Viewbook Marketing of Women's Colleges

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A Dissertation submitted to

The Faculty of
The Graduate School of Education and Human Development
of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

January 19, 2018

Dissertation directed by

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Viewbook Marketing of Women's Colleges

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Dedication

For Alex

Abstract of Dissertation

Viewbook Marketing of Women's Colleges

Over the past several decades, women's colleges have increasingly become coeducational or have closed completely due to declining enrollment. With just 37 women's colleges remaining in the United States as of Fall 2016, the researcher explored how these institutions marketed to prospective students using viewbooks. This qualitative dissertation explored research questions pertaining to representations of organizational identity, academic and social life, benefits and challenges of single-sex education, and the construction of gender within the viewbooks.

Using qualitative content analysis, the researcher analyzed viewbooks from the women's colleges to understand how they addressed organizational identity, academic life, social life, single-sex education, and gender. This dissertation utilized the conceptual framework of Albert and Whetten's (1985) work on organizational identity to ground the analysis. Using a critical lens, the researcher sought to make meaning of common content themes across viewbooks and critique the implications of this content.

Ultimately the viewbook functions as a form of bricolage, where the edited version of the colleges' offerings is presented to appeal to as many students as possible. Through this, the viewbooks from different institutions appear very similar, and the institutions promote features that are common among the majority of higher education institutions such as study abroad, internship opportunities, and academic programs. In the role as readers of viewbooks, students act as consumers who weigh the offerings and presentation of the colleges to decide whether to consider a particular college further with additional research or a campus visit. Despite the fact that this institutional type is

struggling to recruit enough students each year, not every college promoted the benefits of single-sex education within the viewbooks. With all of the students in the viewbooks being female, the representation of the gender of students was mostly limited to students who appear traditionally feminine. There were a few students who presented as nontraditionally female, who had short hair and traditionally masculine clothing. Throughout this analysis, the colleges in this study are not acting as enough of advocates for the women's college institutional type by omitting or not giving sufficient weight to discussions about their institutional mission as a women's college. If these institutions are not able to recruit a sufficient amount of students in the coming years, it is inevitable that there will be additional women's colleges that shift missions towards coeducation or close completely.

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Chapter 1

Higher education marketing has become essential for institutions to create demand, recruit top talent, and promote their brand. In the quest for recruiting prospective students, almost all institutions turn to the use of digital or print viewbooks, a form of brochure, to introduce prospective students to the institution. Enrollment marketing seeks to increase interest in a particular college, and viewbooks are a critical piece within colleges' marketing portfolio. Despite increased marketing efforts, women's colleges have seen declines in enrollment. There are currently 37 women's colleges in the United States, down from 298 in 1960 (Tifft, 1990), and these institutions are limited in the students they can recruit due to selectivity by gender. This dissertation sought to understand how today's women's colleges use viewbooks to recruit prospective students, and represent their institutions.

Context

In the global market for higher education, American institutions of higher education rely on marketing to recruit top students. Due to the commercialized nature of higher education, enhancements in marketing have led to heightened competition for prospective students (McDonough, 1994). As student demand in the global higher education marketplace has increased, marketing and recruitment efforts have turned international, where institutions are no longer competing on a local or domestic level, but across nations as well (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

Spending in higher education marketing amounts to $10 billion per year, with institutions typically spending a decent percentage of tuition revenue solely for recruitment purposes (Katzman, 2016). Four-year private colleges spend $2,232 at the

median to recruit a single undergraduate student (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2016). Marketing efforts are still invested in print publications, with nearly one-quarter of marketing budgets going to print publications (Lipman Hearne, 2010). Throughout marketing materials, higher education is often advertised as a form of economic currency that can be used to obtain employment post-graduation, instead of as a life-changing educational experience (Gibbs, 2007). Marketing has made the student recruitment and enrollment process more competitive, and institutions have to demonstrate to prospective students why they should attend a particular college.

Due to the commercialization of higher education, students are increasingly viewing the culmination of their educational experience as a credential, with personal economic benefit. In Hartley and Morphew's (2008) study about viewbooks, they found that viewbooks often framed their purpose as helping students achieve their personal aspirations. They argued that viewbooks are selling to prospective students, "this product will make you happy, meet your every need, help you succeed- even make you rich" (p. 688). When colleges emphasize the personal benefits throughout the viewbooks, they downplay the public benefits of higher education such as creating educated citizens and promoting community service. If the viewbooks are marketing to students by playing up the personal benefits of higher education, the students begin to take on this role as a consumer of higher education seeking the best possible return on investment.

Branding, image, and marketing contribute to student perceptions of a particular institution (Sung & Yang, 2008). Institutional branding can include institution name, logo, color scheme, reputation, and other elements used in marketing (Duarte, Alves & Raposos, 2010). Additionally, the physical campus of the institution, and geographic

location of the institution play into the institutions' external image and these factors are significant to prospective students when they select a college (Ali-Choudhury, Yang & Kinsey, 2009). Marketing is now central to institutions' enrollment management strategy, and admissions offices use a variety of media to recruit prospective students. Higher education institutions advertise using websites, social media, viewbooks, commercials during football bowl games (Clayton, Cavanagh & Hettche, 2012; Harris, 2009; Tobolowsky & Lowery, 2006), and other commercials (Johnson, 2010). With the many aspects of branding and marketing, universities need to recognize that identity elements such as logo, location, and advertisements affect prospective students' perceptions of an institution. If colleges seek to use a unified message to interest prospective students, the colleges' branding and marketing efforts must be coordinated towards this purpose.

Since colleges have invested a lot of resources into marketing and brand identity efforts, scholars have begun to examine how higher education institutions use marketing to engage prospective students. Viewbooks, the brochures mailed to prospective students, are the most common form of higher education marketing, even in a digital age (Oleson, 2012). Several researchers have used content analysis to understand the subject of these publications (Hite & Yearwood, 2001; Hartley & Morphew, 2008). They serve as an introduction to the institutions for students who may be unfamiliar, and are created with the goal of sparking student interest in the college for their college search. Since viewbooks are intended to increase campus visits or applications, there can be a disconnect between how an institution is portrayed and the lived experiences of students at a particular institution.

Prior studies have included a broad analysis of viewbooks (Hartley & Morphew, 2008), comparison of top- and bottom-ranked institutions (Klassen, 2000), deep-dive into liberal arts colleges (Ragan & McMillan, 1989; Urciuoli, 2014), exploration of faith-based institutions (Tolbert, 2014), or diversity analyses (Osei-Kofi & Torres, 2015; Osei-Kofi, Torres & Lui, 2013; Pippert, Essenburg & Matchett, 2013). These studies have used content analysis to reveal the messages colleges communicate to prospective students. Liberal arts institutions explicitly identified their niche in the higher education landscape, marking large public institutions as the antithesis of a liberal education (Ragan & McMillan, 1989). At faith-based institutions, Christianity was a larger theme in the viewbooks than the university websites (Klassen, 2000). When looking at the racial composition of the students in viewbooks, African American students were overrepresented when compared with the actual student body, and Hispanic students were significantly underrepresented (Pippert et al., 2013). This overrepresentation of African American students was likely done as a way to show how diverse a particular institution is. Additionally, some researchers have found that viewbooks are constructed with a primary audience of White males, and images of diversity appear to exist to recruit more White students (Osei-Kofi et al., 2013).

Viewbook analysis is a fairly new area of study within higher education research. Women's colleges serve a unique function in the higher education landscape by granting access to higher education for women in the past, and being dedicated to serve female students for the careers of the future. However, despite this group's historical significance and potential vulnerability with regards to enrollment, only one prior study examined how women's colleges represent themselves to prospective students. Women's

colleges and marketing practices have likely changed quite a bit in the two decades since this study, and this dissertation explored the current state of women's colleges' viewbook marketing.

More research is needed on how prospective students utilize viewbooks in their college search process. Armstrong and Lumsden (1999) conducted the most recent study exploring this topic, and higher education marketing has evolved a lot since that time. This article referenced a previous study by the Carnegie Foundation Survey of the Transition of High School to College, which stated that college publications were ranked second to college visits as the most important source of information. The students in this study were more familiar with the University of North Texas's printed marketing materials such as a brochure and booklet, and were less familiar with the institution's videotape. Results were mixed about the usefulness of the viewbook in students' college searches since some students found the viewbooks helpful as a source of information, whereas other students found it less useful and viewed it solely as a piece of advertising. They used the images within the viewbooks to envision their life at a particular college, and were disappointed to see unrealistic and outdated images because they had difficulty imaging themselves at the institution. However, all of the participants in the study were current students at the university so this perception that the viewbooks contained outdated and unrealistic materials did not deter them from attending.

Viewbooks can serve as an introduction to a prospective student and highlight their unique qualities to appeal to a wide variety of prospective students. If a student's interest has been piqued by the contents of the viewbook that could prompt the student to visit the college's website to learn more or even schedule a campus visit. The materials

contained within the viewbooks seem to serve as an introduction to the features of a particular college, and is not something meant to solidify a student's college decision. While the viewbook may not play as large of a role in the final college decision, it could shape the colleges to which prospective students visit and submit an application.

Since marketing has become an inherent part of the recruitment process, institutions represent themselves in a way to maximize interest from prospective students. Marketing is especially important for particular institutions that are facing low enrollment numbers. Women's colleges in recent years have adapted to the changing higher education landscape, sometimes becoming coeducational, merging, or closing altogether. This dissertation examined how women's colleges promote their unique identity to prospective students, with the understanding that marketing has increased the competition for selective institutions.

Problem of Practice

Single-sex institutions, and more specifically women's colleges, are struggling to enroll students and remain competitive in the higher education marketplace. There has been a dramatic decrease in the number of women's colleges over the past few decades. In 1960, there were 298 women's institutions (Tifft, 1990), and now 37 remain. Some institutions have become coeducational; others have merged with existing coeducational institutions, while others have closed completely. These institutions have shifted towards coeducation or closure due to changing enrollment demands, and less desire for single-sex education. While some institutions may have transitioned away from single-sex education for other reasons, the primary reason for change appears to be institutional survival.

Although women's colleges served an important role historically, providing access to higher education for women, today less than 5% of high school women would consider applying to a women's college (Kratzok & Near, 2014). However, women's colleges serve the female students who have been underserved by the "chilly campus climate" at coeducational institutions, disparate educational and career outcomes, and lack of gender representation in traditionally masculine fields of study (Hall & Sandler, 1984). As president of Barnard College, Judith Shapiro (1994) argued "in a society that favors men over women, men's institutions operate to preserve privilege; women's institutions challenge privilege and attempt to expand access to the good things of life" (p. A23). Until coeducational institutions can serve male and female students in equitable ways, women's colleges continue to have a valuable role within the higher education landscape.

Because many women's colleges have become coeducational, those that are still single-sex remain in a niche market. While these institutions may be able to recruit a larger share of the total prospective student pool by becoming coeducational, Ricci (1994) argued that it makes sense from a competitive standpoint to remain a women's college and retain the niche advantage. Otherwise, the institution loses a unique characteristic. This increased market pressure and limited potential student pool means that enrollment is key to an institution's viability, and long-term success.

The closest anyone has come to a thorough investigation of women's college viewbooks was Ricci (1994), who examined how women's colleges represented themselves as single-sex institutions in admission literature. Some institutions used the word "students" throughout the text, referring to women in few examples, whereas other

institutions explicitly cited the benefits of attending a women's college (Ricci, 1994). However, this was not a comprehensive analysis of broader messaging by these institutions. Only five institutions were discussed briefly, with a total of 16 in the sample. Additionally, women's colleges have continued to evolve over the past two decades since this study. Competition has increased for prospective students, and fewer female students are electing to attend single-sex institutions.

This dissertation contributes to the overall understanding of how this institutional type markets to prospective students in an era of decreased demand for single-sex education. In previous research, there have been findings of a male normative gaze, where male prospective students are the desired audience and the messages crafted within the viewbooks are geared towards this audience (Osei-Kofi et al., 2013). This dissertation explored how women's institutions define themselves, and highlights their histories to prospective students. Since fewer students are electing to enroll in single-sex institutions, these colleges need to effectively communicate how their mission is relevant to students today. Using what is discovered about these institutions, I contextualized the findings with the existing literature about viewbooks and college marketing.

Purpose

The purpose of the dissertation was to analyze how women's colleges market to prospective students using viewbooks. Colleges use viewbooks to encourage students to visit campus or submit an application. A viewbook can serve as a first impression to the institution, and its content can influence students' perceptions of an institution's values, goals, and culture all before they step onto campus. They can introduce prospective students to a college's history, or implicitly illustrate who attends a particular institution.

Colleges carefully construct the images, words, and representations within the pages of the viewbooks, with the goal of recruiting talented students to their institution.

Prior research about viewbooks has examined how gender is represented in college viewbooks. Osei-Kofi and Torres (2015) studied visual gender representations in the context of STEM environments. Additionally, Ricci (1994) broadly studied women's college marketing, and found that these institutions rarely identified themselves as women's colleges in their own viewbooks. While gender has been analyzed in prior studies, no researcher has thoroughly examined the viewbook representations of women's colleges. While websites are becoming a valuable source of information for prospective students, the viewbook is created with the sole goal of student recruitment. The institutional website serves many stakeholders, and the messages are not tailored specifically to prospective students. This dissertation not only focused on women's colleges for the role that gender plays in marketing, but also other institutional factors such as academics, and social life. The scope of this dissertation was to understand how women's colleges represent themselves to prospective students, through defining their role as single-sex institutions.

Women's colleges are in an era of increased pressure to recruit students in order to maintain student enrollment and remain financially solvent. Institutions such as Mount Vernon College have closed (Jaschik, 2008), Sweet Briar College had planned to close until many stakeholders rallied for the institution to remain open (Jaschik, 2015), and other women's colleges such as Wells College became coeducational after enrollment declines (Powers, 2007). This dissertation provides insight about how women's colleges are portraying single-sex education to prospective students. This research will benefit

enrollment and admissions professionals, who can understand themes in how women's colleges represent themselves to prospective students. Additionally, this dissertation contributes to the emerging body of research about representations of colleges in viewbooks and marketing.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to evaluate the portrayal of women's colleges in viewbooks:

- How is the organizational identity of women's colleges portrayed within viewbooks?
- How do women's colleges portray academic and social life?
- How do women's colleges address the benefits and challenges of single-sex education within the viewbook?
- How do women's colleges construct gender in viewbooks?

Through these questions, I identified themes that reveal how women's colleges represent themselves to prospective students.

Significance

This dissertation will be meaningful to other scholars, because it compliments work conducted by Osei-Kofi and Torres (2015), who examined gendered representations within viewbooks in STEM environments, and Ricci (1994) who broadly surveyed the marketing practices of women's colleges. Although this dissertation evaluated women's college, it was not limited by field of study. Osei-Kofi and Torres (2015) suggested that there is a White male normative gaze in college viewbooks. Despite the fact that women

are the majority participants in higher education and have been since the 1980s, there may still be a normative male gaze in these coeducational colleges' viewbooks.

This dissertation provided additional themes to this emerging area of study as to how colleges represent themselves for the purpose of recruiting students. Additionally, the results of this dissertation could be used to understand how women's colleges may differ when compared with institutional types studied previously. While the sample for this dissertation was women's colleges, other types of institutions can learn about how single-sex education is marketed with an audience of female students.

This dissertation explored how women's colleges introduce prospective students to organizational elements, with the added lens of recruiting students. These factors make institutions unique, allowing students to understand more about a college, and what makes it stand out from the more than 4,000 higher education institutions in the United States. The institutions selected for this dissertation have a deep commitment to educating women, and through this dissertation I explored how this history was made relevant to prospective students.

As commercialization has affected higher education, higher education institutions are relying more on marketing to recruit students (McDonough, 1994). Viewbooks are meaningful ways for institutions to craft a message for prospective students and their families, with the goal of gaining a campus visitor or an applicant. This dissertation can help women's colleges understand how their viewbooks are portraying the institution's history and mission to newcomers. Women's colleges may need to promote the benefits of single-sex education, and this dissertation explored how this niche market is communicated to appeal to a broad array of female students.

This dissertation contributes to practice by revealing general themes for this institutional type, and demonstrated examples where the colleges promoted features that are unique to women's colleges. Maintaining enrollment is important for institutional viability, so viewbooks and other marketing materials should be designed to solicit campus visits and applications. However, the messages that colleges communicate to prospective students alter their perceptions of the institution. The content that is and is not included in viewbooks signifies what the institution values, and hopes to communicate to the new group of students. While enrollment moves an institution forward, it must also be grounded in the legacy and history of the institution, which makes the college unique.

Literature Review

Marketing for higher education institutions takes many forms and can have a variety of audiences. As higher education marketing has evolved into a $10 billion a year industry, colleges have invested in marketing to recruit prospective students to apply and enroll at their institution (Katzman, 2016). Colleges carefully craft the messages in viewbooks, social media, and other forms of marketing to create a favorable impression on prospective students, convincing them to consider the institution in their college search. As some women's colleges are struggling to enroll enough students interested in single-sex education, these institutions rely on marketing, including viewbooks, to communicate the college's qualities to prospective students. The following literature review will highlight the most salient literature relating to higher education marketing, viewbooks, and women's colleges.

In a study seeking to understand how marketing materials affect college choice, Armstrong and Lumsden (1999) found that students were quick to evaluate the quality of the materials from the University of North Texas (UNT) when compared with those received from other institutions. The students felt that UNT's materials were outdated, lower quality, and unrealistic, which stood out in a bad way when students are receiving hundreds of viewbooks from institutions across the country. If admissions offices solicited feedback from students, this would allow them to understand what prospective students really want to see and hopefully avoid being seen as cheesy in the eyes of a prospective student. With admissions materials designed to solicit applications and yield students to campus, the messages and images included are important to not only communicate information, but also stand out in a crowded field with many institutions competing for students' attention and interest.

While some researchers have argued that the marketing of higher education contradicts the values of higher education (Gibbs, 2007), most institutions have embraced marketing as a viable strategy to communicate institutional identity and recruit prospective students. In 2000, 84% of colleges were engaging in advertising using various media such as mailings to alumni and prospective students, and advertisements on radio and television (Kittle, 2000). Colleges have utilized DVDs to create a more interactive approach with students (Furbeck, Harding, Wohlgemuth & Bousquet, 2003), and created social media platforms to communicate with prospective students and improve yield (Hayes, Ruschman & Walker, 2009). Colleges have experimented with new media to recruit students in new ways, but they also rely on viewbooks to mail or email prospective students to communicate why students should attend their institution.

Higher education researchers have only recently begun to study viewbooks for the purposes of college admissions. Several researchers have conducted broad analyses to understand the content of viewbooks (Hite & Yearwood, 2001; Hartley & Morphew, 2008), while others have focused on faith-based institutions (Tolbert, 2014), and representations of race (Osei-Kofi, Torres & Lui, 2013; Roediger, 2005; Pippert, Essenburg & Matchett, 2013). One study (Osei-Kofi & Torres, 2015) looked at how gender and race were situated in STEM environments. Typically, viewbooks focus on social life, such as athletics and residence life, and downplay the rigors of academic life. Overall, prior research has found that the content of viewbooks are quite similar, and few institutions attempt to be unique in their representations.

The only prior study about women's college marketing (Ricci, 1994) found that only a few of the women's colleges in the study explicitly mentioned that they were a women's college. In this study, only one institution, Simmons College, actively promoted the benefits of attending a single-sex institution in the marketing materials. Ricci (1994) argued that women's colleges should monopolize on their niche in the marketplace, and promote the benefits of women's colleges to prospective students and their families.

The significance of women's colleges in the higher education landscape has been a subject of higher education research for some time, where researchers focused on the unique experiences women's colleges provide for their students. Kinzie, Thomas, Palmer, Umbach, and Kuh (2007) studied educational experiences of women at coeducational and women's colleges, and found that students at women's colleges embraced diversity, were more engaged, and demonstrated higher order thinking. The

only negative for women's colleges was lower level of interpersonal support. In a study conducted by Smith (1990), the only area where women's college students were less satisfied than their coeducational peers was social life. In all other aspects of college the women's college students demonstrated higher overall satisfaction.

Data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) has allowed researchers to understand women's college students' aspirations and outcomes. Smith, Morrison, and Wolf (1994) explored how male and female students changed over the course of college, and found that while scores from the CIRP for both genders increased, the scores of the female students ended where the male students were at the start of college. Using data from the CIRP as well, Kim and Alvarez (1995) did not find significantly different outcomes between students at women's college and coeducational institution students attending graduate school, but did find a negative influence of job skills for women's college graduates.

Due to the increasingly commercialized world of higher education, institutions have to use marketing to create demand for their degree programs, recruit students who are unfamiliar with the institution, and ensure students elect to attend that particular institution. Viewbooks are one of the primary forms of higher education marketing, and the images and text included portray an idealized version of the institution. Since women's colleges are facing challenges with enrollment, the marketing of these institutions in particular is especially important to ensure organizational survival. The following section will provide an overview of the organizational identity framework that was used throughout this dissertation to situate the work.

Conceptual Framework

This dissertation used the conceptual framework of organizational identity to guide the research questions, analysis, and interpretation of findings. The research on organizational identity focuses on the identities that an organization uses for different audiences at various times, and how organizations perform this identity. Albert and Whetten (1985) introduced the concept of organizational identity, which institutions can use for self-examination and researchers can use for institutional interpretation. In their framework, organizational identity is comprised of an organization's mission, distinctiveness, and temporal continuity. These elements of an organization's identity allow an institution to signal its differences from others, adapt based on a change in audience or time, and reflect on the central mission and purpose.

Continuing this work on organizational identity, Glynn (2008) outlined several approaches that institutions can take to demonstrate their identity such as essence, bricolage, and performance. Since organizations, particularly higher education institutions, are complex, their identity is comprised of many simultaneous priorities. The idea of bricolage captures this complex identity of organizations, where there may not be one unifying mission, but many elements that contribute to a central organizational identity. The performance of identity also demonstrates what is significant to a particular organization, and provides a lens to respond to organizational challenges.

Identity performance can take many forms, but one in particular is quite salient- the image as identity. Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000) argued that while images serve as a way to represent an organization's identity that does not mean that images are true portrayals of identity. As institutions are promoting their identity in the marketplace,

images are used to represent desirable traits about the institution to benefit the organization in some way. These images can be used to solicit donations from alumni, advocate for additional state funding, or recruit prospective students. Regardless of the purpose, the images used are a fixed portrayal of an institution and are not as dynamic as identity.

This work on organizational identity is directly relevant to this dissertation, as it seeks to understand how women's colleges are representing their identity with prospective students through viewbooks. In order to appeal to prospective students, institutions carefully craft the messages in viewbooks to convey a desirable identity. Images are inherent in the design of viewbooks, and these further represent the institution, but may not be a true representation of life on campus. Cultural symbols and campus traditions can be signified through images in the viewbooks, but images are not a proxy for truly experiencing an institution. Images cannot capture an institution's true identity, but rather they can shape an illusion of the organization (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000). As higher education institutions aim to recruit prospective students, they align their marketing efforts with the goal of higher applications and enrollment. This goal affects how colleges perform their identity, including what messages are included in viewbooks for this audience.

Methodology

I used a critical perspective throughout this dissertation, which I believe worked well with qualitative content analysis and the scope of this dissertation. I used this lens to uncover biases, and situated the significance of these institutions in the higher education

landscape. I used qualitative content analysis as the approach for understanding how language and images are used to recruit prospective students.

For this dissertation, I collected and analyzed the viewbooks from the 34 of the 37 women's colleges within the United States. The three remaining colleges did not provide a print or digital viewbook upon request. While these institutions all serve female students, they vary by selectivity, religious affiliation, and academic missions. All of the colleges are four-year private not-for-profit institutions. Two institutions, Bennett College and Spelman College, are considered Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). However, Bennett College does not offer a viewbook for prospective students, so only Spelman College was used in this analysis. Slightly more than half of the institutions are religiously affiliated (19). The institutions are most concentrated in the northeast and southeast regions of the United States.

In order to collect the data, I requested print or digital viewbooks from the institutions by contacting the Undergraduate Admissions offices. Once the materials were received, I conducted qualitative content analysis to understand the content of the materials. This process involved developing a data-driven coding frame using the themes within the data. Additionally, through this dissertation, I utilized analytic memos, to document my analysis process. The memos helped me to remember initial thoughts when reviewing the documents, allowed me to document my own perspective throughout the analysis, and bracket my subjectivity as much as possible.

To enhance trustworthiness of the dissertation, I engaged in multiple rounds of coding. Additionally, I provided thick description of the data using images and exact quotations from the viewbook materials. Based on the previous literature, and the

qualitative methods referenced here, I attempted to account for any biases, and was as transparent as possible with the methods, documents, and analyses to enhance trustworthiness.

Assumptions

This dissertation was carefully designed with several assumptions. First, it is assumed that colleges' viewbooks depict the institution with the aim of recruiting prospective students. Since viewbooks are significant to the recruitment process, it is assumed that a great deal of time and effort has been spent crafting the images and text within the pages. I assumed that the depictions within the viewbooks are carefully edited to be favorable to as many prospective students as possible.

Additionally, since women have historically been represented as secondary in the academic experience to men, I assumed that some gendered representations of women would persist. While women's colleges do not have male students within their undergraduate programs, there may still be some gendered behaviors to which the female students adhere. The colleges still exist in current American society where women are still not equal to men in societal status. I suspected that this gender divide would present itself throughout the viewbooks when colleges presented their case for single-sex education.

Delimitations and Limitations

This dissertation was delimited to include viewbooks, print and digital, of the remaining women's colleges within the United States. The scope of this dissertation was limited to colleges within the United States, so that comparisons reflect differences between institutions and not educational systems. While there have been several hundred

institutions that were former women's colleges, this dissertation only included those colleges that were single-sex institutions as of Fall 2016. Since other forms of marketing, including websites, social media, and commercials, are geared towards a broader audience, I have elected to focus exclusively on viewbooks. The viewbooks represent how the institution wants to appear to prospective students, and show how institutional identity is made relevant for this population.

There are some limitations with the following dissertation. Due to the fact that institutions are all the same institutional type, the themes that emerge may not be transferable to other types of higher education institutions. Women's colleges differ from coeducational colleges, so any unifying themes could represent a phenomenon unique to women's colleges. Marketing materials change from year to year, so the language and themes that an institution uses one year could differ from the next. Themes that emerge for an institution might not apply in the following year, for the next round of prospective students, so there is a temporal limitation as well. The findings for the group of women's colleges are limited since only one year of viewbooks was examined. The conclusions reached as a result of this dissertation pertain to this group of viewbooks, and does not address changes in the group's marketing practices over time. Additionally, due to the focus on representations in viewbooks, one could argue that the reliance on documents as the sole method of data collection is a limitation. While interviews with administrators and institutional site visits may add a different perspective to how an institution markets to prospective students, the focus of this dissertation was solely on the viewbooks as the unit of analysis.

Definition of Key Terms

There are several keys terms necessary to understand the following research project. These terms are defined below to provide context for the reader for the following chapters.

Women's Colleges are single-sex institutions originally designed to provide access to higher education to women, but have grown to serve the unique needs of female students. Up until very recently, these institutions admitted students on the basis of their biological sex alone. As the concepts of gender and gender identity have evolved, some of the institutions in the sample have recently begun to admit transgender applicants who identify as female. While the term single-sex will be used to describe these colleges, several of these institutions are welcoming towards any female student, regardless of biological sex.

Seven Sisters Colleges were a consortium of liberal arts colleges for women on the East Coast and were "the female equivalent of the once predominately male Ivy League" (Mount Holyoke College, 2012). The Seven Sisters name refers to the seven daughters of Atlas from Greek mythology. Wellesley, Radcliffe, Smith, Mount Holyoke, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, and Barnard are considered the Seven Sisters Colleges. Radcliffe merged with Harvard, and Vassar became coeducational, so these institutions are no longer considered women's colleges. The Seven Sisters Colleges provided students with a liberal arts education, and the remaining institutions are some of the most selective women's colleges and liberal arts institutions in the United States.

Viewbooks refer to the brochures that colleges send to prospective students, introducing them to the institution. These can serve many purposes in the recruitment

process, by encouraging students to visit the campus, learn more about the institution online, or submit an application. The primary audience for viewbooks is prospective students, but family members may also use the viewbooks as a reference guide for colleges the student is considering in their college search.

Conclusion

Increases in competition for students have driven colleges and universities to invest resources in marketing for recruitment purposes. With growing competition from for-profit institutions, non-profit colleges are devoting larger portions of their operating budgets toward marketing and recruitment of students (Katzman, 2016). As this shift has occurred, researchers have begun to study the effects of marketing on college choice, institutional image, and admissions processes. Prior research on viewbooks has focused on the messages that colleges broadcast to students, with the aim of recruiting these students to attend.

Women's colleges are faced with several enrollment challenges, which result in difficulties when recruiting additional students. Fewer young women are interested in attending a single-sex college, so these institutions have to promote their own institution but also single-sex education's benefits. The one prior study on women's college marketing practices happened over two decades ago, and higher education marketing has changed significantly since then. This dissertation improved upon the literature base for viewbooks, but also how a particular institution type engages in marketing practices.

Through the exploration of the research questions, I explored how women's colleges represent organizational identity, academic life, social life, single-sex college benefits and challenges, and gender. This dissertation is significant due to its moment in

time, where these institutions are responding to changing student interests, while also looking to maintain institutional survival. Using the conceptual framework of organizational identity and qualitative content analysis, these approaches guided the dissertation forward to answer these research questions using viewbook materials.

Overview of the Dissertation Document

The following chapters will provide greater detail about the literature surrounding this area of research, the methods used, analysis, and findings. Chapter two will provide a detailed analysis of literature pertaining to marketing, viewbooks, and women's colleges. Additionally, there will be an overview of the conceptual framework of organizational identity and its relevance for this dissertation. Chapter three will provide details about the methods used in this study. Chapter four will delve into the content analysis of the viewbooks, exploring content themes are they relate to the four stated research questions. Chapter five will provide a deeper analysis into the implications of the findings from chapter four, contextualize the findings with prior literature, and recommend further research to continue this work.

Chapter 2

This chapter provides an overview of the most salient research pertaining to higher education marketing, viewbooks, and women's colleges. Higher education marketing takes many forms, and the research discussed below will highlight how institutions use various media to promote their mission and purpose. Since this dissertation focused on the representations in viewbooks of women's colleges, this chapter also provides some context about the student experience and outcomes of women's college graduates. Finally, an overview of the conceptual framework of organizational identity and its relevance to this dissertation is provided at the end of this chapter.

Purpose and Methods

This dissertation was designed to understand how women's colleges market to prospective students using viewbooks. Viewbooks promote higher education institutions to prospective students, with the goal of promoting student interest in attending the college. Women's colleges have been a vulnerable group of institutions, with many colleges in this group considering closure and coeducation in response to market demands. These institutions, which have undergone an organizational shift, need to demonstrate their purpose, benefits, and mission to recruit talented female students.

In order to understand the literature on higher education marketing and women's colleges, I used Education Source, ERIC, and JSTOR databases to locate scholarly articles around these topics. Search terms included higher education marketing, higher education viewbooks, and women's colleges. In addition to scholarly articles, I reviewed the reference lists of several articles to locate additional resources that were not found in

the initial search. While the majority of the articles discussed in detail below are from the past 20 years, I did not limit my searches by publication year. This allowed me to understand the historical evolution of women's colleges, and higher education marketing practices.

While this dissertation focused specifically on viewbooks, there is limited research on institutions' use of viewbooks in higher education marketing. In order to provide broader context for how institutions utilize marketing for the recruitment of prospective students, the following literature review will highlight relevant research about general marketing practices, and delve deeper into prior research on viewbooks. The next element of the following literature review will provide context for the benefits and disadvantages of women's colleges. Finally, this chapter will outline the conceptual framework that grounded the design and analysis of the dissertation. This dissertation will contribute to the growing body of literature on higher education marketing, while also examining the practices of women's colleges in this area.

Background

Women's colleges have evolved quite a bit over the last few decades, as female students were able to access newly coeducational institutions. At the time of data collection, only 37 women's colleges remained, down from 298 in 1960 (Tifft, 1990). Declines in enrollment and interest in single-sex education has led the majority of women's colleges to become coeducational or close completely. Several institutions, such as Mills College and Sweet Briar College, have considered coeducation or closing, and opted to remain committed to the education of undergraduate women (Jaschik, 2005,

2015). The institutions that have remained single-sex have continued to recruit students, even in a highly competitive higher education marketplace.

Marketing efforts to recruit top students have increased the global competition between institutions (McDonough, 1994). Recruiting prospective students is just one element of marketing, but enrollment marketing drives prospective student demand. Marketing can include mailed materials, college websites, DVDs, and social media. Institutions are developing their brand identity across various media, with the hopes of promoting the institution to all relevant stakeholders.

Viewbooks are one of many forms of enrollment marketing, where institutions mail or email students a brochure complete with images and text presenting the college in a favorable light. These viewbooks serve as an introduction to an institution, inviting the prospective student to visit the college website for more information, schedule a campus visit, or submit an application. While viewbooks were intended to serve as resources of information for prospective students, the reality is that viewbooks from different institutions tend to include similar information and images.

In the following section on scholarly literature, I will provide an overview on higher education marketing, in order to highlight the broader trends in this arena. Subsequently, I will illustrate how institutions use viewbooks to communicate their institutional characteristics. Finally, I will present selected research that has demonstrated the benefits and negative aspects of attending a women's college. The research presented below has informed the design of the dissertation, and the elements that should be explored within women's college viewbooks.

Scholarly Literature

Marketing in Higher Education

Higher education marketing encompasses a variety of institutional activities designed to engage university stakeholders and the general public. This section highlights prior research about higher education marketing, specifically as it relates to recruiting prospective students. While colleges and universities market to a wide variety of audiences, I focused on prospective student recruitment, while bringing forth some research that provides a broader scope of higher education marketing. Research pertaining to college and university viewbooks will be discussed in a separate section following this overview of marketing practices.

In one study, Armstrong and Lumsden (1999) examined how marketing affected students' college choice. The researchers conducted focus groups of freshmen students to understand what promotional materials influenced students' choice to attend the University of North Texas. The marketing campaign featured a brochure, videotape, and catalog, and students were asked if they were familiar with the three marketing pieces. Nearly all of the students had seen the printed materials, but fewer than half had seen the video.

Students felt that University of North Texas sent fewer materials and the ones they did send were lower quality than other institutions. The students provided suggestions to improve the marketing materials, by using brighter colors, incorporating more visual elements, and outlining the costs of attendance. Additionally, several of the students called the materials "cheesy," meaning "out-of-style, silly, or stupid" (Armstrong & Lumsden, 1999, p. 89). The students also felt that the photographs were

outdated and unrealistic. Despite the fact that these students felt this way about the materials, they all elected to attend the University of North Texas.

This study featured focus groups, which also would prove helpful to admissions offices looking to solicit feedback from prospective and current students. Prospective students receive promotional materials from dozens of colleges, and having seen many viewbooks, they know what stands out to them. Marketing for the new class of students is constantly evolving, especially when it comes to new technology and it is important to understand how the intended audience is viewing the materials created.

In the nearly 20 years since this study was conducted, higher education marketing has changed significantly. There have not been similar studies that incorporate students' use of the viewbook in their college decision process. High school students today have access to vast amounts of information about any college in the country. With access to university websites, admissions and enrollment statistics on the Department of Education's College Navigator site, and information from other college search companies, students can be overwhelmed by their options. Today's prospective college students continue to receive viewbooks by mail, even as email and Internet marketing have become more sophisticated. More research is needed on how today's high school students use the college viewbooks to inform their college decision process.

Attempting to understand advertising practices in higher education, Kittle (2000) surveyed institutions to see what forms of marketing they employ. From this survey, 84% of institutions reported using institutional advertising within the last three years. For institutional media, the most popular materials were athletic event programs, alumni organization magazines, and mailings to institution donors. In commercial media, the

institutions most frequently advertised using television, newspaper, and radio. Institutions use various marketing strategies when creating advertising campaigns, with the average being four institutional media and three commercial media approaches.

The institutions' top objectives for engaging in marketing were to create favorable impressions, to increase general awareness, and to increase program donations (Kittle, 2000). Also, the top audiences for these marketing campaigns were prospective students, parents of prospective students, and alumni association members. These patterns showed that institutions needed to please diverse groups when marketing. They need to reengage those already familiar with the institution, and introduce themselves to those who are unfamiliar with the institution. Ultimately, marketing of higher education has become more pervasive since this study, as the quest for more students, funding, and prestige has increased.

Gibbs (2007) argued that the concept of higher education marketing might go against the very values of higher education. Through the creation of persuasive advertising, Gibbs (2007) exclaimed that higher education marketing is eroding educational values stating, "it exploits the student as consumer by substituting his/her well-being for the well-being obtained through the explicit financial or ideological satisfaction of knowledge production rather than the implicit values of transformation" (p. 6). Thus, what is being marketed is a credential, not higher education. The researcher also argued that by becoming part of mass culture through marketing, this limits the academy's ability to critique mass culture. Higher education institutions should engage prospective students to communicate what really occurs while at college, such as challenging their imagination, not just preparation for employment opportunities.

Social media is a growing trend for recruiting prospective students, with new platforms emerging constantly. Hayes, Ruschman, and Walker (2009) examined ways in which higher education institutions attempt to reach the millennial generation online. Xavier University created its own social media tool, designed to enhance yield, provide online services, improve prospective relationships with Xavier, and influence students' perceptions. Through this tool, administrators found that engaged users of this site were more likely to enroll in the institution.

DVDs and videos have been used to give students a better impression of the institution that cannot be conveyed through print media. Furbeck, Harding, Wohlgemuth, and Bousquet (2003) examined Iowa State University's use of DVD marketing, which allowed for a more interactive approach. Students were able to select what they were interested in hearing about, with most students beginning with academics or "Life at Iowa State." While the use of DVDs and videos have evolved a lot since this article was published, it is still relevant to practitioners today. Now, colleges are using online videos as a way to supplement the text and images on their websites. Prospective students can use these videos to select what they want to learn about, hear directly from current students and faculty members, and understand more than just what the admissions office chooses to include in the pages of the viewbook.

Synthesis. Marketing in higher education covers many elements of an institution's brand. Athletics, alumni, and admissions marketing have different goals, and highlight different aspects of the institution (Armstrong & Lumsden, 1999). The articles discussed show a few ways in which institutions engage in marketing, but this field is always changing. As institutions pursue more digital marketing, through

advertisements on web pages and social media sites, there will be a shift away from traditional print media. While some forms of technology such as DVD marketing and creating a social network for prospective students may become easily outdated, it shows that these institutions are meeting students where they are (Hayes et al., 2009; Harding et al., 2003). The key for institutions is to stay current on how prospective students gather information about their college search, and concentrate marketing efforts with those media.

What is clear from these studies is that higher education marketing is expanding to new media, trying to reach students using all available resources. Despite claims that marketing and advertising conflict with higher education values (Gibbs, 2007), the competition for students and resources continues to drive demand for more applications, and enrolling students. As new opportunities to reach prospective students emerge, one can bet that institutions are ready to enter new marketing spaces in order to recruit talented students. While the trend in the past few decades was a continual growth in advertising and marketing, there may come a time where a critical point has been reached where the input of students enrolling does not justify the output of marketing material. While driving up application numbers is one way to improve an institutions' selectivity, one can note that the most prestigious institutions do not need to invest in advertisements in order to draw large application numbers. For those institutions aspiring to the top ranks of colleges and universities, marketing is a viable way to generate student interest in the form of more applications.

Marketing can happen in various offices within the same institution, so creating a cohesive message across departments can be challenge. For tuition-dependent

institutions, the most important marketing is for prospective students. This is an area where institutions need to focus on what students want to see when they attend college, and how institutions compare with others in the marketplace. Prospective students and their families have become savvy consumers, knowing how to compare between institutions to ensure they are weighing important factors in this decision. Prospective students are receiving marketing materials from many competing institutions, and it is important for an institution to stand out in order to be meaningful to prospective students (Armstrong & Lumsden, 1999). Therefore, institutions need to strike a balance between pleasing students by highlighting what they expect to see, but also being aware of how peer institutions are engaging students as well.

Ultimately the goal of higher education marketing for prospective students is to shape students' college search and college choice processes. In order to appeal to a wide range of prospective students, much effort is made on crafting a college's image to appear favorable to many students. Institutions' unique features and those that are expected from a higher education institution are communicated through various forms of marketing. This allows institutions to differentiate themselves from others in the marketplace, and communicate the institutional identity to prospective students.

The prior research on higher education marketing illustrates the breadth of marketing communications, and specific types of marketing used in prospective student recruitment. While marketing can take various forms, it is clear that institutions are spending more money and time than ever trying to engage stakeholders and prospective students for the benefit of the institution.

Viewbooks

Viewbooks are a specific form of higher education marketing, where institutions send a brochure, either by mail or email, to prospective students. Sometimes students request these viewbooks from institutions, and other times they receive them when admissions offices obtain prospective student data from sources such as the College Board. Additionally, some colleges host PDF versions of the viewbooks on their websites, for prospective students to download on their own. These viewbooks are created with the intent of encouraging students to visit campus, submit an application, and ultimately attend the institution. The following research studies have analyzed the content of these viewbooks, and the messages they are communicating to prospective students. The researchers examined specific institutional types, gender, race, and other elements to understand how institutions represent themselves.

Hartley and Morphew (2008) examined viewbooks from various institutional types seeking to understand similarities or differences in the messages communicated. The sample included a diverse set of institutions, public and private, elite and lesser-known colleges. These institutions' viewbooks "paint a hopeful, idealized, and somewhat unrealistic portrait of undergraduate life" (Hartley & Morphew, 2008, p. 677). Institutions highlighted their location's attractiveness, and the majority of institutions begin the viewbooks discussing academic offerings. While academics are important, the viewbooks rarely showed students studying, and when they are studying it was in a group. Hartley and Morphew (2008) argued, "it is the rare viewbook that goes beyond the sales pitch to try to connect with something more cerebral, spiritual, or educational"

(p. 688). It appears that the generic college ideal is the most frequently used representation of college life.

There is one prior study on the marketing of women's colleges, which included a look at the colleges' viewbooks. Ricci (1994) sought to understand how women's colleges used marketing to reverse declining enrollment trends. Based upon the prior research, Ricci argued that women's colleges should promote the advantages of attending a single-sex institution. For this study, Ricci reviewed marketing materials of 16 women's colleges. Additionally, the researcher interviewed admissions staff at the colleges. However, there was no stated methods or methodology portion of the article so it is unclear what level of administrators Ricci interviewed. There are several approaches to reviewing documents for research, and Ricci also did not discuss the methodology used for document analysis. The lack of stated methodology and methods does not allow for transparency for the reader, and calls into question the rigor of analysis.

While 16 institutions were included in the sample, Ricci stated that 11 of the institutions were not included in the more in-depth analysis because they did not employ parent-targeting strategies. Since Ricci did not state the purpose or the research questions of this study, the first time the reader understands the goals of the study is near the conclusion of the article. Additionally, marketing to parents is a different strategy than marketing towards prospective students. It would seem that the marketing materials reviewed as part of this analysis were intended for prospective students, but Ricci did not make this explicit since the article lacks a detailed account of the methods used. Therefore, if certain institutions were excluded for their lack of parent engagement in

marketing, it would be important to understand how those institutions are operating differently than the five institutions discussed more in depth.

Despite the flaws in the presentation of the research, Ricci was able to document examples of how five institutions marketed to prospective students and their families. Some of the five institutions reviewed shied away from identifying themselves as a women's college, by using the word students instead of women, or highlighting an association with a partner institution (Ricci, 1994). Simmons College was cited as the one example of an institution that promoted the benefits of attending a women's college.

As Ricci (1994) discussed, women's colleges have a niche market, and should look to capitalize on the benefits of attending a single-sex institution when recruiting students. However, the findings suggest these colleges behaved otherwise, that institutions avoid labeling themselves as women's colleges. These institutions are dedicated to the mission of educating women, and yet there was little evidence of that purpose communicated to students and their families. Despite the vast amounts of research about the benefits of women's colleges, these institutions continued to downplay their own importance within the higher education landscape. Highlighting the benefits of single-sex education may encourage more students and their parents to consider women's college as part of the college search, and therefore reverse the continuing trend of enrollment declines.

One prior study of viewbooks examined representations of gender and race in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) environments. Osei-Kofi and Torres (2015) used a sample of the most and least diverse institutions according to the diversity index of *U.S. News and World Report.* Using the lenses of identity, power,

privilege, and ideology, the researchers identified three recurring themes: superheroes, brainy babes, and sidekicks. Scientists are presented as a heroic figure, that are on the cusp of a world-saving discovery and these figures are predominantly White males. This theme reinforces gender norms, signaling that the future of scientific discoveries depends on White male figures.

The next theme, brainy babes, embodies "an idealized, dominant White beauty standard" (Osei-Kofi & Torres, 2015, p. 535). Appearance in these images is more important than accomplishments, and contributes to the perception that attractive females are simply objects of the male gaze. These brainy babes play a passive role in the images, while male figures do the "scientific" work. Some examples included a woman observing males working at a white board, women sitting in a lab where scientific activity goes on behind them by male peers, and a woman using a computer uninvolved in the scientific process going on around her.

The final theme of sidekicks features scenarios where men of color and women are viewed as subordinate to White men. These include images of faculty members that are unsurprisingly homogenous, and reinforces the dearth of female faculty and faculty of color in the academy. While people of diverse backgrounds are shown participating in STEM environments, the focus is often primarily on the White male figure. There is no expectation for a female student or a student of color to lead the group in scientific advancement.

These representations are significant when considering the viewbook's purpose, for prospective students to envision themselves at a particular institution. While the researchers studied diverse and not so diverse institutions, the findings were similar

among institutions. When recruiting prospective students, particularly females and people of color, representation signifies who is valued within an institution. Images such as the ones discussed above reify expected gender and racial norms, further marginalizing these populations out of STEM spaces. It is important for institutions to consider these elements when recruiting students, and not just perpetuate the White male scientist stereotype.

In a comparison between higher- and lower-ranked universities, Klassen (2000) studied the differences in visual content of viewbooks. Top-ranked institutions highlighted faculty, students in classrooms, cultural and artistic events, the city close to campus, internships, science labs, and technology other than computers (Klassen, 2000). In contrast, lower-ranked institutions featured more outdoor beauty, graduation ceremonies, sports, student profiles, student media, and alumni profiles. There are different messages that are communicated from these representations of college life. Higher-ranked institutions focused on student-faculty interactions and cultural events, whereas lower-ranked institutions focused on outcomes such as graduation and alumni experiences. According to Klassen (2000), "the perspective of college life offered is practically devoid of commitment and loyalty to anything beyond having a good time while waiting to graduate" (p. 21). Despite the differences between the two sets of institutions, the colleges were trying to recruit talented students to their colleges and exclude most indications of the true purposes of higher education.

Additional studies on the representations of race in viewbooks have captured the marginalization of people of color in college marketing materials. Pippert, Essenburg, and Matchett (2013) examined viewbooks of 250 institutions and found "African

American, Asian, and White categories of students have been significantly over-represented while Hispanic and non-white others have been significantly under-represented" (p. 270). Due to this misleading information, the authors argued that this happens almost universally and institutions intentionally use race as a commodity to represent diversity on campuses. Osei-Kofi, Torres, and Lui (2013) conducted a similar analysis, which found that White and Black students were more represented than other racial groups, with Asian and Asian American students situated within STEM environments as model minorities. These authors noted that few examples of other racial groups were included in the viewbooks. Additionally, the researchers did not find an example of students of color, other than Asian students, within classroom environments, signaling that diversity is an extracurricular activity and not central to the primary purpose of higher education. These studies highlight the fact that representations of people of color are used to sell higher education, at the expense of providing an accurate representation of the campus population or students' academic abilities.

Synthesis. To date, there have been few studies dedicated to examining college viewbooks. The prior research on viewbooks has found common traits among various institutional types. The first common trait is that institutions portray a generic representation of college life and their institution (Hartley & Morphew, 2008; Klassen, 2000). Institutions rarely focus on their unique aspects, and reinforce prospective students' perceptions of what a college experience should be. These generic messages blend together when prospective students are receiving dozens of viewbooks in the mail and via email. Institutions create these viewbooks with the goal of recruiting talented students to their campus, not to distinguish themselves from peer institutions. Therefore,

since students expect picturesque campus spaces, study abroad opportunities, and a variety of student experiences, one would expect institutions to highlight how their institution offers these nearly universal elements of the college experience.

Another trait to note is that not all students are represented equitably within the pages of the viewbook. Students of color were rarely featured in academic spaces, and Black male students are frequently shown as athletes, limiting their involvement in college to sports (Osei-Kofi, Torres & Lui, 2013). Women are often not shown as engaged in STEM activities, which further marginalizes female students who desire to study in STEM programs (Osei-Kofi & Torres, 2015). Additionally, Latino/Latina and American Indian students were rarely included, even at highly diverse institutions (Pippert et al., 2013; Osei-Kofi et al., 2013). For the most part, racial diversity includes Black and White students within the pages of the viewbooks. As institutions look to improve access for people of color and representation of women in STEM, the representations within viewbooks do not create a welcoming environment for those who are not White males.

The prior research on viewbooks of women's colleges began the conversation on how women's colleges recruit prospective students. For the most part, the institutions in the study did not broadcast their identity as a single-sex institution (Ricci, 1994). By shying away from this identity, the institutions chose to highlight other aspects of their institutions that are more favorable to prospective students. Ricci (1994) argued that women's colleges should promote their single-sex missions to differentiate themselves from the large number of coeducational institution.

Viewbooks serve as a projected image of an organization's identity. Prospective students use the information and images in the pages of a viewbook to weigh their options when considering which institutions to visit and apply. This identity performance strikes a delicate balance between differentiating oneself from competitors, and aligning with expectations from prospective students. As the research has shown, many colleges opt to represent generic portraits of campus life, not wanting to dissuade students from considering their institution.

In the competitive marketplace of higher education recruitment, image is everything. The images included in the viewbooks can project the institution's aspirational identity, if not the authentic one, which may lead towards a desired goal. One example of this is racial and ethnic diversity, where colleges overrepresented their diversity on campus through viewbook images. While diversity is seen as a positive to many prospective students, the real diversity on campus could be different than what was represented. However, through projecting images of students of color on campus, it may assist in recruiting more students of color. Therefore the actual diversity of the institution may grow closer to the diversity represented in viewbooks.

For the most part, the studies highlighted above were atheoretical, which is a critique of the prior research. While a few studies did use a theoretical or conceptual framework to ground their discussion of findings, the majority of research on viewbooks solely discusses content of the viewbooks studied. Without relating these findings back to college choice or organizational theories, this could prove challenging to the reader to see why the content matters in terms of recruiting students, promoting higher education, or critiquing marketing techniques.

Ultimately, more research is needed to understand how colleges use viewbooks to recruit prospective students. Women's colleges have a unique role in higher education marketing, not only trying to promote their institution, but also encourage prospective students to consider single-sex education in their college search. Since this dissertation examined women's colleges' use of viewbooks for recruiting prospective students, the following section will provide context to the current challenges and successes of women's colleges.

Women's Colleges

Women's colleges have evolved since their earlier mission of providing access to higher education for women. Since female students now have access to thousands of coeducational institutions in the United States, the role of women's colleges has shifted from promoting access to providing equity in higher education. The following section compares coeducational institutions and women's colleges, in order to understand how these institutional types engage female students.

Through the examination of engagement, career outcomes, institutional values, and student satisfaction, the following researchers attempted to uncover what makes women's colleges stand out when compared to their coeducational peers. This research provides context for the areas where women's colleges are excelling, and some areas where students are not as satisfied with their experience. This information sets a foundation for women's colleges to use when marketing the value of attending a single-sex institution to prospective students.

While trying to understand the value of attending a women's college, some researchers compared the experiences of female students at women's colleges and at

coeducational institutions. Kinzie, Thomas, Palmer, Umbach, and Kuh (2007) sought to understand how women's colleges and coeducational institutions compared on issues of student satisfaction, faculty and peer interactions, and outcome-driven educational activities. Additionally, the researchers examined how students at women's colleges of different backgrounds experienced college.

Using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the researchers used this data to examine student experiences across institutional types. The total sample for this study included 42,112 female students who were first-year students and seniors. Of the 68 women's colleges at the time, 26 were represented in the NSSE data set for 2000, 2001, and 2002. Due to the relatively large proportion of women's colleges, the researchers argued that this study allowed for a large representation of all women's colleges. The coeducational institutions were represented by 264 institutions that are in the same Carnegie classifications as the women's colleges in the study. The women's college sample did not include the two remaining HBCUs, and only included one of the remaining Seven Sisters colleges.

While analyzing the data, the researchers separated the analyses between first-year and senior students due to differences in engagement levels. Kinzie et al. (2007) utilized hierarchical linear modeling due to the desire to measure institutional effects and the fact that students are nested within institutions. This allowed the researchers to employ more accurate estimates, and understand if a variance should be attributed to the institution or the individual. This method also allowed for weighted sample sizes across schools, so that equal sample sizes were not necessary. The researchers controlled for race and ethnicity, age, enrollment status, transfer status, major field, institution type,

institution location, institutional selectivity, institutional size, and proportion of full-time students.

As a result, the researchers found that students at women's colleges demonstrated higher levels of student engagement than their female peers at coeducational institutions. Students at women's colleges had higher levels of academic challenge, and seniors at women's colleges showed higher levels of higher order thinking (Kinzie et al., 2007). Students at women's colleges also noted more institutional commitment to diversity and diverse interactions. There was not much of a difference between coeducational institutions and women's colleges when it came to other campus environment factors. At women's colleges, first-year students felt greater support for success, whereas seniors perceived lower levels of interpersonal support. In nearly every measure tested, women's college seniors showed more progress than women at coeducational institutions, including understanding themselves and others, general education, analyzing quantitative problems, and desire to contribute to their community.

While generally women's college students fared better than their coeducational peers, there were also differences on the individual level (Kinzie et al., 2007). African American and Asian Pacific Americans had fewer faculty interactions than White students. Asian Pacific Americans were less likely to have experienced collaborative learning activities, showed lower academic challenge, and demonstrated less involvement than White students. Overall, students in the social sciences had the highest levels of engagement, with the exception of active and collaborative learning. Transfer students were as engaged or more engaged than those students who began at women's colleges.

Perceptions of campus climate differed by race and ethnicity, and student status. African American students felt less supported, and less satisfied than White students (Kinzie et al., 2007). Additionally, Asian Pacific Americans were less satisfied with the campus climate. Social science majors reported more positive views on campus climate, whereas students with professional majors showed lower satisfaction levels.

This study was significant because it demonstrated that women's colleges possess the advantage of higher levels of student engagement. These effective educational practices exceed those at coeducational institutions, and women's colleges foster a campus climate that is supportive of women. Kinzie et al. (2007) cited additional advantages of women's colleges as more female role models, more opportunities for leadership roles, and higher proportions of students enrolled in STEM fields. Women's college students frequently lauded the institutions' encouragement and commitment to diversity, including gender, economic, racial, and social.

While the Kinzie et al. study found significant differences in engagement for women's colleges and coeducational institutions, there were some limitations with the findings. First, only 26 women's colleges and only one of the remaining Seven Sisters colleges were included in the sample, and the results may differ if additional women's colleges were included for the study. Additionally, since the NSSE instrument requires students to self-report data, there is some concern as to the validity of the measures. The researchers also noted that some effect sizes are relatively small, but nearly all favor women's colleges. Students who select to attend women's colleges may have different characteristics than those who elect to attend a coeducational institution. The self-

selection of college choice could influence students' perceptions about the institutions and environment as measured in this study.

Another scholar, Riordan (1994) compared differences between students at single-sex and coeducational institutions along several variables. Using longitudinal data, the researcher found that students who attended a women's college for one year before transferring to a coeducational institution were more likely to obtain additional education (Riordan, 1994). The researchers argued that students bring the advantages of attending a women's college with them when they transfer to coeducational institutions. Women's college graduates earn higher salaries and have higher prestige positions, despite not having additional education to their peers who attended coeducational institutions.

Women's college graduates in Riordan's (1994) study saw a return from their years spent attending a women's college. For students who attended women's colleges, Riordan found that these students saw a return on human capital relative to the social capital gained through years at a women's college. While Riordan used longitudinal information from several decades ago, the findings are significant for women's colleges today. These benefits of attending a women's college are not limited to the years spent as an undergraduate student. Women's colleges are able to promote education that sets female students up for a lifetime of success in terms of occupational and economic benefit.

Smith (1990) examined the experiences of students at women's colleges and those at coeducational institutions. The researcher found that attendance at a women's college leads to greater satisfaction with instructional quality, major courses, social science courses, approachable professors, campus rules, career counseling, housing, and cultural

opportunities on campus. The one area where women's college students were less satisfied was social life. Additionally, women's colleges had a higher graduation rate (65%) compared with coeducational institutions (50%) (Smith, 1990). For the most part, women's colleges outperformed coeducational institutions, with the one difference being students' social life.

In a later study, Smith, Wolf, and Morrison (1995) sought to understand the different experiences between women at women's colleges and coeducational institutions. Using response data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, the researchers examined the data through the lens of college impact that considers students' entering characteristics, institutional characteristics, and students' experiences. On an institutional level, they found that students perceived women's colleges to value student learning, civic involvement, and multicultural objectives. These institutional characteristics foster success among female students, and students who perceive that their institution cares about their growth are less likely to be unhappy with their social life.

However, not all of the research on women's colleges yielded positive results. Kim and Alvarez (1995) examined educational efficacy using the CIRP to compare the outcomes of female students at women's colleges and coeducational institutions. The researchers found no statistically significant differences between female students attending graduate or professional school, but did find a negative impact on job-related skills for women's college graduates. The findings supported prior research that demonstrates that attending a women's college positively influences students' academic ability and opportunities for involvement. The researchers found that the amount of

female faculty members was not significant in predicting female student development in this analysis. However, the researchers did find that encouragement does promote development in college.

Synthesis. This research on women's colleges demonstrates how this institutional type differs from coeducational institutions. Most of the studies discussed found largely positive benefits for students who have attended women's colleges (Kinzie et al., 2007; Riordan, 1994; Smith, 1990). Throughout the literature, there were two notable negative outcomes of attending women's colleges. Students at women's colleges were less satisfied with their social life, when compared with their peers at coeducational institutions (Smith, 1990). Additionally, women's college graduates fared worse when looking at job-related skills (Kim & Alvarez, 1995). Overall, the research demonstrated higher levels of engagement, higher incomes post graduation, better relationships with professors, more cultural opportunities, and values of multiculturalism positively influence the students who attend women's colleges.

While this research did attempt to capture the differences between women's colleges and coeducational institutions, there was no prior research on differences within the collection of women's colleges. Women's colleges differ in religious affiliation, selectivity, and historical contribution to women's education. While it can be assumed that women's colleges promote the education of women as a primary mission, there may be vast differences in how these institutions prepare their graduates for the workforce, graduate school, and life. Since no prior research has been done on institutional effectiveness within this institutional population, it remains difficult to understand how these broad findings apply to a specific women's college.

Additionally, the findings of women's college outcomes may be a result of a self-selection bias. When students make their college choice, they weigh many factors in their decision such as cost, location, academic program, and fit. It may be the case that markedly different students select to attend women's colleges, which could reduce the relevance of the findings. Some researchers have attempted to control for students' entering characteristics, but since college attendance is not randomly assigned, there could be a difference in academic preparedness, engagement, and commitment to diversity in the students who elect to attend women's colleges.

This research on women's colleges relates to the purposes of the study, because there have been many studies documenting the benefits of attending a women's college. However, it remains to be seen how this information is communicated to prospective students and their families. There has not been any prior research to understand why students choose to enroll in women's colleges. While the negative perceptions of social life on a single-sex campus may be a primary deterrent, women's colleges need to promote the many benefits of their institutions. The colleges may play up their academic strengths, and frame the college's social aspects as fun and engaging. While the research pertaining to the strengths of women's colleges would be meaningful to prospective students and their families, it is the responsibility of the institutions to communicate the benefits through viewbooks and other marketing materials.

Intersection of Marketing and Women's Colleges

While there has been only one previous study on marketing at women's colleges over 20 years ago, there is much more to learn about how these institutions use viewbooks to recruit prospective students. Ricci (1994) noted that some institutions

avoided mentioning they are single-sex. Through this dissertation, I examined if institutions are embracing and promoting this unique institutional characteristic for prospective student recruitment.

Women's colleges are often struggling to enroll students, and are competing with coeducational institutions for talented female students. Since these institutions are operating within the same competitive environment, they may be responding in similar ways by promoting their commitment to undergraduate women's education, the liberal arts, or their other academic focus. Many colleges are promoting their institutional brand through academics, athletics, the arts, and marketing. This brand can be translated to prospective students through the form of viewbooks, to create interest in engaging further with the institution.

Inferences for Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation was to analyze how women's colleges market to prospective students using viewbooks. In order to understand how these institutions represent themselves, I utilized document analysis to investigate the representations of academic and social life, construction of gender, organizational identity, and promotion of single-sex education. When navigating the admissions marketing materials, students tend to compare institutions based upon availability of desired major and other academic opportunities. Researchers, such as Gibbs (2007) have argued that the marketing of higher education promotes a college education as a credential, rather than a transformative experience. As part of this analysis, I examined how academic life was portrayed to prospective students, such as personal economic outcomes, or invaluable educational experiences.

One of the perceived negative aspects of attending a women's college is a lesser-quality social life when compared with coeducational institutions (Smith, 1990). As higher education institutions are investing in amenities to recruit students to select their campus, I explored how women's colleges demonstrated the social aspects of college to prospective students. If institutions can combat the perception that students at women's colleges have a lackluster social life, viewbooks could challenge this perception to combat these negative expectations.

Prior research on coeducational institutions has shown examples where female students are shown as secondary to male figures, particularly in academic spaces. Since the entire student population at women's colleges is female, I explored how gender plays a role in the text and images within the viewbook. As women's colleges, it can be assumed that these institutions seek to promote the education of women as a core value. I took a critical stance when reviewing the text and images within the viewbooks, and sought to understand how gendered expectations of women persist, or how gender dynamics were represented when a male figure, such as a faculty member, is present.

Additionally, I explored how women's colleges promoted single-sex education to prospective students. Since fewer than 5% of high school women consider single-sex colleges in their college search (Kratzok & Near, 2014), these institutions need to win students over for their unique institutional characteristics as well as the idea of attending a women's college. Based upon the research in the chapter, there are plenty of benefits of attending and graduating from a women's college. If prospective students and their families had this information when making decisions on where to apply, this may combat the negative perceptions associated with single-sex institutions.

Conceptual Framework

Albert and Whetten (1985) introduced the concept of organizational identity, with the purpose of creating a framework that researchers could use to study organizations. Additionally, the framework can serve as a useful tool for organizations to engage in self-reflection to understand their own identity. There are three criteria of an organization's identity: claimed central character, claimed distinctiveness, and claimed temporal continuity. These three criteria create the initial framework of organizational identity, which many researchers have used to understand organizations better.

The criterion of central character stems from an organization's own philosophy and mission, where the organization itself defines its identity. Albert and Whetten (1985) argued that an organization's definition of their own identity might differ depending on who is asking. The context in which an institution defines its identity shapes the values that are emphasized in a given scenario. The various forms of an organization's identity "may be compatible, complementary, unrelated, or even contradictory" (Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 267). It is up to the organization to define its identity for various purposes, but this complicates identity research because the same organization can have various identities for various stakeholders, goals, or other endeavors.

Distinctiveness is the next element of the organizational identity framework, and Albert and Whetten (1985) defined this criterion as "a classification of the self that identifies the individual as recognizably different from others" (p. 267). An organization's identity should be able to serve as identification signaling membership within a group of organizations. When used in marketing, distinctions are made to highlight how a particular product differs from similar products. The same holds true in

organizational identity; organizations need to demonstrate what makes them unique in the marketplace. Comparison to other relevant organizations can help shape an organization's identity, and this can also help communicate the differences to others. The authors identified several modes of communicating an identity including annual reports, symbols, and location. These media convey an organization's identity and can signal identification with or differentiation from a normative group of peer organizations.

Just as an organization's identity can change based on audience, the identity can also change over time. The researchers identified pivotal moments in identity development such as formation, rapid growth, and retrenchment. While all organizations evolve over time, they do not always follow the same process of identity change. There are patterns of common life cycles of organizations, but these are not necessarily followed by all organizations. It speaks to an organization's success if they are able to rebound from a challenging moment that requires reevaluation of one's identity. Loss of identity can cause dysfunction within an organization, just as it would on the individual level. Identity loss can be catastrophic to recover from as an organization, which would have to reevaluate its central mission and purpose.

Glynn (2008) added to Albert and Whetten's theory by noting that an organization's identity stems not only from its essence, but also an organization's similarities to others within the same member group. Glynn introduced several methods for organizations to demonstrate their identity, which are essence, bricolage, and performance. The essence of an institution's identity includes the idea that the organization is situated within a social sphere, and elements of the identity shift based upon a given context. The essence of an organization's identity highlights membership

within a group, but also demarcates the organization as uniquely different than its peers. Having a distinct identity affects an organization's reputation and outsiders' perceptions of legitimacy. Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000) argued that since external audiences can shape an organization's identity, this shows an organization's instability in its core mission. Glynn also argued that institutional change and organizational change are not the same, since organizational identity may be driven by institutional change but relates more to the culture and mission of the organization.

Glynn (2008) built upon the initial framework of organizational identity, introducing the concept of organizational identity as a form of bricolage. This notion of identity as bricolage relates to an organization's identity development by compiling all available organizational elements, in order to make a coherent and comprehensive identity that speaks to all stakeholders. Organizations can use cultural symbols that are unique or distinct to a particular institution, or organizations can have a unique combination of symbols shared by other organizations. This bricolage of symbols contributes to the distinctiveness of an organization's identity. The process described here incorporates many institutional elements that may not be special on their own, but the institution's use of the symbol in conjunction with other symbols contributes to the identity formation within the organization.

Identity performance is another method that organizations can use to construct their identities (Glynn, 2008). An organization's identity can help guide an institution on how to perform when facing particular situation. This identity performance can guide strategic behavior, but also institutional survival. When an institution performs an

identity, their central purpose is put into action and communicated to others. This reinforces the original organizational identity through the act of performance.

In one study, Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000) found that organizational identity and image have a strong relationship. The researchers argued, "projected image…might also encompass attempts to convey a socially desirable, managed impression that emphasizes selected aspects of identity; it could even conceal or misrepresent identity" (p. 66). This projection of image, and therefore identity, allows for feedback to the organization.

The authors posited that organizational identity is always in flux, and the idea that an organization's identity can be fixed is an illusion (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000). While the core identity can exist, the ways in which organizations portray these identities is ever changing. Changes in identity can align with current trends within the organizational sphere, and can align the organization's priorities to current trends. This provides a challenge to those within the organization, since constant change suggests organizational instability. However, having a changing identity allows organizations to be nimble, and adapt to an evolving environment.

By using the postmodern perspective, one can argue that regardless of the identity's origins, everything ends up as an image and therefore an illusion (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000). The authors stated, "identity becomes a chameleon-like imitation of images prevailing in the postmodern marketplace" (p. 72). As images change over time, that does not necessarily mean that identity changes as well. Since the organization has various identities to highlight for specific audiences, then images can be tailored to meet these goals as well.

Prior studies have used organizational identity as a central framework explored the complex organizations that are higher education institutions. Weerts and Freed (2016) examined universities' civic engagement and civic identity as a method to engage the public with the institutions. The researchers found this public identity of being engaged with the community benefits the universities when it comes to recruiting students. This is one approach where institutions can leverage their own identities to promote their own survival (Weerts and Freed, 2016).

Stensaker (2014) explored how organizational identity can be linked with current challenges that universities are facing. Organizational identity has many uses, including interpretation, image and innovation. Stensaker (2016) explained, "the paradox that emerges is that labels such as being 'entrepreneurial' or 'world-class' become typical (mass) expressions of universities trying to profile themselves globally as unique organizations" (p. 112). These identity markers across institutions appear increasingly similar, even as colleges aim to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Additionally, Gioia, Price, Hamilton, and Thomas (2010) explored organizational identity formation through the lens of a new university. Through a grounded theory approach, the researchers developed eight essential processes that occur throughout organizational identity formation. These processes formalize the complex process that takes a great deal of time and stakeholder input that is involved throughout the organizational identity process. Participants in the study explained that being similar to peer institutions enhance their legitimacy, while being dissimilar allowed the institution to differentiate themselves from their peer group. This indicates that organizational

identity is not developed by one sole founder of an organization, but rather by a collective process that includes many stakeholders, internal and external.

This research on organizational identity, and also image, relates directly to the purpose of this dissertation. Institutions represent their unique qualities and mission to recruit prospective students, and are trying to communicate this identity through the use of viewbooks. Additionally, this framework provides a lens to examine how institutions demonstrate their symbols and saga to involve prospective students and their families in the institution.

As stated in the organizational identity literature, organizations use their identity in different ways depending on the context (Glynn, 2008). If a public college were advocating for additional funding resources from their state, they would highlight different facts about their institution than when they are recruiting prospective students. A higher education institution's identity, just like most organizations, is dynamic and can be made relevant for varying purposes. When institutions are trying to recruit prospective students, they are highlighting the university's best features, while also demonstrating common qualities among higher education institutions. Prospective students are expecting to see images of campus including residence halls, classrooms, athletic facilities, and the geographic region surrounding campus. If a college did not conform to these expected norms, they may be seen as an outlier to prospective students who are looking to evaluate an institution's qualities using the viewbook images.

Viewbooks are a way that colleges can differentiate themselves, but also conform to a member group. While Albert and Whetten (1985) suggested that organizational identity is an approach that organizations can use to differentiate themselves, prior

research on viewbooks has suggested that is not occurring (Hartley & Morphew, 2008). As Glynn (2008) argued, organizational identity performance can also include signals that an organization belongs to a member group. This can symbolize greater significance of the organization, based upon the prestige of its peer group. Colleges and universities can use viewbooks as a method for differentiating an institution from others in the field, or also aligning the institution with a group of institutions. One example of differentiation in the literatures about college viewbooks comes from liberal arts colleges frequently comparing their mission and practices to those of large, public institutions (Ragan & McMillan, 1989). The use of these two approaches will be noted throughout the dissertation.

Women's colleges can argue why single-sex education is preferable for prospective students, which is one approach to differentiate these institutions from the large number of coeducational institutions. Conversely, these institutions can focus on the member group of remaining women's colleges, showing their commitment to the success of this special mission. While both approaches demonstrate the commitment to the education of women, there are multiple ways of approaching this identity communication.

Images, especially those used in college viewbooks, are a way in which higher education institutions convey their identity. Images of important cultural symbols or traditions are communicated to prospective students as a way of introducing the institution's identity. Since students are often seeing the viewbook separate from campus, images allow students to subconsciously understand the college's projected identity through images. However, these images and projected identity are carefully

crafted with the goal of increasing applications and enrollment. Therefore, the information provided serves to benefit the institution and the identity is almost entirely positive for the organization's survival.

The concept of organizational identity as bricolage (Glynn, 2008) is particularly relevant when discussing college viewbooks. These viewbooks attempt to capture all relevant aspects of college life to prompt students to find out more information through visiting the website, or taking a campus tour. Higher education institutions are complex organizations with many simultaneous goals and objectives. These many priorities and facets of the undergraduate experience are necessary to communicate to prospective students. Therefore, it can be argued that viewbooks are a form of bricolage in the way they represent many images of an organization's identity. While the viewbooks do have an objective to recruit students, colleges have a plethora of information to convey to students. These various identity elements contribute to a complex organizational identity, which sometimes requires a complex set of images that try to capture the institution's identity.

As Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000) argued, identity as images contributes to the concept of an illusion. This is particularly relevant when it comes to research on higher education marketing. Prospective students and their families need to recognize that viewbooks are constructed with a purpose, and the images and text are carefully chosen to promote the illusion of the perfect college. While the creation of this illusion is not necessarily done with insidious intent, an organization's true identity cannot be experienced solely through a viewbook.

By being free of a fixed identity, and understanding that organizational identity is constantly in flux, higher education institutions are able to highlight the most relevant portions of their organizational identity. This proves true when it comes to viewbooks, and recruiting prospective students. For example, STEM education is a current higher education buzzword, and prospective students are picking up on this emphasis. Now, since students are looking to colleges to see their STEM programs, colleges can use viewbooks to highlight their science labs and research opportunities. While these STEM majors may have existed for decades, this increased focus provides the institution with an opportunity to highlight this aspect of their identity. This suggests that identity can be used as a strategic tool, where institutions can focus their energy on the trends in higher education, and downplay core identity elements that are not explicitly desired by prospective students.

The conceptual framework of organizational identity is appropriate for this dissertation, because it speaks to why institutions try to represent themselves to prospective students, and that this representation has a specific aim. Additionally, the concept that identity can be performed through images aligns directly with the practices of admissions marketing. As women's colleges are trying to recruit prospective students, they may choose to highlight (or not) the fact that they are single-sex institutions. This identity that is inherent in the institutions in this study, may be subdued for the purposes of student recruitment. Overall, the concept of organizational identity provided an effective framework to use when interpreting the findings from this dissertation.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the scholarly literature relevant to the dissertation. With women's colleges closing and becoming coeducational, recruiting prospective students has become necessary to institutional survival. An overview of higher education marketing situated viewbooks within the larger landscape of student recruitment and marketing practices. Research on women's college outcomes differentiated the experiences of students at single-sex institutions and coeducational colleges. This will help readers understand the values and influence that attending a women's college can have for a student. Finally, the conceptual framework of organizational identity was introduced and applied towards the dissertation. The next chapter will provide an outline of the methodology, methods, and epistemology that will be used in the dissertation.

Chapter 3

As outlined in the literature review, women's colleges exist in a unique environment where student outcomes demonstrate the benefits of single-sex education, yet fewer young women are considering attending women's colleges. Additionally, increases in college marketing have spurred competition for prospective students. Enrollment marketing is one method for women's colleges to attract prospective students, and more information is needed as to how this is presently occurring. This dissertation examined the content of women's college viewbooks to understand what information is communicated to prospective students.

Since higher education marketing has become more prevalent, research that examines the ways in which institutions recruit prospective students has grown as well. This dissertation aligned with prior studies about viewbooks, which have sought to understand the content and messages within the viewbooks of specific institutions. It also featured qualitative content analysis, which is the primary methodology used by viewbook researchers.

The purpose of this dissertation was to analyze how women's colleges market to prospective students using viewbooks. This analysis also sought to understand how women's colleges represent themselves with the end goal of recruiting students. The existing literature on women's colleges, and organizational identity shaped the research questions for this dissertation.

The research questions I sought to answer were:

- How is the organizational identity of women's colleges portrayed within viewbooks?

- How do women's colleges portray academic and social life?
- How do women's colleges address the benefits and challenges of single-sex education within the viewbook?
- How do women's colleges construct gender in viewbooks?

Using a critical lens and qualitative content analysis, I analyzed the viewbooks of women's colleges. This process involved developing a coding frame using categories and subcategories through document analysis. Through this, I developed themes that were common among these institutions to see how women's colleges market to prospective students in the 21st century. This chapter will provide detailed information about the methodology, epistemology, conceptual framework, and methods used to conduct this analysis.

Research Design

In order to answer the research questions stated above, I used qualitative content analysis (QCA) to analyze the data and identify themes within the viewbooks. Through QCA, researchers develop categories and subcategories using the data, with the aim of understanding the content of the qualitative material. This allows researchers to narrow down the volume of data to only the relevant portions in order to answer the research questions.

This methodology was appropriate for this dissertation because it created a framework to systematically categorize the data. Many researchers who have also examined admissions viewbooks have used content analysis as their research approach (Hartley & Morphew, 2008; Hite & Yearwood, 2001; Pippert, Essenburg & Matchett,

2013). Since content analysis has been used in prior work with viewbooks, using the same method for this dissertation allows for a direct comparison to prior studies.

QCA is an appropriate methodology for any qualitative data, when the goal of the research is to interpret the data to arrive at a meaning (Schreier, 2012). QCA is unique because it allows researchers to focus on selected portions of the data, in order to focus on the information needed to answer the research questions. By building a coding frame, researchers can divide the data into categories, and code within these categories (Schreier, 2012).

The data for QCA can include images or text, which made it appropriate for use in this dissertation. The same approaches of analysis for text can be applied to images. Since there is substantial information, both text and images, included within each college viewbook, this approach narrowed the content to only the most relevant data. Once the data was limited to the content most applicable to the research questions, then coding and thematic analysis can begin.

Epistemology

The epistemological perspective that aligned best with the goals and planned methodology of this dissertation was critical theory. Critical theorists situate knowledge within the current structures of society, and empower people to "transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender" (Creswell, 2013, p. 30). The researcher utilizes the power to affect change through research, and uses this lens in the choice of methods, and documentation of findings. This epistemology can contribute to a deeper understanding of the messages included within viewbooks, and the role of women's colleges in the 21st century.

In critical theory, research serves as "the critique and transformation of the social, political, cultural, economics, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). This critical lens accounts for historical inequalities that have led to the current state of affairs. This perspective aligns with the current situation where women's colleges are struggling to enroll students, but have significant historical legacies educating talented female students for generations. The critique will come through questioning of the content intended for a prospective student audience.

I believe critical theory aligns with this dissertation because the goal of this dissertation was to understand the deeper meanings of institutional viewbooks, to see what these colleges are trying to communicate to prospective students. The text and images used in viewbooks have a goal, and the messages in viewbooks are carefully crafted with the goal of increasing applications to the institution. The messages included within viewbooks influence college decision making for prospective students, and therefore more attention should be paid to how institutions represent themselves to this audience.

In an analysis of higher education marketing, Hearn (2010) used the critical perspective to analyze the evolution of higher education marketing from its early days to the current culture. As public universities have had to become more entrepreneurial due to reduced public funding for higher education, these institutions have looked to corporate sponsors for private sector support. With this drive towards the commercialization of higher education, students fulfill the role of consumers, viewing a university as a service provider instead of as an educational experience.

Additionally, Hearn (2010), argued "the communicative practices of promotionalism in the form of branding, then, comprise the deep commodification of culture, whereby our values and commonly used symbols are colonized by the market and put to work to sell" (p. 205). This quotation speaks directly to the heart of this study. Universities' identities involve symbols and values that can span centuries, but in the promotional culture of higher education, these elements of an organization's identity are repurposed to respond in a competitive marketplace. These complex organizations are reduced to a marketable image or brand, and exchange in the higher education marketplace in the aim of recruiting students. Organizational identity is repurposed to sell merchandise, generate prospective student interest, and convince students to enroll.

This critical perspective about the detrimental effects of higher education marketing is directly relevant to this dissertation. Hearn (2010) also explained, "the university experience is configured as a lifestyle choice, where brochures brag of retail and food courts, great social and sports events, and plentiful student services, so students will not have to compromise their already well-established consumer lifestyles (p. 211). The viewbook analysis presented through this dissertation gets at many of these issues. Students are focusing on the fun, social aspects of their prospective college, and concerns about academic offerings are limited.

In order to appeal to their ideal student, a college may represent their institution in a certain way. This representation could come in the form of an aspirational identity such as showing a more diverse student body than the real racial diversity of an institution. Colleges also highlight the top achievers from their institutions, in order to demonstrate what is possible for prospective students to achieve. These student and alumni profiles

include those who have obtained coveted internships, gained admission to top graduate schools, or studied abroad in a desirable and visually appealing location.

When a college gives space to one student's perspective or feature of the institution, there are inevitably perspectives that are left out of the conversation. Many students struggle in the adjustment to college life, and yet this common experience for students is noticeably absent from conversations with prospective students. In order to have broad appeal for students, the students in viewbooks are all smiles and success stories. As an example, by privileging the students who have obtained internships, a college leaves out those students who work full-time to support their family.

As the first person in my family to attend college, I used viewbooks to imagine campuses where I would not have the opportunity to visit. I felt special that a top-tier university would send me a viewbook in the mail. I did not realize at the time that viewbooks are mailed to thousands of students in order to drive up college application numbers, and therefore enhance selectivity. The very act of sending an unsolicited viewbook to a student can signal an interest in recruiting the student, or at least encourage an application.

Another challenge when it comes to college marketing and representation is how college appears to first generation students. The lingo and images associated with college may be lost on the students who do not have a parent to guide them. Even the parents who attended community colleges or as part-time students may not understand the experience of attending a residential college. The viewbooks assume a certain level of familiarity with the college process and are not intended to educate the consumers about their myriad of options.

Additionally, college advertisements fall short of representing the true meaning of higher education. Instead, higher education is sold as a commodity and outcomes signal success for an institution's graduates. The benefits of college are individualized to show prospective students what they will benefit from attending a particular institution. This individual benefit perspective of higher education begins before students arrive on campus, and persists throughout the student experience. In this tuition-driven environment, colleges are catering to their customers in order to remain relevant and competitive. However, this also causes students to view their role at the institution as consumers, which creates other complications.

I used QCA for this dissertation, and the critical theory perspective that aligns well with this methodology. Through conducting QCA, this allowed me to understand how images and text are being used in viewbooks. The data and findings through this dissertation were situated in the understanding that truth is not a fixed outcome. Institutions' use of a similar word or concept could have different connotations based upon the given context of a particular institution. However, critical theory allows for researchers to question the validity of the presented portrait of college life, and empower prospective students to question the edited identity portrayed through college viewbooks.

Conceptual Framework

The organizational identity model introduced by Albert and Whetten (1985) provided the conceptual framework that guided the analysis in this dissertation. An organization's identity is relative based upon the audience at the time. It also is temporal and evolves over time, as the organization changes. Additionally, part of an

organization's identity is the ability to differentiate itself from others in the competitive marketplace.

Glynn (2008) introduced the concept of bricolage as a way of understanding organizational identity. For instance the various symbols that an organization uses all contribute to an organization's identity. Sometimes, just the unique combination of symbols defines an identity for a particular institution. Additionally, according to Glynn (2008), an organization's identity can provide guidance on how it should perform in a given scenario. Through performance, an organization communicates their mission to others.

Organizational identity and image have a strong relationship according to Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000). An organization can use a projected image to edit how their identity is communicated to others. Therefore, one must be cautious to not conflate an organization's image with identity.

This concept of organizational identity aligns with this dissertation because higher education institutions are trying to communicate their best qualities with prospective students for recruitment purposes. The images and text within viewbooks are carefully crafted to portray the most favorable identity to all potential students. Viewbooks can also be viewed as a form of bricolage, where organizational symbols are utilized to represent the institution and students' experiences.

Data Sources and Collection

The data sources for this dissertation were viewbooks from women's colleges within the United States. These viewbooks include text and images intended to persuade students to consider an institution in their college choice. Viewbooks come in print or

digital formats, and both formats contain similar information. The digital viewbooks were available as a website or as PDF files. In most cases with the PDF viewbooks, the content matched the printed viewbooks exactly. Some colleges use multiple smaller documents in their mailings, but if these smaller brochures are considered as a whole they include similar information to viewbooks. Since these smaller pieces were often sent to me when I requested a viewbook, I included these within the analysis. The data from the images and text provided sufficient information to properly address the research questions for this dissertation.

The printed viewbooks differed both in number of pages and size. Hollis College, Judson College, Saint Catherine University, Spelman College, and Ursuline College had viewbooks that had the fewest amount of pages at eight pages. Scripps College's viewbook had the most pages within the sample, with 102. The average page length of the viewbooks was 31 pages. While Scripps was the largest by page numbers, their viewbook also had the smallest dimensions, five inches wide by seven inches long. The largest was Bay Path University, which was 9.75" wide by 12.5" long.

The covers of the viewbooks engaged prospective students with images of smiling students, bright colors, taglines, logos, and idyllic campus scenes. Nearly all of the viewbooks featured a student or multiple students on the cover. Images dominated the majority of the page space within the viewbooks, illustrating the campus experience through image depiction rather than textual explanation. The text that was included was not lengthy on each page, but was designed to give prospective students a quick glance about particular topics such as study abroad, and internships. The viewbooks used varying font sizes to highlight the main points about a particular topic, and draw the

reader in to read and discover more. For any given topic minimal information was provided through the text, and few institutions referred students to their website for additional information on specific topics. This results in viewbooks that are designed to generate prospective student interest without providing an overwhelming amount of information.

The data collection phase involved two steps to locate the digital viewbooks and request a paper viewbook to be sent via mail. First, I viewed the undergraduate admissions offices' websites attempting to locate the colleges' digital viewbooks. After this step was complete, I emailed the undergraduate admissions office at each women's college to request a viewbook to be sent by mail or email. Initial emails were sent in December 2016. For the colleges who had not replied within three weeks of the initial email, I followed up with a second email request in early January 2017. By late January there were still several schools where the office had not replied or the viewbook was never received. In these cases, I followed up via email again and by phone.

Population and Sample

The sample for this study included the 37 women's colleges as of Fall 2016 (see Appendix A). Due to the small number of remaining women's college, it was appropriate and feasible to sample all of the colleges within this given population and therefore the sample in this proposed study is a population sample. These institutions vary in some aspects, but all are four-year not-for-profit private institutions. Their undergraduate populations range in size from 316 students (Sweet Briar College) to 3320 (St. Catherine University). While all of the institutions were single-sex, they varied based on religious affiliation, geographic location, special mission, and Carnegie classification.

Of the 37 institutions in this sample, 18 are religiously affiliated with a Christian sect. Eleven are Roman Catholic, three are United Methodist, two are Presbyterian, one is Baptist and one is a Moravian Church institution. The majority of women's colleges are located within the Southeast and Northeast United States, with thirteen and twelve colleges respectively. Additionally, there are nine women's colleges within the Midwest and three in the West. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia are represented in the sample.

Within the sample there are also institutions that have unique missions, aside from being a single-sex college. Moore College of Art and Design is the only visual arts college for women in the United States. Two colleges in the sample, Spelman College and Bennett College are considered Historically Black Colleges and Universites (HBCUs). These special missions may also be communicated through the viewbooks that students receive, and these other identities could overshadow the single-sex nature of the institution.

The colleges in this dissertation also have a variety of Carnegie classifications. Within the 18 baccalaureate institutions most have an arts and science focus, but two also represent diverse academic fields. There is one institution, Cottey College, which is mixed between primarily associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees. Seventeen colleges are master's colleges, with 14 institutions offering doctoral degree programs. For institutions that have graduate students, graduate programs are required by law to be coeducational. Therefore the single-sex identity of women's colleges applies only to the undergraduate population.

All of the institutions, except Mount Mary University and Ursuline College, are members of the Women's College Coalition. This organization assists students and their families with promoting women's college education in the college search process (Women's College Coalition, 2016). Additionally, this group promotes research that explores the outcomes of graduates of women's colleges.

Out of the sample of 37 institutions, I was able to analyze viewbooks of 34 colleges. The viewbooks from Agnes Scott College and Bennett College never arrived, after multiple requests. Additionally, these colleges did not offer electronic viewbooks. Since Bennett College was not included in this analysis, the only HBCU was Spelman College. Cedar Crest College does not offer a viewbook, but instead they mailed a welcome letter, application, scholarship information, and a two-page overview of the colleges offered at the institution. Since this does not quite align with the other materials analyzed throughout the dissertation, this packet was not considered as part of the analysis. Bryn Mawr College does not offer a print viewbook, in an effort to be more sustainable. Therefore, only the PDF viewbook from this institution was included in this analysis.

Instrumentation and Analysis

To manage the coding process with 34 college viewbooks, I scanned all of the paper viewbooks into PDF files. Once this process was complete, I imported the scanned viewbooks and digital viewbooks in ATLAS.ti to code the data. This software allowed me to organize text and image segments using the established codes, and see patterns of frequency within the sample. Using color, I was able to organize the codes associated

with each research question, and was able to focus on addressing a particular research question when analyzing the massive amounts of data.

To begin QCA, the researcher must read all of the data first to understand what is included and what is not (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). This first reading did not include any coding, but allowed me to understand the breadth of the content within the viewbooks. Following this initial reading, I started to develop a coding frame to organize and understand the content of the data. This allowed me to focus on the most relevant portions of the data, and move forward with the analysis. The coding frame served as an outline for sorting through the large quantity of qualitative material. This section will outline how the coding frame instrument was developed through the course of this dissertation, and how it was applied to the analysis of the data.

Once all of the viewbooks had been read, the next step was to create a coding frame. This consisted of categories and subcategories that provided an outline of how to sort the content of each viewbook. There are three schools of thought about how to construct the coding frame, a concept-driven approach, a data-driven approach, and a combination of the two (Schreier, 2012). The concept-driven approach draws from prior research, theories, experience, or logic, whereas, the data-driven approach allows the categories in the coding frame to emerge from the data. For this analysis, I used a combination of the two approaches to develop the coding frame.

For the categories within the coding frame, I drew from the major constructs that were relevant to the research questions using the concept-driven approach. These constructs were organizational identity, academic life, social life, benefits and challenges

of women's colleges, and gender representation (see Appendix B). This helped to organize the data so that each research question can have sufficient data coverage.

Once I read the viewbooks several times, I followed the process of subsumption to develop the data-driven subcategories (Schreier, 2012). Since the categories were developed based upon the research questions, I reviewed all of the relevant material within a given category. If I noticed something new, I made a note of it for consideration of a subcategory. As more of the data was read, then I evaluated as to whether or not it would fit into an established subcategory. This process continued until all of the material within a given category was read and considered for the subcategories. Some subcategories featured multiple codes. For example the "campus" subcategory featured codes such as landmarks, maps, and public art. Whereas other subcategories served as a code, in the case of Study Abroad.

After the initial coding frame was complete, the data segmentation began. I reread each viewbook with the newly created coding frame, and determined how the data included in the viewbooks fit into the categories and subcategories of the coding frame. At this time, I looked at all of the data again using this new perspective, to ensure that all data that would fit into a subcategory was included for the final analysis. In this stage of coding, I felt that several codes were not included initially that should have been. These included specific benefits and challenges of women's colleges, and codes pertaining to gender representation. When these codes were added to the final coding frame, I reread the materials to consider the applicability of these codes to the viewbooks.

Once all of the data had been coded using the subcategories, I compared the data within each code to determine how the subcategories are defined within the data. I also

examined all of the data for a given subcategory to see common elements within this grouping. These subcategories were used to develop the themes that will be presented in Chapter 4.

As part of the analysis process, I also utilized analytic memos before, throughout, and after the data collection and analysis processes. These memos helped track my data collection process, analysis process, allowing me to consider developing ideas, reoccurring themes, and personal responses to the data. Through these memos, I documented my own assumptions, emerging thoughts about the data through the analysis process, and what I found surprising. This aligned with Vagle's (2014) work on analytic memos, where researchers take note of moments of connection or disconnection with the data, assumptions of normality, and what shocks the researchers.

I used the memos as a method of tracking my thoughts throughout the research process, and so I dedicated time to reflect on each viewbook after a reading or coding session. I was critical of my own ways of thinking, pushing myself to interpret the information through a different lens. Through this memo writing process, this strengthened the overall result of the dissertation because I find that writing is a beneficial way to structure thoughts, and identify recurring themes throughout the data.

Data Presentation

The results of this dissertation are presented using the categories as they relate to the research questions. Each category was defined, and examples of each category were included. Within each category, the main content themes were discussed and related back to the research questions. Due to the information available in viewbooks, the

presentation of findings includes images and direct quotations from the text. This allows readers to examine exactly how the themes were expressed in the viewbook materials.

Design Issues

Throughout the design of this project, I carefully considered how the research design would effectively answer the research questions. Due to the fact that all institutions within the given population were included in the sample, the sample size is sufficient. However, three colleges within the sample did not respond to my request for a viewbook or did not offer viewbooks. Despite this fact, I felt that 34 viewbooks from a 37-college sample was sufficient to use when exploring the viewbook use of women's colleges.

There was a limitation because this dissertation only captured a single moment in time. Colleges' marketing strategies can change frequently to adapt to new trends in the marketplace. As these strategies evolve, a particular institution can shift gears within a matter of months. This dissertation was designed to examine women's colleges as they existed in Fall 2016. I recognize that these institutions will continue to evolve as institutions do, and the findings of this dissertation speak to this moment only.

While some critics may see the study of women's colleges as a lost cause, due to their rapid rate of coeducation and closure, I believe higher education researchers have a responsibility to understand how these institutions respond to enrollment demands at this critical juncture. One may not know what the future holds for the successes or failures of these institutions. However, the design and scope of this dissertation was carefully considered to address this critical juncture for the future of women's colleges within the United States.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the following dissertation, I coded the data multiple times, and provided thick description when presenting the findings. Additionally, in the subjectivity statement later in this chapter, I used this opportunity to clarify any biases I am aware of prior to the beginning of the dissertation. For QCA, Schreier (2012) recommend researchers code and then recode the data after 10-14 days. This allows researchers to compare their coding to ensure consistency with the material. I used this approach of waiting a while to recode the data a second time to ensure trustworthiness of the analysis.

Another form of trustworthiness, thick description, was employed throughout the use of this dissertation. When presenting the themes from the data, I presented exact quotations and images from the viewbooks. By using thick description, this supports my arguments regarding the findings from the viewbooks, and provides readers with tangible examples to understand the themes better.

Human Participants

Since the methods for this dissertation included only document analysis, there were not any human participants in this study. Since documents were the only source of data, this study was outside of the purview of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Therefore, informed consent and a review from IRB were not required.

Subjectivity Statement

I became interested in this topic after reading an article in *The Journal of Higher Education* titled "What college and university websites reveal about the purposes of higher education" by Saichaie and Morphew (2014). After realizing that there was a

whole body of research dedicated to marketing of higher education, I realized that I could combine these two academic interests for my dissertation. I recognize that with my educational background in media studies, I cannot see an image at face value. I read into images, and their reasons for being selected to represent an institution or other entity. I have been interested in the use of semiotics for film and visual art analysis in the past, but had never thought about its possible uses with educational research.

One experience in particular has made me interested in studying the viewbooks of higher education institution. One of my friends is Japanese American, and appeared on several pages of her college's viewbooks sent to prospective students. The admissions staff photographed students at diversity seminars as an opportunity to capture one slice of racial diversity and used these images to represent the student body on campus. Since learning how common these practices can be, I have been critical of how institutions promote their own values through the crafting of marketing materials.

I believe that I can contribute to this area of study because I want to ensure students understand what they are getting when they decide to enroll in a particular institution. Deciding where to enroll in college is a big decision, and can change the course of a person's life. Acts of misrepresentation and editing students so an institution can appear more racially diverse are more commonplace than they should be. I believe that colleges can be transparent and represent their unique mission to prospective students, and that this can also serve their goal of recruiting students.

I specifically chose to study women's colleges because I wanted to understand how these institutions are making single-sex education relevant to prospective students. When I was deciding where to attend college, I considered a few of the Seven Sisters

colleges in my search but ultimately enrolled at a coeducational institution. Additionally, with the national news of Sweet Briar College nearly closing its doors, I learned more about the enrollment challenges that women's colleges are facing in a competitive environment. As the role of women's colleges shifts away from access for female students, I wanted to understand how these institutions are defining their missions and history with the aim of recruiting talented students.

I also personally identify as a feminist, and this played a role in this dissertation. I know that many higher education institutions in the 21st century continue to perpetuate gendered expectations of women, thus creating inequitable experiences for female students at coeducational institutions. While progress has been made in the area of access to higher education, women are still viewed as outsiders in the academy, particularly when it comes to STEM environments. Women's colleges are a form of higher education that has a unique opportunity to combat the sexist assumptions of female students' academic aspirations and limited academic opportunities. I believe that higher education institutions have a responsibility to present equal academic opportunities to students of all genders, and that can begin at the recruitment phase.

During the time period when I was writing my findings for this dissertation, I relocated to the town where the University of Saint Joseph is located. As a result of this move, I became a member at the university's fitness center. I do not believe this affiliation with the institution affected my presentation of the findings, since this occurred after the analysis portion was completed for this dissertation.

While I have tried to consider my own subjectivity for documentation and consideration, the very notion of subjectivity includes unconscious biases that researchers

hold. I am not blind to this fact, and acknowledge that I hold biases that are unknown to me. As this dissertation progressed, my own assumptions of "expected" behaviors of higher education institutions was challenged, expanded, and redefined.

Summary

To align with the prior research on college viewbooks, I utilized qualitative content analysis to answer the stated research questions. This methodology is appropriate for use with college viewbooks, because it provides researchers with a systematic approach to uncover meaning in qualitative data. This methodology is also appropriate for use with images and text, which are both important elements of collegiate viewbooks. In order to uncover the deeper meanings and implications of the text within the viewbooks, I used a critical perspective. This epistemological approach allows researchers to situate their findings within the historical structures in which the data takes place. I felt that qualitative content analysis and the critical perspective provided the most appropriate lens for this dissertation.

In order to answer the research questions, I used print and digital viewbooks from the women's colleges within the United States. The sample includes all of these single-sex institutions because there are currently only 37 remaining. Using the data from these viewbooks, I developed the coding frame to conduct the analysis. This coding frame included categories developed from the research questions, and subcategories that are data-driven from the texts. While this dissertation did attempt to understand the viewbook practices of women's colleges, it only captured one moment in time. Although, for some colleges within this dissertation, it was a critical time due to declining enrollment and decreased interest in single-sex education.

The following chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the findings using these research methods. The data will be presented to answer the research questions one by one. Additionally, the presentation of the findings will include images and exact quotations from the viewbook texts, to provide readers with examples of the findings.

Chapter 4

Based on the content analysis, the coding revealed several themes per research question. I have presented the themes as they relate to and answer the research questions, and provided supporting evidence in the forms of photographs and thick description excerpts from the viewbooks. The exploration of the themes presented in the chapter reveals the messages used within viewbooks for women's colleges.

Organizational Identity

Since colleges are trying to stand out from amongst the rest of the field when recruiting prospective students, I wanted to explore how the colleges in this study were communicating their unique organizational identity to prospective students. Organizational identity is what makes a particular college unique, and this includes an institution's history, location, mission, and more. While organizational identity can take many forms, it was clear from the data that notable campus figures, location, campus, history and traditions, meaningful institutional symbols, and postgraduate outcomes were aspects of the colleges' identity that were worth highlighting for prospective students. The viewbooks did not highlight the demographic information of students, or the graduation and retention rates of students. Throughout the following examples of organizational identity, the colleges differentiated their offerings from coeducational institutions and not from other women's colleges.

Notable Campus Figures

Throughout the viewbooks, there were many examples of women's colleges highlighting various campus figures to show the institution's unique benefits. These figures included alumnae, current students, faculty, celebrities, and college presidents.

While the audience of the viewbooks is prospective students, there were more alumnae profiles than those of current students in the viewbooks. This feature is one method for the colleges to show outcomes and successful graduates in a more personalized manner.

Almost all of the institutions included profiles for one of the populations mentioned earlier. However, there were three institutions that did not speak about specific campus figures- Saint Catherine University, Stephens College, and Ursuline College. The only institution that featured alumnae, students, faculty, celebrities, and college presidents was Barnard College. Three different institutions only featured the college's president in the viewbooks.

The alumnae profiles used in 21 colleges' viewbooks consisted of background information such as hometown, and major. The young women featured in the viewbooks had gone on to pursue graduate work at prestigious institutions, or have achieved career success since graduating. Out of the 78 profiles across the sample, 68 included quotations where the alumna described her own college experience, or reflected on how her alma mater helped her become the woman she is today. One example such a quotation came from an alumna from Barnard College, who stated "Barnard taught me how to be comfortable not knowing. It taught me how to ask questions, how to push myself into the unknown, and how to survive there. I knew that I had the tools to cope- and to succeed." The colleges that have celebrities or notable people among their graduates called attention to this fact, and used their names and images to promote the successes of the institution. Hillary Clinton and Elaine Chao are two examples of famous alumnae that were featured prominently within the viewbooks. These alumnae profiles

provided an avenue for the colleges to highlight the accomplishments of their graduates, and have the alumnae credit their alma mater for their achievements.

Student profiles also referenced a student's hometown and major, but went a little bit deeper into the students' experiences on campus. Twenty-four of the 34 institutions featured student profiles within the viewbooks. Out of the 39 examples where a hometown was named, seven students were from international locations. In two cases, the students listed their U.S. hometown and their country of origin. For Smith and Wellesley, the hometowns of students were internationally and domestically diverse. It is clear that these institutions are able to recruit students from anywhere, whereas, other schools such as College of Saint Mary and Converse College had more in-state students. In the examples where the viewbook provided the students' majors, there were a wide variety of fields of study represented within each school's viewbook. This approach offers institutions a way to show the academic offerings at the campus, and if the students expanded upon their academic experiences, it shows prospective students a glimpse into the life of a particular major.

These student profiles allowed the colleges to highlight a student's internship opportunities, study abroad experiences, and cocurricular activities. Since these profiles featured quotations from the students' perspectives, they shared their thoughts about why they love their college, why they chose to attend that particular institution, and advice for new students. The students featured were heavily involved in multiple campus organizations, and several served as campus tour guides. It may be that the tour guides would be featured so frequently because they are familiar with the staff within the undergraduate admissions office, and they are accustomed to sharing their passion for

their school with prospective students. Of the 24 institutions that used student profiles, 17 colleges featured multiple students, and it appears that the students were carefully selected to highlight different experiences on campus. The profile format is an approachable way to share students' perspectives, while also crafting the message towards prospective students.

One example of such a profile can be seen in Figure 1. This profile of a student from Notre Dame of Maryland University featured the student's expected graduation year, major, hometown, and career goals. By showing her hometown as California, this institution in Maryland is able to show that they can draw students from across the country to attend. Additionally, the student shared her experience transitioning to the college and the cocurricular activities that she became involved with on campus. She also reflected on how her college has helped her grow, and become more confident. This example highlights this students' high level of involvement with her college, and her academic and athletic success.

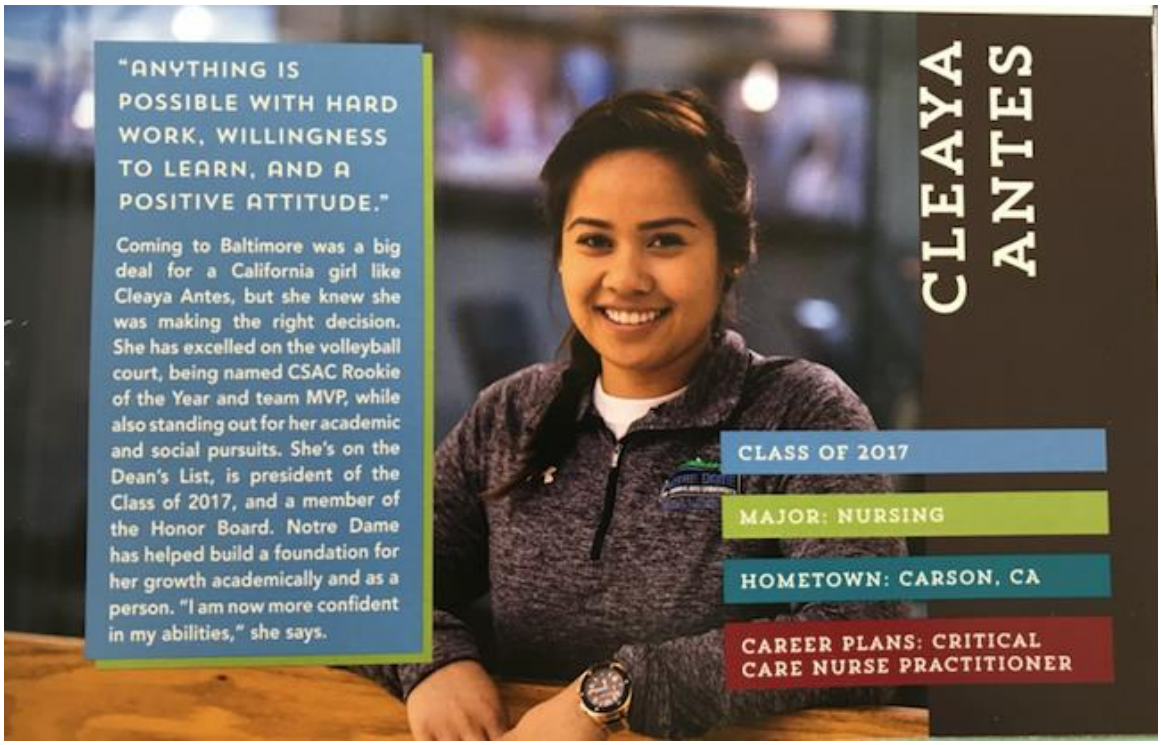

Figure 1. Student Profile Example from Notre Dame of Maryland University

While alumnae and students were the primary focus, ten colleges featured profiles of faculty members. These portrayals focused on a faculty member's area of research, their work with students on a research project, and grants received. There was an emphasis on the faculty members as student mentors, and several profiles highlighted the faculty members' educational philosophy. Additionally, there were several quotations responding to why they love the institution they work at, and how they love helping students learn. One example of this came from Nanette Veilleux from Simmons College who stated, "Faculty support students as whole people, not as, say, a random kid in Math 101. I have really watched women use their voices at Simmons, and I'm overjoyed every

single time." These messages shape the concept of a supportive learning environment, particularly when it comes to the STEM fields.

Ten institutions also used the viewbook to highlight celebrities who spoke or visited campus recently. This affiliation, while fleeting, shows that students who attend a particular college could have access to meet and listen to the great minds of our time. Barnard and Wellesley included the most prominent alumni of the set, including Barack Obama (Barnard), Hillary Clinton (both), Oprah Winfrey (both), and Sheryl Sandberg (Barnard). The notable figures that were featured throughout the other viewbooks were less famous people such as Queen Latifah (Bay Path) and Zadie Smith (Bryn Mawr). Of the five remaining Seven Sisters colleges, the only institution that did not feature a celebrity was Mount Holyoke.

Six colleges within this study featured the college president within their viewbooks. These representations varied from the president's educational philosophy to a welcome message to prospective students. Other colleges went further, showing the president exercising with students in the fitness center, and explaining the president's dorm chats, which allow students to interact with the president on a regular basis.

While colleges used these profiles in various ways, each institution attempted to situate them within the marketplace as unique and different. The student profiles are presented as if the experiences of a student could not be replicated anywhere else. The students' quotations include statements such as "that is what makes me a Barnard woman" and "without Scripps, I never would have studied vertebrate activity at the Bernard Field Station, leaf cutler ants in Costa Rica, or zebrafish brains at Keck." Since students and alumnae each have different experiences tailored to their interests, the

colleges can capitalize on their combination of experiences, and frame it as unique. Throughout the viewbooks in this study, the student profiles are pretty similar across institutions, since students at any college can pursue a coveted internship, participate in a study abroad experience, or lead a student organization. The ideal student within these profiles appeared to be pretty consistent across the institutions, and the profiles seem geared towards areas which may viewed most favorably by prospective students.

It seems that the 31 institutions that used notable campus figures within their viewbooks featured their students, alumnae, presidents, faculty members, and celebrity visitors to promote their institutional brand and identity. It may be difficult to demonstrate the effects of a leadership program, so a college could highlight an alumna who has been successful in her field after graduating from the institution. Seeing the experiences of students and alumnae is a more personalized approach for readers to understand the array of experiences available at a particular institution. Additionally, the colleges can highlight examples of people who espouse the values and mission of the institution. The colleges can use the celebrities' clout to enhance the identity of the institution. Using quotations from these various populations allows prospective students to understand the perspectives of students who have been in their place before.

Location and Campus

Throughout the viewbooks in this study, the majority of colleges placed emphasis on the value of their location and campus's features. Twenty-nine of the colleges discussed their location, and all but one highlighted their campus offerings such as buildings and scenery. Traditional undergraduate students are assessing colleges not only for their academics, but also livability for the next four years of their life. The college's

location provides additional experiences and opportunities for its students, and this could be a deciding factor for prospective students deciding where to study. The examples within this theme all point to a college's desirable location or campus setting.

Twenty-three institutions referenced a close city or town that offer students the ability to pursue internship opportunities, attend a cultural event, or grab a bite to eat. The colleges highlighted nearby parks, museums, mountains, beaches, concert venues, and sports arenas. The colleges in California played up their ideal climate. The institutions close to large metropolitan areas highlighted the abundance of internship and post-graduate career opportunities. One example of this comes from Notre Dame of Maryland University, whose viewbook stated:

> There are 120,000+ college students in Baltimore. Connected by the Collegetown network, they will become your neighbors as you enjoy the arts, music, cultural and sporting attractions, and Charm City nightlife. And guess what? With a robust job market, those college students tend to stay in Baltimore, making it one of the fastest growing cities for young professionals in the country.

Even if the college was in a small town, the institution highlighted the area's attractions such as a small bookstore, or a popular restaurant. Students are planning to spend the next four years of their life at a particular school, and off-campus opportunities may be helpful to factor into their decision-making process.

Another notable emphasis pertaining to location was the colleges' proximity to other colleges and universities. While five schools included an area or state map, others listed the number or names of colleges nearby. Ten colleges specified the number of college students nearby. One example of this was Moore College of Art and Design,

which stated “Greater Philadelphia is home to over 15 four-year colleges and more than 300,000 college students from across the U.S. and the world.” Barnard College, Saint Mary’s College, and College of Saint Benedict referenced their institutions’ partnerships with nearby Columbia University, University of Notre Dame, and Saint John’s University. In the cases of Barnard College and Saint Mary’s College, it seems that these colleges are capitalizing on the proximity and relationship to a more reputable coeducational institution. This reputation by association may create additional prestige for the women’s college, but since women can attend Barnard and Saint Mary’s why would talented students attend the college next door when they can attend the more reputable of the two. Saint John’s University is a men’s college, so the partnership between College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s highlights to prospective students that there are male college students nearby. For those colleges in a consortium, they played up the ability to cross-register and socialize with students from the nearby campuses.

The five colleges that did not highlight their location were Alverno College, the College of Saint Benedict, Converse College, Saint Catherine University, and Ursuline College. Four of these schools are located in the Midwest, and one is in the Southeast. Alverno College is located in Milwaukee, WI, just like Mount Mary University. However, the Mount Mary University viewbook portrayed Milwaukee as a bustling city known as the City of Festivals. Mount Mary University’s viewbook stated, “Did you know that Milwaukee is known internationally as the City of Festivals? Summerfest is the world's largest music festival, as determined by the Guinness Book of Records. Over the course of eleven days, eleven stages feature more than 700 performers!”

Additionally, Saint Catherine University is located in a large city, Saint Paul, MN. The three other institutions are located in small cities or medium to large suburbs. Despite the fact that two of these institutions are located within a large city with more to offer students, they chose not to highlight the city's offerings.

While the location of the school is important, it is clear that campus beauty is a primary selling feature as well. In the quotations from students throughout several viewbooks, they stated that they knew it was a great fit the moment they stepped on campus. For one student at Moore College of Art and Design, they stated, "'When I walked in the door, I realized that this was going to be a creative environment." Callie, a student at Columbia College (Columbia, SC), said, "my decision of which college to attend was made when I first stepped onto the Columbia College." The images of the campus in the viewbook attempt to translate the most ideal, picturesque day in printed form. The images of campus scenery featured lush trees, lakes, and other relaxing outdoor spaces. Figure 2 is an image from the viewbook of Bryn Mawr College that featured a sunny day on campus, and showcases a photogenic building and some lush trees. Out of the hundreds of images included within the viewbooks of this study, only three pictures featured snow, and few showed fall foliage. For the colleges that experience four true seasons, there was little evidence of cold or precipitation throughout the viewbooks.

Figure 2. Campus Scene at Bryn Mawr College

Additionally, the colleges showed images of campus buildings. These ranged in purpose from academic buildings to residence halls, and libraries to student unions. The buildings located on a quad were featured quite often. Most of the buildings appeared to be traditional, brick architecture. Smith College has unique house-style residence halls, and included images to demonstrate examples (See Figure 3). Smith's viewbook included images of nine different campus buildings, the most of any institution in this dissertation. Four colleges featured the same building multiple times within the viewbooks, which causes one to wonder how large the campus is and how unphotogenic the other buildings must be. In addition, a few schools included digital renderings or

descriptions of planned or in progress new buildings. This shows that the institution is improving their physical space, and working on enhancing the campus as a whole.

Figure 3. House-style Residence Hall at Smith College

The only institution that did not feature its campus within the viewbook was the College of Saint Benedict. Instead of images of buildings and the campus quad, the viewbook focused on student and alumnae profiles. The viewbook read more like a magazine, with human-interest stories capturing the experiences of students, alumnae, and faculty members. This institutions' viewbook was the viewbook for both the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Since the colleges were trying to capture the student experience across both institutions, it seems that the campus features were deemphasized.

History and Traditions

The colleges in this study showed their history and traditions in several ways. They highlighted their campuses' unique traditions, founding date or years established, religious affiliation, and referenced their missions. These items all signify how the institution has been around for many years, and this longstanding history carries some prestige.

While many of the messages across viewbooks begin to look similar from one college to the next, traditions are one example where each school can portray their unique campus history to prospective students. These traditions include annual campus events, class competitions, and the honor code. Three colleges (Brenau, Bryn Mawr, and Converse) hold May Day events. Brenau University dedicates a week to celebrating the school's traditions, called R.A.T.T. Week (Remember All the Traditions). Other campus events among the colleges include New Student Luncheon (Notre Dame of Maryland University), Founder's Weeks (Ursuline), Lake Day (Wellesley), and 1889 Week (Converse).

Two institutions (Salem College and Notre Dame of Maryland University) referenced their honor code as a tradition that has been passed down to each new class. Notre Dame of Maryland University stated, "at convocation, you'll take the Honor Pledge of academic integrity- which Notre Dame students have upheld since 1953." Additionally, two institutions (Columbia and Wesleyan) discussed their class competitions as a primary tradition. The Follies (Columbia) and Color Rush Cup (Wesleyan) traditions offer students a way to become engaged in the traditions, and contribute to the success of their class.

The representations in the viewbooks appear to be very welcoming to new students, and current students are eager to share the college's traditions with new students. Cottey College stated:

> Cottey's many and varied traditions create lifelong ties among students and between students and alumnae. Fun and formal, ducks and daisies, song and dance -they help to define your unique Cottey experience. You can join in or just watch the fun - your choice!

Wesleyan College (Macon, GA) explained, "Sisterhood starts as soon as you enter Wesleyan, when your new "big sister" shows you the ropes, and begins your introduction to traditions like STUNT, class cheers, class soccer, and pep rallies." The colleges can utilize these unique events to demonstrate school spirit, and create a sense of loyalty and connection with the institution.

Looking at the language used when speaking about the college's age, one would learn that each school has a "long tradition" or a "rich history" spanning many decades, or over a century. Twenty-five colleges included at least one reference to the institution's age. Based upon the language used such as, "130 years strong," "more than 90 years of rich history and tradition," and "you'll be part of a 178-year old legacy" one can understand that long-term establishment is associated with quality and prestige. This representation of the age of the colleges shows that number of years established is worthwhile to mention to prospective students. While eight institutions simply listed the date established, 17 others grounded this fact within a founding narrative. Others used the date established within their logo, showing the significance placed upon these dates.

Within the viewbooks, there were three colleges who claimed to be the first women's college. Mount Holyoke Colleges referred to itself as, "the first of all women's colleges." Salem College claimed to be the "oldest educational institution for women in America." Wesleyan College mentioned that it was "the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women." Additionally Wesleyan's tagline is "First for Women. Second to None." When reading these statements, they all sound similar but they mean slightly different things in the world of higher education history. Clearly not all three of these institutions can be the first women's college. However, the significance of being the first appears to be worth making these fine distinctions. This promotes the idea that prospective students and their families can perceive older institutions as more prestigious.

Continuing with other areas of a school's history, 16 colleges in this study are affiliated with a religious organization. The level of religious affiliation can vary by college, where some institutions' affiliation remains with the religious founding and others involve faith in every aspect of the college experience. However, only 11 institutions mentioned this fact within the pages of their viewbooks. These were typically mentioned briefly, referencing the founding story, mission, or group of sisters that created the college. Three colleges (College of Saint Benedict, Mount Saint Mary's University, and Saint Mary's College) included a message of "all faiths welcome," which is an attempt to welcome prospective students not affiliated with a particular faith community. One example of such a religious affiliation message comes from the College of Saint Benedict, who stated, "Benedictine men and women are actively involved on

both campuses as teachers, administrators and role models. 55 percent of students are Catholic; students of all faiths are welcome."

Even fewer schools (10) discussed their mission throughout the viewbooks. Any references to the mission utilized vague language such as leadership, personal strength, faith, empowerment, and commitment to women. Some examples include, "College of Saint Mary is a Catholic university providing access to education for women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership," Columbia College's "Our mission is preparing and promoting young women for dynamic professional and leadership roles in today's fast-paced, rapidly changing world", and Spelman College:

> is dedicated to academic excellence in the liberal arts and sciences and the intellectual, creative, ethical, and leadership development of its students. Spelman empowers the whole person to engage the many cultures of the world and inspires a commitment to positive social change.

As a whole, mission statements are pretty removed from the day-to-day practice at colleges and do not provide much insight into a particular institution. The references to the colleges' missions, if mentioned at all, appear to be a generic attempt at an educational philosophy and not distinct in any way.

Overall the history and tradition theme throughout the viewbooks shows that history and tradition play an important role in communications with prospective students. While colleges market new, shiny buildings to prospective students, they also promote traditions that have been around since the 19th century. Using this lens, it seems that viewbooks are a way to represent the past in an attempt to recruit talented students who will shape the institution's future.

Meaningful Institutional Symbols

While symbols can be one way for an institution to portray its unique identity to the public, it seems that the symbols used by these colleges were fairly similar. Nearly every institution (except Bryn Mawr) used logos and mottos to introduce students to their college, most frequently on the cover. Additionally, students at 16 institutions wore branded t-shirts and sweatshirts with their college's name. The colleges that did feature branded merchandise typically featured it throughout the viewbook in multiple images. A handful of colleges dedicated space to their mascot and college rings. While meaningful institutional symbols can be used to create stronger ties with an organization (Metcalfe, 2012), when looking at a large array of schools they start to blend together.

Nearly all of the colleges in this study used a logo, although many of the logos consisted of only the institution name. Others used the logo to feature an image such as founding date, location, a shield, or other icons. Stephens College and Sweet Briar College incorporated their Latin mottos into the logo design. Colleges with prominent athletic programs typically featured two branding identities, one for academics and another for athletics. While women's colleges may not be well known for their athletic prowess, there were three colleges (Converse College, Mount Saint Mary's University, Salem College) who featured their athletic logos within the viewbooks. The image below (Figure 4) features several examples of the main institutional logo, and the athletic logo from Mount Mary University. From these examples, one can see the use of location, founding year, shields, and other symbols used to represent the institution.

Figure 4. Assortment of Academic and Athletic Logos from Nine Women's Colleges

In addition to using logos to introduce the college to students, 23 institutions used a motto or tagline on the cover to share the overall message of the viewbook. While all of these schools are dedicated to educating women, only three institutions (Alverno College, Cottey College, Wesleyan College) mentioned this goal within a motto. Three institutions used strength to highlight their institutions' persistence in the field: "Because the world needs strong women" (Alverno College), "Going Strong" (Meredith College), and "Discover your strength" (Trinity Washington University). These messages of strength illustrate the empowerment of women that these colleges seek to promote. Further, Meredith College's motto signals to prospective students that the institution itself is strong, which serves as a signal of institutional stability.

As with many colleges, there are generic phrases such as “Be More” (Brenau College), “Shine” (Salem College), and “Bloom” (College of Saint Mary). The connotations of the words bloom and shine seem fairly feminine, and would likely not be used at a coeducational college. While they are not specifically mentioning women in these taglines, they still reinforce the female-centric nature of the institutions. Sweet Briar College and Notre Dame of Maryland University used Latin phrases as their mottos. Two colleges within this study had nearly the same exact motto. Converse College stated “Voice. Value. Vision.” and Ursuline College used “Values. Voice. Vision.” It seems surprising that two colleges within this small group of institutions would use nearly the same motto. Ultimately, these taglines seem to be empty phrases used for marketing purposes, and do not communicate much about the institution’s identity.

Throughout the images of viewbooks, there were plenty of photographs that featured students wearing branded merchandise. Two colleges used images of groups of students wearing similar, branded shirts, and this matching adds to the appearance that the photo was staged. Students who are proud to display their college on their t-shirt highlight their school spirit, but having too many students in a viewbook with similar outfit choices seems suspect. One example of this came from Trinity Washington University (Figure 5), where there are multiple students wearing similar shirts. This example seems to be staged, and does not seem as though these three students coincidentally chose to wear similar shirts for their walk around Washington. If a college goes through such lengths to show branded merchandise, it comes off as inauthentic.

Figure 5. Trinity Washington University's Branded Merchandise on Students at the National Mall

This perception that the images in the viewbook are staged could taint the rest of the information from the perspective of a prospective student. While prospective students can understand that the college is trying to recruit students, they are also using these viewbooks to narrow the scope of their college search. Having an abundance of clearly staged photographs with branded merchandise may signal to prospective students that the viewbook as a whole is not a realistic portrayal of the student experience.

Another symbol used within the viewbooks is the college mascot. Seven schools used their mascot in various scenarios both around campus and around town. Typically, mascots are used during athletic events, but the majority of the images of mascots were in non-athletic settings. Sweet Briar College's mascot can be seen greeting cars (See Figure

6). Since women's colleges are not known for their athletic teams, it makes sense that these mascots can take on different roles within the campus environment.

Figure 6. Sweet Briar College's Mascot Greets Cars

Finally, there were five schools that mentioned ring ceremonies within the viewbooks. These colleges spoke about the significance of the rings for students to make connections with other alumni from across an airport, or a boardroom. These rings connote a sense of membership beyond simply an educational affiliation, and there were several images with students proud to match their classmates. This symbol is something that students can carry with them for the rest of their life, and is a tangible way to show affiliation with the college. By including these rings within the viewbook, it is a way for the institutions to show prospective students the benefits of enrolling in a particular

Figure 7. Converse College's Rings

college, and the connections that membership within this community will provide. One image that was used in the viewbooks came from Converse College (Figure 7). The image of multiple students showcasing their rings shows the students' pride and enthusiasm for displaying this symbol of their college. The emphasis on this item of jewelry as an institutional symbol is similar to a class ring, but it is shared among all graduates. While class rings have been used for coeducational institutions, the rings featured in these viewbooks resemble a traditional piece of jewelry and would only be identified as a symbol by fellow members.

Postgraduate Outcomes

Another element that relates to a college's identity is the postgraduate outcomes of the students who attend a particular institution. Similar to the student and alumni profiles discussed earlier, colleges want to promote the successes of their graduates for their own personal gain. These successes can come in the form of companies where students interned or obtained employment, percentage of students employed or in graduate school, graduate school placement, and graduation rates.

More than half of the institutions included lists of companies where students had internships or obtained employment. Barnard College used a page of logos, while the other institutions provided a list of companies, non-profits, and federal government agencies where their graduates work (see Figure 8). Several of the television shows referenced on this graphic have been off the air for quite some time (Gilmore Girls, Gossip Girl, The L Word), and it seems unlikely that current high school students would be familiar with these programs.

Figure 8. List of Graduates' Employers from Barnard College

These lists of companies privilege large corporations, which cannot be the experience of all graduates. While top company names such as Disney appeared frequently among the various lists, there was no mention about the graduates' roles within these companies.

Since these lists were quite common, it signals to prospective students that the end goal of college is to obtain employment. The colleges are positioning themselves to seem competent to prepare students to work at a recognizable company. The prospective students in high school likely do not know what they want to major in, let alone where they want to start their career. Lists such as this are contributing to the perception of prestige that colleges want to convey.

Along these same lines, fifteen institutions included the percentage of graduates who are in graduate school or are employed. These percentages ranged from 79% (Bryn Mawr College) to 97% (Hollins University). Typically these surveys were conducted six months to a year post graduation. Cottey College, which falls under the Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's Carnegie classification, stated a 95% transfer success rate for its Associate's degree graduates. Moore College of Art and Design went even further and listed this percentage for each major. Only two remaining Seven Sisters colleges (Bryn Mawr and Smith) included the employment and graduation rate. The institutions that did include employment and graduate school percentages ranged in selectivity. It is difficult to compare these self-reported statistics across institutions since the surveys were conducted at different points post-graduation.

The colleges within this study also listed graduate schools where their alumni were accepted. Nearly every list included at least one Ivy League school. Seven institutions specified medical or law schools within the universities. Much like the list of companies, one must be skeptical about this information to understand how representative this list is for the graduates. Bryn Mawr College, Salem College, and Wellesley College included the percentage of their students who applied and were

admitted to medical and law school. Despite the good intentions of showing the college's graduates going on to top tier schools, the inclusion of these lists reinforces that these other schools are more desirable and admission to these universities for graduate programs is a primary aim of attending college. Even in the viewbooks for these women's colleges, the Ivy League and other top research universities are promoted as the ultimate achievement of success in terms of graduate admission. While the women's colleges may not have professional degrees, these colleges are granting free publicity to these coveted institutions as a result of claiming their graduates' success.

Within this sample, only four schools mentioned graduation or retention rates. College of Saint Benedict and Notre Dame of Maryland University included their first to second year retention rates (88% and 80% respectively). Saint Mary's College and Converse College included their four-year graduation rates of 93% and 94%. When describing the college's graduation rate, the viewbook for College of Saint Benedict stated "90 percent of graduates earn a degree within four years." While this seems like a graduation rate like the others, it really means that 10% of students are taking longer than four-years to graduate. It was surprising that so few institutions included this statistic, because without graduating, neither employment with a desirable company nor a graduate degree from an Ivy or public Ivy can be possible. As with everything included within the viewbooks, one must wonder what the statistics would look like for the colleges who did not provide this information. As a prospective student, if this statistic mattered when making the college choice, this information is easy to locate on the College Navigator website.

Analysis

By reading the viewbooks from these women's colleges, prospective students can learn about an institution's history, traditions, symbols, student experiences and outcomes, location, and campus. By utilizing student profiles, the colleges can introduce prospective students to the campus's offerings and student experiences. Prospective students can learn about the major offerings and various student organizations they could become involved with once they step on campus. For institutions such as Smith and Wellesley who featured student profiles of international students, viewbook readers can learn that these institutions recruit students from all over the world.

Across the various viewbooks, a common theme was featuring the campus and location favorably. Within the viewbooks, the campus features and location offerings are portrayed as beneficial to the overall student experience. In order to create appeal, the colleges provided more information about the surrounding area. An institution's location and campus is one aspect of the institution that is unique and not changing anytime soon. The emphasis on place-based education shows that these colleges are committed to in person education. None of the viewbooks discussed online options for undergraduate programs.

The focus on notable campus figures demonstrated an approach for institutions to translate their values, mission, and desired outcomes into an understandable form. By featuring successful alumnae and involved students in the viewbooks, the colleges are signaling to prospective students what the desired experiences and outcomes are for their students. The well-rounded students demonstrate the many areas of campus life where they can get involved, learn, and make a difference.

Within the viewbooks there were other elements that were not very prevalent across institutions. Graduation and retention rates seem like they would be meaningful statistics for prospective students to know and understand, and yet only four institutions included this information within the viewbook. While the colleges mentioned the outcomes of graduates obtaining employment or pursuing graduate studies, the more immediate evidence of outcomes would be the college's ability to retain and graduate students.

The mission statements, if provided at all, were vague and generic. The inclusion of a mission statement did not help an institution stand out from this group of colleges. However, when compared with coeducational institutions, the colleges' commitment to women would stand out as different. For those students who are considering coeducational and single-sex colleges, this statement about commitment to women could signal that there is a difference for women studying at the two institution types.

With all of the emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity in higher education, I was surprised to see how few institutions highlighted this information within the viewbooks. While 16 colleges included statistics on their racial and ethnic diversity, only Mills and Alverno included statistics related to other demographic information. These colleges provided the percentage of first generation college students, number of religions represented, and the percentage of nontraditional age students. For the students who fit in these populations, it is helpful to see that they are welcome in this community. However, the engagement on campus for these populations may be different than what was represented within the majority of viewbooks. Most students were traditional in age, and there was not much discussion about first generation challenges. If there were specific

services for these groups, they were not highlighted within the viewbooks. Wesleyan College featured an image of a group of nontraditional age women, and provided information about how to transfer to the institution. They did not provide further information about services for this population.

Based upon the elements of the institutions' organizational identity, the institutions use their notable campus figures, location, campus symbols, and outcomes of graduates to demonstrate their particular qualities. However, there was not one institution in particular who truly excelled at differentiating itself from the other women's colleges. One must wonder, in the quest to be considered the first or the most symbolic, how this information translates to the student experience. For prospective students and their families, does any of this organizational identity information shape the college choice? Although we may think that students are making rational college choices based on the relative academic quality and social life of different colleges, the colleges in this sample appear to hope that students will pay more attention to campus traditions, mascots. In this next section, I will showcase how the colleges portrayed academic life on their campus.

Academic Life

As prospective students are considering which colleges to visit, apply, and attend, academics can be a filtering tool for determining future consideration of a college. If a student has decided on their academic path, although it may change, they are looking for institutions that offer their desired program of study. Throughout this section, I will showcase several themes pertaining to students' academic life at college. These themes include portraits of learning, curricula, academic support, study abroad, and career

preparation. Throughout these themes, it is clear that there are consistent messages that colleges feel the need to communicate to prospective students. While nearly all colleges offer study abroad programs and career services, the institutions promoted their offerings as if they are not commonplace among higher education institutions throughout the country. Learning is always shown as fun, and the images within the viewbooks do not show students struggling to learn, and dedicating significant time to homework. Additionally, very few colleges showed a four-year degree plan or information about the college's general education requirements.

Portraits of Learning

Within the pages of the viewbook, the colleges used several methods when representing the learning experiences of students. These images ranged from laboratory classrooms, to professors lecturing, to homework. By far the most common academic setting was students learning with laboratory equipment. Twenty-seven colleges included images of students and faculty members in science lab environments. Of the colleges that listed majors in their viewbooks, the only institution that did not have a STEM major was Moore College of Art and Design. Since this institution does not offer STEM programs, it makes sense that laboratory images were not included in their viewbook. These laboratory settings served as a way for the colleges to show active learning taking place, beyond just sitting in a classroom or lecture hall. Throughout these images students can be seen using test tubes, microscopes, pipettes, Petri dishes, Erlenmeyer flasks, and analyzing skeletons. Students in these images are frequently wearing safety glasses and lab coats. One example of these laboratory images can be seen in Figure 9, from the University of Saint Joseph. The students in this image are

actively involved in the scientific process. Only a couple of images out of the nearly 80 photos were obviously staged. In these cases, students were making eye contact with the camera and smiling. This may affect prospective students' perception about the authenticity of the experience of students in the photos. It seems that women's colleges

Figure 9. Students Participate in a Science Laboratory Exercise at the University of Saint Joseph

are combating the expectation that female students are underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and showed many female students involved in laboratory environments. Overall, the images showed a welcoming environment for young women to learn and discover their scientific talents.

Another type of visualization of learning that occurred throughout many of the viewbooks was faculty members helping students. Twenty institutions included images where a faculty member can be see assisting a student. Of these colleges, most

viewbooks included one or two images of this type, but Smith College featured six such images. Both highly selective and less-selective institutions showed this helping relationship between students and their professors. These types of images show faculty members as having a collegial relationship with students, who are accessible and helpful beyond the classroom. The images show faculty members who are supportive to learning, and assist students outside of the classroom. This was seen in many images of faculty helping students by hovering over a group of students talking, one-on-one chats with a student in a public space, demonstrating laboratory techniques, or sitting at a piano with a student. One example of these images can be seen in Figure 10, from the College of Saint Mary, which featured an instructor assisting two students with a course project. Images such as these contribute to the perception that the faculty members at women's colleges serve as mentors to the students.

Figure 10. An Instructor at the College of Saint Mary Assists Students with their Work

Homework is not necessarily the most exciting and fun element of attending college, but 15 colleges showed students doing homework throughout their viewbooks. The colleges portrayed homework as something that is often done in a public setting, surrounded by friends. While there were images of students alone on their laptops, these were typically set in beautiful campus libraries. Throughout these homework pictures, there were quite a few examples with students smiling and facing the camera. One such example came from Mount Saint Mary University (see Figure 11), which shows a student smiling and looking away from the book she is reading for the picture. This approach seems odd, because the students would not naturally be smiling, looking away from their

books or laptop when they're trying to learn course material or write an essay. While homework may not seem like the most enjoyable part of college for prospective students, the smiling makes homework and projects look fun and exciting.

Figure 11. A Student at Mount Saint Mary's University Reads and Smiles While in the Library

Finally, there were also images of faculty members lecturing in 15 viewbooks. They were typically standing against a whiteboard, facing a classroom full of students. The photographs showed instructors gesturing to make a point, pointing to a student, or highlighting something on the board. The example in Figure 12 from Mills College shows a faculty member gesturing towards the board in front of a classroom of students.

Overall, the more meaningful interactions of faculty members helping students occurred more frequently than lecturing images across the sample.

Figure 12. An Instructor at Mills College Points Towards the Front of the Classroom

Curricula

A crucial piece within the theme of academic life is the curriculum of a particular institution. Within the viewbooks, colleges discussed programs of study, dual degrees, customization and personalization options, and consortia. While the viewbook is targeted towards high school students, the institutions provided prospective students with options for dual degrees and graduate programs through partner institutions. Sixteen institutions presented the major offerings and other academic programs as customizable, appealing to all prospective students who aim to tailor their program of study to their interests.

Finally, the institutions also highlighted the availability of consortia for cross-registration and other partnerships with nearby coeducational institutions.

Nearly every institution provided a list of their major and minor offerings. These lists were either college-wide majors, or separated by school. One example of this listing of programs of study comes from Columbia College, and can be seen in Figure 13. Thirteen schools also included a statement showing the number of majors they offer. Beyond the majors, the institutions also stated any pre-professional or teacher licensure programs that student can select. Eight colleges referenced their honors program as an option for student. Some of the institutions that offer graduate degrees also included these degrees in their lists of programs offered. Since Cottey College offers Associate's and Bachelor's degrees, they delineated which programs align with which degree type. Notre Dame of Maryland University offers the engineering major in conjunction with Johns Hopkins, University of Maryland, and Columbia University.

MAJORS

For more information about any of these programs, visit
www.columbiasc.edu/academics

The quality of a Columbia College educational experience is largely the product of who is teaching in the classroom. Faculty members at Columbia College teach 100% of undergraduate courses.

Learning requires action, getting out of your seat, and taking on career-building activities. The College currently offers 35 undergraduate majors in a wide array of challenging fields. Can't find what you're looking for? Then design your own major using our innovative contractual studies program.

UNDERGRADUATE

Art
Behavioral Science
Biochemistry
Biology
Business (concentration in Accounting or Administration)
Chemistry
Child and Family Studies (concentration in Child Life)
Communication Studies
Computer and Information Science
Contractual Studies (self-designed)
Dance
Education (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level, Special Education)
English (Literary Studies, Writing for Print and Digital Media)
History
Mathematics
Music
Political Science
Public Affairs
Public Health Science and Delivery
Psychology
Religious, Ethical and Cultural Studies
Social Work
Spanish
Speech Language Pathology

Pre-Professional Programs:
Pre-Medicine, Pre-Pharmacy, Pre-Occupational Therapy, Pre-Physical Therapy, Pre-Physician Assistant, Pre-Dentistry, Pre-Law, Pre-Ministry, Pre-Counseling, Pre-Athletic Training, Arts Management and Advocacy, ROTC

MASTER'S PROGRAMS

M.Ed. Divergent Learning
M.Ed. Higher Education Administration
M.A. Organizational Change and Leadership
M.A. Criminal Justice (Online)

MAJORS

Figure 13. Programs of Study Offered at Columbia College

There were 14 institutions that referenced their dual degree programs, either within the institution or partnerships with other institutions. This is a way to get prospective students thinking beyond their undergraduate experience, and towards their graduate degree. The institutions offered a variety of program options including 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, and 4/1 year degree plans. These combined degree programs mean, for example in a 3/2 program, that a student would complete three years towards their undergraduate program and then the following two years would be graduate-level work. The Notre Dame of Maryland University guarantees 20 spots in the B.A./Pharm.D. program for their undergraduate students. Barnard College highlighted its partnership with Columbia University for dual degrees, as did Bryn Mawr who partners with Caltech and University of Pennsylvania. Saint Mary's College, Wesleyan College, and Ursuline College also offer dual degree programs with nearby coeducational institutions.

Throughout the viewbooks, the language used to discuss programs of study and academics referenced customization, personalization, and individualization. This aligns with a customer service model of higher education, where the student is seen as a consumer of higher education and their satisfaction is the number one priority (Cunningham, 2016). The colleges offered students the ability to design their own majors, directed studies, and research projects. Mount Mary University titled their page listing their program offerings, "Programs Designed for You." Many references to the colleges' general education requirements informed students that they could tailor their course selections to their own interests.

Ten colleges also emphasized their consortia with nearby institutions. This group included all five remaining Seven Sisters, Mills, Saint Mary's College, Scripps,

Simmons, and Spelman. Smith College referenced their consortium six times throughout the viewbook. While the primary feature of the consortium is cross registration, several schools mentioned that the consortium allows students to access musical events, social events, athletic events, and worship gatherings across institutions. In one example, Bryn Mawr College's viewbook showed a student riding the bus to take a course at Haverford College. The viewbook from Smith College stated:

> The Five College consortium increases your choices for scholarly and social activities. Four liberal arts colleges—Smith, Amherst, Hampshire and Mount Holyoke—along with the University of Massachusetts, lie within a 12- mile radius and offer joint courses of study in such fields as astronomy and marine science, as well as certificate programs in interdisciplinary fields. Courses are available at no extra cost to Smith students.

This message may be intended to inform students that they would still interact with male college age students, whether the women's college students are registering elsewhere or the male students enrolls in a course at the women's college. The amount of references to an institution's consortium seems surprising because one would not expect that a college would bring attention to its limited academic offerings. While typically consortia's primary function is cross registration, these women's colleges seem to have developed a more comprehensive relationship with the nearby institutions to combat the negative social life expectations of students.

Academic Support

Within the viewbooks, the colleges referenced several forms of academic support that students have access to on campus. This included the student-faculty ratio, advising,

tutoring, and more. The student-faculty ratio was a fairly common statistic that colleges featured in their viewbooks; within the sample 26 institutions included this figure. The highest ratio was 12:1, and there was a seven-way tie for institutions with this number. On the low end, Barnard College, Judson College, and Sweet Briar have a ratio of 8:1. Sweet Briar's statistic is a historical figure, not a current one. This is due to the recent decision to close the institution, and then a reversal of this decision that caused a dip in enrollment. Ultimately, the colleges within this sample have similarly small class sizes. The range of ratios listed within these viewbooks are not really all that different, so institutions are not able to differentiate themselves from other women's colleges based upon this statistic. This low student-faculty ratio is typical for small, private institutions, and these numbers would look low when compared with public institutions.

Advising was also mentioned in the viewbooks of ten institutions, in several forms. Meredith College focused on students' strengths as an advising model, stating, "you'll identify your strengths, explore academic and experiential activities to build on those strengths, enhance your financial literacy, and examine potential career paths." whereas others mentioned success and staying on track to graduation. Alverno College touted their advisors, saying, "The dedicated experts in our Academic Advising Office will keep you on track so you can reach your academic goals." Simmons College stated, "you'll identify your strengths and interests, your values and goals, to discover your passion and a fulfilling academic path."

Of the ten institutions, four focused on keeping students on track for graduation, and four also discussed the availability of tutoring. While advising is something that occurs at every college, these messages promoting the advising resources may be directed

towards students who may attend college underprepared and need additional guidance about course selection, tutoring, and writing development. While ten institutions did discuss academic advising in some form, the other 24 colleges did not. None of the remaining Seven Sisters colleges referenced advising. Since these five colleges are the most selective of the group, the students who attend these colleges may have higher expectations of resources available at the college, and expect that an advisor will be part of their experience.

Study Abroad

Twenty-eight of the colleges in this study included information and images about study abroad within their viewbooks. The six institutions that did not provide study abroad were a diverse group that included Bryn Mawr and Trinity Washington University. These institutions differ widely on institutional selectivity, and regional or national institutions. While these colleges may have study abroad programs, they elected not to include this information in the viewbooks for prospective students to use when comparing colleges.

The institutions that mentioned study abroad within their viewbooks listed the countries where programs are offered, or provided maps where students have studied previously. One example of such a map was featured in the viewbook from Saint Mary's College (Figure 14). Several colleges provided the number or percentage of students who studied abroad. Of the 28 colleges that discussed study abroad, 17 only briefly cited its availability and a listed cities and countries where students can study. The remaining 11 institutions provided additional context regarding research and internship opportunities available to students.

Figure 14. Map of Study Abroad Opportunities at Saint Mary's College

There were a variety of program types discussed such as direct exchange, joint programs with international institutions, and January term programs. Cottey College requires a semester of study abroad for both the International Relations and International

Business majors. In addition to academic programs, five institutions offered international and domestic service trips. Study abroad is growing in popularity (Institute of International Education, 2016), and it may be important for colleges to include study abroad program details in viewbooks so prospective students know their options when making their college choice.

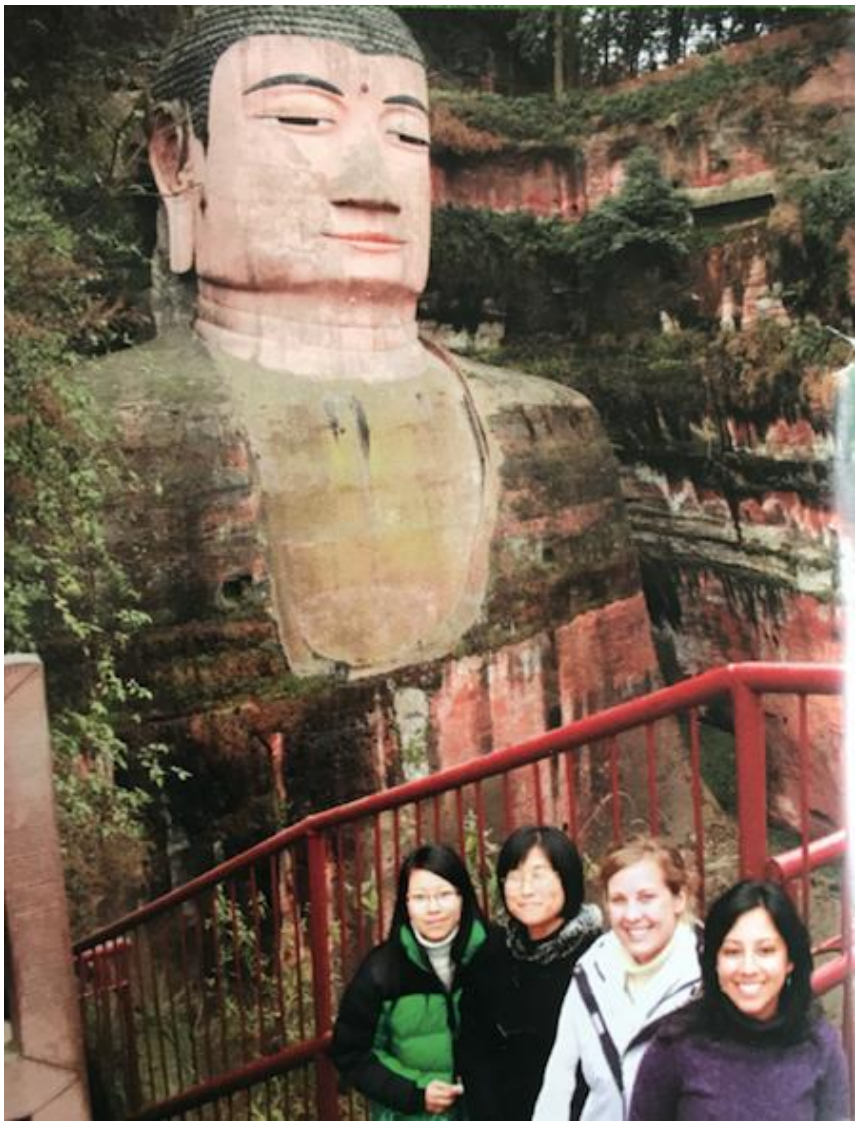

Figure 15. Salem College Students Pose with a Landmark while Abroad

In addition to the details of the study abroad programs, the viewbooks provided photos of students abroad. Groups of students and students by themselves often stood in front of a landmark or within an ecosystem that is clearly not in the United States. In the image above (Figure 15), a group of students from Salem College post in front of a statue. Typically the images that illustrate study abroad could be seen as vacation photographs. There were no images of students in an international classroom, at an international internship, or conducting international research. However, the text referenced students' experiences with internships abroad and Wellesley referenced conducting research while abroad. Since academics seems separate from the visual experiences of students, one must wonder how these photographs shape prospective students' expectations of their own potential study abroad experience.

Career Preparation

Throughout the viewbooks, there was an emphasis on experiences that will help students succeed after graduation. These institutions incorporated career preparation into the academic offerings by promoting internship and career services. Based upon the frequency of internships being mentioned, it is clear that internships have become very popular and some institutions even require their students to participate in one. These career preparation events have become integrated into the full student experience.

Internships were the primary method for curriculum-based career preparation. Twenty-five institutions included statistics about the percentage of students who complete internships, and the total number of internship opportunities available to students. In order to personalize experiences of current students, some institutions included a brief description of current students' internships. Two examples from the

viewbooks include a portrait of a student who interned at Glamour Magazine (Bryn Mawr College) and another student at the Minnesota Lynx (College of Saint Benedict). The viewbook from Bryn Mawr explained the process that alumna Kaitlin Menza took to land the internship at Glamour Magazine, stating:

> Each year, the American Society of Magazine Editors selects 30 college students from across the country and places them in internships at the nation's top magazines. Menza competed to become Bryn Mawr's nominee and then worked with CPD staff to prepare a winning application that showcased her passion for writing. The result? An internship at Glamour magazine.

This example highlights not only the prestige of obtaining a name-brand internship, but also the advantages of the resources available to students through the Career Services office.

While internships had been traditionally up to individual students to pursue, the colleges promoted internships for their career benefits. Alverno College and Salem College require all students to complete at least one internship. Bay Path University guarantees all students will complete an internship, fieldwork, or practicum by the time of graduation. Ursuline College's First-Year to Career program starts first-year students with career workshops and micro-internships which typically last 1-2 weeks. Notre Dame of Maryland University offers an Internship Prep Program with the career center, and students who complete this program are guaranteed an internship. Moore College of Art and Design guarantees a paid $1000 internship for each student. Three colleges (Mount Holyoke, Smith, and Wellesley) offer internship funding for eligible students. These colleges are among the most selective and reputable of the women's college

institutions, and are dedicated to assisting students achieve their career goals by investing in internship experiences. While these various programs show the different approaches institutions can take to facilitate internships, it is clear that these institutions want their students to complete internships, which will help them when seeking post-graduate employment.

In addition to internships, the viewbooks also discussed the services that the colleges' career services offer their students. The stated offerings of career services offices included seminars, career counseling appointments, résumé and cover letter workshops, job and internship search strategies, online employment listings, mock interviewing, dress for success events, alumnae and employer networking, and social media portraits. One example of how the viewbooks discuss career services comes from Mount Saint Mary University, which stated:

> The Career Center will help you explore careers, find internships and ultimately get a job. You'll find out how to create a professional and polished resume, interview like a pro and make great connections that can help you get hired. We also invite speakers from a variety of fields so you can hear about opportunities and conditions in the real working world.

Bay Path University and Moore College of Art and Design touted that their career services offices are available to students for the rest of their lives.

Two institutions provided details regarding specific career services events. Mount Saint Mary's University has hosted an Etiquette Dinner for over 10 years. This event is designed to help students navigate lunch interviews, business meetings at parties and social events. They elaborated, "you'll not only learn which fork to use, but also

how to hold a conversation and make a good impression." Notre Dame of Maryland University offers a similar program, the First Impressions Program, where students "are able to network, learn business etiquette, sharpen professional skills, and gain a competitive edge in the internship and career marketplace." The viewbook also stated that this program includes events such as mock interviews, a trip to Macy's with a personal shopper, and an etiquette dinner. These two events seem like they would be unique to women's colleges. It harkens back to the societal expectations for young women, and etiquette has been traditionally a subject for women. While these institutions are utilizing etiquette programs to further students' careers, one wonders how useful formal etiquette training is in the current workplace culture. While networking skills are helpful to students seeking careers, formal etiquette such as knowledge about silverware may not be as useful as it once was.

Analysis

For most of the students' academic options, the offerings are easily tailored to students' interests. Study abroad and majors were presented as a selection of choices that students can make based upon their interest or career goals. Internships were illustrated as ripe with possibility, and inspiration for a future career path that one may not have imagined otherwise. This student-centric focus provides prospective students and their families with a plethora of options, all presented as equally accessible to students.

In the images of students in the classroom or completing homework, the students are presented as smiling and laughing with friends. Study abroad is represented as an opportunity to see the notable landmarks, interact with different people, and see climates unlike those in the United States. While learning can be fun, it certainly is not always so,

and the images within the viewbook provide this limited lens regarding academic life. Students can arrive at college, and struggle with higher academic expectations. Within the viewbooks, there was not much acknowledgement that learning can be difficult and challenging at times. Some institutions listed tutoring as a resource available to students, should they need it during their time in college. The ideal version of classrooms, research, and homework do not capture the lived experiences of students who cannot keep up with course material, struggle to learn complex concepts, or lack the social capital to create a network of study buddies. These highly positive images provide a cursory presentation of the task of learning, and prospective students should understand the types and amount of work they will be taking on as college students.

While many areas pertaining to academics were represented within the viewbooks, four-year plans for degree completion and general education programs were rarely featured. Only two institutions discussed having a four-year plan, and neither of these examples provided much detail. Mary Baldwin University provided the primary themes for each year of education, and described the educational outcomes from each theme. The themes of explore, connect, and prepare guided students' degree plans. Saint Mary's College guarantees a four-year graduation if students follow their graduation plan, and offers to cover any additional courses required after the fourth year.

Four institutions provided details regarding their general education programs within the viewbooks. Saint Mary's College and Wellesley College emphasized students' ability to choose the courses they desired to take across a range of liberal arts fields. Simmons College's requirements cover four academic content areas, designed to connect multidisciplinary perspectives. Barnard College provided the most thorough

information regarding each requirement within the general education program, and the rationale and desired outcome for each requirement. Their Foundations program lasts throughout the students' degree program, beginning with the First-Year Writing and First-Year Seminar courses, and concluding with the Senior Experience. While Barnard did not provide specific class examples, they encouraged prospective students to review their course catalog online. The colleges that omitted information about general education programs provided lists of academic majors and minors, and information about the college's honors program if offered.

These two elements that were underrepresented within the viewbooks demonstrate the fact that most institutions do not see the value in communicating these pieces of information to prospective students. Course and program requirements may appear too daunting and could deter possible applicants from attending. The courses that students take during their time at college are one of the most influential aspects of their education, and by not introducing prospective students to the goals and outcomes of general education, the colleges are missing out on a way to add meaning and purpose to these requirements. Prospective students should understand what is expected of them when applying, so they can factor in curricula requirements when making their decision.

Throughout the images, program listings, and study abroad offerings, these institutions seem very similar. Even the top-ranked liberal arts colleges are not sharing what makes them stand out academically. While all colleges offer academic programs and services, these colleges sought to communicate about themselves by making the ordinary seem innovative. Since prospective students typically receive many viewbooks, emails, and other college marketing messages during their junior and senior years of high

school, they must understand that nearly every school has science laboratories and offers study abroad programs that will enhance their academic experience. There did not seem to be any academic programs that seemed truly new and unique. Continuing with the portrayal of the student experience, this next section will provide more information as to how these institutions are showing off their social side.

Social Life

Within the viewbooks, colleges showed the ways in which students have fun, socialize, and relax on campus. Since Smith (1990) found that students at women's colleges were less satisfied with their social experiences when compared with students at coeducational institutions, I chose to explore how these colleges are demonstrating the social offerings of their campus to appear exciting and engaging to prospective students. Students are laughing and smiling while doing homework, walking across campus, and exercising. This section will highlight the main themes of college social life in the viewbooks, which includes active lifestyles, social environments, amenities, and student activities. Additionally, I will discuss the populations of students who were marginalized or omitted from the viewbook images.

Active Lifestyles

Without a doubt, the theme of active lifestyles was the most prevalent theme throughout the viewbooks. Thirty-one viewbooks featured students playing sports, riding horses, or exercising in other forms. One example of these athletic images was found in Meredith College's viewbook, where students were actively engaged in a soccer match (see Figure 16). The theme of active lifestyles incorporates varsity athletics, club and intramural athletics, exercising, and equestrian teams. From the focus on athletics and

fitness, it is clear that physical well being is an important message for prospective students, in addition to pride for the schools' athletic teams.

Figure 16. Meredith College Student Participates in a Varsity Soccer Match

Within the sample, all but three institutions (Moore College of Art & Design, Spelman College, and Saint Catherine University) featured images and information

pertaining to the institution's varsity athletics programs. The majority of the institutions fall within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III. However, Barnard students compete alongside students from Columbia University, which is a Division I school. Ursuline College participates in Division II athletics within the NCAA. Columbia College and Stephens College are part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), Saint Mary's College is part of the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA), and Cottey College is part of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).

In addition to identifying the athletic association affiliation of the institution, the colleges within this study also provided prospective students with the school's conference information. Nearly all provided a list of the varsity sports offered, whereas the remaining colleges listed the number of teams. Six institutions provided a list of their school's athletic championships and awards, and two institutions provided the percentage of students who are student-athletes. Some institutions also promoted the sports events as a social event, where students can cheer on their peers at the games. The images of student athletes were action shots, with representation from many sports. The viewbooks included references to 18 different varsity sports available to the students. The colleges' logos were frequently shown prominently on the students' uniforms.

While not all students can participate in varsity athletics, it seems that the institutions offered an array of club and intramural options for the more casual athlete. These sports were promoted as a fun activity, or a way to try something new. One example of this came from Barnard's viewbook: "The intramural sports program offers even more ways to test your physical limits-or to just have fun." Much like the varsity

athletic teams, the institutions provided a list of sports or the number of sports available. Smith College even listed Quidditch, a sport from the Harry Potter book series, as an option for students.

In additional images, students can be seen jogging around campus, pedaling stationary bikes in a fitness center, completing a ropes course, stretching, and lifting weights. Wellesley College featured "Running around a lake" as one of the 100 marvelous things about the institution, and students can be seen running around the lake in the image in Figure 17. Twelve institutions highlighted their fitness center's amenities, and showed students the variety of fitness options available to them as students. Converse College further promoted active lifestyles, stating, "be active to burn stress and be healthy."

Figure 17. Wellesley College Students Run Around a Lake

Within this study, three institutions (Converse College, Sweet Briar College, and Wesleyan College) showcased their schools' equestrian programs. Converse and Wesleyan stated that they were part of the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA). Sweet Briar and Wesleyan offer students the option to bring their own horse to campus. Additionally, Sweet Briar stated, "Equestrian certificate programs, internships and five College-supported competitive teams are all part of riding here." For students who are interested in riding horses, these institutions offer a distinct advantage over the other women's colleges. This phenomenon of promoting the college's equestrian program seems pretty unique to women's colleges, since it is typically females who ride horses competitively.

Throughout this theme, there are many examples of ways in which these institutions are promoting an active lifestyle on campus. Physical fitness and team sports are ways in which students socialize with their peers while also de-stressing from the rigors of academic life. The images of students running, swimming, and playing sports illustrate the fact that there is more to college than sitting in a classroom or the library studying.

Social Environments

The next theme of social environments includes examples of students walking around campus, relaxing in public spaces, residence halls, and dining halls on campus. These images of students relaxing and socializing illustrate the many aspects of students' social lives on campus. In the majority of these images within the viewbooks, students can be seen with friends, smiling, laughing, and keeping one another company.

Within the images, students were sitting in various public spaces such as student unions, benches outdoors, and on the grass on the quad. Students also stood on or near campus landmarks. All of these images showed bright, sunny days without a raindrop in sight. Students who were not alone were laughing, talking, and smiling with their classmates. The campus quad seemed to be the primary area of focus within these images. It is clear that some images within this grouping were clearly staged, which questions the authenticity of the relationships and laughter of the students featured. In addition, students traversed the paths of the colleges by walking with a group of friends. It seems that the very act of walking to class was a social experience. The image below (Figure 18) shows a group of students at Spelman College walking across the campus quad. This image was used as the cover of the viewbook, and serves as an introduction to the campus and social environment.

Figure 18. Students at Spelman College Cross the Campus

Residence halls are social environments where students can get to know one another outside of the classroom environment. The viewbooks included images of students playing games, talking, laughing, and playing musical instruments. Within some of the viewbooks, the language accompanying these residence hall images spoke about friendships and the benefits of living on campus.

Much like the residence halls, the dining halls are portrayed as a social environment as well. Students can be seen eating, laughing, and talking with one another. Most images of dining halls show groups of students, rather than students eating

alone. Through these images, the dining hall is connoted as being more than just a place to obtain food, but also a place to gather with friends and socialize.

While students are outside of the classroom, there are many opportunities on campus to socialize. Students can venture outdoors and enjoy the campus' scenery, mingle in the student union, stay in their residence hall, or eat at a dining hall. These images illustrate the purely social aspect of college, and that the student experience consists of more than just classrooms and the library. For many students, and especially those attending the institutions within this sample, the traditional residential college experience is the norm. These photographs show students more about the full student experience by showing the various campus hangout locations.

Amenities

Within the viewbooks, the colleges highlighted their amenities that contribute to a well-rounded student experience on campus. These amenities include residence halls, fitness centers, meal plans, and more. Residence halls were the amenity most frequently mentioned, followed by fitness centers, and meal plans. While residence halls are standard among four-year institutions, the colleges in this sample touted the features that make their residence halls unique for prospective students, marketing them as an amenity.

As colleges are describing their residence hall offerings, they cited the number of halls on campus and the percentage of students who live on campus. Typically, the institutions described the features of on-campus living such as spacious rooms, suite-style options, cable television, wireless Internet, laundry rooms, computer labs, lounges, resident assistants, and security. Three institutions mentioned having multiple tiers of housing options based upon students' class years, whereas students at Smith and Bryn

Mawr share housing spaces with students from all class years. Some institutions guarantee housing for all four years, and others require students to live on campus. Several of the institutions in the sample highlighted the leadership options within residence hall associations. In particular, the students at Bryn Mawr "decide what housing looks like on campus. They run the residence hall room-draw process." The residence hall is a hub for social activities around campus, and by highlighting the halls' features, this demonstrates prospective students and their families that living on campus is an important aspect of life at college.

Twelve institutions provided details regarding their fitness centers' sport and exercise options. The remaining twenty-two institutions did not provide information about fitness centers, which shows that for the majority of the institutions in this study, fitness centers were not a priority to include the viewbooks. When referencing the fitness centers, institutions mentioned indoor pools, tracks, and more. A few institutions offered dance and workout classes for students as well. One example of the description of the fitness center offerings came from Barnard College, which stated:

> students use facilities on both the Barnard and Columbia campuses, including Dodge and Levien gyms, along with outdoor facilities at Baker Field, a 26-acre complex at the northern tip of Manhattan. Highlights include three multi-sport gyms, two indoor pools, the newest boathouse in the Ivy League, a soccer stadium, a softball field, and a field hockey venue.

The detail provided in this description demonstrates how much prospective students must be interested in the specifics of the athletic facilities. The institutions that did not include information about fitness centers may have omitted this information due to a lack of

facilities or other priorities that were more important to include within the viewbook pages. For the institutions that included information about fitness centers, this serves as further evidence for the prominence placed upon active lifestyles within the viewbooks.

Ten colleges provided details regarding their college's meal plans. They stated the number of dining halls on campus, meal plan options to pick from, and the number of on-campus meals included each week. Two institutions promoted their campus dining experience as a true amenity to be desired. Columbia College explained, "our executive chef plans healthy and tasty meals with both regional and international accents." Cottey College has a cookbook with recipes from their dining facilities for sale in their bookstore, showing their commitment to food that should taste good. A few colleges specifically mentioned that their institutions' food is locally grown, showing the colleges' awareness regarding the sustainable, healthier food trends that students have come to expect. Some specifically stated that many food preferences and restrictions such as kosher, halal, vegetarian, vegan, and more would be accommodated. For these colleges who offer religion-based dietary options, this signals that Muslim and Jewish students are welcome and accommodated.

While information about dining plans were included in the viewbooks for ten institutions, the remaining twenty-four colleges did not dedicate space to dining options. The institutions that included information about meal plans were diverse in institutional characteristics. The choice about whether or not to include information about dining services may come down to the quality of the college's offerings. Clearly Columbia and Cottey demonstrated significant pride in their dining services, whereas the institutions

that did not elect to mention these services may not find it worth mentioning for the purposes of the viewbooks.

In addition to these main amenities, the institutions also featured technology, nature, transportation, and other benefits. Bay Path University gives all students an iPad to keep them connected with their coursework. Alverno College offers bike rentals on campus, and Sweet Briar has nature sanctuaries and trails on campus. Cottey College offers students the opportunity for a weekend getaway at B.I.L. Lodge, which features a pool table, volleyball court, and television. Moore College of Art and Design offers students free admission to Philadelphia's museums. Moore College of Art and Design, Mount Saint Mary's University, and Wellesley College offer students transportation via bus to destinations in the surrounding area. Not one to take the fun off campus, Smith College "sponsors an impressive array of concerts, lectures, parties, films and special events right on campus." While Mount Saint Mary's University offers residence halls for students, they also specified in their viewbook that they have a commuter lounge where commuting students can relax between classes. Wesleyan College eliminates the stress of textbook shopping, saying "all textbook and course materials waiting for you at the campus post office at the beginning of each semester." However, the viewbook did not specify if the cost of the textbooks was included.

Student Activities

Within the viewbooks, there were many examples of student cocurricular activities. The institutions provided prospective students with a list of recognized student organizations, or sometimes just the number of student organizations on campus. The number of student organizations ranged from eight (Moore College of Art and Design), to

160+ at Wellesley College, and 300+ at Scripps if you count all of the organizations within the Claremont Colleges Consortium. This abundance of choice and options provides students with a variety of options to pursue outside of classroom time. For those institutions that are unable to list all of the approved student organizations, the colleges need to make a choice as to which organizations to include to pique the interest of prospective students.

While for the most part the organizations are self-explanatory or the colleges provided an explanation as to the purpose behind a specific organization, there are some examples where the organization mission behind the name is unclear. Two examples are "The Circle" at Salem College, and "Red Clay" at Sweet Briar College. While prospective students who are particularly curious may look into what these organizations do, it would be easier to state a brief description. These student organizations across institutions begin to look pretty similar. Most colleges mention student government, yearbook, literary journals, newspapers, service organizations, and theatre/dance troupes.

Ten institutions specifically mentioned LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) affiliated organizations in their viewbooks, showing their acceptance and openness of this population. While 10 colleges dedicated space to address LGBT students on campus, the remaining 24 institutions did not. Of the 16 colleges that are religiously affiliated, only 3 specifically mentioned a reference to LGBT student organizations (Columbia College, Mount Mary University, and Mount Saint Mary's University). By having only 10 institutions mention organizations for LGBT students, this does not signal much acceptance and community for prospective students who identify as LGBT. Additionally, since most references to LGBT students were in the

form of student organizations, the formal support for these students may come only from these organizations and not a formalized resource like a multicultural center would be. While these ten institutions and others may have a center dedicate to serve LGBT students, it was not included to communicate to prospective students within the viewbooks.

Also, eight institutions included information about their campus ministry program. Despite the fact that nearly half of the colleges in the sample are religiously affiliated, there was low representation of campus ministry programs. The majority of references to campus ministry did not provide much detail. However, Judson College stated, "at Judson you can learn more about yourself and who God calls you to be through staff- and student-led small groups, Bible studies, weekly campus-wide Chapel services, and relationships with community church members." This was the most specific discussion about the campus ministry offerings. Two of the colleges that mentioned campus ministry are not affiliated with a church. Most of these ministry programs are intended to teach students more about faith and show them how to serve the world they live in.

Additionally, only four institutions within this sample discussed sororities, and only three offer them on campus. Brenau University dedicated a lot of space to discuss sororities, providing prospective students with information on Greek Week, sorority councils, the number of national sororities on campus, and a picture of bid day. Mount Saint Mary's University and Salem College listed sororities among their student organizations lists, not placing any particular emphasis on these organizations. Wesleyan College touted their historic nature, stating "the world's first sororities, Alpha Delta Pi

and Phi Mu, were established right here at Wesleyan." However, they went on to explain that they felt these organizations were not inclusive for all students and they have since been discontinued at this institution. In their place are class year pride events, and "a more inclusive tradition we call Sisterhood." Female students are included in every aspect of these colleges, and may not need to seek out a female-only space within a larger institution. While it is unclear in most cases why the colleges do not have or feature their sororities, the fact that only three schools promoted it was surprisingly low.

Within the viewbooks, only five institutions showed non-dominant ethnic activities. Bay Path University, Mills College, and Mount Saint Mary's University showed various forms of dance that can be viewed as "other" due to the dancers' costumes, which are visibly different than traditional American clothing. The costumes represented African and Latin American cultures as an extracurricular experience, outside of the "traditional" classroom and college environment. While this symbolic "othering" was notable for how people of non-White American cultures were represented, the College of Saint Mary showcased two White students appropriating Mexican culture with sombreros and maracas (See Figure 19). Representations of non-dominant cultures in such manners continue to represent cultures that are distinctly non-White as "other" and extracurricular or optional.

Figure 19. Two College of Saint Mary Students Don Sombreros and Using Maracas

One example of an institution that included positive messages about non-dominant groups was Wellesley College. This institution's viewbook focused on the top 100 "marvelous" things about the institutions. Some examples that made the top 100 list were Harambee House (Home of Ethos, the organization for students of African descent), and the Multifaith Center. In the description of the Multifaith Center, Wellesley College describes the center as "a place for searching, questioning, questing, expanding…which

includes but are not even close to limited to Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian (of many sects), Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Native American, and Sikh." The inclusion of these resources and organizations shows this institution's commitment to representing non-dominant cultures within the student experience. In most of the viewbooks, non-dominant groups were featured as a student activity or organization, and formal college resources were absent from the majority of viewbooks.

Analysis

While women's college students have rated their social experiences lower than their peers at coeducational institutions (Smith, 1990), it seems that these viewbooks are trying to combat some of the negative perceptions of women's colleges by highlighting the social experiences of students. While some heterosexual or bisexual prospective students may be wary about their separation from males for relationships, the viewbooks marketed their location or consortia agreements as a way in which students can meet male peers. By listing number of institutions that are in close proximity, prospective students can understand that college-aged males are nearby as part of a consortium or a coeducational college. While one would hope students' "MRS degree" aspirations are in the past, limited heterosexual dating options may be a primary concern for prospective students when deciding where to attend college.

For those students who are interested in women, these relationships are fairly hidden within the viewbook pages. With the exception of one image in the Mills College viewbook that seemed to portray a lesbian couple, queer issues were only referred to in conjunction with student organizations. Formal support of various sexual orientations was noticeably absent from the viewbooks. Prospective students may be looking at

viewbooks with the expectation that some students who attend women's colleges identify as lesbian or bisexual, and yet looking at the viewbooks there was little evidence to confirm this expectation.

Additionally, the colleges within this sample that have a religious affiliation are all of Christian faiths. There did not appear to be any religious ceremonies of other faiths, including Judaism or Islam. While three colleges did state that they would welcome students of all faiths, prospective students who practice another faith may not view the environment as welcoming.

As discussed in the previous section, there was also a lack of non-dominant ethnic activities. Aside from dance, music, and sombrero-wearing students, the dominant, White American culture persists through the rest of the student experience. While the student body was racially and ethnically diverse, the non-White students were engaging in similar activities as their White peers. There were some students who were wearing traditional attire from their home country that was visibly different than American clothing, but that seemed to be the only way students could share their culture with others in the community.

Throughout the viewbooks there were no examples of students with physical disabilities. With the emphasis on sports and other active activities, this could send a message to students with disabilities that they would not fit into the social atmosphere if they are unable to participate in sports and exercise as a social outing. Images of people with disabilities can border on tokenism, which also would not provide a welcoming atmosphere for prospective students. Ideally, the viewbooks would portray an accurate portrayal of the student experience with the understanding that prospective students may

differ from the current populations on campus. Viewbooks have to straddle this space between the lived reality and the ideal campus environment that the institution is seeking to achieve.

For LGBT, non-Christian, non-able bodied, and racially and ethnically diverse students, the viewbooks may not represent a social life that aligns with these students' own experiences and expectations for college. It is clear that queer issues, other religions, and diverse cultures are relegated to student organizations and outside the bounds of the official institutional mission or programming. Conversely, the viewbooks are also not using LGBT students and religious diversity in a way where the diverse representation of these groups is treated as a commodity in the way that racial diversity is sometimes used. From the moment a prospective student is considering an institution by perusing a viewbook, they can feel like an outsider. If students feel that they won't fit in at a particular college, students would be unlikely to visit for a tour, submit an application, or enroll. However, if the viewbooks are an accurate representation of life at a particular campus, it might be better for prospective students to know this going into college instead of holding different expectations than what truly occurs. This is a balancing act, but as for the viewbooks in this sample, it seemed there are students whose experiences are tangential to the "traditional" student experience represented throughout the viewbooks.

By showing the wide variety of social experiences and student organizations available to students, the colleges allow prospective students to imagine their future selves taking advantage of the plethora of offerings. Prospective students can continue an activity they enjoy while in high school, or try something new now that they have the

opportunity. While academics are one reason why students choose to attend a particular institution, there are some majors that exist at nearly every college and sometimes the college choice is based on what is happening outside of the classroom. Prospective students can get excited about participating in a literary journal or service organization, and can look forward to the new person they will be at college.

The viewbooks provide students with a plethora of social offerings on and near campus. They are busy participating in student organizations on campus, and some obligations off campus. Even the simple act of walking to class can be a social experience. For those prospective students who may not feel outgoing or social in high school, these viewbooks may be a way to see how friendly people at a particular college are. If everyone appears to be sociable, this may connote that a particular institution has a positive social atmosphere and appear welcoming to new students.

Throughout this section, I have provided evidence showing how the social life portrayal seems to provide students with a glimpse into life as a student. Based upon the number of images, students spend a lot of time on the quad with friends. Student activities are part of the student experience at every college in America, and the colleges within this sample are no exception. For those schools looking to differentiate themselves in terms of their social life, they included amenities that enhance the student experience or expand the boundaries of where students hang out during their free time. While prospective students may perceive women's colleges as having lackluster social scenes, the images and descriptions of life on campus were not doing anything to reverse this perception but rather showed the simply social experiences of having friends around campus in different environments. While social life may not be women's colleges' best

offering, there are other areas where they excel beyond their coeducational peers. This next section will explore how women's colleges are communicating women's colleges' unique features to prospective students.

Benefits and Challenges of Women's Colleges

Out of the 34 viewbooks in this study, only 22 specifically addressed the benefits and challenges of women's colleges. While the viewbooks referenced the women's college identity in other ways, these 12 schools did not use the viewbook format to sell students on the mission of women's colleges. The institutions that did reference the benefits and challenges of women's colleges cited various facts to impress prospective students and their families. The most frequently cited benefits were leadership, advanced degree attainment, and career achievements. This section will provide examples of how institutions demonstrated the benefits, and addressed prospective students' concerns regarding single-sex education. Additionally, the analysis section will demonstrate how these benefits are individual to the students, and contextualize the significance of women's colleges in the higher education landscape.

Leadership

Within the sample of viewbooks, 11 institutions cited leadership as an advantage for students at women's colleges. They argued that female students had more leadership roles on campus, developed their leadership skills, and were successful leaders post-graduation. Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Columbia, Saint Catherine, and Scripps highlighted students' access to leadership opportunities. Columbia College stated, students at women's colleges "have the opportunity to engage in an abundance of leadership roles both inside and outside the classroom setting." While female students at coeducational

institutions also have opportunities to lead, often there is not explicit emphasis on developing the leadership skills of women. This is why Bryn Mawr argued that students at women's college experience "more significant campus leadership roles."

Three institutions discussed leadership as a skill to be developed, and how women's colleges foster the development of this skill. Ursuline College cited its inclusive community as the reason for developing female leaders. Salem College argued that students from women's colleges were more likely to "exhibit leadership traits." While they do not define what these traits are, it can be inferred that these behaviors can be learned and students at women's colleges are learning leadership in different ways than those who attend coeducational colleges. By saying "a women's college education creates leaders, communicators, and persuaders who speak up and speak out," Wesleyan College views leaders as those who influence others, which is certainly something that can be fostered at a specific institution.

Finally, Alverno College and Meredith College viewed leadership as a post-graduation accomplishment. Alverno College wrote, "graduates of women's colleges are more likely to assume leadership roles, feel prepared for their first job and go on to graduate school." According to this example, leadership roles are something more attainable by the alumnae of women's colleges. Meredith College argued, "an overwhelming majority of women in leadership positions worldwide are graduates of women's colleges." While this does sound impressive, it seems highly unlikely that such few colleges can produce a majority of leaders around the world.

Career Achievements

Ten institutions chose to highlight the career outcomes of graduates of women's colleges. Career achievement can come in many forms, but the institutions within this study focused on preparation for one's first job, members of Congress, rising women stars, and other career advancement opportunities. Within this sample, seven institutions argued that graduates of women's colleges were more prepared for their first jobs when compared with coeducational institution graduates. Several schools chose to highlight the research from the Women's College Coalition as percentage differences of students in the form of an infographic (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Simmons College Highlighted Career Preparation Differences between Women's College Graduates and Public University Graduates

Four institutions cited that approximately 20% of female members of Congress are graduates of women's college. This number is disproportionately high considering how few single-sex institutions there are and were in the United States. Also, Barnard and Salem referenced *Business Week*'s list of rising women stars in corporate America. Of this list, 30% of the women earned their degrees at a women's college. Of course there was also more general language used when describing alumnae's career achievements. Mary Baldwin University included a statistic from a Women's College Coalition study that found that women's college graduates adapt better to career changes when compared to graduates from public universities.

Advanced Degree Attainment

Nine colleges specifically mentioned advanced degree attainment as a benefit for graduates of women's colleges. Five of the nine colleges also cited the career achievement benefits of women's colleges. One statistic that nearly every one of these nine colleges referenced frequently was likelihood to attend graduate school, but the information was inconsistent across colleges. Mount Holyoke said women's college graduates are "almost twice" and Saint Mary's College said "more than twice as likely" to earn a graduate degree. Whereas the other four institutions that cited this figure argued that women's college students "twice as likely." Two institutions included the comparison as graduates of public colleges, whereas four colleges argued against coeducational colleges. Accuracy matters aside, it is clear that the colleges feel that this increased access to graduate school opportunities will shed a favorable light on their institution in the eyes of prospective students.

Other Benefits of Women's Colleges

A few institutions included other benefits that were not as common across the sample. These included messages about confidence, faculty support and role models, satisfaction, participation in STEM, and having a close community. Some examples include Columbia College stating, "[students] are dozens of times more likely to complete a major in math, chemistry or other hard science and to go on to a career in those fields. Not twice as likely, but dozens of times more likely." Bryn Mawr highlighted the importance of faculty role models, saying, "the research shows that students at women's colleges participate more in the classroom, achieve more academically, assume more significant campus leadership roles, and find more female role models who inspire them to dream big." While these benefits were not as common throughout the viewbooks, the colleges added additional context to the significance of the women's college institutional type in an attempt to promote more students to consider attending.

Negative Expectations

While the women's colleges did not specifically mention negative aspects of attending a women's college, they did try to combat the negative expectations of prospective students. In several quotations, current students mentioned that they were initially hesitant to consider attending a women's college. Bryn Mawr highlighted two students who shared this perspective, including one that said, "Bryn Mawr was the first college I visited. The whole drive up I complained, telling my mom how I didn't want to go to a women's college. She still makes fun of me—I completely fell in love." Barnard addressed concerns about meeting people outside of the college, playing up New York's

abundance of college students and interns. When addressing the negative perception of a limited social life in the viewbook, Barnard College highlighted the ways to meet fellow college students both on and off campus through the partnership with Columbia University and the large population of college students in New York City. The viewbook stated, "With several institutions of higher education in the neighborhood, including Columbia University across the street, Barnard students have the opportunity to meet many people both on and off campus." Without explicitly saying it, this quotation seems that it was intended to assure heterosexual prospective students that they would have opportunities meet male students during their time in college.

Smith College also addressed the idea that a women's college might feel a bit isolating. Within a student profile, a student stated, "you might think life at a women's college would be cloistered, but it is just the opposite at Smith. I am continually surprised by how tolerant and diverse the student body is." This is an example where the institution uses the negative expectation to promote a desired characteristic of the college. Another student at Smith addressed the perception of not seeing men, saying, "with the Five College consortium, we are able to take classes at all the other schools—UMass Amherst as well as Amherst, Hampshire and Mount Holyoke colleges. Oftentimes there are guys in my classes here at Smith too."

While prospective students may be weighing the benefits of attending a women's college with the perceived reduced social life quality, the four women's colleges that addressed negative expectations actually were able to take a negative expectation and make a positive spin on it. Without having done that, the prospective students may feel

alone in their desire for an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere for women but also weighing the risks of a less than ideal college social life.

Analysis

While colleges addressed a myriad of benefits specific to women's college, the benefits included in the viewbooks were individual-level benefits. This means that the student is the primary beneficiary to higher education in terms of economic capital of a college degree. Few colleges discussed larger societal benefits of their programs. As can be expected, the viewbooks tailored these private benefits to showcase those that most students and parents like to see such as employment and graduate school figures. None of the benefits mentioned reference the public benefits of women's colleges. I think this is pretty typical of viewbooks, because there was no mention of public benefits about higher education in general in any area of the viewbooks. Marketing within viewbooks takes a more individualized approach, so the prospective students can see how they will benefit from attending the institution.

With so few high school women interested in attending a single-sex institution, the potential recruitment pool for prospective students is already limited. If women's colleges want to capture students who would not have previously considered attending through the messages in their viewbook, they must present a compelling case to showcase the benefits of single-sex education. Some colleges did address students' negative expectations, with the aim of minimizing these concerns enough to allow the institution to communicate about the institutions' other features. However, these institutions were the top-tier of the women's colleges, and had an abundance of positive benefits to outweigh the perceived negativity of being a single-sex institution.

Since the students in high school today have never known a world where women were in the minority in college attendance, they may not understand the significance of single-sex institutions on a historical or contemporary level. Without specific information about the experiences of women at coeducational colleges compared with single-sex colleges, prospective students may assume that both offer a similar academic experience. Students in high school may not fully understand the gender disparity and sexism that many college women face to this day.

Female students are consistently underrepresented in STEM majors, and yet few high school students may recognize this fact before entering college. Having female professors and strong role models for female students helps young women envision themselves as scientists too. Barnard's viewbook stated:

> It turns out that students at women's colleges are more likely to study math or science. They graduate in math and sciences at 1.5 times the rate of women at co-ed institutions. Why? Perhaps because they fine an environment where their interests and abilities are encouraged.

The colleges in this study that specifically addressed this representation at STEM are trying to educate prospective students about a primary difference in the student experience between coeducational and single-sex colleges.

The viewbook could serve as an educational experience to promote the benefits of women's college. While the majority of institutions did cite benefits from the Women's College Coalition and other published studies, it was helpful to see that four institutions provided current students' negative expectation and their reversal of opinion once they gave the institution a chance. While some institutions may hesitate to bring up anything

negative in the viewbook, this approach works well for the top tier colleges who are able to combat these negative expectations with a plethora of accolades and positive benefits. In fact, three of the schools that referenced students' initial hesitations to attend a women's college were Barnard, Smith, and Bryn Mawr, three of the remaining Seven Sisters colleges.

While nearly all the colleges in this sample are members of the Women's College Coalition and have access to published research showing the benefits of women's colleges, it was surprising to see that not all of the institutions were touting the benefits of women's colleges. While addressing the challenges is a tricky process, advanced degree attainment, career achievements, and developing leadership skills are universally desired and yet omitted from several of the viewbooks. For a group of colleges that is struggling to survive and promote its mission of undergraduate women's education, it does not seem that all colleges are enthusiastic about the benefits that come with this identity. In the next section, I will address the final research question pertaining to how gender was represented within the viewbook pages.

Constructing Gender

Throughout the viewbooks, all of the students presented as female. However the gender of students is just one aspect of the viewbooks. Faculty members within the viewbooks are both male and female. Additionally, the colleges discuss leadership and confidence as gendered traits, typically assuming that the prospective students arrive on campus lacking these characteristics. The final theme in this section discusses what the typical students at these institutions are like, and the lack of inclusion with regards to transgender women.

Leaders

Within the viewbooks, there was a strong focus on developing women as leaders. This emphasis on leadership as an essential part of undergraduate education was communicated by 21 of the colleges in this study. Leadership development can take many forms on a college campus from leading student organizations to formal leadership programs. This section specifically addresses the gendered messages of leadership throughout the viewbooks, and not those that are specifically tied to the benefits of women's colleges.

Some institutions included generic messages of fostering leadership development for their students. Mount Saint Mary's University stated "Over the span of 90 years, the mission of Mount Saint Mary's has been to develop leaders for the future." Simmons argued, "We take leadership seriously. We ignore arguments about whether leaders are born or made. Instead, we offer an environment where you define what leadership means to you and what it will take to get there." Some institutions included a gendered message about leadership, such as Alverno's message "a rich history of developing female leaders."

Additional institutions included specific statements that students can serve as leaders in their campus communities. Cottey College stated, "Of course, women lead all of the College's clubs and organizations and serve as captains of our intercollegiate athletic teams. Cottey students can't say enough about the leadership experience they gain through participation in campus clubs." The University of Saint Joseph also associated leadership opportunities with gender, saying, "experience the stature and quality of a USJ

education, in classrooms, studios, and labs where women fill every leadership role, are at the top of every class, and seize every opportunity available."

Nine colleges included descriptions about their college's leadership development programs. Simmons College offers students three leadership opportunities, the Simmons P.L.A.N. is an undergraduate curriculum designed to develop students' leadership skills, the Simmons Leadership Challenge for sophomores, and the Leader-in-Residence program. Mount Mary University has a Women's Leadership Institute, where students can learn about their strengths and develop their skills as leaders. These programs are just a few examples of the conferences, institutes, and other leadership programs available to students at women's colleges. Programs such as these show the commitment of these colleges to the success of women as future leaders.

The focus on leadership development within women's colleges is significant because programs such as these achieve different goals than similar programs at coeducational institutions. Female students attending coeducational institutions would not have as many opportunities for campus leadership opportunities, since the majority of significant leadership positions continue to go to male students. Prior research on the gender disparity in leadership roles in student government found that women are underrepresented despite being interested in leadership positions (Miller, 2004). Since leadership traits can be associated with male characteristics, having leadership development opportunities amongst all women allows female leaders to develop without imitating male leadership methods. Since there seems to be an assumption that male and female leaders operate differently due to gender roles, the leadership programs at single-

sex colleges should help young women develop their confidence and skills without having to face sexist assumptions and discrimination.

While one criticism of these types of programs is that single-sex workplaces are rare, and there will likely never be an environment where women are leading in a single-sex environment. However, by developing these skills and confidence in a safe environment, graduates may be more prepared to combat negative stereotypes and perform well without questioning how others perceive them as female leaders. Ultimately, these leadership skill programs show that this is an advantage for students attending a women's college. While few specifically cited it as a unique feature for these colleges, young women should understand how refreshing it is to have leadership programs where women are involved at all levels.

The focus on leadership programs specifically designed for women are grounded in the assumption that young women entering college are lacking leadership skills. There were no examples where the colleges were leveraging students' prior experience as leaders in their high schools or communities, and translating that to college life. This deficit thinking, where colleges assume that students come to them not having leadership skills also occurs when it comes to confidence. This additional learning outcome is discussed in the following section.

Confidence

Much like leadership, confidence was touted as a valuable piece of the women's college education. This was illustrated through student's quotations about their institutions, the college's messages of promoting confidence, and other institution-specific examples. Like leadership, it is generally perceived that females need

confidence to know they can compete with their male peers for top jobs, graduate school positions, and other areas.

The image included below (Figure 21) shows a group of students from the College of Saint Mary, with the caption "Confidence." There is no context provided within the viewbook for this image, but given the location and attire of the students in the image, one might associate participation in athletics with increased confidence. In this example, this illustrates how viewbooks can use buzzwords alongside images to create added significance to the image. By adding the caption of confidence to this image, this changes the meaning and context of the athletic image and signifies that confidence and participation in sports are related in some way.

Figure 21. Students at the College of Saint Mary Illustrating the Value of Confidence

In quotations in seven viewbooks, students shared their opinion about how their institution has improved their confidence. A student at Smith shared her perspective:

> The greatest gift that Smith has given me is the courage to be myself. Coming out of high school, I didn't have that. I've always been shy. Smith gives you a sense of confidence, of being able to accomplish your dreams. It lets me know that I'm okay being who I am.

This quotation illustrates how this student felt the biggest net change as a result of attending college was that of confidence. Going to Smith allowed this student to express herself as she truly is, and was empowering to her goals. Other students such as Leiya Mahoney from Mills College referenced faculty members encouraging students to speak up during class discussions. A student from the University of Saint Joseph also shared, "USJ empowered me to be a strong, confident and successful woman in a male-dominated field. With the personal support provided by the faculty, I was more than prepared to make a positive impact." The need for confidence for young women in male-dominated academic environments is a unique opportunity for women's colleges. Faculty can focus on developing young women's skills and confidence to help them succeed and face a world that holds different expectations for women and men. From these quotations, it is clear that not only are students gaining confidence through their college experience, but also they are directly crediting their college for developing this confidence and demonstrating how this newly found confidence has changed them for the better.

Confidence is also a broader theme that the colleges used to promote the college's mission. Mount Holyoke's tagline on the front of their viewbook read "face the future with confidence." For Bay Path University, confidence was a theme throughout their whole viewbook. They had headings such as "the confidence to take on more,"

"confidence you can take to work," and "Bay Path is where Erin, Cassie, Anna and Dawa were all prepared to move confidently in the direction of their dreams." These statements show a commitment to confidence as part of the undergraduate experience, much like leadership.

Bay Path University has designed a specific program to develop women's confidence in STEM programs. This program, entitled WiSH (Women in STEM Honors), is a four-year curriculum to develop women in STEM. A faculty member was quoted in reference to this program, "what women really need to succeed in STEM fields is confidence. Female mentors that are successful are pivotal." While confidence is certainly a key aspect of promoting female access to STEM, mentorship also appears to be a crucial aspect to succeed in male-dominated fields.

Simmons College specifically listed confidence as an outcome for graduates of the institution. They stated, "You'll graduate with a new kind of confidence, ready to contribute your vision and voice to your community and the world." This assurance leads readers to believe that all students will gain confidence, and that it will result in meaningful personal gain. On the other hand, the University of Saint Joseph viewed confidence with a more immediate lens. In a letter to prospective students, the president of the institution wrote, "Your confidence and drive will have an immediate and enduring impact on campus, in your career, and for your future." For this institution, confidence is not an outcome, but one that first-year students bring with them when they arrive for their first semester. Instead of viewing confidence as a deficit model with new undergraduate students lacking confidence, the University of Saint Joseph communicates that students arrive to their institution with these skills. While other students mentioned the increased

confidence earned by the instructors, it is important to note that not all first-year students begin at the same confidence level and even those who arrive on campus confident can make further gains.

While confidence is not necessarily a gendered topic, many of the messages within the viewbook pertaining to confidence coincided with gendered expectations. This includes the confidence to succeed as female students by participating in class discussions, pursuing academic fields that are male-dominated, and changing the world for the better. These messages of confidence appear to be feminist in nature, teaching students to push for what they want to achieve and not let gender barriers get them down. Much like leadership, these messages of confidence may be unique to women's colleges. Female students at coeducational institutions would not have access to as many female mentors, and would be less likely to participate in class and in STEM programs. Much like leadership, these confidence skills are developed in single-sex environments, and students will likely work in mixed gender environments. However, confidence and leadership skills earned during their undergraduate years will help students to become bold women who will not accept limits to their opportunities.

Faculty

Since faculty members are part of the college experience, they were featured prominently throughout the viewbooks within this sample. Of all the images of faculty members in the viewbooks, there were 44 images of male faculty members and 61 female faculty members. Since the majority of the professoriate has historically been male, it was surprising to see more female faculty within the viewbooks, but that does seem to be a unique characteristic of women's colleges.

In addition to images of faculty members, five schools chose to include the percentage of female faculty. The percentages ranged from 63% at Barnard College to 75% at Salem College. While Barnard did have the lowest percentage of this group of five, they also contextualized this numbers for prospective students, comparing their statistic to 38% nationally.

The images of male and female faculty members paint somewhat different portraits of student-faculty interactions. Male faculty members were outside of the classroom more often, teaching in the field or on the campus quad (See Figure 22). Male professors were also featured out in the field conducting research. While they did break the confines of the classroom, they were demonstrating how to conduct research or lecturing. The following image shows an example of an instructor holding class on the campus quad, lecturing to his class.

Within the viewbooks there were images of female faculty members walking around campus talking with students (See Figure 23), but no such images existed with male faculty members. The following image shows an approachable instructor, willing to talk with a student outside of the classroom environment. This mentoring relationship that can occur outside of the classroom was portrayed only with female faculty members. Despite having more images of female faculty members across all viewbooks, the viewbooks showed equal numbers of male and female faculty members lecturing at the front of a classroom across all of the viewbooks. For both male and female faculty members, the most common portrayal came in the form of helping students. These images showed professors in less formal instructor poses, discussing course materials with students in class.

Figure 22. A Male Faculty Member at Saint Mary's College Lectures to a Class on the Campus Quad

Ultimately the question of professors' gender must relate back to the wants of prospective students. As students who are considering attending a women's college, it is important for these students to see women in positive roles in the classroom. Since faculty mentorship is a benefit for those attending a women's college, it is important to see this mentorship relationship in action. While there were some differences with how male and female faculty members were portrayed, there does seem to be a heavy focus on the student-faculty interaction regardless of the instructor's gender.

Figure 23. A Female Professor at Mills College Walks with a Student Across Campus

It was promising to see female faculty members represented well even in scientific laboratory environments. As several of the viewbooks have cited, and has been discussed earlier in this chapter, female mentors in STEM help promote access to these majors for female students. By showing female faculty members engaging in scientific research, and demonstrating laboratory techniques, these viewbooks further demonstrate their commitment to promoting the STEM careers of the colleges' students.

Traditionally Feminine, Cisgender Students

Throughout the viewbooks female students were mostly presented as traditionally feminine in appearance. I was interested in exploring how these colleges portray the female gender of their students, so I took note of how many nontraditional women I saw throughout the viewbooks. I defined a student as nontraditional if she possessed

traditionally masculine qualities such as short hair and masculine clothing choices (See Figure 24). Throughout the hundreds of images in the 34 viewbooks, there were only 24 students who met this definition as nontraditional. These students were featured in ten of the institutions within this sample. Moore College of Art and Design, Mills College, Smith College, Wesleyan College had multiple examples of nontraditional women in their images. For women who identify as nontraditional, they were able to see students like them within the viewbook pages, but only at a handful of the women's colleges. Aside from these 24 students, the remainder of the students wore traditional female clothing and had long hair. This continued focus on traditional femininity reinforces the traditional and expected gender roles of women, even at a single-sex institution.

Figure 24. A Nontraditional Female Student at Moore College of Art and Design

Additionally, while the majority of the colleges in this study are open to admitting transgender students, only one college openly mentioned this fact in their viewbook. It is unclear from the colleges' websites how many institutions would admit transgender students. At least two colleges would require students to revise their birth certificate or driver's license to accept them, whereas others would accept any person who identifies as female. For the colleges that had no policy or an unclear policy on their website, I contacted the institutions via phone and email. When calling the colleges, most evaded the question simply citing the college's non-discrimination policy, even if it did not address gender identity. One college refused to answer, and the staff member hung up on me. If I were a transgender student calling this school for more information, that would be enough of a signal as to whether or not I should consider applying. At least three colleges referred me to their non-discrimination policies, assuming that would answer my question until I pointed out that "gender identity" was not protected in their non-discrimination clause. Ultimately, I an unable to state exactly how many colleges would accept transgender women to their undergraduate programs, but the majority of colleges in this sample would welcome transgender applicants.

However, Mills College was the only college who mentioned that they would welcome transgender applicants within their viewbook. In their section where they discuss Mills's firsts among women's colleges, they claimed that they were "the first to enact an admission policy for transgender applicants." Additionally, in their nondiscrimination policy statement, they stated, "self-identified women are eligible for admission to our undergraduate programs." While Mills is not the only college in this

study to welcome transgender women applicants, it is important to note that none of the other colleges mentioned this fact within their viewbooks.

With these two pieces of information, it is clear that the women's colleges are perpetuating the traditional feminine body to prospective students. The young women who were featured within the viewbooks participating in the classroom, student activities, and spending time with friends mostly embody traditional female characteristics. While one may argue that there are not many nontraditional women or transgender females on campus, that has not stopped colleges in the past when representing racial and ethnic diversity in viewbooks. Colleges have overrepresented Black students within viewbooks, as a method of showing an aspirational level of diversity (Osei-Kofi, Torres, & Lui, 2013). While colleges use students of color as a marker of diversity, it seems that these colleges do not use varying levels of gender performativity to represent what it means to be a woman.

Analysis

By focusing on leadership and confidence as outcomes of the women's college experience, the majority of the colleges in this study operate with the assumption that new students will arrive on campus lacking leadership skills and confidence. High school students have opportunities to lead student organizations, and develop confidence through school and cocurricular activities. Instead of framing these two concepts as absent in the new students, I think that the approach that the University of Saint Joseph used, where they understand that students are arriving with these skills and the university will help them leverage it for personal success, is a better model to use. While students may achieve gains in confidence and leadership during their time in college, many young

women are entering college having partially developed these skills during their high school experience.

The emphasis on female faculty members throughout the viewbooks demonstrated the commitment of women's colleges to the success of female students, but also female scholars. Female mentorship is a crucial part of the women's college experience, so it makes perfect sense that these institutions practice what they preach and hire more women faculty members. It may also be the case that more women choose to apply for faculty positions at women's colleges, knowing that they will have a community of women who support one another.

The images within the viewbook promote the idea of what women at women's colleges should look like. For the majority of students, the traditional feminine appearance of long hair, makeup, and feminine clothing appeared to be the norm. However, at some colleges there were more nontraditional women, who dressed in more masculine attire and had shorter haircuts. By showing a variety of interpretations of what it means to be a woman, these institutions are welcome to diverse expressions of female identity.

This diverse representation did not extend to transgender women, with the exception of Mills College. While not all of the women's colleges in this sample welcome transgender applicants, even those who do welcome transgender applicants did not promote this population within the pages of the viewbooks. Many colleges included a non-discrimination statement in the fine text near the end of the viewbook, and only Mills wrote, "self-identified women are eligible for admission to our undergraduate programs." This lack of inclusion for transgender women marginalizes this group from

cisgender female applicants. While this population technically may be admissible to the colleges, this fact is not worth mentioning in the viewbook. This issue relates back to the lack of representation for women who do not align with normative expectations of femininity. Transgender women may align with the traditional feminine expectations, but are marginalized or omitted within the viewbooks due to their gender identity.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have provided evidence using the content from viewbooks to demonstrate how women's colleges are marketing to prospective students. The colleges within this study consistently used academic life, social life, organizational identity, unique features of women's colleges, and gendered messages to communicate the best possible version of their institution to prospective students.

The colleges did not use the viewbooks to differentiate themselves from one another as women's colleges, but instead compared their mission and offerings to those of coeducational colleges. While the mission statements were generic, they were unique when looking at all higher education institutions by focusing on the education of women. These institutions touted their notable campus figures, student outcomes, campus, and location, but shied away from discussing demographic information or graduation and retention rates.

The academic elements of the viewbooks were student-centric, showing prospective students their plethora of options available to them, even if it means registering for classes through the consortium. Learning can be seen as fun that includes friends and travelling to interesting places around the world, but these positive images do not capture students' struggles with learning and portray the amount of work necessary to

succeed in college as trivial. Very few institutions provided four-year plans or general education requirements to students, which may seem to daunting for an introduction to the institution and could deter applicants from further considering the college.

From the looks of the viewbooks, anything and everything can be interpreted as a social experience. From walking to class to playing basketball, the students within the viewbooks are all smiles, laughing with friends. The student organization offerings available at the colleges were almost overwhelming; however this allows prospective students to envision what their niche at the college would be. The social life was limited to portray mostly White, Christian, heterosexual, and able-bodied activities, and rarely incorporated the cultures of non-White, non-Christian, LGBT, or students with disabilities.

The benefits of women's colleges are private benefits for individual students' personal gain through employment or graduate education. With very few high school students interested in attending women's colleges, these institutions need to provide more information about the historical significance and importance of single-sex institutions. If prospective students do not understand how sexism and bias continues to affect women at coeducational institutions, they may not see the value of attending a women's college.

Finally, the female gender was presented within the viewbook as lacking leadership and confidence, at least until students arrive at a women's college. By learning these skills, young women would be better suited to compete in the working world or in coeducational graduate programs. Using female faculty members throughout the viewbook showcases the commitment to having female mentors, and this network of educated women who want to help young women succeed toward their goals.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the implications of these findings, and connect them with the prior literature and conceptual framework. I will connect the content of these viewbooks to the trends of consumerism and competition in higher education, and how the marketing of women's college has evolved since the one prior study conducted on the subject in 1994. Additionally, I will provide targeted recommendations for further research and practice in the area of women's colleges and higher education marketing.

Chapter 5

As higher education has grown more competitive, the marketing practices of specific institutions have grown to fit in this marketplace (McDonough, 1994). Due to limited interest in single-sex education from high school women, women's colleges in general are struggling to recruit enough students (Kratzok & Near, 2014). Many former women's colleges have become coeducational in order to recruit both male and female students (Tifft, 1990). Without enough tuition-paying students, women's colleges may not be able to survive much longer, as was almost the case with Sweet Briar College in 2015 (Jaschik, 2015). The significance of enrolling a talented class of students each year is why the marketing of these colleges was interesting to me. I wanted to understand how these institutions were representing themselves to prospective students.

The research questions that were explored through this dissertation were:

- How is the organizational identity of women's colleges portrayed within viewbooks?
- How do women's colleges portray academic and social life?
- How do women's colleges address the benefits and challenges of single-sex education within the viewbook?
- How do women's colleges construct gender in viewbooks?

Using the information that was learned from the viewbooks through the content analysis, I will present a summary of the findings and discuss the implications of these findings. Using the prior literature that informed this dissertation, I will reflect back on the findings from these studies to see if they were present in the sample of women's colleges. Since there was one prior study on the marketing practices of women's

colleges, I will present a detailed comparison of the findings from the Ricci (1994) study and those of this dissertation. Finally, I will provide recommendations for future research and practice in the areas of higher education marketing and women's colleges

Summary of Findings

Using the four research questions, I analyzed the available viewbooks from remaining women's colleges. These four research questions provided the framework for me to examine organizational identity, academic and social life, the benefits and challenges of women's colleges, and the construction of gender in the viewbooks. While the concept of organizational identity focuses on differentiating oneself from marketplace competitors, it seems that the women's colleges contrasted their values and the students' experiences with those at coeducational institutions. None of the colleges directly referenced the competitors within the group of women's colleges. Additionally, while there were some unique features of each college such as symbols and traditions, the remaining elements were fairly generic.

Within the area of academic life, the colleges offered similar academic programs, career services, study abroad opportunities, and internship opportunities. While the institutions tried to make their version of these offerings sound new and different, they end up sounding the same when viewing many viewbooks, as prospective students would do. There were no examples of truly innovative or engaging academic programs.

The students at these institutions seemed to have a lot of fun engaging in athletics, campus activities, amenities, and relaxing on campus. While there were many images and options for students to enjoy their time at college, the activities drew from Christian, heterosexual, White students' cultural practices. This limited perspective on

social experiences signals to non-Christian, LGBT, and non-White students that their culture is outside of the norm at this institution. By having one's culture relegated to a student organization, if one is lucky, this shows that it is up to the students to introduce and maintain their cultures in the general campus community.

Twenty-two institutions addressed the benefits and challenges of women's colleges within the viewbooks. The most frequently cited benefits were leadership, advanced degree attainment, and career achievements. Additionally, some institutions directly addressed the negative expectations and spun them in a positive way so prospective students can better understand the single-sex college environment. The benefits listed demonstrate private benefits of higher education, which would personally benefit the student as a result of having attended a particular institution. These benefits and challenges are important for prospective students when considering where to apply and enroll.

I also examined how gender was constructed throughout the viewbooks. While the students all presented as female, there was a range of how femininity was displayed. Some colleges included images of nontraditional females, whereas the rest featured women who fit within the stereotypical expectations of American women. While only some of the women's colleges admit trans women, only Mills College openly stated this fact. The faculty within the images was mostly female, and several institutions also brought attention to their faculty gender ratio. Throughout the viewbooks there were also the themes of confidence and leadership, where students were typically assumed to be arriving at college lacking these traits. The institutions showed various ways in which they develop students' confidence and leadership throughout their undergraduate

education. While confidence and leadership are not typically gendered topics, the perception that young women lack these skills after graduating from high school is a response to the social and cultural standing of women.

Interpretation of Findings

Competition and Consumerism in Higher Education

Higher education is a competitive environment for both institutions and students alike. Tuition-dependent institutions need to recruit enough students to earn sufficient revenue to stay in business. In the college recruitment process, marketing is one approach to recruiting top students to apply and attend a particular institution. Until the finance model moves away from tuition-dependency, it is unlikely that competition and marketing of higher education will subside.

As Gibbs (2007) argued, higher education marketing contradicts the values of higher education, and frames the student as a consumer. Within the viewbooks of this study, the language used to promote the benefits of a college highlighted private benefits to the student. These included access to internships, job placement, career services, and top employers. The audience of the viewbooks is high school students, who are evaluating colleges for their own personal goals. Throughout the viewbooks, the emphasis placed on employment and graduate school signaled that these are the two desired results of a college degree. Few schools, if any, addressed broader values of higher education such as civic involvement, and having an educated populace.

In an environment where fewer than 5% of high school women would consider attending a women's college (Kratzok & Near, 2014), the institutions within this study not only had to promote themselves, but also women's colleges. While many colleges

did include information on the benefits of attending a women's college, 12 institutions did not. Bryn Mawr, Barnard, and Smith addressed students' negative perceptions about women's colleges. These elite institutions have many positive benefits that outweigh the single-sex nature of the institution, and are able to utilize their surrounding colleges and cities to show that there are male college students nearby.

With fewer and fewer students willing to attend a women's college, these institutions need to justify their unique mission in order to attract students each year. The women's colleges promoted the unique features of single-sex institutions, and viewed coeducational colleges as the primary competition. While 12 institutions did not include this information for prospective students to use, the majority of colleges were trying to communicate what makes women's colleges worthwhile even as women have access to nearly all colleges.

The information presented within the viewbooks showcased that students are viewed as consumers of higher education. The fun aspects of being a student were front and center, and the stressful aspects of college such as homework were presented with smiling students. Nearly every institution touted its career services resources, showing that they are preparing students to work at top companies. While this may not be an aim of a particular college, they are recognizing that students come to college expecting career services, graduate school placement, study abroad, and other services when considering where to attend. As tuition-driven institutions, the colleges presented their takes at what they think students want to see in a viewbook, such as study abroad and internship opportunities. However, since the colleges used similar marketing tactics, the

viewbooks started to blend together and were not distinct. The following section will delve deeper into the analysis of generic representations within college viewbooks.

Generic College Representations

Much like the studies of Hartley and Morphew (2008) and Klassen (2000), the viewbooks in this study represent generic versions of collegiate life. In these prior studies, the researchers found that colleges do not focus on their unique qualities, but rather they perpetuate a generic college ideal. With the exception of mentioning that the institutions are women's college, the viewbooks within this study align with these past findings. Through this dissertation, the viewbooks of women's colleges featured students in typical college settings such as athletic fields, a campus quad, or in the library. The academic and social programs offered were standard offerings among higher education institutions. There were no examples of a truly unique representation of college life, or unique programs offered.

For the many themes throughout the viewbooks, the colleges within this study appeared very similar. Nearly all of the colleges mentioned their student/faculty ratio, study abroad programs, career services, internships, and athletics. While the majority of prospective students and parents can easily understand these generic messages, these messages were not coupled with many examples of unique features. Only ten colleges mentioned a course unique to their institution, and the only other unique aspects of the colleges' identity came in the form of location, traditions, and symbols.

In the time since the prior studies on viewbook messages, it seems that not much has changed in this respect. For the most part, the messages within each viewbook could be easily used for another college within this same study. Even the schools' mottos were

interchangeable, since Converse College and Ursuline College used nearly the same motto.

Even with the advent of the digital viewbook, it does not seem like many institutions are using this medium to engage students in new and different ways. While ten colleges offered a digital viewbook, only Wellesley College's and Bay Path University's viewbooks were in the form of websites and not PDFs. Bay Path's online viewbook was mostly static, and offered students fast facts about the institution without much more content. However, Wellesley College utilized the digital space to enhance the content already in their viewbook. They featured 21 videos that correspond to the viewbook's theme of top 100 things about Wellesley. In our increasingly digital age, it was surprising to see how few institutions are investing their time and resources into the digital viewbook, and how the majority continue to stick with the traditional, mailed viewbook. While not many institutions promoted a unique representation, the elements that were included contribute to the institution's organizational identity. The next section will examine how organizational identity manifested in the viewbooks of the women's colleges in this dissertation.

Organizational Identity

Throughout the previous literature regarding organizational identity, there are several elements that shape an organization's identity. With respect to the first research question that pertained to organizational identity, I will situate the findings from this study into the conceptual framework of organizational identity for a better understanding on how the viewbooks have or have not communicated the institutions' identity to prospective students.

In Albert and Whetten's (1985) original concept of organizational identity, they developed three criteria to evaluate an organization's identity. These criteria include central character, distinctiveness, and claimed temporal continuity. Central character pertains to the institution's philosophy and mission, with the understanding that this could vary based upon the audience. Since viewbooks are written and developed by the institution, or a third-party marketing company on behalf of the institution, this allows the college to shape its own message and select which of the college's features they want prospective students to learn about. Since only ten institutions mentioned the college's mission within their viewbook, the remaining colleges may consider this aspect of organizational identity to be extraneous information for prospective students to know. However, the viewbooks did include other organizational identity elements that provided sufficient information to project an identity for recruiting students.

The second criterion, distinctiveness, includes signals about membership in a group of organizations and differentiation regarding unique organizational features. These comparisons to peer organizations allow colleges to promote the differences in what they offer. Throughout the viewbooks, the institutions did define themselves as women's colleges, therefore signaling their membership within this group. However, there were only limited attempts to differentiate their identity from the rest of the group. The women's colleges framed their institutions' mission and characteristics in opposition to coeducational colleges. Since the viewbooks are trying to recruit talented female students to their institution, but also women's colleges in general, the institutions within this sample may respect each other enough not to downplay other women's colleges, while they frequently cited the benefits of single-sex education over coeducation. Within

this sample, there were several examples where the institutions promote being the first or the only to offer or accomplish something desirable. In most cases, the language in the viewbooks differentiated the institution from coeducational colleges, not other women's colleges. None of the viewbooks referenced other women's colleges to engage in a direct comparison.

Albert and Whetten's (1985) final criterion, claimed temporal continuity, focuses on changes in organizational identity over time. While viewbooks can represent a college's identity, most prospective students viewing only the viewbooks will not understand the claimed temporal continuity of the institution. If a student researches a college further, they could learn more about the history of the college. Additionally, if they choose to enroll, they will also experience the institution's evolution during their undergraduate years, and later as an alumna. The traditions that are included within the viewbooks are made relevant to a new group of students, and the colleges did not dedicate space to discussing much about the history of these traditions. Some schools intentionally remained secretive about the traditions, and informed students that they would be clued in once they too are a part of the college community. Since this study focused on college viewbooks obtained during a limited time frame, I am unable to comment upon the viewbooks' changes in identity communication over time. While this was a limitation for this study, it does open up avenues for further research and will be discussed more in the recommendations section later in this chapter.

In an update to the organizational identity framework, Glynn (2008) identified several ways that organizations can demonstrate their identity including essence, bricolage, and performance. Much like Albert and Whetten's (1985) notion of

distinctiveness, essence includes membership and signaling features that are unique to an organization. Since the similar concept of distinctiveness was discussed earlier in this section, I will turn my attention to bricolage and performance.

Bricolage utilizes all available elements of an organization's identity, to create something coherent to which all stakeholders can relate. Viewbooks can be considered a form of bricolage as a way to demonstrate the colleges' identity to prospective students. Using all of the features of the undergraduate experience, colleges create a finely edited presentation of the college's features. While the symbols and traditions of the colleges were fairly unique and college-specific, the majority of the colleges' features were common across the institutions in this study. Prospective students would see that nearly every women's college in the United States offers internships, study abroad, athletics, and low student/faculty ratio. The deeper organizational identity elements that are more difficult to grasp as an outsider, did not seem to be communicated in the viewbooks. The colleges' educational philosophy, commitment to contribute to an educated populace, and the intangible outcomes of higher education were noticeably absent from the viewbooks analyzed. While viewbooks can be considered a bricolage, they are not one that captures the true, lived experiences of students and other campus stakeholders. The messages and images within are edited to be favorable, no matter what the campus climate and culture are actually like.

Identity performance, the final element of Glynn's (2008) work, covers how organizations perform identity to particular groups. While a college's identity includes the mission and philosophy, the majority of these women's colleges selected not to perform these identity markers when speaking with prospective students. There could be

many different reasons for this omission, but this edited identity is considered performance. The viewbook that is mailed or emailed to prospective students typically takes a lot of resources to craft, and this investment has the goal of increasing applications to the institution. Since performance can affect institutional survival, the women's colleges promoted what they feel will be the optimum messaging for recruiting the best students to their campus. Due to declining interest in attending women's colleges, these institutions are responding to the competitive enrollment marketplace in a way that makes sense for them.

Ultimately, viewbooks can be considered a bricolage or performance of organizational identity. While viewbooks do communicate some aspects of a college's identity, they are not comprehensive documents that chronicle the history, current state, and future goals of the institution. The viewbook serves its purpose as an introduction to a particular institution, and if prospective students are interested they can learn more about a college through the institutional website, a campus tour, and more. Even though a college's organizational identity can be promoted in many ways, many institutions explored similar themes and presented similar images within the viewbooks. STEM environments were pervasive in many viewbooks, and these images contributed to the promotion of academics throughout the viewbooks. The following section will present additional findings related to the representation of STEM environments within this dissertation.

STEM Academic Environments

In prior research about gender and race representations within viewbooks, Osei-Kofi and Torres (2015) found that scientists were predominantly portrayed as White

males. They identified several themes from the viewbooks, including "brainy babes" where the females represent the ideal, White beauty standard. Also, men of color and women were also portrayed as sidekicks to White male students.

When compared with this prior study, the laboratory environments within the women's college viewbooks were different in that all of the students are female. The only male figures in the viewbook were faculty members, so the students were actively engaged in the experiments and research. Women, including female faculty members, were leading the way in terms of scientific research and there were several programs dedicated to promoting STEM achievement in women. Additionally, the young women in these STEM environments represent many racial backgrounds. While White students were the majority, there were many examples of Black, Asian American, and racially ambiguous students in the laboratory environment. While the White students in the viewbooks did represent the "idealized, dominant White beauty standard" (Osei-Kofi & Torres, 2015, p. 535), women of color were engaged in STEM activities within the viewbook pages. In this women's college scenario, the sidekick theme would not apply. When looking at the results of this prior study and the findings here, it appears that women's colleges offer more inclusive STEM spaces, not only for women but more specifically women of color.

The women's colleges offer more opportunities for young women to develop their talents in the STEM fields. These colleges provide students with access to female faculty members, opportunities for research, and the ability to be taken seriously as a scientist. When compared with coeducational STEM environments, these female students might serve as an assistant for a White male classmate, or be represented as note taker,

unengaged with the scientific process happening around her. Additionally, the STEM laboratory classrooms appeared more frequently than traditional discussion or lecture hall classrooms. Since women's colleges are able to offer access to more inclusive STEM education for women compared with their coeducational peers, these colleges are using these laboratory classroom images to highlight this advantage and represent female students actively engaged in scientific projects and research. This could be a conscious choice to show women engaged in STEM activities, considering females are often excluded or marginalized in STEM programs at coeducational colleges. The messaging within the women's college viewbooks highlights a noticeable difference in the experiences in STEM majors between single-sex institutions and coeducational colleges. What is really important to know at this point is whether prospective students notice or consider these representations when deciding where to attend. Just as academic representations are important within the viewbooks, social life can be just as significant. The following section will explain how social life was presented within the viewbooks of this dissertation.

Social Life

In the prior research on the different experiences between single-sex and coeducational colleges, Smith (1990) found that students at women's colleges were more satisfied with instructional quality, major courses, social science courses, approachable professors, campus, rules, career counseling, housing, and cultural opportunities when compared with their coeducational college peers. Smith noted there was one area where students at single-sex institutions were less satisfied, which was social life. With this information in mind, I specifically looked at how the viewbooks represented social life on

the campuses. Social life was a big part of the images and text within the viewbooks, where colleges demonstrated the fun and exciting parts of being a student.

Social life representations included athletics, student activities, service, and relaxing on campus. The colleges touted all the things to do on campus, in the surrounding towns and cities, and with nearby college students. The students who were featured in the student profiles were involved in many activities across the campus, which further shows how involved students can be if they take advantage of the college's opportunities.

For those students who are skeptical of a women's college environment due to a lack of male peers, several institutions highlighted the college's location in a big college city or town, or the school's consortium or partnership with coeducational colleges nearby. The ability to meet male college students affects prospective students' perception of the colleges. For those institutions that have partnerships or a big city close by, they are able to lessen the negative expectations. However, not all students are equally included in the social experiences at colleges. The next section will provide more insight into the groups of students that were marginalized throughout the images and text of the viewbooks.

Outsiders

Within the viewbooks there were several groups, which seem to be outsiders among the student populations at women's colleges. Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women are rarely mentioned or featured. Students from non-dominant cultural, ethnic, and racial groups were present in most viewbooks, but appeared less frequently than their White peers. Finally, within the viewbooks there were no students, or faculty members,

who had physical disabilities. This lack of representation signals to prospective students that students who identify with one of these groups are still considered extraneous to the typical college experience.

For lesbian and bisexual women, the only mention of LGBT issues was in student activities and organizations lists. Only nine colleges mentioned this population in their viewbooks. As more women in high school are open and aware of their sexual orientation, this limited representation could be a signal that a college is unwelcoming to lesbian or bisexual women. For the lesbian and bisexual women that this institutional type can attract, it would make sense that the colleges promote their campus resources for these populations. One example would be to mention services offered through the institution's LGBT resource center, if it exists.

Transgender students were also barely mentioned within the viewbooks. Several of the colleges in this study recently updated their admissions policy to allow transgender applicants. However, only Mills College, the first to make this policy, spoke about admitting transgender women at all in their viewbooks. Being transgender is typically a hidden identity that is not easily distinguishable from an image of a person, but there were no students within the viewbooks who were visibly transgender. Single-sex institutions may have a unique role to play when it comes to transgender students, so it was surprising to see that they were not openly welcoming of this population given their admission policies.

In a prior study conducted by Osei-Kofi, Torres, and Lui (2013), the researchers argued that racial and ethnic diversity played out in viewbooks as an extracurricular activity because students of color were hardly featured in classroom environments. The

one exception was Asian and Asian American students who were typically situated in STEM environments. Within the women's colleges' viewbooks, there was certainly racial and ethnic diversity in all environments. Students of color can be seen participating in lab sciences and STEM research. Since racial and ethnic diversity is well represented within the viewbooks, it seems that the viewbooks in this study showcased students of color in the various student roles, and not just extraneous to the academic experience.

While women of color were included throughout these viewbooks, there were several examples where non-dominant cultural and ethnic activities were appropriated or relegated to extracurricular activities. For three colleges, the only representation of non-dominant ethnic activities was dance that can be seen as culturally diverse due to the dancers' costumes. Additionally, the College of Saint Mary featured two White students with sombreros and maracas, which signals to Latina students that their culture can be boiled down to fun accessories for White people to enjoy. These signals perpetuate the perception that non-White students are still excluded from the dominant messages that colleges produce for student recruitment.

Finally, within the viewbooks there were no images of students or professors with physical disabilities. This lack of representation promotes an idealized, able-bodied student population. While some colleges did mention disability support services as a service offered, it was not discussed in depth. For prospective students with disabilities, this lack of messaging for their needs could be seen as unwelcoming and lacking equal representation.

With these four populations of students, it seems that they are still outsiders among a largely White, cisgender, able-bodied and heterosexual student population. This lack of representation for these groups may be missed opportunity. There may be a significant LGBT population at these institutions, and by relegating these groups to student organizations the colleges signal that these experiences are outside the formal mission of the institution. While women of color were included in many different campus activities, there is still more that can be done to promote the inclusion of underrepresented minorities in college. Colleges should shift their efforts away from White students appropriating non-dominant cultural and ethnic activities to sell an exciting college experience. Additionally, students with disabilities were noticeably absent from the viewbooks. It must be noted that colleges need to walk a fine line between calling attention to a student's disability, and representing them as a typical student on their campus. These changes can certainly grow over time, because colleges have been reacting to changes in racial and ethnic representations. It should be time for equal representation for LGBT students, and students with disabilities as well.

Institutional Types

Within the population of women's colleges, the institutions varied by special mission, religious affiliation, historical legacy, and urbanicity. These variances by institutional type may explain some differences within the viewbooks, and the messages the institutions are providing for prospective students. This section will provide further information about how different institutional factors play a role in the viewbooks. While there are two HBCUs that are women's colleges, one of the colleges did not provide a viewbook so only Spelman College was included in this study. Since Spelman was the

only HBCU included in the study, it is not possible to generalize to speak about common traits between the historically black women's colleges.

The 16 Christian institutions featured their religious affiliation in different ways. Some institutions featured their faith heavily within the viewbooks, whereas other did not reference this faith identity at all. One example was Judson College, which stated, "At Judson you can learn more about yourself and who God calls you to be." Whereas other institutions cited their religious affiliation, but promoted their true mission as one of service. Prospective students who were not part of a particular religion could feel included if they desired to give back and serve their local community. Only three of the 16 religiously affiliated institutions featured a campus ministry service, which could mean that the faith is more heavily integrated in students' lives or that the impact of the religious affiliation on the student experience is minimal.

The historical legacy of the remaining Seven Sisters institutions remains present within the viewbooks. These colleges are known for being selective, and well known as a result of their historical stature in American higher education. All five of these institutions discussed their consortia with nearby colleges, showing their expanded academic opportunities and college students that their students can meet as they pursue academic interests through other colleges. Out of the ten institutions that featured celebrities within their viewbooks four were former Seven Sisters colleges, which featured these celebrities both as alumni and notable speakers on campus. Of the four institutions in this study that referenced prospective students' initial hesitation about attending women's colleges, three were within the Seven Sisters group. These institutions were able to address these negative expectations and illustrate the abundance

of benefits that their students have. Finally, none of these colleges discussed academic advising within the viewbook. This may be assumed that academic advising would be part of the student experience, but none of these colleges mentioned this within their viewbooks.

The institutions that are located in large cities highlighted the advantages that their location has to offer. These institutions highlighted internship opportunities, post-graduate job opportunities, and cultural events available in the nearby city. For those colleges located in the suburbs of a desirable urban area, they showed the city as easily accessible by students. The colleges in smaller towns featured the towns' hot spots such as a local bookstore or restaurant. These colleges promoted the benefits of their geographic location regardless if the institution is located in a large urban area or a small town.

The institutional types discussed in this section highlight the fact that these institutions are more multi-dimensional than just being known as women's colleges. The colleges differ in the type of students they attract with their geographic location, religious affiliation, historical legacy, selectivity, and more. These additional elements of the institution's identities may be important for prospective students when considering where to apply when finalizing their college search. Therefore, it is important that these other organizational identity elements be included within the viewbooks for prospective students' consideration.

Women's College Marketing since Ricci (1994)

In the one prior study about women's colleges' marketing, Ricci (1994) recommended that women's colleges capitalize on their niche in the marketplace. Using

their unique advantages was one way to combat declining enrollment trends, according to Ricci. Over twenty years later, it does seem that more colleges within this population are promoting their identity as a women's college to prospective students. In Ricci's study, only Simmons College stated the benefits of attending a women's college. The findings from this dissertation showed that 22 of the 34 institutions specifically addressed benefits or challenges of single-sex education.

Over time, it seems that more institutions have embraced the positive aspects of their niche in the higher education marketplace. However, Ricci postulated that promoting their benefits would reverse the declining enrollment trends. While this was not explicitly covered in this dissertation to this point, there are many examples of former women's colleges that have since become coeducational since Ricci's study. While promoting the benefits are easy enough to do within enrollment marketing, the tricky aspect is turning these benefits for the institutional group into meaningful enrollment interest by prospective students.

Additionally, Ricci argued that the women's colleges at the time downplayed their importance within the field of higher education. Within this dissertation, only a few of the colleges discussed their significance to women's education and higher education broadly. The institutions that did reference their commitment to women's education demonstrated this through their founding narrative, or mission statement. Also, the three institutions that claimed to be the first women's college were aiming to show how important their contributions are to undergraduate women's education. While I do agree that providing historical significance is important, it must also be made relevant to the new generation of students. While offering opportunities for women to access higher

education in the past was important, prospective students may not understand how their past mission affects the current students' experiences and education.

In the analysis of the findings, Ricci also mentioned that some institutions highlighted an association with a partner institution to avoid identifying themselves as a women's college. These partnerships were still prevalent within the viewbooks analyzed for this dissertation. Barnard College, Saint Mary's College, and the College of Saint Benedict promoted their partnerships with Columbia University, the University of Notre Dame, and Saint John's University. These partnerships between the two institutions can be seen throughout the viewbooks. The colleges mentioned the many opportunities where their students participate in activities at the other institution, and how often their students socialize.

Going beyond one-to-one partnerships, several institutions within this dissertation promoted their consortia as more than just an opportunity for cross registration. The colleges shared examples of athletic, social, academic, and other events in which the consortium students can participate. These partnerships involved more than just one nearby college, but still emphasized the partnerships that the women's colleges have.

Ultimately, it does seem that more institutions are communicating the benefits of women's colleges within their viewbooks. Some are promoting their historical contribution to access to higher education for women, and several institutions play up their partnerships with nearby institutions. While some of Ricci's recommendations were implemented and are used today, it remains to be seen how successful these institutions will continue to be when promoting their single-sex mission.

Recommendations for Further Research

While the findings and interpretations presented here addressed the stated research questions of this dissertation, there are several other opportunities build upon this research pertaining to the enrollment marketing of women's colleges. This dissertation has started a new line of research into the enrollment marketing of women's colleges, but there is more to be learned from this institutional type and marketing materials for all higher education institutions. This section will provide recommendations for further research to better understand the impacts of marketing materials and their effect on college choice decisions. Since the college application and decision process typically takes a village, it is also important to understand the perspectives of those who can influence the prospective student's options and ultimate decision.

One question I continued to think about while I was engaged in this research was "Why do students choose to attend women's colleges?" Since this dissertation found that many of the colleges did provide information pertaining to the benefits of attending a women's college, I wondered if students cared about the stated benefits of a women's college, or if location, campus culture, or other elements were ultimately the deciding factor. When students are narrowing down their list of institutions to apply, it would be helpful for administrators to know how many students solely apply to women's colleges or which coeducational institutions students also consider.

In order to continue understanding the enrollment patterns of students who do and do not attend women's colleges, further research could explore high school and college students' perceptions regarding the experiences of women's colleges. If students'

perceptions about single-sex institutions are limiting their consideration of a women's college, then these perceptions, both negative and positive, can inform future marketing practices. This research could be done in the form of a survey of female students who are and are not considering women's colleges in their college search. This could help administrators at women's colleges understand prospective students' concerns in order to address them properly in their marketing efforts. This would also help administrators to understand evolving interest in single-sex education, and would inform colleges about their future applicant pool.

Based upon the findings of this dissertation, women's college officials understand how they want to present their institution, but more work still needs to be done in order to understand what prospective students need and want from viewbooks in their college search. Further research in this area could include understanding how prospective students respond to messages within viewbooks or other marketing materials. Since college-bound high school students receive a variety of marketing materials from many colleges, what would pique their interest and what are they looking to find in a viewbook? I think that administrators at women's colleges would be interested to know how their marketing materials compare to those that are sent by their competitors, both coeducational and single-sex.

It remains unknown how frequently current high school students utilize the viewbooks when there is an abundance of information about colleges online. While students today have many options for researching colleges, institutions can use the viewbook as a way of introducing themselves and crafting particular messages for prospective students. Receiving a mailed item may be more likely to be viewed when

compared to an email where students can be bombarded by the volume of emails sent by institutions. Regardless of how prospective students use the viewbook when making their college decisions, colleges are continuing to invest money, time, and effort into sending these viewbooks to prospective students. Since the practice of using the viewbook in some form is nearly universal, there is an expectation that the viewbook remains part of the traditional student recruitment process. If the investment in viewbooks did not generate sufficient enrolling students then fewer institutions would continue to use viewbooks. However, for those colleges who opt out of providing a viewbook to prospective student leads they may find themselves missing out on this means of introducing themselves to prospective students. More studies should be conducted on how the viewbook is used to inform students' college searches.

This dissertation focused on the perspective of prospective students, but there are other stakeholders who influence students' college search. Since guidance counselors, teachers, parents, and others inform high school students' college decisions, it would be interesting to see how these populations view women's colleges. Researchers could study when and how high school guidance counselors recommend women's colleges as an option. Parents may have different concerns or expectations about the student experience at women's colleges, and this could also influence prospective students' choices.

While this dissertation focused on viewbooks as the source of information for prospective students, additional analyses could examine other forms of marketing. This could include institutional websites, social media, email campaigns, commercials, and print advertisements. In addition to these traditional college marketing venues, I have

also seen advertisements for colleges on public transportation, billboards, and signs in shopping malls. As new marketing spaces and opportunities develop, there will be new opportunities to see how college marketing evolves to fit in these new spaces.

As college marketing practices become more digitized, further research will be needed to understand how institutions use digital marketing strategies, including web advertisements and email marketing to recruit prospective students. Through the use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software systems, marketing can become more tailored to specific students and their interests. These CRM systems allow institutions to send prospective students targeted advertisements based upon students' desired programs of study or cocurricular interests. As these marketing practices become more common, the viewbook as it exists today may not be used for much longer. Tailored marketing materials may replace the catch-all nature of the viewbook, but the digital nature of these advertisements are competing for prospective students' attention in their cluttered inboxes. More research is needed on how effective these digital marketing practices are for recruiting prospective students, and to understand the ways in which institutions engage in digital marketing.

Since Albert and Whetten (1985) included claimed temporal continuity as one primary aspect of organizational identity, this framework would lend way for a longitudinal study examining a particular college's viewbooks over time. This would provide further insight into one institution in particular, instead of comparing across institutions. Additionally, researchers could take a retrospective look to see how women's college marketing has evolved over the past decades. These historical analyses

would provide insight to understand how marketing practices, student expectations, and the images and language of higher education have evolved over time.

The focus of this dissertation was on the content of viewbooks. More insight could be gained by interviewing campus officials involved in the decision making process behind the viewbook content. This would build on the findings of the work in this dissertation to show how marketing officials view what they were trying to achieve would provide insight into the outcomes between the intent and the finished product sent to students. Additionally, I would recommend interviewing senior enrollment officials to understand the role that these viewbooks and other marketing efforts play in the overall recruitment process. By understanding more about the function of the viewbook in the overall recruitment process, this would help researchers and administrators understand the goals for continuing to create and send this information to prospective students.

The focus on STEM within the viewbooks was notable, but this buzzword's prevalence could relate to the fact that STEM is a current trend in education. Since the women's colleges promoted their engagement in providing access to STEM fields for female students, researchers can study how effective women's colleges are in producing STEM graduates. This research can include retention in STEM majors through graduation, graduate degree attainment in STEM fields, and employment outcomes in STEM-related positions.

This dissertation focused on how the female gender was presented, but did not seek to explore the role that race and disability played within the viewbooks. While there was some exploration on the groups that were portrayed as outsiders, there could be further studies that examine how women of color are represented in the women's college

experience, and how these students explore these intersectional identities within the single-sex college environment. Since students with physical disabilities were not included in the viewbook within this dissertation, further studies could examine how and when colleges feature students with disabilities within their marketing materials. While these groups have been used as a commodity to represent a diverse college environment, the fact is that prospective students within these groups are still prospective students and deserve to see students like themselves within the campus experience in meaningful, non-tokenistic ways.

While this dissertation was limited to the viewbook marketing practices of women's colleges, there are also single-sex institutions that only admit male students. Further research can be conducted to determine how this group of institutions recruits prospective students, and how these practices compare with the group of women's colleges. Since these single-sex institutions for male students serve the gender holding more power in society, it would be interesting to learn how these institutions communicate their relevance and role in the higher education landscape.

Finally, I would recommend the use of content analysis for more studies in the field of higher education research. This method allowed for a comprehensive analysis regarding the content of viewbooks, and provided a systematic way to sort through the vast amount of language and images used within the viewbooks. This method could be used to analyze many forms of communication used in higher education, and is not limited in applicability to marketing materials. The increased use of content analysis as a methodological approach for research in education opens up many possibilities for understanding written and visual materials used in higher education.

There are many areas of opportunity for further research regarding women's colleges' marketing to prospective students and this effect on students' college choice process. Marketing and college choice decisions do not occur in a vacuum, and students listen to people they trust for guidance as they navigate this process. As women's colleges continue to justify their existence and relevance in a time when women can access the best coeducational institutions in the world, more will need to be understood about why students continue, or do not continue, to consider women's colleges as an option for their higher education career.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In addition to research recommendations, this dissertation calls attention to the practices of women's colleges when recruiting students and the policy implications of single-sex colleges. This section will provide practical recommendations that respond to the findings of this study. The recommendations for practitioners include promoting student satisfaction, understanding the choices of current students, outreach to younger female students, and representing diverse groups in equitable ways. Additionally, policy updates can be enhanced, such as using Title IX, to create better education for female students regardless of the institutional type.

The satisfaction of current students at women's colleges could go a long way to communicate the values of single-sex education in a way that the viewbooks were not utilizing. In the viewbooks analyzed for this dissertation, Meredith College included a statistic that 97% of their alumnae would recommend the institution to other students. However, most of other institutions did not include such a perspective within the viewbooks. Information such as this provides a deeper insight into the experiences of

current students and alumnae, and could assist prospective students in their college search. While student satisfaction should not be the primary aim of the college experience, these types of surveys can communicate what makes the experience of being a student at a women's college unique compared to peers at coeducational colleges.

Campus administrators at women's colleges can speak to current students to better understand why these students chose to attend their institution. Additionally, the staff can also survey those students who were admitted but chose not to attend to understand their decision process and where they could have improved. For those students who received viewbooks before scheduling a campus visit, the admissions officials can speak with these students to see what prompted them to consider the college further.

If high school juniors and seniors are not interested in attending a women's college, then administrators at these institutions may need to reach out to younger students to get them engaged in the institution. This could take the form of a precollege program for girls, where these students can experience the campus before they are even beginning the college search process. In one student profile within the Smith College viewbook, a student mentioned that she attended a precollege experience at Smith and she compared all other colleges to her prior experience. This personal experience may be able to shape prospective students' opinions on the values of women's colleges, and affect these students' future college plans.

This dissertation found several examples of student populations that were routinely represented as other within the viewbooks. Another practical recommendation for the future of higher education is for college administrators to engage in equitable

representation of all groups. By continuing to favor White, able-bodied, and heterosexual student experiences as the "traditional" student experience, this does not allow students with diverse backgrounds to see themselves at a particular institution. The continued representation of dominant groups reinforces who is and is not welcome at the institution.

With all of the information examined about women's colleges as part of this dissertation, it would be disappointing to see this institutional type that was beneficial to women's education disappear from the higher education landscape. If women were completely accepted and recognized as equal contributors in coeducational classrooms, there may not be a need for single-sex education in the 21st century. However, female students today face sexism when entering male-dominated fields such as STEM. Since the majority of women now attend coeducational institutions, policy makers may want to examine the Title IX legislation to ensure that these laws account for equal opportunity and treatment within the classroom environment. If young women receive more information on ways to identify microaggressions and forms of subtle discrimination within the classroom, they may feel more empowered to speak up. Instead of accepting sexist classroom experiences as status quo, this would mandate colleges examine their practices to ensure the equal success of female students.

Why This Matters

While the viewbooks examined in this dissertation presented an exciting and possibility-filled college experience, the months since the conclusion of this study have not been favorable to the remaining women's colleges. After missing enrollment targets for Fall 2017, Mills College declared a financial emergency, which will include layoffs of faculty and staff in the coming months (Jaschik, 2017). Additionally, the University of

Saint Joseph's Board of Trustees voted to become a coeducational institution effective Fall 2018. Trends such as these do not bode well for the future of women's colleges. As time will tell what the future holds for the remaining women's colleges, this dissertation was able to capture the unique qualities, images, and messages that reflected this critical moment in time.

Within the sample of remaining women's colleges, there are several elite institutions that are consistently highly ranked liberal arts colleges. There are also institutions that are not considered selective within this group as well. For the institutions that are consistently highly ranked year after year, they may be able to coast on their reputation in order to receive a sufficient number of applicants annually. Since these top-tier institutions have an excellent reputation, they were able to combat prospective students' negative expectations within the viewbook in order to end up in a more favorable position.

For the colleges not in the top-tier, these institutions maintain the struggle for survival. While these colleges spend a lot of resources marketing and recruiting students, it seems that no amount of marketing can reverse the declining enrollment trends at single-sex colleges. If fewer than 5% of high school women are interested in attending a single-sex institution, these colleges face an uphill battle to change other students' opinions of what a women's college can do for them. The viewbooks studied in this dissertation often did not provide a truly compelling and convincing case to overturn a skeptical student's opinion of the women's college institutional type. If these colleges want to continue their original mission of serving female students, they need to enhance

their marketing strategy to gain more market share away from coeducational institutions through more compelling marketing.

As more research is done to understand how prospective students use viewbooks and other marketing materials in their college search process, then women's colleges can respond to students' interests. This targeted investment could provide a better return on investment. The cost of recruiting students to the point of enrollment is a huge investment for any institution, but many women's colleges are still struggling to meet their enrollment goals. Tuition discounting has become a popular approach for enrolling students, but this model is not sustainable for any institution, and particularly a financially fragile one. Early outreach to younger high school students could be a method to build interest in attending a particular college, and this could combat the minimal interest of young women to attend a single-sex institution.

This dissertation aimed to understand the marketing practices of women's colleges, since a significant portion of these institutions have become coeducational over the years. As student interests have evolved, and more high school women are interested in coeducational institutions, women's colleges have been fighting to continue their primary mission of providing quality education for women. With fewer and fewer women's colleges remaining each year, this institutional type may become obsolete. While this would mean progress to creating equitable opportunities for women in higher education, this does not mean that female college students experience college in the same ways as their male peers. What will be important to understand going forward is how coeducational colleges can replicate some of the unique women's college features to

create an environment where female students have access to female faculty mentors, and a close-knit community that is supportive of students' goals and aspirations.

Conclusion

Viewbooks are ultimately one source of information for prospective students to understand implicit and explicit messages about a college's culture and identity. While they are just one source, it could very well be a prospective students' first introduction to a college. Additionally, a student who requested information from a college could receive a viewbook in the mail and the messages within could shape their decision to further consider the institution. As students view countless viewbooks, they are able to see what particular institutions value most. Depending on the focus of the viewbooks, the prospective students can determine if the projected campus climate is compatible with their envisioned college experience. For the students who do not see people like themselves represented amongst the pages of the viewbooks, they are left to examine how they will fit into a culture that is noticeably different than theirs or to which they are an outsider.

While there are issues with representations within viewbooks, the utility of the medium itself may need to be reconsidered when colleges start to recruit members of the next generation. The reliance on print and PDF viewbooks does not make sense given the ubiquity of the Internet in this day and age. While college websites have information available to prospective students, it is often decentralized and requires user searches to filter through the vast amount of information. If prospective students are only searching for what they want a college to have, they may not discover the unique features they didn't know they were looking for when considering a college. Truly digital viewbooks,

much like those of Bay Path University and Wellesley College, offer an edited look at life on these campuses. These new approaches to traditional viewbooks can be customizable based upon the students' academic and personal interests, and can be more responsive to students who have had instant access to information online for their entire lives.

Ultimately the practical success of a viewbook for a particular institution is to recruit, admit, and yield enough students. The viewbook serves a meaningful function within higher education marketing, but is hardly the only option to engage prospective students. In order for colleges to keep the viewbook, print or digital, relevant to prospective students they need to focus more on who is and is not represented well within viewbooks, women's colleges, and higher education in general. Also, colleges need to move beyond staged, stereotypical images and forgettable slogans and create something truly meaningful for prospective students to use as a resource in their decision-making process. While there are practical benefits to using generic, idealized images, these vapid portraits of an institution do not prepare, challenge, or educate prospective students about the purposes of higher education.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Characteristics of Women's Colleges in the United States

Institution	Undergraduate Enrollment (Fall 2015)	Religion Affiliation	Carnegie Classification (Basic)
Agnes Scott College†	902	Presbyterian	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Alverno College	1558	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Barnard College	2548	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Bay Path University	1856	N/A	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Bennett College*†	583	United Methodist	Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields
Brenau University	1572	N/A	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs

Bryn Mawr College	1346	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Cedar Crest College†	1388	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields
College of Saint Benedict	1943	Roman Catholic	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
College of Saint Mary	735	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs
Columbia College	1388	United Methodist	Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Converse College	794	N/A	Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Cottey College	326	N/A	Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's
Hollins University	639	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Judson College	374	Baptist	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Mary Baldwin University	1312	Presbyterian	Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Meredith College	1679	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Mills College	859	N/A	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Moore College of Art & Design	405	N/A	Special Focus Four-Year: Arts, Music & Design Schools
Mount Holyoke College	2126	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus

Mount Mary University	747	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Mount Saint Mary's University	2787	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Notre Dame of Maryland University	1013	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Saint Mary's College	1619	Roman Catholic	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Salem College	938	Moravian Church	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Scripps College	973	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Simmons College	1743	N/A	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Smith College	2478	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Spelman College*	2144	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
St. Catherine University	3320	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Stephens College	716	N/A	Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs
Sweet Briar College	316	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Trinity Washington University	1592	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
University of Saint Joseph	960	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs

Ursuline College	655	Roman Catholic	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Wellesley College	2510	N/A	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus
Wesleyan College	660	United Methodist	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus

Note: Data from National Center for Education Statistics (2016) and The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2016).

*Historically Black College † No viewbook was provided so institution was not included in analysis

Appendix B: Coding Frame Categories

- *Organizational Identity* – The ways in which colleges represent their mission, symbols, and unique characteristics. This can also include references to a member group, or differentiation from other institutions.
- *Academic Life* – Representations of curricular activities, studying, faculty-student relationships, research, study abroad, classroom environments, or other activities that are primarily academic in nature.
- *Social Life* – Representations of social experiences that students at the institutions can experience, which can include instances of cocurricular activities, residential life, and friendships.
- *Benefits and Challenges of Single-Sex Education* – The ways in which institutions justify the challenges or demonstrate the benefits of single-sex education to prospective students.
- *Gender Representation* – The ways in which the colleges use images and text to portray gender, particularly that of students.