3).
due to an unfriendly set of requirements and unfortunate timing of the tenure assessment period, (Goulden, Frasch & Mason, 2009).

With greater numbers of men now involved in caring for children and participating in household chores (Kossek & Lambert, 2005; Gerkovich, 2006), increasingly the problem of work-life integration and balance is seen as a cross-gender issue. Many men as well as women now feel the effects of competing work and personal demands on their quality of life and career advancement (Kossek & Lambert, 2005; Gerkovich, 2006). The lack of balance between competing work and home demands is broadly acknowledged by scholars as an undesirable state for any employee and usually results in lowered levels of employee satisfaction and increased levels of stress for employees (Edwards & Rothbard, 2005). Lowered levels of satisfaction create an environment where faculty retention becomes a problem and performance is adversely impacted. Literature suggests that it is in the best interests of the institution to foster higher levels of employee satisfaction and reduced levels of stress in order to build employee loyalty and retention. Administrators should seek to create an atmosphere where employees experience lower levels of stress and can therefore perform at their highest potential (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000).

According to the symptom-based literature, much research has been centered on the identification of problem manifestations, work-life stress and conflict, bias avoidance, a “chilly climate,” (Sullivan, Hollenshead, and Smith 2004, pp. 24-27) the tenure system, a lack of policies, and the ills that have resulted when work-life conflict issues have arisen (Sullivan, et al, 2004, pp. 24-27). Taken collectively, the negative outcomes when work-life balance is absent for faculty in the workplace have been discussed in numerous books and articles on academe
(Drago, Colbeck, Hollenshead & Sullivan, 2004; Mason, Goulden & Wolfinger, 2006; Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007).

Symptom-based research allows us to look at the problems that result when work and life are out of balance and provides extensive information on the varied manifestations of negative results that occur when work-life conflict is in play. This genre of literature provides a cogent rationale to study the topic further and excels at problem identification and description. However, with the exception of the analysis at the root of tenure inequities for women, the literature does not go far enough in diagnosing the causal factors related to the problem.

**Solution-Based Research**

Although work-life policies are present on campuses in far greater numbers than ever before, the lack of work-life balance in academic settings is a threat to the well-being of faculty and administrators of higher education. Where policies do exist, there is a low rate of utilization, sometimes referred to as “bias avoidance.” This phenomenon was identified by Drago, and his research team suggested that faculty were reluctant to use policies available to them for fear of being placed on the “mommy track” or for “not being taken seriously as an academic” (Drago et al. 2004, p. 24-27). And Sullivan, Hollenshead, and Smith cited a “chilly climate” for women that “sometimes discourages them from taking advantage of work family policies” (2004, pp. 24-27). What has not been thoroughly studied is why faculty chose not to use work-life policies when they are in place, suggesting the possibility that social interactions and cultural influences may discourage use (Sullivan, Hollenshead & Smith, 2004, p. 24-27). At the University of California at Berkeley, a healthy range of polices for faculty exist that support balance. Despite
the institution’s support for balance, “the Berkeley faculty report managing high levels of work/family conflict on a regular basis.” (Stacy, Zedeck, Goulden & Frasch, 2011, p. 58).

The lack of work-life policies available at colleges and universities has been cited by many researchers as the cause of conflict for men and women trying to manage work and family demands. The Center for the Education of Women at the University of Michigan conducted a national survey of institutions in 2002, examining the prevalence of family-friendly policies. The survey was repeated in 2007, and the findings revealed that average number of family-friendly policies per institution increased by 0.3% in five years, and many institutions surveyed still do not offer a wide range of flexible policies. In addition, the average number of policies per institution is 1.9, or just two policies per school (August, Miller, Hollenshead, Bell, Moorman & Waltman, 2007). On average, most schools offer at least two family-friendly policies; however, the impact of this result is reduced by the fact that 10% of the participant institutions said there was no policy or accepted practice at their institution regarding time off for pregnancy and childbirth for biological mothers (August et al., 2007). These facts, as related in the Research Brief on Family-Friendly Policies in Higher Education, in a report on the 2007 national survey conducted by the Center for the Education of Women at the University of Michigan, confirms that work-family policies are still absent in many institutions.

According to the data, the small numbers of policies that are in place are not widely utilized by the faculty at those institutions. Researchers at Washington State University, Blair-Loy and Wharton found that “the formal existence of a policy does not guarantee its use” and that “the social context of work… affects workers’ decision to use officially available work-family policies” (2002, p. 839).
Solution-based literature clearly points to formal policies as important keys to solving faculty work-life conflict, yet it does not target the causes for the continued conflict between work and life demands, nor does it fully explain the link between organizational social context and work group norms. Solution-based literature is on target with suggesting that policy solutions can help to mitigate imbalance, yet the literature does not delve into the reasons why faculty seem to hide in the shadows and equivocate when utilizing what is legitimately available to them.

**Organizational Social Context**

In the area of academic work-life balance literature, one of the less-studied topics is context-based research, which examines the organizational context in which individuals try to cope with competing demands from their work and personal lives. The importance of organizational social context as an area of inquiry in faculty work-life balance is less studied and has the potential to reveal influential elements related to the successful balance of work and personal demands. Kossek and Lambert (2005) in “Work-Family Scholarship: Voice and Context,” maintain that with respect to work-life research, “workplace social dynamics are often ignored, even though research shows us that work is defined and experienced very differently across societies and cultures” (pp. 5-6).

In a 1993 article in *Personnel Psychology*, Gary Johns found that ignorance of the social contexts into which an intervention (like-work-life policies) is introduced can limit the effectiveness of the intervention. Recent research conducted by Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002) confirmed how social contexts within an organization shape the fate of policies after adoption, thus supporting employees’ aversion to use policies and confirming the power of social context.
over personal needs (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002). These findings substantiate the influence of social context and culture in workplace decision-making and interactions. This area of research offers a viable prospect for understanding the cause of work-life conflict and offers promise in the quest for an understanding and resolution of the problem.

Understanding the context and culture within which faculty members manage competing work and life demands is critical to the resolution of conflict (Gerovich, 2006; Ruderman, 2005). It is organizational context, as revealed through individuals’ experiences, that provides a view of the influences that shape people’s behavior, actions, and decision-making as they attempt to find a balance between their work and life demands (Becher, 1994).

Becher and Trowler (2001) discuss the influence of academic disciplines on the culture of individual departments in *Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*. Becher and Trowler describe the culture of higher education as one that is composed of various disciplinary cultures. The authors explain that the “cultures we refer to are sets of taken-for-granted values, attitudes, and ways of behaving, which are articulated through and reinforced by recurrent practices among a group of people in a given context” (p. 23). The discipline within which a context is created determines the nature of social interactions and decision-making within the group (Schein, 2004). Organizational context then can also be the window that will allow the researcher to see how the social interactions between managers and employees can influence the ways in which conflict is resolved (e.g., utilize policies; Kuh & Whitt, 1988) and the ways that attitudes shape people’s ability to manage their lives at work and at home (e.g., avoid using policies).

**Theoretical Frameworks**
Early faculty work-life balance literature is replete with studies that are more pragmatically oriented and not theoretically grounded. This may be because the early literature in the field is a reflection of the more practical concerns at the time, with a focus given to describing symptoms (types of stress, inequities for women), and proposing solutions (faculty satisfaction surveys and the presence of policies). The exceptions that stand out are the works of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) related to role conflict, and Voydanoff, who proposed a theoretical framework to explicate the conflict. More current research, starting in the mid-1990s, seems to have stronger connections to a theoretical base.

Researchers interested in organizational culture, social context, and workplace norms have looked to the work of Edgar H. Schein for help in analyzing the culture of organizations. Schein presents a cogent framework for understanding cultural contexts and behaviors that are the result of artifacts, shared values, and assumptions.

Those interested in studying the influences of subcultures (disciplines) in the academy can look to the work of Becher and Trowler (1989) for a theoretical framework that can be used to differentiate the behaviors and values of different academic disciplines. It provides a means of looking at the connection of academic cultures and disciplinary knowledge.

Researchers whose interests lie in developing a deeper understanding of how individual faculty members experience work-life integration and balance can look to role identity to provide a framework for study. Role identity drives behavior in an interactive social environment and provides a model that helps the researcher to understand individual behavior in the context of workplace norms, subcultures, and competing demands.

I will discuss these three theories in the context of the qualitative study that I conducted.
Organizational Culture and Leadership Theory

Edgar H. Schein’s well known book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership: Third Edition* (2004), clearly defined culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 17). Schein related that occupations have culture, especially if there is an intense period of training or socialization, which will result in a “shared learning of attitudes, norms, and values that eventually become taken-for-granted assumptions” by members of those occupations (2004, p. 20).

Schein devised a framework for analysis of a group’s culture by identifying the “levels of culture” that are manifested by the group (2004, pp. 26-36). The levels of culture, as described by Schein, become apparent in the artifacts, espoused beliefs, values, and underlying assumptions that are shared by the members of the group (2004). Schein asserted that the “essence of a group’s culture is its pattern of shared, basic taken-for-granted assumptions” and that “the culture will manifest itself at the level of observable artifacts, and shared espoused beliefs and values” (2004, p. 36). Schein asserted that “the group’s basic assumptions can function as a cognitive defense mechanism for the individual members and the group as a whole”, (2004, p. 36). He also explained that “culture is multidimensional and multifaceted” and that it “fulfills the function of providing stability, meaning and predictability in the present based on decisions in the past” (Schein, 2004, p. 109).
Schein (2004) posited that understanding organizational culture is created by and central to effective leadership. He asserted that “culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we don’t understand the operation of these forces, we will become victim to them.” (Schein, 2004, p. 3).

Schein’s work provides a useful definition of organizational culture and the importance of leadership in the transmission and preservation of the culture. Schein’s area of interest was predominantly corporate culture, and the lens he has devised provides a highly pragmatic way to understand culture.

However, there are two ways in which Schein’s framework does not meet the requirements of my qualitative study. First, Schein’s work emphasized the pragmatic interpretation of culture as viewed through the eyes of a “clinician” (himself) rather than the eyes of an ethnographer. The qualitative researcher Charmaz advised in her book, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2006), that researchers should be reflexive about their own assumptions on their topic of study, and she cautioned them to avoid having those opinions overshadow the participants’ reports. Tierney claimed that Schein’s methods result in a cultural interpretation that relies too heavily on the author’s own reminiscence of his past experiences and that his findings present his own “personal opined conclusions” (1986, p.679.).

Second, the ethnographer Geertz recommended that thick descriptions should be used to study culture, and that they “will lead themselves to interpretive insights” (Tierney, 1986, p. 679). Tierney, concurring with Geertz, argued that human behavior is symbolic action and that culture “is a web of meaning spun collectively in a dialectical process between structure and individual” (Tierney, 1986). For those planning on using qualitative methods for their research,
Schein’s framework falls short on both issues of the influence of researcher opinion on predetermined outcomes and allowing the meaning to emerge from the collected data rather than being superimposed on it.

A final point related to consistency related to Schein’s thesis is the author’s belief that cultures evolve and cannot be changed at will. Yet, Schein viewed leaders as the ones responsible for the management of the learning process, suggesting that cultures can be intentionally changed (Tierney, 1986). This remains an unresolved conflict in Schein’s framework (Tierney, 1986).

The qualitative method that I chose to use in my study was focused on discovering how individual faculty members experience work-life balance in their particular setting, Waverly Hills College. And although my study does look at the organizational culture in which their experiences are placed, my focus was on individuals’ perceptions and behaviors as they integrate their professional and personal lives. Schein’s analysis is heavily oriented toward an analysis of the organizational structure (setting) and lends itself well to explaining the behavior of the organization on a broader scale. Schein’s approach aided my study in terms of looking at the cultural context in which it was positioned, but did not provide the theoretical framework which was necessary to interpret the participants’ actions and interactions within their professional environment.

**Academic Tribes and Territories Framework**

*Academic Tribes and Territories (Second Edition)*, a book coauthored by Tony Becher and Paul R. Trowler (2001), provides an insightful look at higher educational disciplines as individual cultures or “tribes” within the academy. When the book was first published in 1989,
Tony Becher gave credit to the physicist C.P. Snow’s work, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (1959) and the anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s unpublished paper, “Towards an ethnography of the disciplines” (1976), as providing the inspiration for his study of the cultures of academic disciplines (Becher and Trowler, 1989). In the preface to the second edition, Becher and Trowler clearly described the changes that had taken place regarding the thinking on the cultures of the disciplines since the book was first published in 1989. They noted the change from their original assertion that academic cultures were shaped by the body of knowledge that the discipline studied to an acknowledgement that the higher education system in 2001 was subject to “a growth in the strength and number of forces acting on academic cultures, enhancing the externalist rather than the internalist character of the influences on them” (Becher et al., 2001, p. xiii), thus, acknowledging the diminished influence of subject matter on the culture of the discipline. However, in 2001, Becher continued to describe the book as an “enquiry into the nature of the linkages between academic cultures (the tribes) and the disciplinary knowledge (their territories; Becher et al., 2001, p. xiv), believing that the linkage was still a credible one.

The subject matter of higher education was arranged into four disciplinary groupings that were then linked to one specific set of knowledge characteristics or nature of knowledge. It was thought that each individual disciplinary grouping, in addition to its own distinct nature of knowledge, also had its own individual cultural characteristics. In connecting the disciplinary grouping to a specific cultural “type,” the authors acknowledged the role of the social in shaping knowledge structures (Becher et al., 2001). This framework then provided a lens through which one’s disciplinary group could describe one’s cultural orientation. This identification of discipline-dependent cultural characteristics might provide some insight into how different disciplines might manage work-life balance demands in the workplace. There was evidence that
pure sciences and technologies produced cultures where women were less represented than men, thus spawning a national campaign to get more women in the U.S. interested in the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). If women were underrepresented in the STEM disciplines, might it be that distinct cultural differences among the disciplines influenced faculty members’ ability to successfully integrate their personal and professional lives in one discipline versus another?

One quantitative longitudinal (1985 and 1989) study, which focused primarily on student outcomes and how they are shaped by their college environments, was taken from a national sample of more than 200 four-year colleges and universities with more than 25,000 students participating (Astin, 1993). One of the measures was the influence of student–faculty interaction on career outcomes. The findings suggest that “Student–faculty interaction also has positive effects on both career choices and major field choices in all fields of science (but not in engineering, it should be stressed) and negative effects on the choice of a career or major in business” (Astin, 1993, p. 8). Student–faculty interaction is least influential for those students in the engineering and business disciplines, which suggests that disciplinary differences are important to students in terms of choosing a career or selecting a major for their graduate programs. This finding reinforces the concept of disciplinary differences, at least in the area of student–faculty interactions (Astin, 1993; Becher et al., 2001). And we don’t know how these differences influence work-life integration for faculty members.

Although the tribes and territories framework provides an interesting way to view cultural differences between and among disciplines, and potentially provides more information on the cultural context within which faculty members try to balance their work and personal lives, it does not provide a lens that would help to explain or describe the workplace interactions or
social dynamics that occurred for faculty members at Waverly Hills College. The disciplinary differences and characteristics described by Becher and Trowler provide a way to assess if, at this specific institution, disciplinary differences play a part in individual faculty member’s ability to achieve work-life integration and balance. However, in my study, there was insufficient evidence to suggest that disciplinary subcultures influenced work-life integration and experiences for faculty members in different disciplinary groups. And therefore this theoretical framework was not the primary rubric used to analyze the experiences of faculty at Waverly Hills.

**Identity Theory**

Identity theory has developed as an outgrowth of the work done by George Herbert Mead (1934) and his follower, Herbert Blumer (1969), who labeled the theory “symbolic interactionism” (Burke & Stets, 2009). Social interactionism advocates that “we can best understand social behavior by focusing on individuals’ definitions and interpretations of themselves, others and their situations” (Burke & Stets, 2009, 36). Social interactionism developed along two lines of thought, traditional and structural. The main distinction between the two schools of thought is that the traditionalists reject the idea that theory about social behavior can be created, because in their view, social structures are constantly in a state of flux and do not have a stable reference point by which they can be measured and evaluated, making it impossible to predict behavior (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 36). The structural symbolic interactionists, however, were interested in “developing and testing predictive explanations of social behavior” which is facilitated by a “stable, core self” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 37). Over the last several decades, identity theory has evolved from the structural version rather than the traditional version of symbolic interactionism and emphasizes the importance of self that
emerges within the context of a complex, patterned, and organized society (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Two early originators of identity theory include McCall and Simmons (1978), whose central concept is role identity, the way one sees or imagines himself in a particular social position (Burke & Stets, 2009). McCall and Simmons saw identities as improvised and negotiated, rather than as normative and conventional (Burke & Stets, 2009). Individuals perform a role in “an effort to maintain an idealized conception of themselves,” which is guided by their role identity (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 39). McCall and Simmons advocated for the idea that “individuals typically claim more than one role identity” and that these multiple identities are organized into a hierarchy of importance within oneself (Burke & Stets, 2009).

More recently, both Stryker and Burke iterated that society is made up of an enduring pattern of interactions and relationships that are differentiated yet organized, and which exist “within groups, organizations, communities, and institutions” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 45). Roles will vary based on the social network within which one is playing his or her role, and a person’s various roles support one’s membership in these networks (Burke & Stets, 2009). People will hold different positions within different social networks, and will have different roles and expectations associated with those roles (Burke & Stets, 2009). Stryker was interested in learning how people choose one role over another, and he attributed these choices to be “functions of the identities they claim in a situation,” and that identities are a person’s internalized role expectations, and that these role expectations become part of who the person is (Burke & Stets, 2009). Stryker’s work focuses on the hierarchical arrangement of identities and how they are tied to social structure, either by prominence—the ideal self—or by salience: the probability that an
identity will be activated across different situations as determined by one’s commitment to the role (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 46). In a very real sense, a person’s role defines the individual.

Stryker’s work focused on the salient hierarchical arrangement of identities and how salience is determined by one’s commitment to the identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). According to Stryker, one’s level of commitment to an identity is “determined along two dimensions, the number of ties and the strength of the ties to others in one’s social network based on an identity” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 47). And Stryker’s conceptualization stressed the relevance of social structure in understanding self (Burke & Stets, 2009). As Stryker pointed out, “people live their lives in social relationships, commitment takes these (social) ties into account when explaining which identities persons are likely to invoke in a situation” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 47). Stryker’s salience hierarchy of identities, which captures a person’s more enduring source of behavior in a socially constructed setting, was helpful in understanding the basis of conflict that occurs within one’s personal and work place roles.

Burke, on the other hand, focused more on the internal dynamics that operate for any one identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). The meaning that one attaches to his or her identity has implications for how one will behave, and one’s behavior confirms the meanings in one’s identity, (Burke & Stets, 2009). Burke purported that identity and behavior are lined through a common system of meaning. “For Burke, meaning is critical to understanding an identity” and “tied to each identity is a set of meanings that persons attribute to themselves when they are playing out or claim an identity” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 49). “These meanings become known to the person through interaction with others in the situation in which others respond to the individual as if the person had these set of meanings,” and so self-meanings develop from the reactions of others, and over time the individual responds to him- or herself in the same way that
others do (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 49). Self-meanings therefore become shared by the group and are significant in the performance of one’s role (Burke & Stets, 2009).

“For Burke, identity behavior is a function of the relationship between perceived meanings of the self in a situation and identity–standard meanings. When perceived self in situation meanings match identity-standard meanings, then identity verification exists, and the meanings of behavior are consistent with the meanings of the identity standard.” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 54). When self in situation meanings don’t match identity-standard meanings, “behavior is modified to restore meanings of self in situation to correspond with identity-standard meanings, thereby moving the self from a state of identity-non-verification to identity-verification” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 54). One’s behavior as seen by others provides feedback to the individual that helps to shape one’s concept of the ideal version of the role.

Burke’s more recent work has focused on expanding the “notion of a correspondence of meaning between identity and behavior and incorporates the idea of a perceptual control system, a cybernetic model, based on the work of Powers (1973)” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 50). I will examine this model and its application to this study in Chapter V of this paper.

The work of Burke focuses on the internal dynamics for any one identity and how behavior is enacted within the context of meanings relative to a specific identity. Burke’s work is therefore more concerned with the internal workings of the identity verification process, which provides the basis for a perceptual control system. And the cybernetic model he proposes demonstrates the iterative process, which is initiated by an individual in a situation where one seeks to verify his or her identity as expressed through behavior. Recently, Burke has applied this model to situations in which we find multiple identities operating within the same person. In
this case, the higher level of prominence and commitment of an identity will be verified over one of less prominence, and frequently “identities are also related more directly in terms of the hierarchy of control in which they are embedded” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 133). This suggests that external forces within the environment or situation can influence which identity will be verified.

Since work-life integration and balance are tied to and dependent upon the different roles that faculty members play in their professional and personal lives, Burke’s version of identity theory provided a lens that helped me to interpret the experiences of faculty members at Waverly Hills College in the context of individual role identity, multiple role salience, and social interactions within the group culture.

In sum, when considering the literature on the topic of work-life integration, it is difficult to jump right from symptoms to solutions without considering the cultural context that will determine policy outcomes.
Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover how tenured faculty members at Waverly Hills College, a four-year liberal arts college, experience work-life integration and balance, and how their experiences were influenced by the institution’s workplace norms, social dynamics, subcultures, and the professional roles with which they identified.

This study investigated the experiences of tenured faculty managing work-life integration and balance in their academic careers, from three separate but interactive vantage points within their workplace setting: the work group, the discipline, and the individual. Through this study, I explored three important research questions.

1. How do members of the tenured faculty at Waverly Hills College experience work-life integration and balance?

2. How are the experiences of tenured faculty in the biological sciences and the social sciences at a four-year liberal arts college similar and different when it comes to managing work and life demands?

3. In what ways is role identity influential in faculty members’ experiences integrating work and life demands and managing balance?

I designed a qualitative study at Waverly Hills College, a four-year liberal arts college in the Northeast that confers degrees at the bachelor’s and master’s levels. A total of 14 participants, seven men and seven women, engaged in at least one semi-structured, in-depth interview in which they shared their understandings and experiences related to managing the demands of
professional and personal lives. All of the participants were tenured faculty members who had been on the faculty for at least five years. Over half of those interviewed had been at this college for a minimum of eight years and had seen several recent changes in the administration. I met with all faculty members at least once and for at least one to one-and-a-half hours. Some participants were interviewed more than once. All the interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed and stored on a thumb drive in a locked cabinet. In the sections that follow, I will describe the design, site selection, participants, data collection, data analysis, personal interest, limitations, and validity of the study.

**Design**

The purpose of this study was to understand how faculty members experience work-life balance, interpret its meaning\(^5\), and view their situation. I chose a qualitative research approach to help reveal the “participants’ perspectives” and how specific events, behaviors, and meanings are shaped by the unique situations in which they occur\(^6\) (Maxwell, 2004, p. 9). Maxwell contended that the participants’ perspective is not simply an account of events and actions, it is part of the reality the researcher is trying to understand (Maxwell, 2005). From a social constructivist worldview, qualitative methods that focus on rich descriptions and naturalistic context enabled me to explore how the faculty views work-life balance in their own lives and how their understandings and opinions on the topic are created through their social interactions and the specific historical and cultural setting in which they occur, (Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

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\(^5\) Meaning is used in a broad sense and includes “cognition, affect, intentions” (Maxwell, 2005, 22).

\(^6\) The particular setting in which the participants act is also referred to as the context.
Beyond this effort to see the topic through the eyes of the faculty, research from a social constructivist worldview recognizes that the researcher’s own background shapes his or her interpretation of the phenomenon. I used fieldnotes taken during the data collection segment of the study to record my perspectives during the data analysis phase\(^7\) of the study. Throughout the data collection and analysis, I was conscious of how my own experiences influenced my perceptions of the topic without altering the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The social constructivist’s worldview provides a paradigm consistent with constructivist grounded theory, in which the researcher builds theory through thick description, constant comparison analysis, theoretical sampling, and inductive processes (Charmaz, 2006).

My choice of the constructivist grounded theory approach for my study over the objectivist grounded theory approach was based on my rejection of several aspects of the objectivists’ position, which result from its ties to the positivist tradition. In the positivist view, the researcher “subscribes to a unitary scientific method consisting of objective systematic observation and experimentation in an external world” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). “The goal of positivistic inquiry is to discover and establish general laws that explain the studied phenomena”, (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). The positivist objective approach views data as concrete and comprised of facts in a “knowable world” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131). Charmaz explains that this approach has strong connections to scientific methodology, (Charmaz, 2006) and lends itself to quantitative studies.

The grounded theory approaches of Corbin, Strauss, and Glaser treat data as reality, with its own inherent meaning, thus aligning their views with the objectivist approach (Charmaz, 2006).

\(^7\) The data analysis phase of the project will be described in greater detail later in this proposal document.
The objective theorists assume that an external reality exists and the researcher is an unbiased observer who records the facts and brings an objective view to the research (Charmaz, 2006). In this genre, the job of the theorist is to discover what already exists (Charmaz, 2006). Objectivist advocates place a strong emphasis on following a strict adherence to grounded theory steps in the research process (Charmaz, 2006). In line with this approach, the role of the researcher is more of a “conduit for the research process rather than a creator of it” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 132).

For these reasons, these theorists are more closely aligned with a quantitative point of view. In my view, the pre-existence of a factual reality denies the temporal social interactions and cultural mores that influence and are part of the fabric of one’s experiences. Further, to follow a step-by-step, tightly controlled method of inquiry conflicts with the inductive and emergent nature of grounded theory. For these reasons, I have chosen not to follow the objectivist leanings of Glaser, Corbin, and Strauss.

The choice of constructivist grounded theory approach, the alternative point of view, is firmly rooted in the belief that both “data and analysis are social constructions that reflect what their production entails” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131). Constructivist grounded theory maintains that theory is developed from existing grounded theories or directly from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). In this respect, I have adopted Charmaz’s point of view with, her affirmation that constructivist grounded theory goes further “than looking at how individuals view their circumstances;” it “theorizes the interpretive work that the research participants do but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130).
This approach also looks to learn how and to what extent the studied experience is embedded in a larger network or system that may be covertly at work (Charmaz, 2006). Since my personal interest was in learning how social interactions and cultural norms influence faculty members’ ability to manage their work and life demands, a social constructivist grounded theory perspective aligns well with the purpose and underlying objectives of my study. It lends itself to research aimed at exploring the connections between how faculty understand work-life balance based on social interactions (processes) and the cultural context of a specific setting.

In researching the issue of work-life balance, I understand the importance of self-awareness when it comes to my opinions on the topic. Charmaz’s work, entitled *Constructing Grounded Theory*, suggests that “constructivists attempt to become aware of their own presuppositions and to grapple with how they affect the research” (2006, p. 131). I was mindful of the challenge to know my own bias, while recognizing the researcher’s role as interpreter, and the importance of the views of the participants, as well as my own, to the study (Charmaz, 2006, p. 126).

Through the use of interviews with faculty members, I looked to the social interactions and settings in which the participants work to provide the conceptual links between facts and values that influence the emerging theory or interpretation (Charmaz, 2006).

There are two aspects of constructivist grounded theory that benefited my work. First, this genre of methods, as advocated by Charmaz, portrays the guidelines as flexible and not prescriptive, and allows the researcher “to let your imagination flow” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 15). Since many of the prior studies of faculty work-life balance have focused within tightly defined parameters of symptoms and solutions, my hope is to take the problem of balance for faculty in
higher education into the arena of context and culture, a less studied area. Second, the methodology of constructivist grounded theory was well suited to this discourse, since its methods allow interpretations to emerge and frees the researcher to look beyond their own “presuppositions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131).

**Research Site**

Founded in the 1800s, Waverly Hills College, a private, four-year college is located in the Northeast U.S., with a small student population. Majority (94%) of the student body are full-time students, all of whom are female, with the remaining 6% of the student population comprised of male and female students enrolled in continuing education or graduate-level programs. The faculty at Waverly Hills College consists of 84 full-time professors, about half of whom are men. There is limited use of adjunct and part-time faculty at Waverly.

The school consistently appears on the *U.S. News* survey of best liberal arts women’s colleges and *Forbes*’ Ten Best List of all-women’s colleges, and in line with the college’s mission statement, which states that it provides an education for the “next generation of women leaders,” it provides educational preparation in 50 majors for careers including nursing, pre-law, pre-med, pre-dentistry, business administration, and forensic sciences.

Within Waverly there are 11 departments, the largest of which is Chemical and Physical Sciences Department, with 11 full-time faculty members, followed by the Biological Sciences Department with a faculty head count of 10. The smallest department, History, Law, and Politics consists of two full-time faculty members. The small size of the departments at Waverly, coupled with the school’s high expectations for faculty involvement in student life and the college

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8 Pseudonym.
9 Both men and women graduate students.
community, produces an environment where demands for additional time are spread among a small number of faculty members, increasing the amount of time each person is expected to give.

As previously mentioned, the absence of formal work-life policies at Waverly afforded an opportunity to discover how faculty members manage work-life balance when no policies exist. Since the average number of work-life balance policies that are offered at all types of institutions\textsuperscript{10} is 1.9 policies per institution, according to a 2007 University of Michigan survey funded by the Sloan Foundation, over two-thirds of the work-life balance situations encountered by faculty have no policies in place designed to mitigate their impact. This means that on average; most work-life issues faced by faculty are managed without the benefit of policies that support balance. When this gap in existing policies across the spectrum of institutional types is layered with a well-documented faculty resistance to utilizing polices that are in place, the result (non-use) is as if no policy existed at all (O’Meara, Terosky & Neumann, 2008). I therefore viewed a college like Waverly Hills, where no policies are in place, as a relevant environment in which to discover how faculty members manage work and life demands. Waverly Hills provided a fertile research site for exploring how cultural context influences the ways in which work-life balance is enacted at this liberal arts college.

The University of Michigan’s 2007 survey, which gathered data from 189 institutions, reported that the liberal arts respondent group had an average of 1.9 policies out of 11 queried on the survey (August, Miller, Hollenshead, Bell, Moorman & Waltman, 2007). This is less than 20% of the possible family-friendly policies that could be implemented by that group, indicating that there is room for improvement when it comes to helping liberal arts college faculty to

\textsuperscript{10} “Types of institutions” refers to the Carnegie classifications of higher educational institutions including doctoral-extensive and baccalaureate-liberal arts.
manage work and family demands. The findings from this study may help other liberal arts institutions to gain a comparative perspective on their own work-life environment. Since there are no work-life balance studies that I am aware of that have looked specifically at small liberal arts colleges’ academic departments and role identities, this study may have applicability to other small liberal arts colleges.

Further, Waverly Hills offered two additional benefits as a research site: it is a women’s college and has a strong liberal arts tradition. First, with a research focus on work-life balance, my topic is a gendered issue, with strong ties to the existing literature of the emergence of women in the workplace. The school’s current mission to prepare women for professional careers would seem to favor support for employee work-life balance consistent with the college’s purpose. However, after an extensive search of the school’s website, I found that Waverly has no formal policies in place, outside of those required legally, that address work-life balance for employees. This will allow my research to see how faculty members manage, when no policies are available. Given the widespread behavior of bias avoidance, which renders the faculty as if there were no policies, conducting my research in the absence of policies should prove a realistic environment in which to do this study.

Second, Waverly Hills College’s liberal education format provides the diversity of disciplines that lend themselves to my study’s design. One of the understudied areas in the higher education literature is the role that environment, such as discipline, plays in faculty work-life balance. Consistent with my use of constructivist grounded theory methods, my study sought to find the links between individual department culture at Waverly and faculty experiences managing work and family demands.
In the words of Austin (1990), the strong cultural influence of one’s academic discipline not only shapes each “faculty member’s identity” but also results in disciplinary distinctions that differentiate members of one discipline from another (p. 64). Becher takes the issue of disciplinary differences further by proposing that certain groups of disciplines share common traits, have a shared culture, and differ from other groups in their values, beliefs, and behaviors (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Following Becher’s classification scheme, I designed my research to study two distinct groups within the college, each with its own “corresponding culture” (Becher, 1994, p. 154).

**Study Participants**

According to Becher’s classification system, disciplines are grouped into four categories: the hard-pure disciplines, the soft-pure disciplines, the hard-applied disciplines, and the soft-applied disciplines. All the disciplines within a specific group share the same cultural characteristics unique to that group. Under this rubric, the disciplines in the hard-pure group share common traits that distinctly differ from the traits of the disciplines in the soft-pure group. The disciplines in the hard-pure group include the disciplines of the sciences and those in the soft-pure group include the social sciences (Austin, 1990; Becher, 1994). Following this classification scheme, I decided to look at how faculty members in the biological sciences and those in the social sciences experience and interpret work-life balance, since my review of literature had led me to believe that the members of the biology department would likely manage work and life demands differently from those in the social sciences. As Burton R. Clark (1989) pointed out, “great differences in the academic life often appear between the letters and the science departments” (p. 5), and I was interested to see how these differences temper work-life
balance. To see the composition of the sciences (hard-pure) group and the social sciences (soft-pure) group, please refer to Becher and Trowler.

I invited male and female faculty at Waverly Hills College to participate in sharing their experiences managing work and life demands in their workplace. I employed purposeful sampling that selects individuals for the study because “they can purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon of the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). With purpose in mind, I sought faculty participants from the disciplines within the biological sciences and from within the social sciences who were the target of my study. I invited faculty members of different ages to interview, since balancing work and life responsibilities is not the exclusive territory of a specific age or career stage group. This strategy is consistent with the demographics of work-life balance, which traverses the age continuum from early career to late career faculty and spans the family status categories from single to married, with and without children. Meeting life demands takes many forms and may include caring for children, an elderly parent, adult sibling, or spouse with an illness. I solicited faculty members who were varied in their faculty rank, but all held tenured status. Any members of the faculty who are employed and meeting the increased demands for teaching, scholarship and service, are juggling multiple demands in their lives. The sample I targeted included faculty participants who meet the criteria of diverse ages and career stages and are employed in the sciences or the social sciences at Waverly Hills College.

Fourteen faculty members from the hard-pure group (biology) and the soft-pure group (social sciences) agreed to participate in the study. Following Becher’s academic cultural classification system, faculty from the biological sciences discipline (hard-pure group) were
invited, as well as faculty from the psychology, economics, communications, sociology, and history disciplines (soft-pure; Austin, 1990).

I used a spreadsheet compiled by the provost’s office and the college’s website to identify potential candidates from the appropriate disciplines. My selection of candidates was purposeful in that all faculty members in my sample were tenured faculty\textsuperscript{11} either in the biological or the social sciences. As I mentioned earlier in regard to age and career stage, faculty of different statuses and ranks are all managing work and personal demands. I anticipated that differences and similarities might be delineated by one’s membership in a particular “subculture” (academic discipline), for example one’s affiliation with the biological or the social sciences, as suggested by Kuh and Whitt (1988). It was interesting to see what other factors influenced similarities and differences.

After the required Institutional Review Board approvals were obtained, I called each of the potential participants. In this phone conversation, I explained the purpose of the study, what role they would play, and what the time commitment and engagement expectations would be. I also discussed the voluntary nature of their participation and the commitment to confidentiality of their identity and that of the school’s. Based on the interest level of the candidates, I followed up on the phone call with an e-mail that included an invitation to be part of the study, information on the study, and all the appropriate human subject information as required by the Institutional Review Board.

Fourteen faculty members agreed to participate, and I then began to schedule interviews. Further, I continued to email and interview faculty members from the biology department (hard-

\textsuperscript{11} All fourteen faculty members interviewed were tenured. Of the 84 full time faculty at the college, 38 are tenured. Seventeen are on the tenure track.
pure) and the social sciences (soft-pure), noting how the data from the two groups was alike and different. The categories of collected data continued to be constantly compared. I continued theoretical sampling\(^{12}\) until additional data no longer added to the category’s theoretical development and saturation occurred (Charmaz, 2006).

**Data Collection**

In order to learn how faculty in biology and the social sciences at Waverly Hills College experience work-life balance and how their opinions and attitudes are influenced by the specific cultures of their academic groups\(^{13}\), I collected data through the use of in-depth interviews and fieldnotes\(^{14}\) as described by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). Fieldnotes can be an important supplement to an interview. Bogdan and Biklen related that “In conducting taped interviews, for example, the meaning and context of the interview can be captured more completely if, as a supplement to each interview, the researcher writes out fieldnotes” (2007, p. 119). The authors pointed out that the “tape recorder,” in my case the digital recorder, “misses the sights, smells, impressions, and extra remarks said before and after the interview” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 119). I was convinced that this supplemental data enhanced my own understandings and

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\(^{12}\) Theoretical sampling means seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging interpretation, and so doing to refine your categories. This is done via a process that Charmaz calls constant comparison. Theoretical sampling aims to examine the categories and to find the connections between and among them, which then provides a basis for interpreting the connections. (Charmaz, 2006)

\(^{13}\) Described by Becher (1987) and referred to previously in this paper.

\(^{14}\) Fieldnotes are the “written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, 118-119).
interpretations while providing a “personal log” that provided a diary of the development of the project.

For this reason, I took fieldnotes after interviews and tried to capture a portrait of the people interviewed, their appearance, dress, mannerisms, and style of talking and acting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I also included a good description of the physical setting in which the interview took place. Any dialogue that had not been captured by the digital recorder was captured in my fieldnotes, as well as a description of my “own behavior, assumptions,” and impressions that could “affect the data that are gathered and analyzed” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 122). My goal in keeping a careful and detailed record of the physical aspects of the people I interviewed and the setting in which it took place was to create rich data that is “well-endowed with good description and dialogue relevant to what occurs at the setting” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 122). I believe that this resulted in a clearer understanding of the results of my interviews with faculty and enhanced my ability to code and categorize the data more effectively.

At the heart of my data collection plan was interviewing, the “dominant strategy for data collection” that I chose for my study, (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 103). I interviewed 14 faculty members from the biological sciences and social sciences faculty at Waverly Hills College. As previously noted, I interviewed seven participants from disciplines within the biology department and seven from disciplines within the social sciences. Becher and Trowler describe the very distinct characteristics of personality and environment that differ from one discipline to another and each discipline is purported to have very distinct cultural characteristics from the other (2001). Becher provides a summary of the disciplinary groupings with a description of the nature of knowledge and the nature of the disciplinary culture associated with each disciplinary grouping (Becher, 1987). In line with Becher’s rubric, I engaged faculty from two separate
groupings, biology (hard-pure) and the social sciences and humanities (soft-pure), as a means of determining how differences in one’s disciplinary affiliation affect faculty work-life balance experiences.

I interviewed faculty in their offices at the college or at a campus location convenient for them. The initial interviews took longer than I originally anticipated; each interview took from one hour to one-and-a-half hours to complete. I also conducted four follow up interviews that lasted whatever time was necessary to clarify categories. I tried to be respectful of the faculty members’ time. However, if there was a compelling reason to extend the interview beyond an hour, I let the individual and the situation guide my decision.

Each interview was recorded digitally and transcribed as soon after the interview as possible. I used pseudonyms for all subject names, names of others, and for the school’s identity in the transcriptions. All data was stored in Word documents, which were kept on a password protected flash drive at my home office in a locked cabinet, according to the rules associated with the Institutional Review Board of both institutions.

On the issue of interview questions, I used an interview protocol that included a set of questions to be used during the initial interviews. A copy of this protocol can be found in the Appendix B at the end of this paper. The questions are designed to be open-ended, allowing the subject to take the interview in the direction that is of most concern to them. This allowed me to gain an understanding of how the interviewee perceived the topic and interpreted its meaning.

The questions provided me with a guide, a way to stimulate conversation, but I did not follow them strictly or rigidly. I probed when necessary to gain better insight into the person’s interpretation of the topic. My goal was to be flexible, to listen attentively, and to let the
interview go where it would, based on the individual experiences of the participants. Bogdan and Biklen suggest that at the beginning of the project, the interviews might be more unstructured and “free flowing” in order to get a “range of perspectives” on the topic, then later the researcher may want to use a more structured approach in order “to focus on particular topics that have emerged during the preliminary interviews” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 104). I predominantly used free flowing interviews and only used more semi-structured interviews to clarify my understanding of the participant responses. This approach aligned well with the interview process and proved effective in terms of the quality of the data that was collected.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data began while data collection was still in progress. I began the initial coding of the data from the interview transcripts and fieldnotes that I collected. During this phase of analysis, I remained open to exploring whatever interpretative possibilities that I could see in the data (Charmaz, 2006). As I tried to identify codes within the collected data, I was aware of in vivo codes, as described by Charmaz, which are the parlance of social groups and organizational settings (2006). I was mindful that these terms may carry some implicit or condensed meanings and convey a person’s opinion or perspective on a particular event or experience. In the initial phase of coding, these in vivo codes proved useful and helped me to anchor my analysis in the participants’ worlds (Charmaz, 2006).

After my initial coding was completed, I engaged in what Charmaz called focused coding. In this phase I looked to the more significant and frequent codes used in the prior phase to sort through the data. When questions arose as to interpretations on a few occasions, I returned

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15 Studies that are in vivo (Latin for "within the living;" often not italicized in English) are those done with living organisms. Charmaz’s reference to “in vivo codes” are those used by humans, which may carry implicit meanings to the individuals who are members of the group under study.
to interviewees to explore topics that needed clarification from my initial interviews with them. I employed focused coding in an effort to make decisions about which initial categories should be used in this phase of the coding, utilizing constant comparison of the topics found in the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Subsequently, I engaged in what Charmaz described as *theoretical coding*, since it seemed to push the coding further in a conceptual direction by developing categories and sub-categories and by identifying the links (connections) that joined them (Charmaz, 2006, p. 61). One important point to emphasize here, pertaining to my study, is that what was identified was not a systematic statement of principles in the sense of a formal theory, but rather an *analytical interpretation* of the connections between categories of the data.

The codes as discerned during *theoretical coding*, point to possible relationships between and among categories identified during the *focused coding* stage of the data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). I used *theoretical coding* to help me tie the pieces of the narrative together and to “weave the fractured story back together” (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). In this way, they helped me to conceptualize my findings and took my analysis in a relational direction (Charmaz, 2006). During this phase, the relationships between data categories emerged. Some commonly used conceptual coding families include many developed by Glaser: self-concepts, social interactions, socialization, social worlds, social status, means-goals, causes, contingencies, identity-self, paired-opposites, and others (Charmaz, 2006).

Constructivist grounded theory has strong ties to the interpretive tradition. My study used this approach, which “places a high priority on both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130). According to this
approach, both researchers and research participants interpret meanings and actions, and assume that both data and analyses are social constructions, (Charmaz, 2006). I strived to be reflexive about my own preconceived ideas from the start of the data collection and analysis. My awareness that as a researcher “we are part of our constructed theory and that this theory reflects the vantage point inherent in our varied experiences” was an ever-present thought as I worked on this study, (Charmaz, 2006, p. 149).

As the reader will see in the next several chapters of this paper, the grounded theory described by Charmaz in her 2006 book entitled, Constructing Grounded Theory, provides a method for analyzing data that “encourages us (the researcher) to construct an interpretive rendering of the worlds we study rather than an external reporting of events and statements” (p. 184). The method, as detailed by Charmaz, was to deconstruct the interview data into categories or codes, analyze the codes through comparison and the use of field notes, and then to search for the connections and relationships between and among those ideas. What results is not a presentation of facts alone, (although I do present the facts), but an interpretation by the author of the studied events as described by the interview participants, and the author’s interpretation of the topic.

Some of what follows in Chapters IV and V will be a narrative of accounts shared by study participants at Waverly Hills College, which describe their experiences integrating work and personal life. These descriptions in most instances are very straightforward in reporting events and provide rich information about culture and social interactions. Chapter V delves more deeply into the connection between Identity Theory and self-perceptions as a theoretical foundation for work-life integration and balance.
In Chapter VI, I describe the findings and conclusions that resulted from my interviews with Waverly Hills’ faculty members. The findings and conclusions discussed are the result of faculty member’s descriptions of the work environment and of my own analysis and interpretation of the data (what Charmaz refers to as theoretical coding). Some of these interpretations dig deeper into the meanings and theory associated with integrating work and life demands. For example, in Chapter VI, the relationship between the seeming absence of communication about work-life balance and the faculty’s feeling of being “on their own” when it comes to managing work and life demands is a relevant example.

Lastly, this paper, in particular Chapter VI, does not purport to present a highly developed abstract theory of work-life integration and balance. As Charmaz cautions, “developing a substantive theory may include analyzing and conceptualizing the results of multiple studies to construct a formal theory” (2006, p. 180). This study is limited to one location and uses descriptions and explanations of data related to the faculty experiences at this one liberal arts college. The analysis seeks “to read between the lines” of the interview transcripts as reported by the faculty and to provide an analytical interpretation of their experiences.

Limitations

Qualitative researchers are often faced with limitations that are inherent in the nature of work they do. I was faced with the often-cited issue of external generalization, which “refers to its generalizability beyond the setting or group” studied (Maxwell, 2005, p. 115). While a small study in a single setting with a limited number of participants, like the one I undertook, may not lend itself to external generalization, it does allow for highly effective internal generalization.
In internal generalization, the generalizability is pertinent to the specific situation in which it occurs.

A second potential limitation to this study is the passion and point of view that the researcher has for the topic under study. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, the participant and the researcher have the ability to interpret the events, which “brings the grounded theorist into the research process” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 180). Knowing that my interpretation is important to the analysis and ultimate findings that resulted from the study, I exercised reflexivity and tried to be cognizant of my own persuasion. At the same time, I recognized the participants’ view of the situation and how they influenced my view of the topic (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). Charmaz (2006) related that “constructivist grounded theorists assume that both the data and the analyses are social constructions” that are “contextually situated in time, place, culture, and situation” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131). Charmaz explained that for constructivist researchers, “our theoretical analyses are interpretive renderings of reality, not objective reporting of it” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 510). She advised researchers to practice “reflexivity about their own interpretations as well as those of their research participants” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131). Open acknowledgement of the researcher’s preconceptions will help the researcher to keep the interpretation honest, while understanding the appropriate role of the researcher from a constructivist view point should serve to mitigate any perceived limitations to the research.

Social constructivists hold that people’s views and interpretations of their immediate situation (time and place) determines what they perceive as real, therefore determining how they construct their views and actions (Charmaz, 2006). Using this theoretical perspective time becomes an important component in interpretation. As a result, a possible limitation for this study may be that what holds true while one collects data and analyzes it may change in the near
future, rendering the results a retrospective. I suggest that this possibility exists in most research, including quantitative studies. Therefore, as the researcher in this qualitative study, I needed to be diligent in my efforts to ensure the timeliness of the work product and the relevance of the work to current conditions.

Validity

Validity is an important aspect of qualitative research, which impacts the credibility of one’s study. Maxwell described five categories of validity16 (derived from the understandings gained as a result of the research) that are especially pertinent to a qualitative study (2002). Three of the five types of validity that Maxwell asserted are most important to the qualitative study are: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and theoretical validity (Maxwell, 2002, p. 52). For this reason, the other two categories will not be discussed in this discourse on validity.17 Maxwell cautioned that the validity types he presents cannot be used “directly or mechanically” to eliminate specific threats to validity (2002, pp. 56-57).

Creswell asserted that validity in qualitative research is related to the “trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility” of the findings from “the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (2009, p. 191). Creswell suggested that validity strategies be incorporated into the design of the study so that threats to accuracy are avoided (2009).

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17 Of the other two types, generalizability has been mentioned in previously in this proposal and evaluative validity I have chosen not to deal with here; although it is important, it is less so than the first three mentioned.
Maxwell’s first category of descriptive validity is described as the primary aspect of validity, since description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built (Maxwell, 2002). It includes reporting on physical and behavioral events, what was seen, heard, touched, smelled, etc. (Maxwell, 2002). Second, interpretive validity refers to the meanings that the people engaged in the physical and behavioral events assign to them. This includes the participants’ perspectives or the attempt to understand the studied phenomena based on the participants’ view of things. This is referred to as the emic perspective, and it is highly interpretive because it is not based on reporting of concrete facts but on ideation (Maxwell, 2002). Interpretive validity is produced by participants who assign meaning to an event. Lastly, theoretical validity goes beyond concrete descriptions and interpretations of events and “explicitly addresses the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to, or develops during, the study” (Maxwell, 2002, p. 50). Theoretical validity refers to the account’s accuracy as “a theory of some phenomena” (Maxwell, 2002, p. 51).

I employed several strategies to ensure the validity of the study’s findings. First, I was careful to verify that each transcription of an interview accurately reflected what had been communicated by the interviewees (Creswell, 2009). Descriptive validity was verified by listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts of each interview. Second, I employed fieldnotes as a tool for providing rich descriptions of the interview setting and of the participants, which added to the authenticity of the findings, ensuring descriptive validity. Third, my use of interviewee verification during the interview phase of the project allowed for the verification of my interpretation of what participants actually said during the interview process. It was designed to verify the interpretations of interviewee’s responses. Fourth, the researcher’s bias was clearly articulated in the section entitled Researcher’s Role.
Ethical Considerations

The treatment of human subjects and safeguarding of data are important concerns to the researcher and her or his research project. I submitted a protocol for the protection of human subjects to the Seton Hall Institutional Review Board in order to ensure that all rules for the treatment of human subjects and confidentially have been provided for in my research plan. The IRB granted approval for my research to move forward. I have ensured that all components of the plan related to the proper treatment of human subjects, their confidentiality, and proper safeguarding of data were implemented.
Chapter IV: WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION AND BALANCE:
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS

(Obstacles, Influences, and Strategies)

“I taught a class one year, I got in there and set up and taught the whole class and at the end, the students had a few questions. I said I know I have office hours from 10-12, but I’m not going to be able to do them today, so e-mail me your questions. And I scooped [up] my sleeping child who had been sleeping behind the podium. I brought in a little mattress. He had been sleeping there. I scooped him up and the students, all their jaws dropped, “we didn’t even know he was back there.” He was sick, what else do you do? I brought him a little pillow. He sat back there, he slept, and it was okay, it worked.” - Nina, Biology

“We either put pressure on ourselves [husband and wife, both academics] that we feel like we have to get a certain amount of work done. If we’re not getting it done, it’s hard for us to focus at home, but if we bring it home and try to work on it and then try to interact with our daughter, nobody is pleased, so it’s just easier to stay away and work out that one person goes and does it and then we switch places, and the other person goes in and does their work and the other person is at home. So, occasionally, we can do things. Then sometimes we say, you know what, we have to stop and the three of us have to do something together. So, that’s the way we try to create a balance. I also, not that it’s a big sacrifice, because I’m not a big techno person, but I’ve actively not gotten a phone that I can check my e-mail on because I felt like at home, I was checking my e-mail enough that my daughter would come to say something to me and I was always, “Wait a minute, wait a minute, I’ve got to check this!” And sometimes I still do that, but I’ve really tried to stop doing that, so I know if I have a phone and I’m out with her places, I will inevitably be checking that [e-mail] and I just said, no, [I am not going to do that] not right now.” - Victoria, Biology

“Unless you’re in a major research institution or you’re at an elite school where the faculty are expected to have very strong research programs, you have your job
demands of teaching and service, you have your family life and your personal life, and what is not necessarily recognized is that there is a third part of our lives which is that we have this desire to do scholarship. This is part of the reason that we are in college teaching is that we want to be able to spend time on those topics that really interest us and working on them and I wouldn’t call that necessarily a required part of the job. I wouldn’t call that life in terms of work-life balance. It’s a third part of life that I think gets squeezed out.” - James, Biology

“This year, I would say I still make sure that one weekend day is mostly available. This is actually in part, you know, my wife and I are now members of a search and rescue team and so we’ll do training and a lot of the training is on weekends, so I’ll know that 6 or 7 hours, usually on Sunday, that’s what we’re going to do. I might have to do a little stuff at night, but those things get scheduled and they happen. I would say, I’m a musician, and I haven’t picked up an instrument in two months. I play piano and electric bass.” James, Biology

“I would say that my exercise routine is cut back. Fortunately, I walk the dogs two miles a day, so I get some exercise in, but definitely not what I’ve been doing in the past. I played basketball three days a week here, but you know classes have integrated, especially some scheduling things, I haven’t been doing the strength training the way that I would and probably should because I have a reconstructed ACL and torn shoulder, so I should be doing that. We have the equipment at home, but the time is (scarce).” Matt, Biology

“I mean, you know, as I have told some people in the past, the thing about a job is that the end of the day, they’re not allowed to kill you. They can fire you, but they’re not allowed to kill you and you have to be willing to sort of put [things] in perspective that they have certain rights to your time, but they don’t have the rights to all of your time.” - Matt, Biology

“I think one [key to helping people manage their professional lives] is that we have to know what is it that we really want to do and are we doing things for approval, comparison of others? Because this is what society often does, and that will [result in] a sense of dependence and a dependent kind of self-esteem, you know. I’m good enough if I’m doing all these things and could we be more independent and know that what we’re doing is okay with us? And that we’re the ones who are setting our
own goals and we know that we’re working hard enough and be okay with that? I think this [need for approval] is a society thing, and I think that our society rewards, you know, those kinds of things and there is a lot of social comparison. I think that puts a lot of pressure on people to be in the rat race, work a lot harder, and be more “perfectionistic.” It also creates a lot more anxiety and depression and sadness, so self-esteem is tied into this [social expectations] very much.”  - Jennifer, Social sciences

Nina, Victoria, James, Matt, and Jennifer are all academics who hold PhD degrees and are on the faculty at Waverly Hills College. In my conversations with each of these faculty members, plus the others who generously gave me their time and shared their views of faculty life at Waverly Hills, I was struck by the dedication these individuals have to their profession, their students, and their work. These quotes speak to the challenge of integrating and balancing their personal and professional lives, and at the same time raise issues about organizational culture, social dynamics, obstacles to balance, influences, and strategies for managing work and life demands.

The five people quoted here are tenured faculty members who teach in the biological sciences or the social sciences at Waverly Hills College. Two of them have children, two of them are married without children, and one is single with no children. Although there is a tendency for work-life researchers to focus on families in the traditional sense of parents and children, integrating work and life for people without children and single people presents challenges in different areas of their lives as well. What becomes apparent in the quotes cited here is a window to the obstacles, the sacrifices, the dedication, the social influences, the personal strategies, and what may be viewed as resourcefulness or desperation, with which these faculty members approach the pursuit of integrating their personal and professional lives.
Culture Traditions and Social Dynamics

The majority of the tenured faculty who participated in this study and were interviewed for this project described the culture of Waverly Hills as one that is “rapidly changing.” They described the changes on campus as largely the result of a dynamic new president taking the leadership position at the school. The new president, a woman with children, is strategically leading the school to address the challenges faced by many small private colleges in the U.S. The demands that are being placed on this liberal arts college, as described by the faculty with whom I spoke, are the result of greater competition for enrollment in a marketplace that demands academic excellence and innovative academic programs that will lead students to a real-world career. In addition, this competitive market for students’ demands that the programs the college offers must be responsive to changing tastes for the next “hot program” that students want and where they will presumably find jobs when they graduate. The school offers the following centerpiece of programs: The Women’s Leadership Institute, Civic Engagement, Global Connectivity, and Living and Learning Communities focused on Social Justice, Environmental Stewardship, and Entrepreneurship. According to the faculty I interviewed, the changing academic landscape and consumer demand require these changes to ensure that the college stays “relevant in a competitive marketplace.”

The school, which was founded in the decade following the Civil War as a women’s college, is highly supportive of gender equality and has a long history of dedication to the education of women. There is a strong emphasis on high expectations for faculty in regard to teaching, service, and scholarship. Of the three, teaching and counseling students are stressed more strongly than scholarship (faculty research and publication). However, there is a renewed emphasis being placed on scholarship as a competitive necessity. The faculty is small, relatively
speaking, and therefore the service required by the college is spread out over a limited number of faculty members. In an environment where recruiting and enrollment are critical to the institution’s financial survival, faculty participation in recruiting events and open houses, alumnae teas and luncheons, have become an essential part of the faculty’s job. These service responsibilities, some faculty say, coupled with increased student expectations for faculty contact, leave little time for research and publishing.

Obstacles to Balancing Work and Life Demands

In my interviews with faculty members, more than half (eight) of the people with whom I spoke acknowledged that children add a level of complexity to achieving balance, although they acknowledged that people who had no children also faced obstacles integrating and balancing professional and personal lives. For the purposes of this discussion, I will share the experiences of people with children, and those who have no children.

Faculty with Children

One parent in the sciences reflecting on the days when her child was younger she said, “I mean, those days of her being sick and trying to juggle this job were just awful, awful. I would say anyone in the department and some of them are still juggling, because they have younger children, but it is overwhelming, and I only have one. I mean, that was so intense and so guilt-ridden. So all I’m trying to say is that thank goodness right now my parents are not ill, my husband is healthy, and my daughter is happy and healthy at the moment. I know what it was like [when things were not as balanced as they are now].”

Another faculty member in the science department shared her experiences working in a supportive, yet, challenging environment, “I think probably, we have a more supportive
environment [referring to her department] than some others. Many of us have younger kids, and I may have the youngest right now. I think after I had twins, everybody else was scared to have any more [children]. You know, you were thinking about it. Not everyone in the department has kids, but almost everybody does, so there’s a real recognition of what goes on with that.”

That same faculty member continued,

One thing is that many of our daycare [centers] required us to give a number in case of an emergency. It is my colleague who is my [emergency contact] number because I know that we would all do things for each other. She would be sure to remind me that my daughter threw up in her office, you know, so we have helped with each other’s kids. I’m not good at asking for help. I’ve learned to have to with twins, but I have colleagues who are even less good at asking for help. But some of us are learning how to volunteer or at least offer in some way so I would say that we [our department members] are more than just an academic department.

This faculty member went on to say that the same person who was her emergency contact for the daycare also had children. She said that she had taken care of her emergency contact’s child in her office when the child was sick and had to accompany her mother to campus. While the mother taught the class, this woman took care of her colleague’s child. So the two colleagues had a reciprocal agreement to help each other.

Feelings of guilt.

Another parent in the social sciences talked about the feelings of guilt associated with juggling her personal and professional life. Speaking about juggling her personal and professional life, she shared her experiences in this way.
Well, one is you have to live with a certain degree of guilt. There’s just no way around that. My kids’ school called me on Monday or Tuesday to say that my youngest was having an asthma attack. They had given her the rescue inhaler but it wasn’t working and they were calling again. I had one more class to get through, and I heard myself saying, “Is she breathing well enough that she can get through the next hour and a half?” And then I thought, you know what, I shouldn’t really have to ask that question, once I said it. But they said, no, she’ll be fine. So I went and taught my last class and then I went [to pick her up]. That was really tough. So you just have to live with it. But that’s guilt.

**Organizational Culture: Changing Landscape of Higher Education**

In addition to the personal demands, faculty must contend with the external and internal forces that are driving higher education, especially at schools with modest endowments. One single faculty member from the social sciences described the issue this way.

Changes in higher education have increased demands on faculty: I would say over the last decade or even before that, we have had a shift, and whether we want to or don’t want to, it’s going in a particular direction. Higher education is changing. We are getting different students coming to institutions, you know we have more and more and we’re reaching out broader and broader, and I think the expectation of how to meet the needs of a diverse population [in terms of academic preparedness] is one thing that has placed more demands on the faculty and the institution as a whole. And the other thing is whether you’re going into a business model or not, it is a business.

Private colleges with modest endowments are forced to rely more heavily on tuition for funding their operations, and tuition is directly tied to enrollment numbers.
The marketing for tuition-paying students becomes a strategic goal of the college, and in an attempt to meet market demand, responsibilities are broadened amongst a shrinking number of faculty. A woman professor in the social sciences who has seen the changes taking place puts it this way.

You know, the only way you’re going to continue to thrive is if you can balance the budget and do the things you need to do and so many small institutions are tuition-driven. So, yeah, what do you need to do so that you’re going to get a share of the population that’s going to be interested in [what you are offering], so one of the things is certainly online learning. You know, whether you want to do some of these things or not, how are you going to make yourself available to a larger population and that means more evening classes. So we have a school with adult and graduate education as well as traditional. So the demands now are also teaching during the day and teaching at night and teaching on the weekends. You know, teaching things in an eight-week format, a 15-week format, two weekends, teaching things traditionally in class, teaching hybrid, teaching online, we have to do everything, the same person. So, learning how to be able to do all those things, it takes work to produce online education and to stay in touch with them [the students] actively and keep them engaged in online learning. You still have the traditional in-class at the same time and you still have all the service that you need to produce for the college and all the extra little things such as maybe admissions and, you know, just the athletic events and the things that are important to everybody. We have to be a team.

The same professor continued,

We can’t just say Admissions this is your job. You know, the perspective students want to meet the faculty. So you have all that and you have, you know an increase in
scholarship, because we want to be known as being a rigorous institution. And how are you going to do that but advertise your faculty. So all of these things have become very important and with all that already, [it] will just take your breath away. That is exactly where it has gone. Then take away 10 people who have supported you in doing all that and take away some budget that has supported you and being able to do that. So you’re doing a lot with less. You have an administrative assistant that no longer is full-time, is maybe 20 hours a week, which means you’re doing all the paperwork and a lot of things yourself.

Changes in the Student Population

In addition, the student population is “more diverse,” in the sense that some are less prepared and therefore will require greater involvement from the faculty. The same faculty member in the humanities went on, “You know, we have more students now that have more demands for our time and it’s been known that we are going to have more and more of these students entering higher education, so it means sometimes we are personal tutors. Sometimes we are personal coaches, encouraging, meeting the special needs that students might have, in a variety of ways.”

In addition, several (six) faculty members in both biology and the social sciences described the current generation of students as “needy” and “less self-reliant” than previous generations of students. Several faculty members described them as “wanting all the answers given to them” and noted that they seem less equipped or willing to problem solve on their own.
Influences That Impede Work-Life Balance

Shifts in Student Culture

A member of the biological sciences department described her experiences with students this way. “So, electronics has made the communication, it’s open communication in a lot of ways, for better or for worse. I also find that on some level, it’s better for students to not be able to communicate because then they figure out the answer on their own.” Speaking about a specific student who was working on a paper for this faculty member’s class, the professor said,

I understand looking at that how that might have confused you, but I feel like if you hadn’t been able to e-mail me right away, you might have sat down and thought about what it was and realized (the answer to your question). Since communication is easy, they (the students) tend to run and ask you simple questions instead of reasoning for themselves. It takes them away from independent thinking. They’re not critical, independent thinkers because they rely on us too heavily. So it’s interesting. . . I can be there whenever you need, but could you try to figure it out on your own first?

Many people interviewed (12) for this project noted that technology has only increased the timeframe that students expect to be in touch with faculty. One associate professor in the sciences gave an example of students expecting emails, sent at 10:30 in the evening, to be answered immediately that night. Therefore, these students require more time and attention than students did, say, 10 years ago. Many of those interviewed noted that technology, such as e-mail and text messaging, has made the faculty available to their students 24/7. One professor in the sciences told me that many students expect you to answer e-mails and text messages at night, on weekends, and on holidays. As this person described it,
Technology has added to the problem of overwork. Technology has created more work, and [has] turned what was a nine-to-five job into a 24/7 responsibility, which includes weekends. E-mail is a huge part of the problem. With hand-held devices you are always accessible to your students, and they have an expectation that you will respond to them at 10 p.m. at night and on Saturdays and Sundays. It has intruded into your personal life, where it did not in the past.

Other faculty members in both the biological sciences and social sciences noted that if you don’t set boundaries and borders, you can be “on call” 24 hours a day. Most said that if you don’t set reasonable expectations about when and how you will respond to students’ e-mails and texts, you will end up with disgruntled students. So boundaries are necessary for your own self-preservation and student satisfaction. In these conversations with faculty members, they reported that student demands for their time present challenges for all faculty members, not just those who are married with children, but also for those who are single with no children.

A majority (10) of the faculty members with whom I spoke talked about the increased demands by the administration for assessments and data-driven reporting that support accountability. Some reported feeling that administrative demands are the most demanding and were viewed by some as “paperwork generators.” One person in the social sciences told me, “It is my personality; I need time to think about my teaching.” The faculty member said that extra assignments can be a serious obstacle to achieving balance between one’s personal and professional life. “We are asked to generate data, and are not sure you are giving what they want. Sometimes there is no feedback. It is demanding for an unclear reward.”
The Administration’s Agenda

Another person in the biological sciences said that “Administrative demands are the most demanding just because I don’t always see that they’re benefiting anybody directly and they’re not what I’m passionate about at all. There are some requests that become just paperwork generators that, if I got some response back, even if somebody said you did a lousy job on this report, you need to address these issues, would make the assignment seem useful. But most of the time, we’re asked to generate data and reports that go into the abyss. If you don’t hand them in, you’re in trouble, but if you hand them in and do the best of your ability, you don’t know if what you gave them was what they wanted.” As noted previously, the report may be “demanding for an unclear reward.”

Another obstacle that was mentioned in more than half (10) of the interviews I conducted with faculty at Waverly Hills was what faculty referred to as “shifting gears.”

One faculty member in the social sciences described the workload:

It’s like next week, it’s a different report that they want written in a different way that half the people don’t do and they don’t get penalized, that you know of. I don’t want them to get penalized but you’re like, could my reward be that mine is great? It’s got the information you need, or doesn’t, and this is the only thing you need and then we could be done. And I could go back to doing the other things that I need to spend my time on. I think if they could sort of administratively reduce the amount of paperwork or define it one way once and then give us some feedback, then we could all consent.

Another faculty member in the biological sciences described the dilemma further.

We like, look at it, we assess it, we get rid of that assignment, we add a different assignment, but we don’t redo the course every year, completely new, and that’s what we
feel like we do around here a lot. And then we switch gears. Like, okay now we’re going
to do a bunch of online courses. Does anyone know how to do online? We need to do
online. Well, that’s a whole other component. And just at, not a psychological level, but I
would say sometimes the college is now making efforts to try to recognize people’s
research accomplishments. Like, today they’re having an event at the president’s house
and they’re having another one this week and that’s nice. I like that. They do try to do
nice things for us and recognize that, but sometimes I know they get caught up in all their
events and you’re like, wait, there are people doing research around here and I’d like to
hear about it.

There seems to be a general perception on the part of the faculty as expressed by a
professor in the biological sciences that:

I mean I think, it’s not unique to our institution, but sometimes I feel like we’re
so, kind of like always in, not so much crisis mode, but we’re like re-figuring out how to
do things that we get some form to fill out, or report to write, or something. You sit in a
meeting with a bunch of other people that have to do it and you say to the person who is
asking you to do it, you say, “You know what, this isn’t fully developed yet, like, do you
want this, and then when you get that information, how it is going to help you?” And they
say “Oh no, this is fine, this is exactly what we wanted.” And then we do it and they say
“You know, that didn’t really work the way we it wanted to.” “Yeah, I know that’s what
we said was going to happen.” I just feel like if you put 12 department chairs in a room
and they’re all going to have different opinions. So, there’s not an easy way.”
Social Interactions

In my conversations with the Waverly Hills Faculty there was frustration over shifting gears and a sense that less shifting could be accomplished by consulting with faculty. One science professor told me, “I understand, sometimes I really wish the administration was better at consulting [with] us and working with us a little bit. I know consensus models take forever to get them to agree to something, but I think we’d feel a little bit more invested than sometimes when we have these things that are dictated down to us, especially [projects] that involve a lot of work. And then you find out half the people in the room didn’t do it [the assignment]. But what some people turned in was not really well done, and then you hand in something, and it doesn’t matter.” The frustration level for this person was very much wrapped up in wanting to do a very good job and turn in a report that would be viewed as excellent. The time used to shift gears and complete assignments that were collected but not used, according to the faculty members I spoke with, usurped time that could have been used to help faculty more effectively balance their personal and professional lives.

Organizational Support for Work-Life Integration and Balance

Organizational Culture

Waverly Hills College has only one formal policy designed to help faculty integrate and balance their personal and professional lives. This policy was put in place during the year that I was interviewing faculty for this study (2014). This policy relates to maternity leave and was designed to help a faculty member to “take an entire semester off paid.” Here is what faculty members had to say about maternity leave and for fathers, parental leave. One faculty member in the social sciences explained how the new maternity leave works:
If you’re a woman who is having a baby or adopting a baby in the middle of the semester, you are allowed to bank from your 12 credit load for the semester. You can bank three or six credits before the semester begins, and then three or six at the end and then the other six of your load; we convert through no magic means to the Family Medical Leave that you get. If you get that semester off, what we do then is you have to pay back those credits, six of 12 credits. You owe the institution half a teaching load, which can be done reasonably easily. I mean, teaching a summer class one summer and then another the next summer. For example, you are able to get full pay throughout [your leave]. And the same thing if you are a male faculty member, who is adopting or whose partner is having a baby you can bank credits and use FMLA. Now, there are some restrictions on it.

When I asked about policies designed to address work-life balance issues, here is what one professor of science told me. “Not as many as you would expect, especially for a women’s college. I think one of the areas that we have really been surprised, and there has been a lot of work towards this, Waverly Hills has not been very progressive in the area of maternity leave and helping to balance, and part of the challenge is at a lot of places [other colleges], maternity leave means you get six weeks off.”

In regard to the existence of policies at the college that address work-life balance concerns of faculty, another faculty member in the biological sciences answered, “Not that I’m aware of. It gets back to maybe there are more policies that I don’t know [about]. I know there’s been some development in the area of maternity and paternity leave, and we have a personnel committee that has looked at some of those areas. There are a lot of policies. Sometimes policies get in the way of teaching.”
One person in the social sciences viewed it quite differently. “Clearer policies would help, but I don’t know if they would solve all the problems and a lot of times you start deriving policies, you end with ‘no, no, no I need it to be this way.’” The implication was that a single policy may not meet the needs that are very specific to an individual, and therefore may fail to address individual needs in a satisfactory manner.

Overall, all 14 faculty interviewed thought that there were a “few policies” that addressed work-life balance needs of the faculty; were aware of only “one policy” (the maternity policy); or were “unsure of what policies were in place” at the school that addressed work-life balance concerns. Since the faculty who were interviewed was comprised of people with young children, older children or with no children, some faculty may have been unaware of policies, like maternity leave, that were not directly related to their individual needs or concerns. And I was somewhat surprised at the lack of clarity around the existence of policies.

**Strategies for Achieving Work-Life Integration**

When I asked about daycare facilities for children of faculty members at Waverly Hills, it was clear that the topic was one that had been discussed over a long period of time, during several prior administrations, and to this point was one that was not supported by the prior or current administrations. Here are some of the reactions the faculty had regarding the idea of daycare on campus. One professor in the social sciences expressed it this way:

We’ve been pushing for years what would really be helpful is to have an on-campus child care. As a women’s college, you really feel like if you’re supporting the education of women, a lot of returning students have kids and on snow days, it would be helpful if we had an on-campus child care that people could drop their kids or even sick child care, if
you could have student aides that could come and watch the sick kids in an office so that people can go to classes. I mean, the on-campus child care has been a dream of many faculty members for years, and it has resurfaced a few times and then disappeared.

**Faculty Views on Policies**

On the issue of the importance of work-life policies, the Waverly Hills faculty that I interviewed had several different lines of thought regarding the importance of policies. Faculty expressed three divergent viewpoints. One viewpoint was that policies were necessary to ensure equity across the faculty related to how individuals were treated, and that policies ensured equality across the board. A second point of view was adamantly opposed to formal policies because they believed that most policies are too narrowly defined, usually developed in response to a specific situation and inevitably become impediments to the purposes for which they were designed. A third line of thought seemed to support the idea that local policies, that is policies that are informally administered by one’s department that reflect the culture of the department, were more helpful than policies that were codified across the institution.

Here are some thoughts as expressed by some faculty members regarding the institutionalization of policies. One tenured professor in the social sciences put it this way.

I think there are always some things that need to be codified and some things that are really difficult to codify. You have to rely on a culture to enforce [policy] and in a sense it’s like manners, that it’s silly to have a policy that says you have to use good manners towards one another. That has to be in the culture or not in the culture. I think that when something needs to be made into a policy is when there is a lack of clarity and then
perceived maybe a worry if there is a lack of equity and I think you could think about whether or not it should be codified as policy.

Another professor in the biological sciences took a different stance regarding work-life policies:

Policies are almost always reactive. There’s nothing proactive. I think instead of policies, I think we should accentuate/highlight the value of what we are doing and how can you preserve those values. We don’t need a policy, it guides them, it says take care of her, but when policy shows up here, A, B, C, D, it’s hard to trust it. Oh, they don’t want to get sued, that’s why they either use or can’t use the policy. And it’s not going to stay there very long, it’s not going to be utilized properly. You really need to go to the core. What is it that we are doing in this entity? What is it we are trying to do and okay, now that we know what it is, now let’s go over here, how can we do it well? Protect your staff, protect your family, how can we do this? But if you create a policy at this point, you completely missed out. Are you going to trust it [(the policy] or not use it properly, because then you know it’s not going to last very long, wait until the next person [administrator] comes along and gets rid of it.

It seemed that regarding the issue of establishing policies, there were mixed sentiments on the part of the faculty. And more than half of the people interviewed seemed to feel that their individual department could assist faculty work-life balance without formal policies.

**Faculty Experiences: Maternity and Feelings of Isolation**

One professor explained her caution when first joining the biology faculty at Waverly Hills. “My first year that I came here, you know you start out in a new job. My mom had always said, you know as a woman, you have to be careful. The last thing, don’t tell people you’re
married or have kids or going to have kids. Keep your personal life separate from your work life.”

When the same Waverly Hills College science professor had to confront the issue of maternity, she was pleasantly surprised.

My first year here, you’re starting work with people you don’t know yet, and I remember going to talk to my department chair, who was a female, and going in and saying, ok, here’s how it [time off for maternity] is going to work. I was pretty sure it will be fine because it was the last week of classes. He [the baby] was going on his due date. He is my timely one. He was the one, he’s much more together than my firstborn, but he was born on his due date and it was a week before classes ended, and I remember going in and talking to her [the department chair], being all nervous. And she said congratulations, that’s so exciting, when are you telling people? And, it was much more friendly [than I had anticipated]. I was ready for angst and she was so supportive! And then it was during the course of that year that my 3-year-old was sick one day, and you bring him in and you’re apologizing and no one cares. Okay, this is okay, and you start realizing it is okay.”

Another faculty member in the biological sciences explained the isolation that she first felt when she was the first woman with a child in the department.

At the time, there were multiple hires right in a row, one right after the other. So, all of us were hired around the same time and I was the third in the line of seven hires. And so, I felt it was kind of uncharted territory when I was having a baby. One of the other faculty members, his wife was pregnant and had a child the second or third month that I was here
and then one of the other faculty members had two kids, but these faculty members were both male. So, I was one of the first females having kids while working here. It was interesting. There was no one to talk to.

The same faculty member went on to say, “So I think we all went through a little bit of that feeling of isolation, but I think it was helpful that by the time there were more young parents hired, there were some kids running around the department and even the young males brought their kids here to work some times. I have to give credit to the two men as well because they had their kids, they were juggling, and they were really supportive.” In retrospect, she said, “My department has been a very supportive department, mainly because we’re all similar in age. I’m not sure that would be true in other departments at Waverly Hills. I know we have had colleagues, who were the one person having babies in their department.” This faculty member felt that this solitary person missed the supportive environment provided by colleagues with children.

**Departmental and Collegial Roles in Successful Work-Life Integration**

**Importance of Organizational Culture**

One tenured professor in the social sciences explained, “Mostly we rely on the departmental support. I don’t know that we interface at the administrative level as much; we usually leave that to the department chair.”

Another professor in the biology department explained the administration’s involvement in work responsibilities in the following way.
But really, it’s the kind of thing where if I have a sick child and I have to do something about my class, either cancel it or have somebody else step in, the administration doesn’t care. It’s the day-to-day things that we are not micromanaged to on that level, which is nice. I think if we had issues here, that would be different. If you know, for example, a colleague was never here because they’re always home with a sick child, then that would be the point where we need administrative support. I don’t know that any of us have any of those long ongoing issues, like a child with cancer, where you are constantly having doctor’s appointments. I don’t know that anyone has had any dependent care, long-term issues. Most of us, if it is a long-term issue, it’s managed outside of work.”

And this person clarified further,

You know the culture around here, as long as the culture is fine, I don’t think administration really needs to be involved. I do think if there are some tensions, then you’d have administration come in and help resolve the issue. As long as it is not interfering with your performance on the job, it is okay. If that was not the case, I think they would step in as a third party, impartial party, to help resolve issues. Mostly we rely on departmental support. I don’t know that we interface at the administrative level as much; we usually leave that to the department chair.

Summing it up, the same young woman explained, “But really, it’s the kind of thing where if I have a sick child and I have to do something about my class, either cancel it or have somebody else step in, the administration doesn’t get involved. The department chair works with the faculty member to resolve the problem. The faculty is reviewed [for performance] individually, but not micromanaged, does that make sense?”
Another professor in the social sciences summed up the department culture related to work-life integration and balance in the following way, “I mean, certainly, I think it is important [for the administration to support work-life integration and balance], but the culture that the faculty live is very departmentally based, so I would say it [the administration’s support] has less impact than the culture that is created within the department.”

The Realities of Achieving Balance

When I asked if each faculty member being interviewed had the power to change or institute work-life balance policies at Waverly Hills College what would it be, nearly all (13) of the faculty with whom I spoke said, “Daycare.” One faculty member in the biological sciences offered her ideas in this way:

Daycare. That would be the big thing and I think you could do it in a really good way. We’ve good nursing majors, and we’ve got education majors, and we’ve got social work majors. We’ve got all these different majors where I think you could create an environment that could benefit from an on-campus daycare program. You would need to have some real employees, hired employees, but I think you could pull in the students and it could be a moneymaker for Waverly Hills, be part of their [students’] work-study jobs, they are paid to actually work at the center. You wouldn’t have to pay them much, it would be a campus job, or it could even offset part of their tuition, it could benefit the college.

That same faculty member continued,

And you could use it for course credit or as, everyone who uses the daycare would have to sign some sort of waiver that acknowledges that their kids might be experimented on,
in IRB-approved ways, but things like, you know, I’m going to do some sort of educational plan. I’ve discovered a new way to teach math. I’m going to pretest your kids, I’m going to do this exercise, I’m going to posttest the kids and see what their gains are, or I’m going to go and do a science lab with the kids. It’s an outreach project for my science club. We’re going to go in and we’re going to have the kids extract DNA from strawberries because it’s a lot of fun and then you go [think], can we do that? I think it would be a really great opportunity for students in so many different ways.

That same professor in the sciences explained, “So snow days, okay the GE [General Education] club is going to go in and you’re going to, as a fund raiser, deal with any kids that happen to show up because it’s a snow day and there’s a good chance we’re going to have more kids here than we usually do."

Another faculty member in the social sciences told me, “I have been trying to get a daycare center on campus since before I had kids. I don’t believe it’s going to happen. The logistics, the liability, all of it just seems insuperable. I have had so many conversations with so many people about this. As much as it would be welcome to have it, it’s not going to happen.”

When I asked what the big stumbling blocks are to having a daycare, this is what this social sciences faculty member said:

Well, first is a facility. You have to have a facility that meets the code. We don’t currently have such a facility, so it would be the cost of building. The liability of the children, the liability involved in having a daycare center on campus is a fairly significant cost. And then, I think everybody knows the central common denominator about daycare centers is that they don’t cover their costs. They don’t. I mean we all know that daycare
workers are paid a pitifully low wage and that the cost of daycare strains even people
who are reasonably affluent. So, you know that to me is tragic. How can something that
costs so much, even for reasonably affluent people, result in such a pitiful wage, to really
wonderful people? You know, and there is a real economic issue there that as a society
we need to address, and it is really beyond the scope of any one college to address it.

Expressing a bit more optimism and going beyond the traditional thinking about daycare
at Waverly Hills, when asked what would be the one thing that he would advocate for if he had
the power to change policy or institute new policy on campus, one of the male professors in the
biological sciences said,

I think I would ask that for one thing, that we really look into some kind of daycare
system. I think that could have a lot of benefits that go beyond just helping people with
providing childcare, especially when you consider we have a lot of students who would
probably benefit from this as well. But, also it takes pressure off the schedule. If you
know that you can bring your kid here and do an 8 o’clock class, maybe now you can
teach that 8-11 a.m. lab on Tuesdays and that 1-4 p.m. lab on Tuesdays of the same
course and reduce your preps. I know there are liability issues; I know there are insurance
issues. I know there are questions of whether it is financially feasible. I don’t know that
people model technically very well and think, really think it through, in reasonable
circumstances. What would be the longer-term costs and benefits of doing something
[daycare], as opposed to just what would be the immediate and obvious costs and
benefits?
Another female professor in the biology department explained the issue of daycare to me in this way:

I think colleagues support each other, but we don’t have an on-campus daycare. My mother is very funny. She goes, “I don’t understand, it’s a women’s campus and you have no daycare.” “Hey mom, I can’t explain it to you.” She, like, genuinely seems confused by this. I think that’s unfortunate. At this point, we wouldn’t even be cutting edge, it would be a catching-up kind of thing and it seems to me that, and we have early childhood education so you link it programmatically. There have been different arguments over the years. That’s a place I would like to begin. You know when we teach the students the challenges that women in science face, and of course when we make it better, the students, if they don’t get this in the upcoming essay I’ll be sad, when you make stuff better for women in science, you make stuff better for everyone in science.

The same thing would hold true here. To have an on-campus, quality daycare, even if it’s related [run by the college] in some way, you’ll get more out of your faculty. We don’t have to go away so far to find daycare services. We might come back to do other things, extra-curricular events on campus. That would make life easier for lots of people. It would make life easier for our students, too. Many of them are parents who are pursuing degrees.

This young woman in the sciences went on to say in regard to daycare on campus, “You tell the students you can’t bring your children. Sick care would be nice, too. You can’t bring your child to lab, but you can’t miss lab. Some people have family nearby, I don’t. My husband is actually away right now, and my parents drive nine hours one direction to be some backup right now.”

She continued to explain, “You know, and they’re not close by. I know some people have family
close by. We are lucky that my parents make the effort and have been able to help us out on multiple occasions, including a full semester when the twins were born, but that could have been easier here had there been a different system. We bring it up every couple of years and every couple of changes and whatnot. I don’t know what the current hang-up is, I don’t know.” This same professor went on to say,

I don’t know, because I get the feeling there are donors who would help with it. I don’t think it’s one of Alexandra’s [President of Waverly Hills College] agenda pieces. I know we asked that earlier on with her. I know she feels it should be tied to curricular information, but I don’t see why we couldn’t do that. I know there have been arguments about space and liability and all that. I know that the previous President was not interested in doing it at all. I had been very hopeful when Alexandra came with her children, who are two months older than my oldest, that she would be more in-tune to that issue. I’ve been sad that there hasn’t been further progress on the issue. It’s a drumbeat we would like to do more often, but we’re often dealing with so many other things, we don’t go back to that one again. So, I think we support each other.

What became clear to me during the course of the interviews with faculty at Waverly Hills was that the faculty possesses a tremendous personal respect for their profession and for their institution. They are tremendously understanding of the circumstances that challenge the administration and that are faced by the president of the college. They, without exception, support the goals and objectives of the institution and strategies that are aimed at insuring the continuing survival of the college in a highly competitive market place.

In summary, this chapter presented work-life integration within the context of organizational culture and social dynamics as reported to me during the faculty interviews.
Faculty members shared their own stories about trying to manage work and life demands within a setting where the pressures for increased enrollment and fundraising push other critical priorities ahead of faculty work-life balance. The shift to the marketization of higher education, including the impact of technology and the changing student population, create an environment where more and more is expected of faculty with fewer and fewer resources. In the next chapter, I review the some of the faculty’s self-perceptions and how the theoretical framework of role identity creates and mitigates work-life conflict.
Chapter V: WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION AND BALANCE:

SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ROLE IDENTITY

In the last chapter, I discussed faculty members’ stories of their own experiences managing work-life integration and balance. This included sharing their experiences managing work and life demands within their own departments, the biological sciences or the social sciences, and describing their experiences as they strive to achieve successful integration of work and life as members of the larger institutional organization.

In this chapter I will focus on sharing faculty members’ self-perceptions as related to their professional lives: their role identities within their department and the larger organization. Based on my interviews with tenured faculty members at Waverly Hills, I will discuss how group and department, as well as organizational interactions, have influenced individuals’ self-perceptions of their professional roles and in some instances have helped to modify individuals’ behaviors in the execution of those roles. As previously suggested, since work-life integration and balance are tied to and dependent upon the different roles that faculty members play in their professional and personal lives, Burke’s version of identity theory provided a lens that helped me to interpret the experiences of faculty members at Waverly Hills College in the context of individual role identity, multiple role salience, and social and professional interactions within the group culture.

Individual Role Identity and Self-Perception

Identity theory provides the researcher with a way to understand how faculty members see themselves in their professional roles. The way that faculty members visualize the idealized role of tenured professor as they “see” it influences their actions and responses to the world
around them. Feedback from those with whom they interact in their professional role helps faculty members to adjust and modify their own concept of the role. Thus their own idealized concept of tenured professor may be altered in the process of interactions with others, which may shape how they respond and behave in a professional setting (Burke & Stets, 2009).

**Role Identity**

How one perceives one’s professional role may influence how one negotiates work-life integration and balance. For example, a professor whose idealized concept of a faculty member includes responsibilities for teaching, service, and research may in some way feel less qualified than other academics, if her position in a primarily teaching institution does not require that she meets requirements to do research and publish. Several of the faculty members I interviewed at Waverly Hills College raised this issue of feeling “less qualified” as an explanation as to why faculty were willing to work excessively long hours, sit on numerous committees, and commit a large amount of time to extracurricular activities, purportedly as a means of proving their worth and increasing their value in the eyes of administrators and colleagues. These additional time commitments will tilt the work-life integration scales in favor of work demands over life demands. The point here is to demonstrate the influence of role identity (how an individual sees their professional role) on one’s perception of self and to suggest that one’s behavior in her professional life can be impacted by that perception.

As one male professor in the social sciences explained, “Well, I was attracted to academia because I thought that you would have some control over this issue [work-life integration and balance]. And I think to some degree you do and to some degree you don’t.”

**Self-Perception**

This same professor went on to say,
The really good thing about this particular kind of job is the set hours. I have some control over when I teach. I have some input as to when committee meetings are. I have input. And people are respectful and negotiate about those times as much as they can. Administration is with faculty, as least tenured—that’s a joke. Even if you’re not tenured you have a tendency to defer all the time. Getting a job done takes a lot of time and you need to do it when you need to do it. By that I mean I can always be working on my job. That’s the downside. I can always be working. Summertime is the same thing. I could be doing research. Mentally there’s no framework. There’s no punch clock for your cognitive approach to your work. You have to just kind of have that self-discipline to turn it off and kind of force yourself to do that.

This professor in the social sciences continued,

I’ve been a faculty personnel committee member for years, and I’ve thought that. Sometimes your worst opponents in this issue are not administration but faculty. With faculty, you think that if you’re arguing for sane work-life balance, that you’re somehow arguing for lower standards. That’s a real interesting twist. I don’t know if you can explore that in your research. I think it’s psychological. And it plays into the relative lack of status of faculty at teaching institutions. They internalize that and then they rework their work-life balance to regain that status, to somehow make them feel better that they’re not at a research institution. So they end up doing twice the amount of work. It’s absurd, but I understand it. Just stepping in the middle of it is unreal, a real hornet’s nest.

He shared a further comment on gender and work-life balance:
One last comment, just observation, I do think work-life balance, the gender distinctions that we talked about in just talking about your work, reproduce themselves in the workplace, so I think that I can safely say that my female colleagues at the same level that I do here, no matter how well accomplished, they go home and they take on the responsibilities. And you see that, actually. I would daresay that if I had the resources to do this kind of research I would bet that in our institution here, it’s just kind of unconsciously accepted that there are certain groups of individuals, that if you need somebody to work on an ad-hoc committee or if you need someone to take over an institution-live intuitive, work on middle states or whatever, that inevitably there are going to be more women than men. There’s something about gender dynamics when it comes to this that has never quite been rebalanced. Those two issues to me, I find them really fascinating, the gender distinction that exploits women at some level, even if it’s women administrators, exploiting women. They internalize themselves. And then also that whole bit about teaching institutions and how that really screws up work-life balance, too, it’s very strange–it’s not strange, it’s unfortunate, actually.

He continued with this thought, “I think it’s analogous to the issue about a research versus teaching institution. This institution is not designed for that. But if you see a lack of status or if you feel you need to prove yourself, it gets raved about in such a way so that person is exploited, really, by that, just forced to work that much harder in order to prove themselves. There’s a reason it’s a 4-4 institution, but that reason ended two decades ago.

Self-Perception and Role Identity
The disparity between faculty members’ perception of the ideal identity of professor compared against the reality of their jobs at this particular institution is a repetitive theme in many of the interviews of the faculty that were conducted at Waverly Hills. This variance between the ideal and the actual can be seen in the following response to a question about the role of scholarship and research in the responsibilities of faculty members at Waverly Hills.

This response came from a faculty member in the social sciences.

So if you think you’re going to produce at the same level as somebody who is teaching half that much it’s absurd. But you have that kind of a switch where it’s complicated by a lot of things. The adoption of a research productivity model based on the sciences by everybody else, that’s part of the problem, the notion that you prove yourself by adding to your discipline. I’m not dismissing that, but what I am saying is that that’s a particular model. A mythological model, and it’s got this industrial thing underneath it, this metaphor going on. So, I have to sit down with my colleagues and go, no, you don’t have to produce like that. If you’re an excellent teacher, that’s what this institution is about. They look at it as some sort of corruption or something. I don’t really know what it is. But I like the analogy, because in both cases you have systems that are happily exploiting those who feel as if they’re judged and that they have to somehow prove themselves. It’s a shame. I’m too much of a rebel to not try to point that out and do something about it.

The same faculty member continued, “I would think that somehow there’s the subconscious thing that teaching is caretaking. And production is manly. Those research institutions, they’re the manly ones.” This faculty member added, “The same faculty offers courses in the evening that they do during the day. A lot of institutions have a separate evening college; we don’t.”
Reduced Priority on Balance

On the topic of the college encouraging faculty work-life balance, one faculty member in the social sciences said,

I have to say, though, right now is probably not a good time to ask that question because this has been an extremely busy semester with a lot of different initiatives beginning with the new management that we have. I can honestly say that, that balance is not being encouraged. I can’t say that they totally disregard that, but I can say that right now they are expecting as much as you possibly can give in the workplace, including days and evenings and weekends, because this is a very pivotal time for the college. They are beginning many new initiatives that they feel are very important. Certainly they acknowledge that you have a life, and I think as faculty members we have learned to create those boundaries.

Role Identity

This same person in the social sciences expanded on the idea of fixed hours,

In academia, those structural boundaries do not exist like a typical organization. In academia, a lot of people do not come in at 8:00 or 8:30 and leave at 4:30 or 5:00. That’s just not the nature of it. Many of us are here on weekends teaching or giving workshops and are here in the evenings, so you don’t have that structural boundary like you would in a typical organization. We’re here for open houses on Saturdays and Sundays, and so on. I think we, over time, try to create those boundaries for ourselves, but those structural boundaries do not exist. This is a 24/7 type of operation and environment for the students.
This same faculty member continued,

I don’t think you have as much of that issue in a larger public organization. For example, I went to Vernon State as an undergrad, and I know my professors were not there on weekends, and a lot of them didn’t teach in the evenings. They had a large daytime program, so they all taught during the day. The same goes for some other private institutions I know around here. I know some of my colleagues do not teach at night, they teach all their classes during the day. So they don’t have that situation. While here, we are stretched thin. We are teaching for multiple populations.”

When I asked if that is because the other institutions don’t have the alternative, the evening students and the nontraditional students, here is how this social sciences faculty member answered:

I think your larger institutions, like Wilkes State, the bulk of their students live on campus and they’re traditional students. Whereas your Hillford, for example, Hillford College has your day program and then it has an evening program. The evening program is staffed by adjunct faculty. They don’t have full-time people teaching their students. Whereas, here [Waverly Hills], that’s not the case. The majority of our classes taught at night are by our full-time faculty.

And this person finished the thought by saying, “And that’s exactly why we do it, because we think that’s really important. We don’t want to have an adjunct-only night program. We don’t think that’s the right thing to do. So I guess maybe we do it somewhat to ourselves.”
Faculty Commitment

When asked how a female faculty member would define the level of commitment of faculty and the expectations of the administration for faculty participation, one professor in the social sciences responded:

I think they would define it the same way. I mean, just in my department, there are two of us who have kids about the same age, and I would say he would kind of say the same thing. There are three people without any children. You just kind of have to say to yourself, enough. I think we’re all very hard workers. You can’t do well in this environment if you’re not. And, honestly, the people who don’t put enough time into work, they probably won’t stay here long, because there is a high expectation for teachers, along with all the service that we do, plus scholarship. I think other faculty members would define it the same way.

She said that, “They would certainly not define expectations in terms of a percentage of time in the office.”

College’s Expectations

She continued, “This is not an 8-5 job, and if you come in here thinking that it will be, or if you teach at night, for example, and think that you’re only going to come in at 4:00 P.M. before your night classes and no other time, that’s just ridiculous. You can’t do that.”

When asked about the college’s expectations for research, one assistant professor of social sciences responded, “Well, we don’t have a numerical expectation. There are some schools, like Beacon, for example, that’ll say you need to have two publications or something
like that. We don’t have a numerical expectation. The way it’s written in our handbook is we are expected to perform in three areas, be a leader in teaching, perform service in the community and the college, and then have scholarship. Scholarship includes professional development.”

**Expectations for Service**

The same social sciences assistant professor expanded,

Like my situation right now, I have two more years and then I can apply for full professor. I have tenure but I have two more years to apply for full. My expectations are still very high. I need to show excellence in those three areas, plus I can highlight in one area if I would like to, if I feel like I’m excelling in one area. So we don’t have numerical values, but we’re expected to go to conferences. I was told, it’s not written down, but I was told to try to go to at least one conference a year, present at those conferences, not just attend, and to publish some articles, not a number, but the expectation is certainly there. And certainly since Dr. Rossi has come in, our new president, the expectation has been raised, definitely.

The assistant professor continued, “And the service commitments right now are just enormous. In fact, the faculty personnel committee, of which I’m a member, we just sent out a survey to all the faculty asking them to check off all the different things they’re on. We want to try to get an idea, we want to tell the provost how many committees they’re serving on right now, because everybody feels pretty stretched.”

In regard to teaching evening classes, this professor continued,
Ultimately it’s up to the department and the chair. Ultimately it’s up to us. We in our department have all committed to teaching at least one night or one weekend course a semester. That’s pretty much our rule here in our department, and it was based on all of us deciding that a couple of years ago, actually, and so we’ve all decided to do that. We’ve all made the commitment for next year to have at least one hybrid or one online course for this evening program. So we’re all in the middle of trying to develop these.

In response to a question on how handling family responsibilities has impacted one social science faculty member’s career, he responded,

We try to all have control over our courses. In our department, we really are lucky that we all try to work together, so we do have some control over when we offer courses. Not all control, but some control. You know, I know I need to do one night class and those sorts of things, and I’ve learned. In the beginning I would feel guilty about making an appointment at 9:00 if I needed to because I was so used to that 8-5 mentality, and now I’m okay with that. I know that in order to get some things done in my life I have to take some time here and there. If you need to leave early or you need to come in, it’s okay. So we’ve learned how to juggle those things.

And this same social sciences faculty continued, “You have to learn how to say no. I’m my worst enemy there. For a while there I would say yes to everything they asked me to do. Talk on this campus and talk here and there, and I just got to the point where I needed to be selective. I need to know when I can do things and when I can’t, and learn how to say no. I was really proud of myself last week. I said no.”

Financial Considerations
When I asked about how financials impacted the college, here is what one of the social sciences faculty said, “But we don’t have that luxury to dip down deep into that endowment and so they try to do everything they can not to touch it, to just let it be. We’re really tuition dependent. Every student counts.”

When I asked about the prior leadership at the college, this social sciences professor said, “She was very authoritarian. I respected her, but she didn’t have a lot of new things going on. And then she became ill and we [the school] were stagnant.”

Identity Theory as a Framework for Studying Work-Life Integration

Identity theory, especially the work of Stryker and Burke, provides a framework for understanding work-life integration and balance for the faculty members whom I interviewed at Waverly Hills College. The work of Stryker, particularly his salience hierarchy referenced previously in Chapter III, discusses the concept of multiple role identities that are held by individuals. What is new in this chapter is a discussion of the links between faculty experiences managing work-life integration and balance and identity theory as the underlying conceptual framework for this conflict.

Work-life integration and balance is fraught with conflicts between and among competing priorities. These conflicts often occur when 1) there is a lack of alignment between self-concept and personal action that can disrupt the relationship between one’s self and one’s social network, 2) when multiple identities reside and compete for prominence within a single person, often due to multiple roles claimed by the individual, or when 3) multiple identities exist within the social structure and these competing identities vie for control. In each of these cases, conflict associated with work-life integration and balance in the academic workplace can result. We will examine some examples of these conflict creating situations more closely later in this
section. But, first we will look at the conceptual framework that provides the structure for these conflicts.

**Identity Theory: Burke’s Identity Model**

Along with Burke, Stryker acknowledges that society is made up of “an enduring pattern of interactions and relationships that are differentiated, yet organized,” and that these relationships and interactions occur within groups, organizations, communities, and institutions, (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 45). “Persons live their lives in small networks of social relationships by playing out roles that support their membership in these networks” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 45).

Burke has focused his attention on studying the perceptual control system of individual actors, an inward-looking assessment of behavioral responses to individual situations. His work has resulted in the development of an identity model that depicts the process by which an individual’s behavior is assessed against the standard for a particular identity. The ultimate outcome of the interaction represented in the model is to verify one’s identity in the role which the individual claims; for example, the role of professor. The process is iterative and will be repeated until a resolution is reached. Resolution of this process is for one’s identity to be confirmed, identity verification, by the actor or actors in the situation.

According to Burke, “An identity is composed of four basic components: an input, an identity standard (set of meanings), a comparator, and an output” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 62). Each of these components represents a process that deals with meanings within the environment and within the self (Burke & Stets, 2009). These elements provide the basis of a cyclical process by which one’s identity is verified. “These four key components are organized into a control system that operates to control the input to the system” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 62). Please see Burke’s Identity Model in Identity Theory (2009).
According to Burke’s model, each identity contains a set of meanings, an *identity standard* (Burke & Stets, 2009). The meanings that comprise the *identity standard* describe the characteristics usually associated with the identity under assessment. For example, the characteristic of feminine may be described by adjectives that are culturally appropriate, like warm, supportive, independent, and resourceful for American culture (Burke & Stets, 2009). Theoretically, these meanings would define, for example, the *identity standard* for feminine in American culture.

**Self-perceptions Compared to the Identity Standard**

“Perceptions are central to the identity process. It our perceptions that we are trying to control as shown in figure 4.1” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 64). The identity model tries to compare the perception to the identity standard (Burke & Stets, 2009). The goal is to match the perceptions of one’s performance and behaviors with the identity standard for that identity, so that performance aligns with the accepted standard for the role (Burke & Stets, 2009). Perceptions are continuously fed into the comparator, “which does nothing more than compare the input perceptions of meanings relevant to the identity with the memory meanings of the identity standard” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 66). If the comparator assesses that the perceptions are not in alignment with the identity standard, an error signal occurs (Burke & Stets, 2009).

The outputs, including the error signal, will indicate how far off the perceptions are from the standard, thus allowing the participant to adjust or modify his or her behavior in the situation (Burke & Stets, 2009). “Once the output is assessed, the process moves back to the situation, where the behavior altered the meanings available in the situation, so that new perceptions are input to the comparator as the cycle continues” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 67). This loop is continuous, and we deal with meaning as the signal that flows through the cycle (Burke & Stets,
This “cycle or loop is organized as a control system” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 67). The continuous loop suggests that perceptions of meanings are constantly coming into the comparator, while meaningful behaviors are continuously output to the environment (Burke & Stets, 2009). Further, one’s identity inputs are controllable, and the process of identity operation as conceptualized here is one of verification (Burke & Stets, 2009). The person holding the identity has the ability to change the perceived meanings by altering his or her behavior in the situation. If the perception changes so that there is a match between individual behaviors and the identity standard for the role, then this successful match will result in identity-verification for the person (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Alignment of Role Identity and the Identity-Standard

Going back to our initial comments in this section, work-life integration and balance is fraught with conflicts between and among competing priorities. These conflicts often occur when there is a lack of alignment between self-concept and personal action that can disrupt the relationship between self and one’s social network. The person is unable to verify his or her identity in their professional setting, for example as a faculty member.

When a person is unable to verify an identity, the person is likely to become upset, according to a study conducted by Swann in 1983 (Burke & Stets, 2009). In the study, the participants sought to bring their self-relevant meanings into alignment, so that their meanings (as demonstrated by their behaviors) were in alignment with the identity standards for their role (Burke & Stets, 2009). Swann’s study found that there appears to be a strong motivation to align one's behavior with the identity standard of their position within their social network (Burke & Stets, 2009). So, the alignment is achieved by modifying one’s behavior. This alignment, once achieved, allows role-specific conflict to drop out of the environment.
An alternative resolution for the conflict between one’s behavior and the identity standard being used to verify one’s identity is for the environment to change. This change may be in terms of how the social network perceives the meanings associated with the identity standard for a particular position. For example, the social network adopts a set of meanings for faculty that includes accommodating children in the workplace. In this example, resolution is achieved by altering the environment of the faculty identity, rather than altering the behavior of the faculty.

**Application of Burke’s Model**

Burke’s model and his conceptual framework have several applications relevant to the results of the study that I conducted at Waverly Hills College. The majority of the faculty with whom I met expressed a strong desire to meet the expectations for their jobs as members of the academic community at the college. They expressed a desire to be “in alignment” with the expectations that others within their department had for their position. Burke’s model helps to explain the feelings of conflict expressed by study participants, whose actions are out of alignment with the identity standards associated with their personal or professional identity, for example, as a parent or as a professor.

Burke’s model reinforced the notion of self-constructed identity meanings, which set one’s personal standards for one’s position (identity). In every instance, the faculty interviewed expressed a strong desire to perform in alignment with the identity standard as defined by the institution’s and their department’s expectations for their job (role). Achieving alignment between one’s role behavior (performance) and the identity standard for the role (performance expectations) was seen as critical to personal success in both professional and personal life.

**The Role of Multiple Identities in the Theoretical Framework**
Burke asserted that “Identities do not always operate in isolation, but they interact with other identities in particular situations” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 130). When multiple identities reside and compete for prominence within a single person, often due to multiple roles claimed by the individual, Burke suggested that there are two distinct approaches that can be used to understand the situation. We may consider the existence of multiple identities from an internal perspective and from an external perspective (Burke & Stets, 2009). We will review these approaches in this section and see how each approach allows us to gain greater insight into understanding how multiple identities achieve prominence and verification within a single individual. The internal approach considers issues of how an individual’s multiple identities function together within the self and the identity verification process, while the external approach will consider the complexities of the social system and one’s commitment to the multiple identities that he or she possesses.

**Internal Framework of Multiple Identities**

The internal framework assesses issues related to “how an individual’s multiple identities function together within the self and within the overall identity-verification process” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 131). The relationship among identities within Burke’s perceptual control system (model) in which all identities reside. This approach looks at how multiple identities are verified.

“The salience of an identity is the likelihood that it will be activated. Identities that are more salient are more likely to be activated in any situation. By being activated, you recall, we mean that an identity is attempting to verify itself” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 133). This means that perceptions are being made about relevant meanings, the inputs are being compared against
the identity standard, and the comparator sends a signal to the output system indicating whether
the identity is verified. If the identity is verified, the output would continue the behavior
unchanged. If not verified, one’s social behavior would be modified. If only one of multiple
identities is activated at a particular time, then for that period it as if only that one identity exists.
(Burke & Stets, 2009).

“If more than one identity is activated in a situation, we expect that the identity with the
higher level of prominence, or the identity with the higher level of commitment, will guide the
behavior more than the identity with the lower level of prominence or commitment” (Burke &
Stets, 2009, p. 133). “Performances that are suggested by more prominent (important) identities
are more likely to be carried out than those suggested by less prominent identities” (Burke &
Stets, 2009, p. 133). And similarly, an identity that has more commitment than another, for
example, more other people depend on that identity than the other; the identity is more likely to
be verified, thus filling the commitments to the many rather than the few. (Burke & Stets, 2009).

“Thus, prominence and commitment not only influence the level of salience of an identity, but
also help sort out the question of what to do next when multiple identities are activated” (Burke
& Stets, 2009, p. 133). Identities can therefore be distinguished and compared in terms of their
prominence and level of commitment (Burke & Stets, 2009). “However, identities are also
related more directly in terms of the hierarchy of control in which they are embedded” (Burke &
Stets, 2009, p. 133).

Hierarchical Control System

If we refer back to Burke’s most basic identity model, we can see how this conceptual
model works for one transaction, the purpose of which is to assess and verify meanings
associated with a single identity. The goal of this assessment is identity verification. The process
assesses the alignment between a person’s self-relevant meanings for her or his identity and the identity standard for the identity that is activated. In the event that meanings do not match up with the standard meanings for the identity under assessment, then one’s identity will not be verified and social behavior will be modified (Burke & Stets, 2009). Burke explained, “The behavior would be modified to counteract any disturbances and alter the situational meanings in order to reduce the error or difference between their perceptions and the identity standard” (2009, p. 133).

Multiple Identities Operating within an Individual

If we expand this model to consider multiple identities operating within a single person and in a particular situation, we can begin to consider the influence hierarchy has in determining social behavior. If we refer to Burke’s model for three identities within a person, we can start to understand how an identity’s hierarchical position within the model impacts the verification process and social behaviors for the other identities claimed by a single person. One important point to this is that in order for the hierarchy to make a difference, more than one of the identities must be activated at the same time, (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Understanding “the hierarchical nature of the overall perceptual control system in which identities are located” as shown in Figure 7.1 (Burke & Stets, 2009) is fundamental to understanding the connections between and among the “interlocking set of individual control systems at multiple levels” as described by Tsushima and Burke (1999) that exist within the framework of the overall perceptual control system, (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 133). If we refer to Figure 7.1, we can see that there are two identities that are located at the same level in the overall control system, labeled B and C. Identity A is positioned at a higher level within the overall perceptual control system. As previously mentioned in this paper, “Each of these individual
identities has its own standard and its own perceptions of meanings, and each modifies its own output (behaviors in the situation) to verify itself by keeping the perceived situational meanings in agreement with the meanings in its standard” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 134). Although this example uses only three identities, there could be more. However, I believe it is reasonable to imagine that the number of identities would have to be limited, since all the identities must be managed within one individual. So, it seems plausible that there would be a point at which we could reach identity saturation.

First, I will discuss the relationship between identities located at the same level in the overall control system. Both identities, B and C, have their own standard and their own perceptions of meanings, and each modifies its own meanings in agreement with the meanings in its standard in the manner we discussed earlier. Because all of these identities exist within one person, I note that the output of all of these identities must combine to control the social behavior of that individual. The individual’s behavior controls situational meanings to make them congruent with the meanings held in all of the identity standards. That is, each identity is controlling meaning by adjusting the behavior of the same individual. Thus, although there are possible many identities, there is only one behavioral output stream because there is only one person to act. This implies that the behavior of an individual must “satisfy” several individual identities simultaneously by altering the situation in ways that change all of the self-relevant meanings perceived by all of the different identities. If a person has the identities of professor and spouse and both are activated, the person must adjust the perceived meanings to confirm or verify both the professor identity and the spousal identity (Burke & Stets, 2009, pp. 134-135).
When behavior must “satisfy” several different identities simultaneously, all self-meanings are controlled and are either unrelated or aligned (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 135). They cannot be in opposition with each other, (Burke & Stets, 2009). Oppositional self-relevant meanings for different identity standards will result in what Burke said is an “impossible situation” in which “one or both of the identity standards cannot be verified” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 135). In this instance, people’s identities will change to alleviate conflict (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 135). Burke says that “people re-identify themselves, changing the self-meanings held in their identity standards” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 135).

If meanings found in different identity standards do not relate to each other, “an action that changes meaning in the situation to verify one identity will leave the other one unaffected” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 135). For example, if a faculty member wins an award for her or his scientific research, this may verify one identity but may not be relevant for the person’s parent identity (Burke & Stets, 2009).

If two identities share common meanings, control of the situation to change self-relevant perceptions on the shared dimension of meaning helps both identities. Verifying one identity will help to verify the other, and the two can coordinate their outputs to verify both (Burke & Stets, 2009). For example, consider a faculty member who also volunteers as a tutor in the remedial program at the college. If the faculty identity includes standards for advising students on improving their academic performance and if the tutor identity includes providing advice to students on improving their study habits, then a student’s academic improvement will help to verify both the faculty and tutor identities.

**Multiple Identities and Different Levels within Burke’s Model**
Next, I will briefly review how this hierarchical dynamic works when multiple identities are present at different levels within the overall perceptual control system. To return to Figure 7.1, one sees two identities, A and B, that are located on two different levels of the model. A is on a higher level than B. “Although the lower identity (B) follows the model we have been discussing, with its perceptions, standard, comparator, and output of social behavior that matches the meanings of perceptions and standard, the higher identity (A) differs in that it does not control social behavior directly. It has its perceptions, comparator, and standard, but its action is to control the standard or “goals” of the lower identity” (Burke & Stets, 2009, pp. 135-136).

The result is that the higher level identity (A in our example) sets the “goals” for the lower-level identity, as it tells the lower-level identity what meanings need to be verified (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 136). “Since the higher-level identity in a sense controls the lower-level identity, they cannot be in conflict” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 136). The higher-level identity “controls the lower-level identities by slowly adjusting the standards of the lower-level identities” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 136). Burke notes that this is on the output side of the model (Burke & Stets, 2009).

**Input Side of the Control Hierarchy Model**

On the input side of the model, a control hierarchy of higher and lower perceptions exists with the identities at the higher levels more general than those at the lower levels (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 137). “Tsushima and Burke (1999) examined parent identity standards that exist at two different levels, which they called principle level (higher) and a program level (lower)”, (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 137). They found that “both the perceptions and the standards that are found at the higher level within the hierarchy are more abstract and more general” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 137). Tsushima and Burke found that these perceptions found at the principle level (higher)
are conceptualizations of “abstract goal states such as values, beliefs, and ideals” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 137).

According to Tsushima and Burke, the perceptions found at the program (lower) level tended to be more activity-based and concrete in nature (Burke & Stets, 2009). For example, in relation to questions concerning education and discipline, some parents who were interviewed in their study focused on short-term methods for dealing with immediate problems, like homework or classroom behavior (Burke & Stets, 2009). These parents, who were more focused on the program level of their parent identities, cited methods like begging, forcing, setting a timer, and grounding as ways to solve homework and disciplinary problems (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Other parents who participated in Tsushima and Burke’s study were more principle-level oriented, and they discussed longer-range goals that were achieved over time (Burke & Stets, 2009). These parents focused on attributes associated with education and discipline by “selecting more immediate situational programs of activity that are consistent with long range (educational) goals” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 138).

The study helped to “illustrate the different levels at which identities and identity standards exist in the control hierarchy” (Burke & Stets, 2009). “Control of perceptions at the higher levels involves controlling the patterns of perceptions at the lower levels,” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 138). Lower-level programs serve to match the patterns of perception of the lower level to the patterns that exist at the higher level. Although this study focused on the parent identity, Burke asserts that “the same principles hold for identities in general” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 138). “Through the identity verification process, actions are taken that alter the situation and hence the self-relevant meanings in that situation to bring them into congruence with the standards held in the identity” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 139).
The External Framework of Multiple Identities

In the prior section, I viewed the interactions of multiple identities with an individual from an internal vantage point. In this section I will move from the discussion of multiple identities within a single person and look at this phenomenon from an external vantage point, by looking at multiple identities as creating multiple ties to the social structure within which they reside (Burke & Stets, 2009). The idea of an individual holding multiple roles within the social structure in which they reside has its roots in sociology. Burke pointed to the work of Linton (1936), Merton (1957), Parsons (1949), and Turner (1978) as early advocates of this thought process, (Burke & Stets, 2009). Burke also pointed to the work of early researchers, who suggested that these multiple positions residing within an individual could come in conflict with each other, resulting in “role conflict (Gross, Ward & McEachern, 1958), role strain (Secord and Backman, 1974), and status inconsistency (Jackson, 1962; Jackson and Burke, 1965; Lenski, 1954)” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 139). This early work focused on the relationship between multiple positions held by an individual and the expectations associated with the positions, rather than on the identities attached to these positions (Burke & Stets, 2009). It’s quite easy to make the transition between the expectations for multiple positions, as conceived by early sociologists, and the identity standards theorized by Burke that I have been discussing.

Stryker (1980, 2002) who was an early proponent of structural symbolic interaction theory, provided a conceptual basis that tied identities to positions in the social structure (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 140). Stryker’s work, which described an individual’s memberships, roles in groups, organizations, and networks to which they belong, also described these as forming the basis for one’s identities (Burke & Stets, 2009). The way in which positions are connected within the social structure suggests the ways in which “1) multiple identities may relate to one another
within a single group, 2) persons may have the same role identities within different groups, or 3) persons may have different role identities within intersecting groups” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 140).

**Identity Theory as a Conceptual Framework**

Identity theory provides a framework that helps us better understand the dilemmas facing faculty who are trying to manage their work and personal lives. Identity theory provides several lenses through which one can consider some reasons for what appear to be conflicting roles between the faculty member identity and the parent identity, the faculty member role and the spousal role, and the faculty member identity and the personal life identity.

Of particular interest to my research are the following aspects of the theory: the discussion concerning multiple identities held by a single individual, including the hierarchical nature of the identities, and the fact that a person may have multiple identities in intersecting groups. In either scenario, identities may come into conflict either within one’s self among multiple identities, or when two identities come into contact due to an overlap or intersection of two different groups. The first example is that a faculty member may have multiple identities, such as professor, faculty member, scholar, advisor, and parent.

Another form of multiple identities within a single group occurs when a person has an activated identity in that group and something in the situation activates another identity the person has in a different group (Burke & Stets, 2009). “Stryker points out that persons with multiple identities, which need to be verified, and people have different levels of commitment and salience for each of the identities, with the result that people spend more or less time in each identity” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 142). When people have “two or more identities activated, the
person engages in behavior that attempts to verify all of the activated identities, with the result that each is influenced by the requirements of the other”, (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 142).

The second example can occur when two identities previously not comingled become so due to the intersection of two groups to which the person belongs, as Burke suggested (2009). The intersection of the two groups may occur in the case of a faculty member due to children’s presence on campus or family participation in campus activities. In this case, the identity of the faculty member may now become comingled with the identity of parent, and role conflict can result.

**Virtual Intersection of Faculty Work and Personal Life**

During my interviews with Waverly Hills’ faculty, I became aware of another form of group intersection, a kind of virtual intersection of faculty and family. This intersection is one that seemed to exist in the conscious minds of many of the faculty members with whom I spoke. Although there was no physical intersection of the groups to which they claimed membership (family and faculty), there certainly was a conscious awareness of the intersection of family and faculty that permeated their daily lives at work and by their reports their daily lives at home. Often faculty members reported feeling conflicted about children at work, even when no family members were present in the work place. And similarly, they reported feeling conflicted about work responsibilities at home when no members of the work group were present.

As I learned at Waverley Hills College, it seems that once the connection between the faculty member and the work group is established, the intersection with the faculty’s family group is activated. It appears that no physical intersection is necessary, and that membership to each group exists within the consciousness of the faculty member, as if an actual mixing of groups has occurred. People behave as if there are group members, faculty and family, mixed
together in a physical setting. Therefore, many of the faculty I interviewed worried about spending enough time with their families while they were at work, and while they were at home they worried about how much time they are devoting to their work.
Chapter VI: WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION AND BALANCE: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover how tenured faculty members at a four-year women’s college experience work-life balance and integration, and how their experiences are shaped by their own perceptions and by the subcultures and workplace norms of their departments. During in-depth interviews, faculty members in the biology department and in the social sciences shared their experiences and challenges associated with balancing their personal and professional lives. Through the interview process, I was able to evaluate how one’s membership in a specific discipline (biology or social sciences) impacted faculty members’ ability to manage the integration of work and life demands. I examined the ways in which role identity can create conflict between personal and professional responsibilities, at the same time discovering that role identity can be a mechanism that helps to mitigate the adverse effects when role conflict occurs. This study also explored the importance of social interactions, cultural norms, and subgroups, found in individual departments and within the administration of the school, and how they play an important role in shaping faculty experiences managing work and life.

This research is important because of the changed nature of the U.S. workforce, where more women than ever are working outside the home, with dual-earner households comprising over 79% of couples (Galinsky, Aumann & Bond 2008) and with both parents working outside the home in 70% of households (Harrington, Van Deusen & Ladge 2010). According to the current U.S. Department of Labor numbers, 57% of women in the U.S. participate in the labor force, (2015). Further, women’s representation in the U.S. workforce has increased by more than
360% since 1950. The consequences are clear that more women, both single and married, with and without children, are working outside the home in the U.S.

With the large numbers of women employed in the workplace, the emphasis on work-life balance has become an important topic to employees and employers in almost every industry, with corporations leading the way in implementing work-life programs. Work-life balance and integration is also a topic important to men who now participate more fully in household responsibilities.

Although research on this topic has tended recently to be driven by large research universities, (University of Michigan’s CEW, University of California Los Angeles, University of Pennsylvania) with collaboration and funding from the government and entities like the Sloan Foundation that funds the Work Family Researchers Network at the University of Pennsylvania, work-life balance and integration remains a problem for faculty members at these institutions. Although many research universities have work-life policies in place designed to allow new parents full or partial parental leave, under-utilization of these policies prevails (Lester 2015). It is likely that “bias avoidance,” described by Drago et al. (2004) and mentioned previously in this paper, is in play at those universities. Further, although many large research universities have established work-life policies, there is still an absence of them at the smaller private colleges where budgets are tight and endowments may be small. Repeatedly, faculty surveys, such as the HERI faculty survey, reflect a broader reality that both men and women across workplaces in higher education continue to be challenged in balancing work and personal lives.

Little is known about the how discipline, role identity, and workplace norms influence faculty work-life experiences at four-year liberal arts colleges, where there are few or virtually no policies that support work-life integration. This study adds to the knowledge of faculty integration and balance from the alternative perspective of workplace norms, discipline, and role
identity.

This study and its results are relevant to Waverly Hills and may hold relevance to other four-year liberal arts colleges\(^\text{18}\) that are facing the same pressures for faculty work-life balance and financial pressures for enrollment and fund raising, while remaining academically competitive.

**Current Literature**

Current literature on the topic of work-life balance and integration includes studies on “the role of family-friendly policies, experiences of academic parenthood, and the role of gender and childbearing in productivity, often with a focus on research universities” (Lester, 2015, p. 141). “Some current literature suggests that the existence of policies at some universities negates the need for cultural change, when it comes to work-life integration” (Lester, 2015). However, Lester rejected this idea, saying, “Policies are often needed in order to protect the rights of employees and can assist in generating conversation for cultural change, but they are not a solution to establishing cultures of work-life balance” (Lester, 2015, p. 142).

Recent literature regarding work-life balance has been focused on research universities, while the literature on small, four-year colleges remains scant. My study sought to examine the less-studied four-year women’s college, with the anticipation that since 100% of the students are women and that there are no formal work-life policies at the school, that the cultural forces in favor of work-life balance would be strong.

\(^{18}\) There are 48 women’s colleges in existence in the U.S. in 2015, with endowments ranging from 14.5 million dollars to 1.808 billion dollars. There are five colleges with endowments less than 20 million dollars. And there are approximately 600 independent liberal arts colleges in the U.S. today.
Summary

In conducting the research for this qualitative research project, I was guided by the goal of understanding faculty members’ experiences and attitudes as they strove to integrate their personal and professional lives. Three research questions, introduced in the first chapter of this paper, provided the direction for the research.

The study that I conducted at Waverly Hills sought to understand how discipline affiliation, role identity, cultural norms, and social interactions influenced the integration of work and life demands in the faculty workplace at this small, four-year women’s college. I was interested to see how culturally driven forces, like discipline affiliation and role identity, shaped the faculty’s ability to balance work and personal life.

Influence of the Research’s Design on the Findings

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the purpose of the study was to understand how faculty members at a small, private, four-year women’s college experience work-life integration, and how social interactions and cultural norms influence their ability to manage their work and life demands. Social constructivists grounded theory provided me with an approach from which to explore the social interactions and cultural norms that influence how faculty experience work-life integration in a private women’s college environment.

This study explored the connection between the faculty’s understanding of work-life integration and the cultural context within which their interactions occurred. I found that the faculty’s understanding of work-life integration at the college was shaped by the culture of the college administration, which created the context in which social interactions took place.

Based on my in-depth conversations with the 14 faculty members who participated in hour to hour-and-a-half long interviews with me during the 2013-2014 academic year at Waverly Hills College, several findings became apparent. Some of the findings relate to role conflict,
explained by the theoretical framework known as identity theory, previously described in Chapter V of this paper. Other findings are rooted in the harsh realities of change, finances, and organizational culture, which provide the setting in which faculty members try to integrate their professional and personal lives. Here are some of the things I discovered about Waverly Hills’ faculty and their pursuit of successful work-life integration.

**How faculty Members Experience Work-Life Integration at Waverly Hills**

The faculty members at Waverly Hills College understand that they are “on their own” to solve their issues related to integrating their personal and professional lives. Faculty members do not expect the administration of the college to help to mitigate their issues related to balancing work and life demands. This perception of workplace flexibility is constructed through their interaction with the organizational and social structures of the college, as suggested by Kossek and Lambert (2005). The testimony of faculty interviewed at Waverly Hills supported the proposition that the most important and tangible support for the successful integration of work and life comes from the individual departments in which the faculty members work (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Schein, 2004; Gerovich, 2006; Ruderman, 2005; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). From a department standpoint, the department chairs are instrumental in assisting faculty members to arrange their schedules to facilitate flexibility and alternative work arrangements, such as working at home, as described by Blair-Loy & Wharton (2002) and Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hansen, (2009).

The department sets the tone when it comes to permitting children to come to work with their parents. As I noted in the interviews, several (10) faculty members I interviewed described how when childcare resources failed, colleagues supervised each other’s children while a parent taught a class. In many cases, colleagues pitched in for each other and taught a class for another faculty member. There was a strong sense of cooperation and camaraderie among department
members who help each other out with managing work-life integration. Workplace norms that set the standards for behavior within the department help to clarify acceptable behaviors for the group as noted by Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010).

Since there is no formal policy regarding bringing children to work, faculty members must test the limits carefully, to see what is allowable in their discipline. This can create inequities between or among departments and individuals in terms of managing work-life situations, since different departments may handle the same issues differently. However, in the two departments (biology and social sciences) that I studied, there was virtually no difference in support or application of measures that hinder or support work-life integration. This finding was contrary to the subculture described by Kuh & Whitt in “The Invisible Tapestry” (1988) and Becher & Trowler (2001) in Academic Tribes and Territories describing the subculture as unique to its individual discipline. However, Kuh and Whitt (1988) in the same book also point out that “Disciplinary cultures are also affected by their institutional context” (p. 79), and further suggested that in a “small liberal arts college” faculty of a small discipline may have fewer opportunities to interact with others of their own academic backgrounds, with the result being that those faculty members may develop a stronger connection to the institution than to their academic discipline (p.79), thereby deemphasizing disciplinary differences.

More recent research has also found that work-life integration does not differ by academic discipline, supporting the finding of my study that work-life integration does not differ based on discipline (Mukhtar, 2012; Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hansen, 2009). The question requires further study to determine if faculty experiences managing work and life integration differ by discipline and institutional type.

No one with whom I spoke brings children to work on a regular basis. Children come to work only in an emergency, when regular daycare arrangements have failed. The lack of policies on
the issue of children in the workplace creates an atmosphere where faculty who bring their children to work often feel guilty or paranoid about having the children in the office. Some faculty members describe a situation where the department chair does not give permission per se, but also does not prohibit the presence of children. Thus, there is a passive permission granted. The topic is not discussed publicly and issues are not articulated except among peers.

Historically, the administration has avoided involvement in the issue of work-life integration and all requests from the faculty for support have been “stonewalled” or flatly rejected. From the faculty’s standpoint, the current administration is too preoccupied with the competition for enrollment and solving financial problems to even discuss work-life integration at this time. Faculty members I spoke with seemed to feel that the administration remains silent on the issue of work-life balance because they are in no position to tackle the issue at this time.

**The Link to Identity Theory**

Faculty have conflicting identities, which compete for prominence as individuals struggle to verify their roles as parents and professionals, spouses and faculty, caretaker and professor. These identities compete for time and attention with each other. Many of the faculty I interviewed told stories of trying to resolve their role as parent with their role as faculty member. Remember Nina’s story, the professor who taught her class with her baby fast asleep in a carrier at the front of the classroom? Or the mother who thought twice about leaving when her daughter’s school called her to pick the child up? Many (eight) of those interviewed also expressed their goal of trying to find equilibrium between their role as spouse and their role as college professor. I remember the professor who is committed to spending time with his wife on the weekends, as they participate together in community service. The examples go on as a testimony to the conflict that faculty experience as they juggle their life roles in an academic
Faculty members at Waverly Hills have experienced changing role expectations with additional responsibilities added to the faculty job description. Increased demands include extending the faculty work day and expanded job responsibilities. For example, the college offers day and night classes, and full-time tenured faculty are expected to teach classes both during the day and at night. So, in practice faculty may teach an 8 o’clock class in the morning and not finish their day until 9:30 at night, only to be back “on deck” bright and early to teach a morning class again. Because some departments are very small, scheduling faculty to avoid this extension of the teaching day becomes problematic since alternative resources may not exist.

In addition, because the college is small and the emphasis on enrollment and student life is great, faculty are expected to participate in extracurricular events, such as admissions open houses, alumnae meetings, and student activities. At Waverly Hills College, faculty are fully responsible for the development of online courses. The consensus of the faculty interviewed said that this course development proves to be very time consuming, because they may be doing this online development for the first time.

Faculty members also have an obligation to participate on committees. Committee work usually includes gathering data and submitting reports and papers that may or may not be used by the committee. Several faculty members described completing reports, only to discover that they were never used. The faculty interviewed described this as increasing their workload with no tangible benefit to the college. And almost every faculty member interviewed complained of students being more “needy” for the professor’s time and attention than ever before, and less prepared for the academic rigor of college. All these factors have added to the faculty work load at Waverly Hills. And the faculty seem to do more and more with less and less capacity.

**Departmental Support**
The greatest level of support for faculty who struggle to balance personal and professional life comes from faculty members’ individual departments. Almost all of those interviewed, with the exception of one, claimed that when it came to schedule flexibility, childcare, a collegial atmosphere, and a supportive environment, the department chair plays the lead role. Leaving their fellow faculty members to play an important role also in creating a supportive workplace. This finding of the importance of individual departments in helping faculty achieve work and life integration, is supported by the literature (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Hammer et al., 2009) mentioned in the section entitled, The Purpose of the Study, in Chapter I.

**Disciplinary Affiliation**

Between the two disciplinary groups who were interviewed for this study, faculty in the biological sciences (hard -pure), versus those in the social sciences and humanities (soft pure) disciplines reported no differences in their experiences facilitating work-life integration. This actually surprised me, since the literature (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Kuh & Whitt, 1988) suggested that there would be a difference. I am not sure if the small size of the faculty contributed to this more homogenized experience handling work and life demands. My finding did not substantiate Becher’s and Trowler’s (2001) thesis that different academic disciplines, for example, biology and the social sciences, possess different cultural characteristics that support work-life balance differently.

As previously noted, this finding was contrary to the subculture described by Kuh & Whitt in “The Invisible Tapestry” (1988) and Becher & Trowler, 2001 in Academic Tribes and Territories describing the subculture as unique to its individual discipline. More recent research has confirmed the findings presented here: that in the case of the biology and social sciences departments at Waverly Hills College, work-life integration does not differ by academic discipline (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hansen, 2009; Mukhtar, 2012). The question
requires further study to determine if department subcultures differ regarding work-life integration based on academic discipline and institutional type.

**Business Orientation**

Waverly Hills College has undergone a radical transition in recent years, moving from a wholly liberal-arts based curriculum with a high focus on traditional academics to a health sciences and vocationally centered curriculum. The college now functions with a business orientation, with the objective being to attract and increase enrollment. The college still seeks to maintain high academic standards, but now needs to meet consumer expectations in a market-driven environment. Continuous change is the order of the day and it appears that this will continue (Finkelstein, 2003). The number of tenured faculty is shrinking, while the number of staff employed in administrative functions at the college has increased (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006) by 20%. There are a small number of part-time faculty members at Waverly Hills compared to other institutions.

**Economic Considerations**

The problem for Waverly Hills, as for other small private colleges who have small endowments and little government funding, is that their operating expenses are mainly derived from student tuition. This makes them more susceptible to market pressures and student demands for specific courses and programs. In the interviews I conducted at the college, faculty reported that the college is constantly “under the gun” to attract students to the school. The school must constantly be responsive to changing market demand for the latest “hot” majors and programs, This “mandatory market responsiveness” causes faculty to be left in a swirling pool of continuous change, as they constantly shift gears, develop new courses, and seemingly have less time for their personal lives.

**Struggle for “Balance”**
In the absence of policies that support work-life integration, faculty find creative ways to problem solve. They devise alternatives by bringing the kids to work, scheduling one day free to stay home to babysit, and watch each other’s children on campus. In the resolution of one problem another is created. In my interviews with faculty at Waverly Hills, it became apparent to me that a lot of energy is spent by faculty on accommodating child care needs, and faculty with kids always have their full attention divided. This detracts from the total amount of time left to think about teaching and research. They are a dedicated group of professionals whose energy could be better used in academic pursuits, free of worry over childcare.

**Administration’s role in Work-Life Integration**

The administration’s influence on work-life integration sets the stage and creates the environment in which faculty work-life integration takes place at Waverly Hills. During the course of my interviews with faculty at the college, I found that there has been a recent effort to support work-life integration at the school. For example, an expanded paid maternity leave policy has been recently instituted. As I interviewed 14 faculty members, many of whom had children or were of child-bearing age, I found that most of those interviewed had either little knowledge or no knowledge of the policy. Some faculty members spoke about getting “one-off deals” regarding their time off for maternity, as the policy seemed to be administered one-on-one. There was a general air of confusion about the specifics of the policy or the existence of a new maternity policy.

**Communication Void**

Several faculty members told me that they were unaware of any policy regarding maternity. My observation is that there is a communication void at Waverly Hills. This may be due to faculty members who don’t need the policy don’t ask about it. But it appears that the administration has not taken advantage of communicating good news to the faculty. A positive
change, like providing paid maternity leave, has not been spoken about across the employee base, thus missing an opportunity to put out a positive message regarding work-life integration at Waverly Hills.

**Cultural Influences on Work-Life Integration**

The current administration has rejected requests for a daycare facility on campus, citing liability issues and space as two reasons for rejection. The faculty seems to find the current administration’s position on this issue more understandable, since they are more keenly aware of the financial and business challenges facing the administration. They understand the push for increased enrollment, revenue growth, increased charitable giving, and continued survival of the institution.

Through the course of the interviews, more than half of the faculty members spoke about the prior administration. Across the board, the prior administration was spoken of in very negative terms regarding work-life integration. The message conveyed by a majority of the faculty was that the prior administration was completely non-supportive of work-life issues and discouraged any conversation on the topic. The prior administration would not entertain suggestions and flatly rejected requests for an on-campus daycare facility. At least two faculty members described the prior administration as unwilling to entertain any discussion regarding work family or work-life integration. One person said such conversations were “stonewalled”.

Lack of communication and action on work-life integration issues convey a message to faculty that work-life integration is the faculty’s problem and not the institution’s. Literally everyone I spoke with believed that it was impossible to have on-campus daycare at Waverly Hills. At the same time, there was no discussion about college support for daycare off campus, either, in the form of subsidies or referral services for faculty. Faculty members seem to understand the administration’s position on establishing an on-campus daycare: that it is not
tenable due to insurance costs, legal issues, liability, and lack of space. Yet, when I asked every interviewee, “If you had the power to do anything here regarding work-life integration, what would it be?” daycare was almost unilaterally (13) the response given.

Cultural influences, like values and group behaviors, run deep. The workplace norms, including a lack of transparency at Waverly Hills, present a problem for work-life integration. Silence and secrecy create an environment where faculty are forced to spend a lot of time finding out what is allowable and how things work in regard to work-life integration. This lack of transparency causes confusion about balancing work and life demands and creates uncertainty on the faculty’s part regarding time off for birth of a child and childcare afterwards. Several faculty members related that when they joined their department, they did not know how the birth of a child would be received by the department chair. One was pleasantly surprised to find that the chair and members of the department were supportive of the faculty member.

The prior administration was openly opposed to work-life integration and rejected the idea that a faculty member should acknowledge their role of parent and professor, denying the role of family as part of a faculty member’s responsibility. The prior administration saw the role of faculty as totally separate from the role of parent and wanted the two worlds to operate in isolation from each other. One professor who had been at the school for a long time remembered having two back-up baby sitters and would never have dreamed of bringing her daughter to campus to be watched by a colleague while she taught a class. This long-time faculty member was shocked and rather critical of the younger faculty who brought children to “the office.”

Cultural norms have a strong influence and a long life when it comes to the influence they have on individuals’ attitudes and behaviors in an organizational setting (Schein, 2004).

In the present, the college has enacted a new policy to address paid time off for maternity, but did not publicize it to the very audience it is designed to serve, with the result being that the
faculty interviewed were mostly unaware of this support to help them manage their work and personal lives. When people became aware of this policy, they were both happy and cynical, as well as surprised and critical about the lack of open communication on the issue. Cultural norms take time to shift, and change is influenced when senior leaders openly encourage and communicate institutional change.

These findings support the ideas espoused by Becher (1994), Gerovich (2006), and Ruderman (2005) that understanding the context and culture within which faculty members manage competing work and life demands is essential to resolving this conflict.

**Interpreting the Relationships Using Grounded Theory Methodology**

Two relationships emerged during the analysis of the data that I believe are worth mentioning because of their connections to the feelings of faculty being “on their own” when it comes to integrating work and life demands in their workplace. They are contemplations and speculations about the “communication void” and the isolation faculty perceive, both of which were mentioned previously in this chapter.

The first is that faculty members’ ability to integrate and balance work and life demands is shaped by one’s individual role identity (tied to self-perceptions and professional image) and the cultural mores and social interactions they experience within their individual department and larger faculty work group (environment of the college). Role identities can come into conflict when two or more important role identities are activated simultaneously and in the same environment, such as the role of the parent activated simultaneously with the faculty role at work (Burke & Stets, 2009). Resolutions to role conflict are mediated individually but can be assisted by support from the department and larger work group, but often aren’t.

The second is the cultural message regarding work-life integration and balance that are
communicated by “omission from the conversation.” Work-life integration and balance are not openly discussed by the administration of the college or within the departments, instead behind closed doors. If the faculty and administration don’t openly talk about work-life integration and the administration fails to acknowledge the problem, they ignore an important issue for the faculty and the college. If the topic isn’t discussed, the message is that the institution doesn’t deal with “issues” related to work-life balance, implying that faculty are “on their own” to manage it.

When the institution does not acknowledge or support work-life integration and balance, therefore denying the existence of a problem by avoiding the topic, the college confirms the existence of the problem. Silence doesn’t suppress the presence of a problem. Faculty recognize the silence and understand that work-life integration and balance is not on the agenda for the college and correctly conclude that they are “on their own” to manage it.

Self-perceptions, role identity, and cultural and social mores of the work group shape faculty experiences managing and integrating work and life demands. For a more complete list of interpretations of the data and the connections and relationships they entail, please see Appendix C at the end of this document.

**Contributions to the Study of Work-Life Integration**

This study assesses faculty work-life integration in terms of culturally defined subgroups (academic disciplines), individually and socially constructed role identities, and workplace norms. The study contributes to the topic of faculty work and life integration in the following ways.

The study found that at Waverly Hills College faculty experience managing work and life integration, as previously reported in the Findings section of this chapter, did not vary according to faculty members’ discipline affiliation. This was very surprising to me, as I expected that in
terms of managing work and life demands, faculty experiences would differ based on membership in one discipline or another, either biology or the social sciences.

In their book, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, Becher and Trowler (2001) maintained that the distinctions between disciplines discussed in the first edition of the book (1989) were still relevant in the academic establishment at the time that the second edition was released in 2001. It seemed to make sense that different disciplines would possess different cultural norms when it came to work-life integration, and that one disciplinary department might offer a more hospitable climate for faculty balancing work and life demands than another.

In Becher’s preface to the first edition, the author explained that he interviewed over 220 academics in 12 disciplines at 18 institutions in two countries (2001, p. xi). He said that in the research for the study, “science-related investigations outnumber by about two to one those in the humanities, social sciences and applied fields, taken together” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. xi). With a preponderance of information coming from scientifically oriented informants, many with strong connections to their disciplinary roots, it is not surprising that Becher concluded that faculty ties to disciplines were strong and distinct.

The separate “silos” frequently found at larger research universities (Lester, 2015), where separate departments function autonomously, may support and encourage disciplinary differences. The more homogeneous disciplinary culture found at Waverly Hills may be a result of the small size of the faculty and their departments, as well as the increased frequency of their interactions across departments. Perhaps the small size of the faculty is indicative of a more homogenous faculty culture. Moreover, Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) suggestion that at small liberal arts colleges, where disciplinary departments may be small, the faculty may have a stronger tie to the institution, deemphasizing faculty connections to their individual disciplines. More research on this topic is needed to determine if the size and type of the institution is important in
determining disciplinary differences that may impact work and life integration.

Second, the study’s findings contribute to the discourse on the importance of role identity as a culturally constructed model for faculty behavior. It demonstrates the institution’s influence in defining the expectations for faculty in terms of managing work and life demands with the administration setting the bar for expected behavior and performance. The study found that what was *spoken* regarding setting the standard for the faculty regarding integrating work and personal life was very important. But what was left *unspoken* by the administration regarding the faculty’s role in work-life integration was equally as powerful.

As a result, in the absence of information, the “stories” of the culture of the prior administration, for example how requests for daycare were handled, become the benchmarks for current discussions on the topic. And the stories become the legends that shaped faculty thinking on the topic.

Third, faculty’s identification with the various work roles they claim is important and inevitable. Resolving role conflict occurs when demands come from two or more different identities that place disparate demands on a single individual. Role identity can mitigate conflict if an individual has a pre-established hierarchy of perceived importance of each role with which they identify. Often this hierarchy is defined through workplace norms; knowledge of what is expected or acceptable in the work environment as communicated in social interactions or by events.

Sometimes the conflicts can be resolved with the help of colleagues, informally offering assistance, or by the chairperson who provides alternatives or solutions to help conflict resolution. (This presupposes that the chair has knowledge of the problem.) If the chairperson has no knowledge of the issue, the conflict is left to be dealt with by the individual. If this person
is afraid or unable to ask for help, the results can be a disaster. From both the employee and chairperson’s point of view, ignoring a problem will not solve it.

Fourth, when messages about work-life integration and balance are omitted from the conversation, a communication void occurs. This is an “omission from the conversation” of work-life balance by the administration of the college or the department. If the faculty and administration don’t openly talk about work-life integration and the administration fails to acknowledge the problem, administrators are ignoring an important opportunity to engage in problem solving. If the topic isn’t discussed, the message is that the institution doesn’t deal with these kinds of “issues” related to work-life balance, implying that faculty are “on their own” to manage it. At a minimum, the administration runs the risk of misinformation getting out in the workplace, and at best, omission from the conversation delivers a clear message that work-life balance is not their problem and that the faculty’s interpretation is correct: they are “on their own” to manage it.

**Recommendations**

Further research can benefit the advancement of work-life integration in a small private college like Waverly Hills. However, some steps are achievable for this school in the short term.

1. The faculty must start an open dialogue with the administration so that their needs and concerns regarding integrating their professional and personal lives can be made known to the administration.

2. The administration must participate in the open dialogue with the faculty, or attempts to resolve issues will fail. The human resources department must partner with the faculty to assist in making this dialogue take place.
3. The administration and human resources at the college should publicize the “new” maternity policy so that faculty and others are aware of it and use it.

4. The administration and college human resources department must introduce some referral services and resource guides that offer support for both people with children and those without children who may have responsibilities for aging parents, ailing siblings, or partners.

5. The administration should educate faculty, students, and alumnae on what the college is doing to promote work and life integration.

6. The faculty must cultivate support for on campus daycare with the administration, alumnae, and students. Many of the students are part-time students, attend classes in the evenings, and are working parents. Faculty and part-time students will benefit from a daycare center or referral service.

7. The college should provide a subsidy for faculty to use daycare, either on or off campus.

8. The administration must open up communication and transparency regarding work-life integration.

9. The college should hold education forums on work-life integration issues, such as time management and parenting issues. These could be sponsored by administration.

10. The college can strengthen the power of departments in work-life integration, by showcasing best practices of the departments that support and lead in that area. Again, the administration should lead this effort.
11. The departments should be charged with examining the structure within their control, especially the efficient scheduling of classes, to determine where better allocation of assets may be possible. They should determine if hours on campus can be clustered closer together to avoid long gaps between classes.

12. The administration should make policies known to the college community explaining them and their use in handbooks, on the college website, and at meetings. Results should be published.

13. The administration should conduct a biannual survey on work-life integration, the purpose of which will be to test the climate of work-life integration on campus.

14. The college should hold online conferences in the form of work-life balance forums that allow faculty to share ideas and practices on the subject. Bring in subject matter experts to chair these forums.

15. The administration should use a professional day care provider to set up and run the campus daycare. The college could explore the possibility of providing training via internships for some of the early childhood education students with opportunities to work in the daycare facility. A rigorous application and acceptance process would be put in place to ensure high quality candidates for the center.

**Future Research**

Future research that looks at other small, private colleges’ approaches to work-life integration can help to determine the extent of the problem for faculty in this area of higher education and will give Waverly Hills comparative information on their peer group. Qualitative methods can be employed to determine the nature and substance of work-life integration at other
small, private institutions and what policies and initiatives are most effective in moving towards a positive result for faculty and the institution.

At this particular institution, continuing research could include the administration of an annual employee engagement survey to measure the progress of work-life integration for faculty members at this school. Focus groups made up of faculty members could problem solve with the administration to find workable solutions to the issues facing the college, including integrating work and personal life. Subject matter experts could be utilized as a resource to help the administration plan and effect change in the area of work-life integration for faculty members and all employees of the college.

**Conclusions and Final Thoughts on Work-Life Integration and Identity Theory**

At Waverly Hills, the pressures for increased enrollment, revenue, and charitable donations drive competition with other schools to attract students and to keep up with the latest hot programs that are in demand by students. The market-driven forces that shape the administration’s business strategies result in a frequent academic “shifting of gears.” This frequent changing of direction in order to meet the expectations of current and prospective students interferes with the faculty’s ability to hone a program’s content and delivery, because it is constantly either being replaced or revamped. Changing priorities and the introduction of new ways to deliver the academic product, such as online courses, living learning communities, etc., all put additional demands on faculty members that push their own personal resources to the limits.

The administration, for its part, is dedicated to delivering quality education to the students it serves, and at the same time must meet the needs of the marketplace in which they operate. They must ensure that Waverly Hills makes the U.S. News and World Report’s list of
top schools, and they must work to maintain academic standards in order to attract new enrollment. Waverly Hills must stay on top of innovation related to academic programs that are in demand by students, like forensic science, genetic engineering, nurse practitioner, MBAs, and nursing. They must also meet the needs of students who want more traditional programs, such as Masters in Education and Biology.

The new administration is pressured to turn in academic and business results and to ensure the smooth operation of the school. The administration has done a good job, as reported by the faculty, in terms of communicating the challenges that the school faces. This is a positive for the school and the faculty. But the dialogue must be expanded to include the quality of faculty life and issues affecting successful work-life integration.

The faculty is sympathetic to the pressures faced by the new administration and the financial concerns that drive these pressures. In this sense, the faculty are willing to be patient and do not expect immediate solutions to the problem of work-life integration. The faculty seem to trust that the new administration is doing all they are able to meet the challenges of a market-driven environment. And they are almost embarrassed to ask for anything. This avoidance of a confrontation regarding the issue of integrating work and personal life can never result in resolution. Years of cultural “stonewalling” by the prior administration has conditioned the faculty to avoid speaking up on the matter of work-life integration. The faculty would be well-advised to consult with the administration on their concerns and try to engage respected faculty leaders who have credibility with the administration to open a dialogue on the issue of work-life integration for faculty and employees of the college.

In regard to work-life integration, the administration has not provided adequate communication regarding the school’s support for faculty work and life issues. Better
communication regarding work and life issues needs to be undertaken by the administration, so that as policies are introduced they are publicized to their faculty constituents and other employees of the college. An environment of open communication and exchange of information needs to allow for public announcements and discussion of the progress the school makes regarding work and life integration, as this will elevate the school’s reputation as an employer of choice and will improve Waverly Hills’ status in the marketplace as an institution that understands and supports current culture. A women’s college that educates students for careers should support men and women who have professional careers and demanding personal lives.

In the modern day world of academic work, as in many other professions, the ability to balance personal and professional demands is not only desirable, it is a necessity. Identity theory provides the researcher and the faculty member with a clearer way in which to see the problem of conflicting roles inherent in the modern day work place. Throughout this paper I have used the terms work-life balance and work-life integration interchangeably. What I have found is that identity theory supports the idea that work-life demands are not equalized in the true meaning of balance, because it is difficult if not impossible to achieve a perfect balance between our work and life demands. If we did achieve such a state, it would only be momentary because the demands from both sides change continuously month to month, week to week, and moment to moment.

According to identity theory, we identify with and claim as our own more than one role at a time, and it is the hierarchy of roles that allows one to take precedence over another at any given time. When we claim a single role, the hierarchy of the role will be subject to a hierarchy of importance that varies from one situation to the next. Individuals perform a role in “an effort
to maintain an idealized conception of themselves,” which is guided by their role identity (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 39). McCall and Simmons advocated for the idea that “individuals typically claim more than one role identity” and that these multiple identities are organized into a hierarchy of importance within oneself, (Burke & Stets, 2009).

When we claim multiple roles, like faculty member and parent, we now have two roles each vying for position over the other. This conflict is one that is changing continuously throughout the day. This conflict is ongoing, not static, and is tied to the situations in which one can find oneself in the course of a day. Multiple identities and changing situations throughout the day will cause our roles to compete for our time and attention. If I am a faculty member I am focused on my job as teacher, but a call from my child’s school informing me that my child is ill will undoubtedly cause my priorities to shift. As my role as a parent enters into a situation, my role as a faculty member may come into conflict with my role as a parent. My faculty role, which was prominent in my classroom, now becomes less so as I am called upon to act in a different role. As a parent, I need to pick my sick child up from school. When work and life intersect, both of my identities will be activated. Meanings and identities for each role will often come into conflict. I feel obligated to my students, but my child needs me now. Conflict occurs when both identities are activated. The salience of the specific role and my commitment to it will be put to the test.

The use of the term work-life balance implies separate and equal domains of roles. This separation is difficult to realize in the world today. I am out to lunch with my children and I get a text or e-mail from a student, which requires an immediate answer. A separation of roles is very difficult if not impossible to achieve, especially in light of technology.
The term integration comes closer to reality when we talk about work and life priorities. As our roles shift during the day and different roles are called to the fore at different times during the day, we are continuously weaving a fabric of different textures. Therefore, it is my belief that we should talk about work-life integration rather than balance, when we talk about the competing demands from our personal and professional lives.

As mentioned before, there is not a distinct line between where work leaves off and life picks up. We can imagine an intersection where one role intersects with another. The conflict does resolve at the intersection, as one identity will assume prominence over the other. However, this resolution is temporary and sometimes fleeting. As we’ve suggested, the intersection can be virtual and not necessarily a physical intersection. The faculty member is worried about her sick father while she is administering a test to her class. Her role as daughter challenges her teaching role for prominence.

The literature on the subject of work-life balance and integration reveal a growing number of schools that provide support for faculty members who are managing work and life demands. Many of the larger top-rated institutions, like those in the California public system, provide support for their faculty members who have children, according to the HERI survey. Many of those schools have large endowments or are publically funded institutions. Smaller private schools, like Waverly Hills, need to find creative ways, such as rallying alumnae, corporate, and community entities, to support their faculty members as they perform their roles as academic leaders and members of society.

Faculty members at Waverly Hills College need support to help them manage the challenge of work-life integration, as their personal and professional roles intersect in different situations throughout the day. Faculty members at Waverly Hills, as suggested before in this
paper, need to engage in an open dialogue with the administration of the college to make their concerns, issues, and possible solutions known to the leaders of the school. The academics who participated in the study are dedicated to the college. They represent a very talented and accomplished group of individuals and are surely capable of partnering with the administration to find creative solutions to this important issue. Resolution of this conflict will be a win for the college administration and for the faculty at Waverly Hills. Successful work-life integration ensures the quality of one’s life and the effectiveness of one’s work for the benefit of the college and the students it serves.
Reference List


## Appendix A

### Study Participants Demographic Profile

#### Hard-Pure - disciplinary group includes Biological Science

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<th>Children</th>
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Since I did not specifically ask the participants’ ages or if they were married or had children, the information presented here is the result of information gained from their responses during the interview process.
Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. My plan for our interview with you is to discuss how you manage the competing demands of your work as a faculty member here at the college with the demands of your personal life. As I mentioned previously, I am a graduate student at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, conducting this research as part of the work for my dissertation.

As I mentioned previously, our conversation will be digitally recorded and I will be taking notes; however, everything you say will be remain strictly confidential. When I transcribe today’s conversation I will use a pseudonym to refer to your comments and to the college. No references will be made to either your name or the name of the institution in any of the work that is produced as a result of this research.

If necessary for clarification or more detail after today’s meeting, may I come back to you at a later time for that purpose? I will endeavor to be respectful of your time in all instances.

Thanks for agreeing to participate in my study.

1. What is your understanding and interpretation of the term work-life balance? On a personal level, what does the term mean to you?
2. From your personal perspective, what are the most important demands of your job? And what are the most important demands of your personal life? How do you negotiate meeting those demands in both areas of your life? (work and personal areas)
3. Can you please describe your background in academe? When did you join the faculty at this college? Was this your first faculty position? If you previously worked at another institution, what was that like?
4. How did you decide to become a member of the faculty in higher education?
5. I know that you are a member of the________ department. What is your discipline or field of study and why did you select that area to concentrate your studies?
6. How would you describe the culture of this college? In regard to work-life balance, how would you describe the culture here?
7. How does the fact that this is a women’s college influence the rules and the culture here?
8. How would you describe the culture of the department in which you work? In what ways do you think the culture of your department or discipline is different than other disciplines (either here or at other institutions)? How are different disciplinary cultures similar?
9. Can you please describe your own personal experiences managing the demands between your work and personal life? What kinds of support have you experienced (inside or outside of the institution) that have assisted you in managing the demands of your professional and personal life?

10. What are your experiences managing conflict between the demands of your work and the demands of your personal life? What have been the sources of the conflicts (example: childcare, eldercare, policy issues, teaching schedule, publishing, supervisor’s expectations, peer attitudes) that you have experienced?

11. If you were giving an orientation for new faculty members, what advice regarding work-life balance would you share with them about managing work and life demands within your department? What advice would you give them regarding managing work and life demands within the larger institutional setting?
Appendix C

Concepts: The following analytical interpretations, derived from the researcher’s analysis of the data, provide part of the structure for the findings and conclusions noted in Chapter VI of the paper.

1. Each faculty member’s ability to integrate and balance work-life demands is shaped by one’s individual role identity (tied to self-perceptions and professional image) and the cultural mores and social interactions they experience within their individual department and larger faculty work group.

2. Identities can come into conflict when two important role identities are activated in the same role environment, for example, the role of parent activated simultaneously with the faculty role at work.

3. Resolutions to role conflict are mediated individually. They can be assisted by support from the department and larger workgroup, but often aren’t.

4. Individuals are “on their own” to resolve work-life conflict when the department or larger workgroup does not acknowledge or support work-life integration and balance. If it isn’t discussed, the message is that the institution does not deal with “issues” related to work-life integration, implying that faculty is “on their own” to “manage it.”

5. Cultural messages regarding work-life integration and balance are communicated by “omission from the conversation.” If we don’t openly talk about work-life integration and balance, and the administration fails to acknowledge the problem, we are ignoring an important issue for faculty.

6. Work-life integration and balance have been a topic that is not openly discussed by the administration of the college or openly within departments, except behind closed doors. Time to bring this important issue out into the light of day and talk about it.

7. Self-perceptions, role identity, and cultural and social mores of the workgroup shape faculty experiences in managing and integrating work and life demands.

8. The college can play a critical role in supporting work and life balance and integration by talking about it and providing faculty with tools to manage it.

9. Avoidance doesn’t make the problem go away. Just because we don’t discuss the issues around work-life integration and balance, doesn’t make it go away.

10. Silence on the issue of work-life integration in faculty lives only focuses our attention on it. Silence won’t suppress the presence of a problem.

11. Omission is a consequence of denial.
12. When we try to deny the existence of a problem by avoidance, we confirm that a problem exists.

13. Work-life integration and balance is not crisis-driven, so it can be comfortably ignored.

14. Faculty members don’t want to “rock the boat.”

15. Further study would help to clarify why the issue is not on the agenda for the school. The groups that support work-life integration could be identified.