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Living Life Together: A Qualitative Exploration of Taylor University's Lifestyle Covenant

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LIVING LIFE TOGETHER: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF TAYLOR UNIVERSITY'S LIFESTYLE COVENANT

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Thesis of

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Abstract

Since its origin in 1636, higher education in the U.S. has sought to promote moral and character development in addition to instilling strong Christian behaviors within its students (Marsden, 1994). Despite a decline of these explicit moral and spiritual expectations in the 19th and early 20th centuries, higher education has witnessed a renewed interest in personal development theories and the formation of character development in recent decades (Marsden, 1994; Morrill, 1980). With this revival, institutions have employed various forms of honor codes, codes of conduct, and lifestyle covenants (Dalton & Crosby, 2010). Taylor University, a small, Christian, liberal arts institution in the Midwest, utilizes a lifestyle covenant which outlines expectations for campus life to promote character development and fulfill the university's mission. In pursuit of exploring student, staff, and faculty perceptions' of the Life Together Covenant (LTC), this qualitative study, consisting of individual interviews with ten senior students, ten staff members, and ten faculty members, found that participants generally perceived the LTC as a guide or set of expectations to live cohesively at Taylor. However, outside of this unified purpose, the three participant groups' perceptions and experiences of the LTC varied. These differences found amongst population groups provoked a further analyzation of these variations related to one's role on campus, maturity of personal development, and familiarity with the LTC. In light of the study's results, the discussion highlights the benefits of utilizing a lifestyle covenant in addition to proposing questions for institutions to reflect on in pursuit of best implementing a lifestyle covenant.

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As I have learned to approach this thesis project with humility and an awareness of the benefits to working and collaborating with a community of thoughtful thinkers, I owe deep gratitude and a thank you to many:

Thank you to my God who welcomes his children with open arms into the most important covenant—the new covenant. Thank you for embodying forgiveness, restoration, and love that we can only attempt to live out here on earth. Through this covenant you have given us two commands: to love you with all of our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Thank you for providing me with a purpose for life, which extends into and motivates this academic work.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another. . . And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:12–17 TNIV)

Every freshman student at Taylor University reads Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* as a requirement for Taylor's "Foundations of Christian Liberal Arts" class. Bonhoeffer (2009) states, "The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us" (p. 26). However, community love is not only expressed in Bonhoeffer's words. The above passage from Colossians concludes Taylor University's Life Together Covenant summarizing its community goals. With the intention of living out the words of Colossians, Taylor has created a lifestyle covenant to determine university expectations.

Covenants

A covenant is an agreement or promise, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not to do something specified (Wickett, 2000). The word covenant comes from the Latin word *convenire* and the Hebrew word *berith*. The former means "to come together or agree," and the latter means "to bind or to fetter; a binding obligation"

(M. Smith, 2002, p. 7). An oath affirming oneself to covenantal words formalizes the commitment that one party makes to the other (M. Smith, 2002). At the core of every covenant, members of the covenant community set terms of high moral or spiritual goals to constitute a way of life together (Rhodes, 1964). A covenant allows a community to work collectively toward a common goal and hold its members accountable to their pledges and vows (Bennett, 2002; Mullen et al., 2011). No longer is one just responsible for himself; rather a member of a covenant community makes decisions based off what they believe will benefit others (Mullen et al., 2011).

Covenants have been used throughout higher education, mainly as academic covenants to unify employees and students to communal moral standards rather than individualism. An acceptable definition of a covenant for the context of higher education settings would be a formal agreement or promise of members' commitments to each other in the pursuit of a common good (Bennett, 2002; Mullen et al., 2011). As seen at Taylor and many other Christian institutions, a lifestyle covenant serves as a promise made by Taylor community members to strive towards a biblically sound community in hopes of fulfilling the institution's mission (Reisberg, 1999; Taylor University, 2020b).

As a foundational document at Taylor, the Life Together Covenant (LTC) is an example of a lifestyle covenant that lays out the expectations for campus life in pursuit of fulfilling the university's mission. To execute this mission, the covenant outlines an expectation for growth in biblical responsibilities for the community and self along with set expectations to preserve the ethos of the campus community (Taylor University, 2020b). Kuh (1993) said, "the ethos on a Christian university campus is one defined by a belief system widely shared by faculty, students, administrators, and others" (pp. 277–

278). Taylor's LTC formally writes out this belief system within the LTC. Following in the footsteps of other forms of contracts that contained behavioral standards, the LTC is no longer a document of rules and restrictions, but now serves as an aspirational document with Christ-minded goals and values for which the community will strive. Since its origin in 1990, the document has undergone various wording, policy, and document make-over changes. Today, the LTC is split into seven sections:

1. An introduction explaining Taylor's mission and the LTC's purpose
2. An explanation of why members have a biblical responsibility to love God, others, and self
3. A list of biblical responsibilities for community (e.g., building up one another)
4. A list of biblical responsibilities for individual attitudes and behavior (e.g., attributes of the heart and prohibited behaviors)
5. A list of university expectations (e.g., expectations of worship, choice of entertainment, prohibited behaviors)
6. An application section that outlines when the LTC is applicable
7. A conclusion statement utilizing Colossians 3:12–17. All students, staff, faculty, and administration are required to sign this document yearly (Taylor University, 2020b)

The Taylor University Community

The mission of Taylor University is "to develop servant leaders marked with a passion to minister Christ's redemptive love and truth to a world in need" (Taylor University, 2020b, p. 8). Together, employees and students strive to fulfill this mission by striving to be whole-person focused, biblically anchored and liberal arts grounded,

Christ-centered, faith and learning integrated, world engaging, and servant leader motivated (Taylor University, 2020b). A close student and faculty relationship is easier to facilitate at smaller institutions such as Taylor and is essential in promoting student learning and development (Holmes, 1987). Residential colleges such as Taylor easily blur the lines between social and academic spaces. "Residential colleges have the potential to help students develop the ability to recognize and respect differences, to understand the roots and meaning of those differences and most importantly to work cooperatively with persons fundamentally different than themselves" (Cornwell & Guarasci, 1993, p. 48)—all values that the LTC lays out as expectations for Taylor members.

Personal Development

Since its origin in the 17th century, American higher education has sought to promote character, ethical, moral, and spiritual development. The development of these values were minimized in the mid-20th century before making a revival in the recent decades (Marsden, 1994; Morrill, 1980). The work of Kohlberg (1971) has aided in higher education's understanding of moral reasoning (Patton et al., 2016). Chickering and Reisser (1993) established seven vectors that outline the growth and direction of one's identity formation. More recently, Astin et al. (2011) have studied the role spirituality plays in a college student's experience. McCabe et al. (2002) and fellow scholars ignited research on honor codes, which in their various forms have been used to help curb academic dishonesty and promote integrity.

In 1990, the Carnegie Foundation released *Campus Life: In Search of Community*. In this report, Boyer (1990) praised the management and running of the higher education system. However, he noted that institutions still had work to do. Boyer did not call for a

return to strict regulations as seen in the early days of higher education; rather, he provided a framework for the development of a community of learning. These six attributes for communities to work towards included: a purposeful, just, open, disciplined, caring, and celebrative community (Boyer, 1990).

A community that holds and abides by shared values is fundamental to moral and character development. Participation in extracurricular activities, life in a residence hall, interaction with faculty, and the influence of a student's peer group all increase student learning and personal development (Kuh, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Familiar social relationships help build character exploration and education (Perry, 1968). Practiced in a community of learners and guides, Christian schools such as Taylor must teach their members to live like Christ (Langer et al., 2010). The LTC places members of Taylor into a covenant community, committing themselves to prioritizing the needs of the group over the individual. The LTC outlines what a Christ-mirrored life looks like in the context of Taylor University through the creation of a theologically-based shared vision.

Purpose of the Study

As a former student stated, "Taylor would not be Taylor if the LTC did not exist" (Unruh, 2010, p. 6). Though the LTC prevails as a founding document of the university, to date, there has been little research conducted regarding student, staff, or faculty perceptions of the LTC. The purpose of the study is to provide a broad understanding of how different population groups of Taylor University perceive the LTC. To this end, the study was guided by the following question: What are student, staff, and faculty perceptions of and experiences with the LTC?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

All higher education institutions provide rules and policies that determine acceptable student behavior (Dalton & Crosby, 2010). Morrill (1980) noted that educational environments flourish when the community commits to moral and intellectual values. The literature review walks through the decline and then renewal of moral education within institutions through the use of honor codes, codes of conduct, and lifestyle covenants. In the totality of all types of policies, the use of relationally emphasized covenants to determine and guide community life at institutions is very rare. Given the sparse nature of lifestyle covenants in higher education, it is not surprising that little literature exists. Nonetheless, this chapter concludes by describing how lifestyle covenants can promote character, ethical, moral, and spiritual development throughout the realm of higher education.

A Change in the Purpose of Higher Education

At the onset of U.S. higher education in the 17th century, colonial colleges sought to cultivate students with high morals and instill Christian behavior (Marsden, 1994). The Puritans (founders of Harvard in 1636) drew upon biblical covenantal ideas to create political and societal cohesion. They brought to life the integration of faith and learning—of spirituality and intellect. Just shy of a century into Harvard's existence, a new "moral philosophy" which sought virtue from within swept the Western world, accompanying the birth of other colonial schools. Per this new movement, colleges

accepted the general thought that people possessed the mental capacity to morally abide by biblical commands without God's grace and therefore relied less on spiritual education (Ringenberg, 2006).

Amidst this new movement, colleges still expected students to practice these moral behaviors. Prior to the Civil War years, colleges were responsible for their students' moral character which they regulated through the use of a prescribed curriculum, a strict disciplinary code of do's and don'ts, specific penalties for those who failed to abide by the expectations, and an emphasis on religious practices (Bok, 2013; Boyer, 1990; Thelin, 2011). For example, King's College utilized monetary penalties for missing chapel, attending cock fights, or playing cards (Marsden, 1994). The Moral Society of Yale College, established in 1897, mandated its members to abide by the virtues of the Bible by refraining from activities such as gambling, profanity, playing cards, and consuming alcohol. These societies, also common at other institutions, diminished in the early 19th century (Rudolph, 1990). Collectively, higher education has slowly released engagement in students' behavioral choices following the dissolution of in loco parentis in the 20th century (Boyer, 1990; Kuh, 2000; Marsden, 1994; Ringenberg, 2006).

The lack of moral and spiritual development research in higher education reflects a century of institution's prioritization of objectivity, individuality, rationality, and neglect of inner-development. Increased autonomy, professionalization, and secularization of the academic disciplines contributed to the demise of explicit moral, religious, and spiritual expectations for students in the early 20th century. Faculty practiced poor ethical decisions regarding human research subjects and prioritized

academic disciplines over values as students held poor attitudes towards cheating and campus theft (Morrill, 1980). However, in recent decades, students have begun to express interest in their own spiritual and holistic growth, while scholars have returned to this body of research (Astin et al., 2011). In the 1970s, institutions, particularly liberal arts institutions, reacted to this disarray and society's general incompetence to morally keep up with larger societal issues such as economic instability, poverty, crime, or racial conflict (Morrill, 1980). Some campuses have returned to setting moral and behavioral expectations in hope of developing character and strengthening the community culture.

Bok (1990) called for this bolster of community as he noted that colleges and universities needed

> rules that prohibit lying, cheating, stealing, violent behavior, interference with free expression, or other acts that break fundamental norms. Such rules not only protect the rights of everyone in the community; they also signal the importance of basic moral obligations and strengthen habits of ethical behavior. (pp. 84–85)

In 1990, the Carnegie Foundation reported that higher education needed "a larger, more integrative vision of community … a place where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good" (Boyer, 1990, p. 7). Boyer (1990) noted that students had been growing up in ethical ambiguity and needed guidance. This surge of behavior expectations motivated from within the colleges is paralleled outside as well. Federal and state governments have increased pressure on universities to provide safe environments for students. For example, the Clery Act of 1990 requires institutions to collect and publish crime statistics for their campus (Beers & Ericson, 2019). Society expects higher education to help

improve the moral tone of the nation as colleges have historically influenced conduct and developed moral character (Morrill, 1980).

Dalton and Crosby (2010) noted that this "return to ethics" has been relabeled character development (p. 1). However, both terms funnel down to guiding the moral values of college students. Academic integrity programs, honor codes, codes of conduct, and lifestyle covenants all make various attempts to promote the character of students (McCabe et al., 2002; Peek et al., 2017; Reisberg, 1999; Sledge & Pringle, 2010).

Honor Codes

Throughout history, all institutions have struggled with academic dishonesty (Barnett & Dalton, 1981; McCabe et al., 2002), and many researchers state that this dilemma is on the rise (McCabe et al., 2002; Peek et al., 2017) largely due to the increase of technology in the classroom (Sledge & Pringle, 2010). Although not overwhelmingly popular, honor codes generally outline inappropriate academic behaviors and their consequences by forcing students to face the ethical ramifications of their actions and use moral reasoning to realize that effective learning depends on honesty, respect, and justice. Honor codes help set the tone for campus culture by distinguishing behaviors that are academically honest and dishonest with a set of shared, desired values (Barnard-Brak et al., 2013; Fleischmann, 2006; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006; Sledge & Pringle, 2010). Some are simple documents, while others are more thorough (Peek et al., 2017). Some are implemented by faculty, others by students (McCabe et al., 2002). Some require students to sign a general pledge or swear in during a ceremony as a reminder of the expectations (Peek et al., 2017; Sledge & Pringle, 2010).

The two primary types of honor codes are traditional and modified. Traditional honor codes are most prevalent and prove more successful in smaller, residential institutions. These codes minimally include at least one of the following: a written pledge of academic honesty, a student or faculty judiciary structure to handle violations, unproctored exams, or peer reporting of academic cheating. In recent years, an increasing number of institutions have adopted modified honor codes. The structure and requirements of these codes differ across institutions, yet clearly communicate to students that academic integrity is a priority (McCabe et al., 2002).

The prevalence of honor codes typically results in reduced cheating (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006; McCabe & Trevino, 1993; McCabe et al., 2002). Along with external motivations, students who believe their peers avoid cheating are more likely to refrain from the same behaviors, which in turn creates a culture of integrity (McCabe & Trevino, 1993). However, depending on the institution, their success in curbing the number of academic integrity violations has not always proven to be any more prevalent than other or no forms of disciplinary measures (Arnold et al., 2007; Bernard-Brak et al., 2013; Roig & Marks, 2006). The implementation and communication of an institution's honor code is vital to its success (McCabe & Trevino, 1993; Roig & Marks, 2006); proper implementation of honor codes requires years of preparation and work to embed the desired behaviors into the campus culture (McCabe et al., 2002).

The most established, distinguished, and well-known honor codes come from U.S. service academies (e.g., West Point) and the University of Virginia (one of the oldest and most ridged codes in U.S. higher education history). These honor codes expand beyond the classroom to determine rules of discipline for violations. They leave no ambiguity for

character expectations in hopes of fostering commitment to honorable living (Fleischmann, 2006; Francis, 2006; Thelin, 2011). Characteristics of such honor codes actually make them more similar to codes of conduct than most other honor codes. For many institutions, codes of conduct contain prohibitions against "the most serious forms of student behavior such as academic cheating, sexual harassment, racial intolerance, and alcohol and substance abuse" (Dalton & Crosby, 2010, p. 2) but are usually limited to these matters. The best codes of conduct communicate behavioral requirements from ethical frameworks parallel to the institution's values and cultivate a student's civic responsibility by connecting students' decisions with their impact on the community (Dalton & Crosby, 2010).

Contracts vs. Covenants

Honor codes and codes of conduct are contractual agreements. Contracts lay out the responsibilities of each party involved (Hoover et al., 2018). Contractual thinking acknowledges responsibilities, but it emphasizes boundaries, limitations, and constraints (Bennett, 2002). Bennett (2002) describes a contract as "encourag[ing] a kind of minimalism" (p. 2)—do not do more than what the contract requires. Contracts usually terminate once the parties involved successfully or unsuccessfully meet the responsibilities within the contract (Hoover et al., 2018).

A covenant can include all of the elements of a contract but also emphasizes and establishes a relationship between the parties involved. It gives priority to the spiritual connection and downplays the legalistic nature of a contract (Freeman, 1980; Wickett, 2000). In pursuit of a common goal, a covenant pushes those involved to move beyond themselves, committing themselves to the welfare of the other party solely out of free

will (Bennett, 2002; Hoover et al., 2018; Wickett, 2000). The success of a covenant rests in the parties' ability to commit, hold a sense of responsibility, create a level of respect for the other party, and re-evaluate the covenant at proper times (Mullen et al., 2011; Wickett, 2000). Bennett (2002) believes students and faculty already have too much on their plates and need to cut back from, not add to, their expectations of others. This thinking reflects the increase in contractual thinking on campuses through cut and dry honor codes or codes of conduct. However, within covenant thinking, one should be asking, "What else can we do to help?" (p. 3) from a heart of generosity and gratitude.

The Use of Covenants

Covenants have evolved over time. Because a covenant focuses on the process of the relationship (Freeman, 1980), every covenant is unique, yet common elements reign throughout most. The mutually beneficial oath (vow) to one another that binds the covenant terms lies at the heart of a covenant (Bennett, 2002; Hillers, 1969; M. Smith, 2002). Other common covenant rituals include: the sharing of a meal, a ceremony, public readings, witnesses, blessings and curses, giving of gifts, a symbol, or the shedding of blood through the cutting of an animal (Hillers, 1969; M. Smith, 2002).

Early covenants trace back to pre-biblical days as "society [was] founded upon the ability of people to live and function in relationship to each other … Contracts and covenants contributed either explicitly or implicitly to the governance of society throughout history" (Wickett, 1993, p. 205). Hobbe's belief that people kept the laws of nature out of the interests of others rather than moral obligations, Rousseau's social contract theories (Wickett, 1993), and Aristotle's belief that one enters into a polity motivated by protection, sustenance, and security all fall in line with covenantal

thinking—or at the very least, contractual thinking. Some may argue the creation of the U.S. Constitution portrayed covenantal thinking as it sought to create a new relationship between people sharing common values (Freeman, 1980; Kaplan, 2014). Societies utilized human frameworks to organize people, regulate power, protect individuality, and build a common sense of purpose for its members (Hillers, 1969; Kaplan, 2014).

Covenants found throughout the Old and New Testaments also help shape the framework for covenants today. Some biblical covenants existed between people (e.g., the Sinai covenant that socially organized the Israelites found in the book of Exodus or the covenant friendship of David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 18). However, there were many unilateral covenants established by God and freely entered into by a human or a group of people (e.g., with Abraham; Hillers, 1969; Wickett, 2000). A unilateral covenant is made among unequals in which a more powerful partner creates and offers the terms of the covenant to the less powerful partner (Rhodes, 1964). Whereas biblical covenants were typically unilateral, many covenants today are bilateral or created amongst equals (e.g., marriage, business deals).

Literature acknowledges the use and success of work covenants that commit employees to their company's mission and of team covenants in businesses to improve goal-setting and conflict resolution (Boscia & Turner, 2008; Durham & Lange, 2004). In education settings, learning covenants commit a learner to their educational goals and establish an interdependent relationship between the learner and the educator in hopes of development through shared passions (Wickett, 2000). Another example of educational covenants is found within departments or groups of faculty, initiated when a group of educators commits to a centralizing, common goal (e.g., a department of educators from

the University of North Carolina at Greensboro created a covenant to promote equity in education; Mullen et al., 2011). The oath of an academic covenant pushes a group of faculty to stay committed to a common goal and helps departments throughout the hiring process by providing potential candidates with a clear focus of the department (Mullen et al., 2011).

Individualism is prevalent in today's higher education system as institutions seek to compete with other institutions, professors retain research rather than share their knowledge to the public, and students compete for the highest grade (Bennett, 2002; Bok, 2013). Bennett (2002) encourages institutions to use covenantal thinking as a reminder to serve the good of society. Contractual agreements such as syllabi, attendance hours, and codes of conduct are frequently used (Hoover et al., 2018)—students show up, do what they are told, and receive a grade in return. Hoover et al. (2018) believe that educational covenantal approaches are the better option over contractual agreements. Fleischmann (2006) also notes, "teaching students to live honorably requires far more effort than memorizing a code of ethics statement or applying it just to academic performance" (p. 381). The qualities of an honor code need to be integral to the culture of the learning institution, embraced by the students and faculty as a way of life.

Lifestyle Covenants and the CCCU

The Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU), of which Taylor University is a member, is a higher education association with more than 180 member schools with Christ-centered missions around the world (CCCU, n.d.). Holmes (1987) said, "the primary goal of a Christian college is not to insulate and protect students, but to

educate them as responsible Christians" (p. 84). The CCCU creates and cultivates a Christian campus ethos through agreed upon behavioral expectations (Rine, 2012).

Kuh (2000) noted that the absence of guiding institutional compacts has had damaging effects within both academics and student life quality. In 1990, Boyer charged Christian institutions to create disciplined communities to promote and protect the common good. He strongly argued that all colleges should hold the community to some sort of clear code of conduct as the campus community plays an important part in developing the whole student (Beers & Ericson, 2019). Specifically, he suggested an honor code to convey the values of honesty and integrity for both inside and outside of the classroom (Boyer, 1990). Institutions use covenants or creeds in hopes of supplementing legalistic contract agreements. The values of a lifestyle covenant should extend outside the classroom to encourage responsible, Christian values in all areas of life (Holmes, 1987).

Similar to codes of conduct, lifestyle covenants can lay out abstinence expectations regarding, but not limited to: alcohol, drugs, tobacco, social dancing, behaviors forbidden by Scripture, lying, gossiping, homosexuality, premarital sex, and gluttony (Reisberg, 1999). In 2011, the Professional Development & Research team from the CCCU gathered data from the websites of 97 of the then 110 U.S. CCCU institutions. The websites showed that 39% of the institutions required an agreement to a statement of faith, and of those schools 62% required their students to sign a lifestyle covenant, meaning that at least 24.18% of U.S. CCCU institutions required students to sign a lifestyle covenant. The study also found that 98% of the institutions had policies prohibiting premarital sex and academic dishonesty, 96% of schools prohibited alcohol

and tobacco use, and approximately 33% of schools prohibited dancing (Rine, 2012). Most institutions with a lifestyle covenant require students to sign in order to attend.

Due to the emphasis society places on equality, unilateral covenants are often difficult for students, staff, and faculty to accept. Taylor acknowledges that it is impossible for all members of the community to accept every individual standard, yet certain expectations are still desired to maintain orderly community life and achieve the institutional mission (Ryker, 1982). “A purposeful community needs plans and strategies to set a course, but also the humility to recognize that blueprints, efficiencies, and achievements may be less vital than receptive hearts” (Sargent & Schulze, 2019, p. 14). A lifestyle covenant uses Christian covenantal language to unite a faith-based community in sacrificing individual rights for the benefit of the common good (Beers & Ericson, 2019). A former Taylor student recognized this self-sacrifice stating, “it is natural to feel stripped of rights. [Taylor students must] trust their spiritual and academic community for growth from people who have taken the time to study the best practices” (McDermott & Povilonis, 2010, p. 7).

The LTC and Personal Development

Taylor’s LTC heavily values the intersection of community relationship and upholding Christ-like character traits. Character exploration and education are built through familiar social relationships that spread throughout an institution's culture (Patton et al., 2016; Perry, 1968). According to the College Student Experiences Questionnaire, CCCU schools showed the most distinctive impact on character development compared to other types of institutions (Kuh et al., 1997). Kuh (2000) refers to character as the integration of moral, ethical, civic, humanitarian, and spiritual values.

Moral development "describes the process through which individuals develop more complex principles and ways of reasoning about what is right, just, and caring" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 336). Kohlberg (1971) studied the process of how individuals create moral judgements and determined six stages in which individuals engage in these principles. The first four stages reflect typical understandings of college students, yet students enter college at different starting points and progress at different rates. Progressively, students obey rules (a) to avoid punishment, (b) if it is in their best interest, (c) as defined by those close to them, and (d) because they believe the social system contains a consistent set of rules that applies equally to all. Kohlberg (1971) distinguished the first two stages as pre-conventional thinking, while labeling the third and fourth stages as conventional. Throughout college, students progress through these four stages towards post-conventional moral judgement meaning they base their moral reasoning off universal principals of social justice utilizing individualistic thinking (Kohlberg, 1971; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Biswas (2013) acknowledged that incoming students may initially unquestionably follow established policies. Students must interpret their beliefs of a lifestyle covenant within their current stage of moral development.

With biblically based expectations, the LTC addresses a spiritual dimension in addition to moral development (Wickett, 2000). Astin et al. (2011) described spirituality as a "sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here, … and our sense of connectedness to the world around us" (p. 4). Spiritual development includes space for growth in wholeness, integrity, openness, self-responsibility, and authentic self-transcendence (Astin et al., 2011)—all values highlighted by the LTC. The

LTC specifically states that its "University Expectations" section is not designed to measure spirituality (Taylor University, 2020b); however, spiritual formation primarily develops in the context of community (Hellerman, 2009), which is enhanced by the LTC. Bohus et al. (2005) found that a higher educational setting emphasizing interpersonal and group relationship formation helps students with low levels of spiritual well-being and weak religious communities grow in these areas. In addition, spiritual growth during college enhances academic performance, psychological well-being, leadership development, and satisfaction with college (Astin et al., 2011).

In addition to moral and spiritual growth, higher education cultivates a stronger sense of identity within students. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) work utilizes seven vectors that contribute to the formation of identity. The seven vectors include:

- Developing competence: confidence to cope with challenges and achieve goals
- Managing emotions: recognizing, accepting, and expressing appropriate emotions
- Moving through autonomy toward interdependence: increasing emotional independence
- Developing mature interpersonal relationships: developing intercultural and interpersonal tolerance, appreciating differences, and developing intimate relationships
- Establishing identity: comfort with one's body, sexuality, social roles, and culture
- Developing purpose: clear vocational goals
- Developing integrity: balancing one's own interests with others', establishing a personal value system, and creating congruence between values and actions

The use of vectors appears to parallel the role of a lifestyle covenant as students, staff, and faculty not only have a magnitude of growth, but the covenant typically guides them towards fulfilling the institution's mission.

As the components of the LTC align with various forms of personal development, some limitations to development may arise. As students develop, they start to internalize their ways of knowing (Patton et al., 2016). This growth could possibly conflict with an institution's expectation of students to follow an externally created covenant that students did not personally have a role in creating. An appropriate degree of disequilibrium can advance someone through Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Morrill, 1980). Therefore, educators should not be surprised when students do, and at times encourage students to, question why they follow institutional rules. Peer influence may also hinder one's desire to follow standards as a student may be more inclined to follow the accepted behaviors that his or her smaller community of peers established (Biswas, 2013).

Staff and Faculty

Christian schools typically strive to teach students to live like Christ, which is practiced in a community of learners and guides (Langer et al., 2010). This community includes both students and employees as they strive to serve each other and Christ. A close student and faculty relationship is easier to facilitate at smaller institutions such as Taylor but is essential to promoting student learning and development at all institutions (Holmes, 1987). Morrill (1980) noted that these relationships do not necessarily require friendship, but rather a shared set of values and commitments. Outside of higher education, the ability of leadership to promote and practice ethical ideas in an organization accounts for much of its ethical behaviors. Brien (1998) has said that the

answer to improving organizational ethical behaviors lies in creating trust amongst leadership and workers. Social learning theory explains the importance of this relationship as people learn best through observing and imitating the values, attitudes, and behaviors of people they respect and find credible (Pojman & Fiester, 2009). No matter the form of the behavior expectations put in place, faculty's ability to live out the policy norms creates a holistic environment that helps students integrate their in-class and out-of-class experiences (Dalton & Crosby, 2010).

Conclusion

Schools such as Taylor tend to attract students and faculty that value character and community; however, while in the community, they are socialized to value the mission of the institution and commitment to character development (Kuh, 2000). These values are more successfully transmitted through involvement rather than spectating (Holmes, 1987). As a living document, the LTC places members of Taylor into a covenant community, teaching and allowing them to practice prioritizing the needs of the group over the individual in hopes of furthering Taylor's mission. The LTC outlines what a Christ-mirrored life looks like in the context of Taylor University through the creation of a theologically-based shared vision.

The success of a covenant relationship depends on members' commitment to a shared sense of passion, the sacrifice of one's own desires for the needs of the community, and the levels of intrinsic motivation to come together and implement its behaviors (Hoover et al., 2018; Reisberg, 1990). No research has been conducted to understand how members actually perceive the LTC, let alone the community's willingness to commit to a lifestyle covenant. In order to understand the impact of the

LTC, it is important to determine student, staff, and faculty perceptions of and experiences with the LTC.

Chapter 3

Methodology

A small number of institutions have used lifestyle covenants to promote community life and institutional values. The LTC is a foundational document central to Taylor University's mission but has yet to be explored through research. The study examined student, staff, and faculty perceptions of and experiences with the LTC to help the Taylor community better understand the impacts of the LTC.

Design

The research utilized a qualitative approach. No research has been conducted on this topic to date; thus, the study was exploratory in nature. In addition, the research question sought to understand people's perceptions and experiences, which are difficult to quantify. Specifically, a phenomenological study was the most appropriate methodological design type as it seeks to "describe the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75). Phenomenological studies primarily collect data through the use of individual interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). With the LTC being a personally relevant document, the researcher chose individual interviews with open-ended response questions as the preferred data collection method to reduce peer pressure or the withholding of honest thoughts possible during group interviews.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted at Taylor University—a private, faith-based, liberal arts institution located in the Midwest. Prior to the study, the researcher sought and received permission from the Vice President of Student Affairs to utilize the institution's name within the results. Taylor's student body consists of approximately 2,000 students. Over the past seven years, the institution has remained 89–92% residential with the majority of the remaining students living in nearby off-campus housing (S. Barrett, personal communication, April 1, 2020). Thus, there is a strong sense of both geographical and communal proximity.

Throughout its history, Taylor has utilized various forms of living standard statements for the community. With input from students and employees, the LTC was created in 1990 following Taylor's use of community standards and expectations called "Life Together." The LTC was put into place to present personal integrity, along with personal and group accountability in a more positive manner (Campbell, 1990). Since its creation in 1990, the document has undergone various wording and policy changes.

At the beginning of every school year, students read and sign the LTC with other members on their floors or wings (signing the document with approximately 20–30 other students). Throughout the year, various residence life programming (e.g., posters focusing on different sections of the LTC, presentations and discussions of the covenant's history) and chapels remind students of the LTC's content and values (Beers, 2008). During the 2019–2020 academic year, besides the annual signing of the covenant on the floors or wings, the only other LTC highlight included the interim chapel series that featured various speakers each addressing a different component of the LTC. Every first-

year student participates in additional discussions of the LTC during Taylor's introductory level Foundations of Christian Liberal Arts class. Some students (e.g., student leaders) interact with the LTC more frequently than others, just as some faculty address it in their classroom more than others. Some students may have discussed the LTC through discipline meetings as the LTC includes a section of prohibitive behaviors (e.g., abstaining from alcohol). A student could possibly have negative perceptions of the LTC if the document was used during a conduct meeting.

Most employees first discuss the LTC with Taylor administration during the hiring process (M. Hammond, personal communication, February 24, 2021). Within their annual employment contract renewal, staff and faculty also agree to abide by and practice the LTC. In the fall of 2019, administration revised the wording of the employment letters, clarifying an employee's full commitment to support and abide by the LTC when signing their contract. Employees follow an "implementation guideline" which outlines how staff, faculty, and administration should apply the LTC to their lives. This implementation guideline encourages employees to follow the principles of the LTC throughout the year, and "when not under contract or fulfilling their service, employees are expected to exercise mature judgment and discernment in their behavior in ways that honor Christ, themselves, and the mission of the University" (Taylor University, 2020a).

Three population groups, for a total of 30 participants, took part in the study: students, staff, and faculty. The only requirement for student participants was a senior status as they would have spent the most time interacting with this document in comparison to underclassmen. Similarly, staff and faculty participants needed to hold their respective statuses for a minimum of four years at Taylor, allowing them time to

interact with the covenant. At Taylor, Student Development professionals hold faculty status.

It is important to note the researcher's personal experiences with a lifestyle covenant. The researcher attended an undergraduate institution similar to Taylor which also expected its students to commit to a lifestyle covenant. While at Taylor, the researcher served as a Graduate Hall Director. The researcher not only sought to abide by the covenant terms but also held an additional responsibility to encourage and hold students accountable to the LTC, potentially ending in discipline matters.

Procedure

Procedures for the study followed Creswell's (2015) data collection recommendations. Prior to setting up interviews, the researcher refined the interview questions and procedures through pilot testing. One student and one employee participated in test interviews. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, the researcher emailed eligible participants, requesting self-referral for participation in the study (see Appendix A). The Taylor community showed a large interest in this specific study as more students, staff, and faculty volunteered to participate than needed. The researcher used a stratified sampling method utilizing a random number generator and then emailed the selected ten senior students, ten staff members, and ten faculty members to set up an individual interview.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the study and asked for participant consent to audio record the interview (see Appendix B). In order to examine participants' perceptions regarding the document rather than their knowledge of it, the researcher did not give participants a copy of the LTC. Participants

then completed a short survey to determine their familiarity with the content of the LTC. Though not central to answering the research question, the survey helped the researcher characterize the sample population and aided in the discussion of the results. Participants also selected a pseudonym to add to the intimacy and narrative of the results.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews by asking each participant a series of questions concerning how they perceive and have experienced the LTC (See Appendix C). Interview questions expanded on Moustakas' two broad phenomenological questions: What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon? (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The individual interviews ran approximately 20 to 40 minutes. Following the interview, the researcher transcribed the recorded interview and emailed a transcription to participants for review via email.

Analysis and Validity

Following the procedures of qualitative data collection, the researcher analyzed the open-ended responses from the transcriptions and highlighted significant statements regarding how the participants experienced the phenomenon. The researcher then grouped these codes into themes to interpret the data. Typical of a phenomenological study, an essence of participants' collective perceptions of and experiences with the LTC emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Rich description, pilot testing, member checking, triangulation, and clarifying researcher bias all helped to increase the validity of the study. Throughout the introduction, literature review, and methodology, the researcher has used thick, rich descriptions of the setting and participants to set the context for the study. Very few

institutions utilize a lifestyle covenant, and its use largely depends on the environment of the university. Thick, rich descriptions will aid readers in making decisions regarding transferring results to other institutions (Creswell, 2015). The practice of member checking involves asking one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2015). Following the coding, the researcher emailed all participants the research findings to check the accuracy of the account. Triangulation involves the process of authenticating data through multiple data sources (Creswell, 2015). The study used triangulation by interviewing faculty, staff, and students at Taylor. Given students and employees may perceive and experience the LTC differently, opening up interviews to all three groups allowed for more accurate results regarding the whole Taylor community.

Summary

The study followed a qualitative, phenomenological methodology to examine student and faculty perceptions of and experiences with the LTC. Individual interviews utilizing a series of formalized open-ended questions that the Taylor community, including the administration, may be wondering. The results of the study will help the Taylor community recognize what students and faculty truly think of this foundational covenant by which the Taylor community is expected to live.

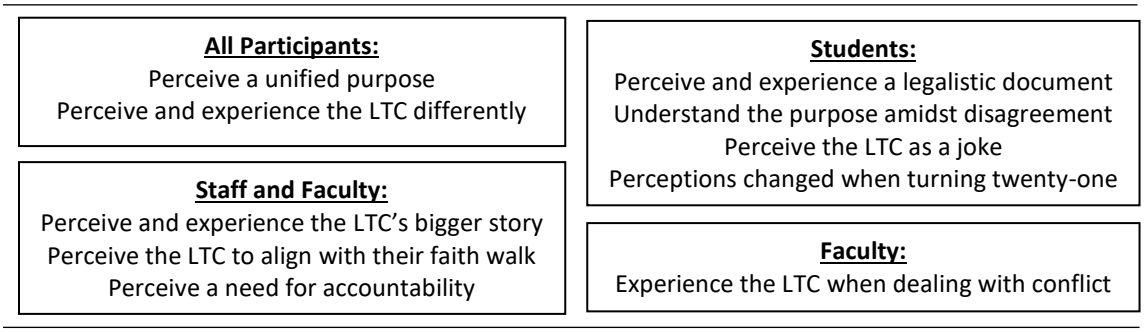
Chapter 4

Results

The study intended to understand how students, staff, and faculty perceive and experience the LTC. The researcher examined themes both within each of the three populations of participants, as well as collectively. While students, faculty, and staff responses revealed themes with distinct and nuanced differences, one key theme—true of most all participants—also emerged. Although themes and subthemes will be presented in detail, Figure 1 summarizes the primary themes for each participant group.

Figure 1

Summary of Themes



All Participant Themes

Perceive a Unified Purpose

The participants generally agreed upon the purpose of the LTC. This understanding divides into four subthemes: (a) the LTC is a guideline for life together, (b) the LTC serves as a reminder of how to treat one another, (c) the LTC defines the

values of Taylor which set the school apart from other institutions, and (d) the LTC should create a community of inclusion.

A Guideline or Set of Expectations for Life Together. The most prominent subtheme that emerged from the study was a unified recognition that the LTC serves as a guideline for community life at Taylor. Eight students, seven staff, and all ten faculty members perceived the LTC to be a guideline or a set of expectations for the community. The specific populations see these expectations played out differently; however, they all agree the LTC outlines the ways in which the community wants to do life together. As faculty member Vito stated, "[the purpose of the LTC is] to provide guidance, but [also] to provide an idea of, 'if you're going to live in community here, this is what's expected. How you treat one another, what your behavior is.'" Participants saw this aspirational document as not only setting individual behavioral expectations, but helping the members of the Taylor community live together cohesively.

The "One Anothers." The participants' emphasis on living cohesively together largely stems from their reflections on the "One Anothers" section of the LTC. Five students, seven staff, and nine faculty members either specifically named at least one of the "One Anothers," or referred to the "One Anothers" when discussing the LTC's purpose. In reference to the purpose of the LTC, faculty member Max said, "[it is] a shared sense of expectations of how we'll live and treat one another and just to get all that on the table so there's kind of a starting point for building relationships and living together in community." However, for all but one of the five students, the "One Anothers" were an afterthought to the rules or living expectations.

A Distinction of Taylor University. The "One Anothers" section is an example of one of Taylor's distinctive features. Participants believed the LTC helps the institution define its values, remain close to them, and set Taylor apart from other institutions. Seven students, eight staff, and three faculty members noted the LTC's part in helping community members of Taylor abide by the institution's values which has helped distinguish Taylor's reputation. Students typically highlighted this distinction when comparing the culture of Taylor to other, specifically state, universities. Staff focused on how the LTC helps one to represent Taylor well to an outside community. Faculty provided no common theme regarding the distinction of Taylor.

A Community of Inclusion. Another subtheme found regarding participants' perceptions of the purpose of the LTC is its role in inclusion or lack thereof. Three students, four staff, and four faculty members believed the LTC sets expectations to create common ground, include all types of people, and create a safe community. Student Amber perceived the LTC as

> more a list of things that we're agreeing to so that if there is anybody who is not comfortable with those things, [then] not participating in those things as a collective body leaves more room for community to foster and it doesn't exclude somebody from communities they aren't comfortable in.

In contrast, two faculty and three students including Brenda think "some of the items that are on [the LTC], um, clash with some people's cultures and might … be very frustrating for some people to follow." Participants whose thoughts aligned with Brenda's specifically mentioned the drinking, dancing, homosexuality, and study abroad

expectations as possible points of conflict. Faculty member Jacob reflected this lack of inclusion in a different way:

> I'm sure [the LTC] is still alive enough to, to hold space for those [cultural shifts]. But I don't know if we ever intentionally do that. I don't know where race and gender and identity and theology and technology all apply. Is this a gender biased document? Is this a race biased document? Those kinds of things.

Participants' reflections regarding the idea of inclusion greatly varied depending on their perception of the LTC's purpose for inclusion and their experiences with community members who feel excluded.

Perceive and Experience the LTC Differently

Although most participants viewed the purpose of the LTC to be the expectations for community life, the researcher was unable to find any more all-encompassing themes true for a majority of the participants. As the LTC is a widely interpreted document, this variation largely depends on one's familiarity with the document, role on campus, and other experiences.

Familiarity with the LTC. Results of the study indicated that participants' lack of knowledge regarding the actual content of the LTC or confusion regarding the implementation guideline statement contribute to a widely interpreted document. Four students, three staff members, and one faculty member incorrectly discussed aspects of the document. Four students, two staff, and three faculty stated something that indicated they were unclear regarding the application of staff and faculty adherence to the LTC. This statement encourages staff and faculty to follow the principles of the LTC "in all contexts to avoid conduct that may bring discredit to themselves of or to the University"

(Taylor University, 2020a). Both within and amongst population groups, participants do not see eye to eye on the actual content and context of the LTC.

In addition to the application of employee adherence, staff and faculty perceive some of the wording of the LTC as vague. Five staff and three faculty members have experienced the LTC to be confusing due to vague wording and having received little training regarding its content and how to interpret it. Staff member Nate noted, "the hard part about leaving [the LTC] vague, like modesty, is [that] your definition of modesty and my definition of modesty can be very different." Though Nate welcomed the ambiguousness as he believes it helps to create further conversation, he was the only participant who explicitly saw this as a benefit. The other employees who experience the LTC as confusing agree with staff member Matt when he said,

> What's interesting about when you don't sit someone down and explain [what a statement in the LTC entails or its expectations regarding implementation], is then its left open to interpretation, which means its left open to a hundred people's interpretations. And so then that creates a little bit of confusion.

Lacking comprehensive training, one staff member and three faculty members, all of whom had worked at previous places of employment before Taylor, assumed the content and implementation of the LTC are identical to previous employment covenants or expectations.

Role on Campus. Another theme that emerged from the data involves participants viewing the LTC differently depending on their role. The most prominent theme regarding one's role would be how students involved in campus leadership experience the LTC differently than their peers. For example, four students held a role in

Residence Life at some point while at Taylor. These students noted their training on the LTC and used language similar to that of the Director of Residence Life. Student leaders, like Joel, must think about the LTC more frequently, "especially [questioning] what example I am setting with the way I'm talking and the way I'm interacting with people." Another theme that emerged would be that staff and faculty roles also contribute to a variety of perceptions regarding the LTC both within their population groups, but also in comparison to students.

Student Themes

Perceive and Experience a Legalistic Document

As participants widely interpret the LTC, students view the LTC differently than staff and faculty. For example, the student population tends to view the LTC as more of a legalistic document. When the researcher asked students what the first LTC ideas or expectations that come to their mind are, nine of the ten student participants mentioned rules from the University Expectations section of the LTC (e.g., no drinking or restrictions on dancing). Throughout the interviews, six students alluded to or spoke about the LTC in terms of a rule document. By way of student leader training, two of these six students knew that the LTC is not intended to promote legalistic thinking; however, these two students still view the ideas of the LTC as rules needed to be enforced. All but one of the four students who do not personally view the LTC in a legalistic way noted that others in the community see the document as a list of rules.

Brenda and Beth noted the implications of a legalistic document in producing shame as a small, yet important theme. When seeing friends struggle after not living up to

the LTC's expectations, Beth questioned the LTC's role in creating a perfect front for shame:

> Do these rules, or guidelines as they would call them, whatever, I still feel like it's a rule, um, do they play into that of like setting up this perfect front of like, 'We don't drink. We don't like engage in like sexual activities or sin.' Like, sometimes I feel like that plays into [the role of shame] because people feel like they have to meet these goals.

Whether or not students perceive the LTC to provoke feelings of shame, almost every student participant either viewed the LTC in a legalistic light themselves or believed their peers did.

Understand the Purpose of the LTC Amidst Disagreement

Although students tend to view the LTC legalistically and disagree with aspects of the content, students generally understand the purpose of the LTC. Staff and faculty also rally behind the purpose of the LTC amidst disagreements; however, these two populations had fewer frustrations with the actual content. All ten student participants disagreed with at least one aspect of the LTC (most notably the drinking prohibition or dancing limitations). Six students noted frustration with the wording found in the LTC. Paxton said the LTC was "written for its time," in regards to both its content and wording, while Beth believed the LTC has not kept up with ideas from 2021. Others believed the wording itself leads to varying interpretations (e.g., specifically the wording regarding homosexual behavior).

Regardless of students' dissatisfaction with the content or wording of specific items in the LTC, students generally appreciate the LTC's influence in creating the

community Taylor has today. All ten students spoke in line with Brenda when she said, "I wanted to live [by the LTC] a little more … because it was a document that [was intended] to support me and support the community I was in, even though I don't agree entirely with everything in it." Students who expressed frustrations in regards to the drinking expectations typically understood its purpose for being included in the LTC. However, students who disagreed with the dancing policy did not reciprocate this understanding. Seven students do not believe the LTC should contain the limitations regarding dancing as they deem this policy unnecessary, unbiblical, or contributing to the LTC being viewed as a joke.

Perceive the LTC as a Joke

At times, the student population perceives the LTC as a joke; five students noted that most students joke about the LTC. Christina said, "a lot of people don't like the LTC and it tends to be a joke around campus, just because of all the rules and like some of the more extreme ones of no dancing other than folk dancing." In a different light, students who mock the LTC may be frustrated with the frequency with which the Taylor community talks about the LTC. Amber noted,

> I think that the like flippancy that we put behind [the LTC] takes away the like the safe space that the LTC was trying to create … But I also think that it's talked about so much that it's like people don't care about it anymore. So I guess I wish that when it's being talked about, we talked more about like the specifics of it.

Six of the ten students agreed with Amber when indicating a wish for less discussion of the LTC, but rather discussions with better quality and engagement.

Perceptions Changed When Turning Twenty-One

Another theme that emerged from the student population was a change in perception of the LTC throughout their time at Taylor. All but two students noted that their perceptions of the LTC have changed since freshman year. Students experienced many of these changes in their residential contexts outside of the classroom; four students recalled talking about the LTC with little-to-no depth within a classroom setting. With limited influence from academics, other various interactions with the LTC contributed to students' changes in perceptions, such as turning twenty-one. Every student mentioned the drinking policy in some capacity. Six students noted that prior to turning twenty-one, their own personal convictions about the drinking age, rather than the LTC, restrained them from drinking. Therefore the LTC held more significance once they turned twenty-one. Christina said, "my first two and a half years at Taylor, [the LTC] didn't really affect my life because I couldn't drink." Since turning twenty-one, five students have experienced the weight of the LTC through their personal daily choices not to drink, experiencing social situations with friends drinking, or reflecting on how the LTC creates an unhealthy relationship with alcohol resulting in shame. Regardless of the magnitude of their thoughts regarding the subject, every student participant quickly mentioned the alcohol policy when explaining the LTC.

Faculty Theme

Experience the LTC in Dealing with Conflict and Confrontation

When faculty members intentionally think about the LTC, they primarily use it as a guide to deal with conflict, confrontation, and reconciliation. While two students and four staff mentioned these three ideas during the interviews, they did not highlight or

expand on the LTC's impact on conflict. Five faculty mentioned the connection between the LTC and conflict resolution, while three faculty members highlighted the LTC's guidance. Samuel said:

> Anytime there is a situation where I am in conflict or disagreement or I'm looking at trying to um, uh, navigate a situation where I'm either feeling in the wrong or feeling wronged, I feel like the Life Together Covenant, while maybe not explicitly, but at least the spirit of that is, kind of helps guide, "How should I approach this relationship?" I mean, in some sense that's not really the Life Together Covenant either because it's more my general sense of Christian civility.

Although faculty typically do not intentionally think about the LTC, compared to students and staff members, the faculty participants noted the impact of the LTC on their obligation to and practice of resolving conflict.

Staff and Faculty Themes

Though faculty uniquely highlighted the role of the LTC's guidance in conflict resolution and accountability, the researcher did not discover any other significant differences between staff and faculty perceptions and experiences. Therefore, the two population groups' themes are presented together.

Perceive and Experience the LTC's Bigger Story

Staff and faculty generally see the LTC as less of a legalistic document than the student population. Seven staff and four faculty members spoke of the LTC in spirit rather than digging into the specific rules and expectations. Staff member Michael portrays this bigger story when saying,

> I don't look at [it] as a rule document. I look at it as a living, breathing document that just helps us in everyday conduct and mindset. I know some people are gonna get caught up on the last, on the last page, but if you … I once heard a committed Christian comedian say, "if we worry about the do's, we won't have to worry about the don'ts," and I thought that was a great illustration of what the Life Together Covenant is, uh, that we need to focus on the first part and then the last part won't matter as much is if I have a difference of opinion, which I don't.

For all but two staff and faculty, who spoke of the LTC in a more legalistic sense, these participants do not personally see it legalistically, but rather believe the LTC is presented, especially to students, in a legalistic manner. Faculty member Samuel noted, "a large part of [students] see that as more religious or rules. That it's very authoritarian in nature, that is the way they kind of view it, rather than the spirit of what it's intended to be from my standpoint." Five of the eight staff and faculty participants who are alumni of Taylor reflected on how their perception of the LTC changed from seeing the day-to-day rules to seeing the overall spirit of the document. Staff member Monique said, "I think my perception is that I have grown in maturity in seeing that it's not a list of do's and don'ts, that it's more about how we treat one another."

Perceive the LTC Aligns With Their Christian Walk

The theme of staff and faculty emphasizing that their walk with the Lord impacts their day to day lives to a greater extent than the LTC also emerged from the study. Four students also alluded to this theme; however, all staff and faculty members acknowledged the LTC's alignment with biblical principles and their faith. Faculty member Ben said,

> The deeper levels of it, like the reconciliation and community, I do think about it. I don't think about it in connection with the LTC. I think about it in connection with my Christian walk, my faith, and my responsibility to fellow believers. I don't think of it like "the LTC says I have to do that."

All but two staff and faculty described the LTC as second in thought to their personal walk with the Lord.

Perceive a Need for Accountability

Staff and faculty emphasized accountability and understanding the weight of a signature in comparison to the student population. Four staff and four faculty members believe the members of the Taylor community who have signed and committed to abiding by the LTC should hold one another accountable to their signature and commitments. Faculty member Jean summarizes these staff and faculty's thoughts:

> Sometimes it's hard to say difficult things, right? … It's hard to let people know when you think they need to change something because sometimes we feel judgmental or things like that. But I think the Life Together Covenant holds us to a higher standard … To what standard am I held? Am I showing the utmost respect and am I being honest?

These staff and faculty believe that not only should each member of the Taylor community hold one another accountable to their commitments to the LTC, but the LTC also directs and guides Taylor members to do so.

Conclusion

In essence, participants perceive the LTC to be a guide or set of expectations to live life cohesively at Taylor University. However, depending on the participant's role,

knowledge of the document, and interactions with the LTC, the members of the Taylor community widely interpret the LTC. In addition to presenting various limitations and implications for further research and practice, the following discussion will address this variation of thought in terms of participants' growth in personal development as well as the LTC's role in contributing to personal development and the mission of Christian higher education.

Chapter 5

Discussion

When considering student, staff, and faculty themes together, both similarities and differences across perceptions and realities emerged as independent themes. The most common theme found amongst the participants came in their understanding of the LTC's purpose to provide a guideline or framework for community expectations. However, outside of this unified purpose, the three participant groups' perceptions and experiences of the LTC vary in nuanced but clear ways. The overall results require a further discussion to analyze the differences related to one's role on campus, maturity of personal development, and familiarity with the LTC. The discussion ends with implications for practice, the study's limitations, and possibilities for further research.

Framework for Society

The LTC provides its members with the opportunity to identify attributes that contribute to a healthy community. This guideline allows one to learn how to make responsible decisions in a moral context, which is crucial to preparing members, particularly students, for the maturity required of them for society at large (Boyer, 1990). Further, this sets the stage for responsible civic and community engagement—foundations of a healthy society which honor codes, codes of conduct, and lifestyle covenants all aim to develop (Dalton & Crosby, 2010). As Taylor seeks to "develop servant leaders marked with a passion to minister Christ's redemptive love and truth to a world in need" (Taylor University, 2020b, p. 8), the participants' recognition of the LTC

as a fundamental community document that (a) serves as a guideline for community life, (b) emphasizes a commitment to "one another," (c) contributes to a distinct Taylor culture, and (d) aspires to foster an inclusive community highlights the success of the LTC in aiding students in their ability to identify, build, and participate in healthy communities.

Even amongst disagreements with specific content or wording within the LTC, most all participants were appreciative of the common guidelines and expectations. This understanding amidst discrepancies exhibits mature characteristics of interpersonal relationships as a majority of participants defer to the community over individualism. In addition, these qualities demonstrate Kohlberg's (1981) stages of conventional moral reasoning as participants generally prioritized concern for the community as a whole, with moral thinking legitimized through Scripture reflected in the LTC.

Whereas other institutions typically tie their honor codes to the promotion of character development, particularly academic integrity (McCabe et al., 2002), for participants at Taylor, the LTC's authority extends to life outside of the classroom (e.g., drinking regulations or conflict with peers and coworkers). However, similar to an honor code, the LTC helps Taylor members hold themselves personally accountable for moral and ethical decisions, attitudes, and behaviors.

Variation of Perceptions and Experiences

Role on Campus

One's role on campus helps to decipher the ideas and expectations of the LTC that most frequently come to mind. Faculty and staff have less restrictions regarding the "University Expectations" section of the LTC, and therefore, as seen in the interview

process, these expectations are less prevalent in their thinking of the LTC. One's role on campus also denotes what type of training they receive regarding the LTC, which shapes their understandings and language of the LTC. As noted as a theme, student leaders have increased interaction with the document through various trainings and contemplation regarding how they should present, model, and enforce the LTC. Those holding formal roles have a greater familiarity with the LTC due to the training and accountability required of these roles.

Personal Development

A lifestyle covenant has the potential to stimulate developmental growth in students, yet may also hinder one's moral, spiritual, and identity development. Whether an institution utilizes a lifestyle covenant or not, college students experience crisis, support, and progression through moral and intellectual development. However, due to university and LTC expectations, these experiences at Taylor typically look different as compared to other types of institutions (e.g., student participants reflected a lack of experience with and discussion regarding alcohol while other institutions may struggle with excessive drinking or negative academic effects of drinking; White & Hingson, 2014). How a participant perceives the LTC could also depend on the frequency and degree to which the document presents challenges in their lives.

Challenge and Support. The LTC facilitates the development of an environment that corresponds to Sanford's (1962) ideas regarding the importance of balancing challenge and support to stimulate personal development. Staff and faculty demonstrated the positive impact of a proper balance of challenge and support as some alumni participants reflected on times in which either they (as a former student at Taylor) or a

close acquaintance failed to abide by the LTC, yet received grace and support from the Taylor administration of the time.

The results of the study also relate to Marcia's (1966) theory of identity development which states that one's sense of identity is determined by the degree of personal and social crises and commitments. Marcia defined crisis as a decision-making period or exploration, not necessarily holding a negative connotation. Commitment refers to the degree of personal investment one exhibits. The status of moratorium involves a high degree of crisis with little commitment to one's values, beliefs, or goals. On the contrary, the status of foreclosure entails a low degree of exploration and questioning with a high degree of commitment. Taylor students demonstrated actions within stages of moratorium or foreclosure, consistent with the typical college student. Within the state of foreclosure, students typically adapt to the authority of the LTC and overlook the document until they experience challenge or conflict leading to a re-evaluation of their understandings of the LTC. Students demonstrated this foreclosure through a posture of comfort with the role of the LTC with no clear evidence of previous exploration with its content or authority. Participants of the study most notably reflected a state of moratorium when turning twenty-one or wrestling with cultural or sexuality implications which appear in conflict with the LTC. While staff and faculty experience crisis, largely due to conflict and confrontation, these employees generally have concrete ideas of where the LTC fits into and challenges their personal identities, demonstrating Marcia's status of identity achievement. Although staff and faculty see the LTC as a helpful guide for community life, their personal convictions and faith walk have a greater influence in their day-to-day lives.

Moral and Ethical Reasoning. The participants' responses reflected Kohlberg's (1981) understandings of moral development. These findings align with Kohlberg's (1981) expectations that college students utilize pre-conventional and conventional reasoning, though they oppose Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) findings that freshman to senior gains include a shift from conventional to post-conventional moral reasoning. Evident in students' interviews, the LTC aims students towards Kohlberg's (1981) fourth stage of obeying authority and conforming to societal order. For example, although students don't agree with some of the drinking, dancing, or sexuality implications, they abide by them to maintain the intentional, relational community of Taylor.

It is important to note that all student participants were seniors and had experienced some conflict with the LTC. Biswas (2013) acknowledged that incoming students may initially unquestionably follow established policies. Throughout college, students make significant gains in the use of principled reasoning to judge moral issues (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), therefore, underclassmen's moral reasoning may align with Kohlberg's (1981) pre-conventional stages of moral thinking.

Managing Emotions. The LTC has helped some participants to wrestle with and develop both appropriate and inappropriate reactions to emotions—a process key to identity development (Chickering & Reiser, 1993). One subtheme found within the study is that students who view the LTC in a legalistic manner could experience shame when failing to live up to its expectations. Optimistically speaking, the LTC's role in helping navigate emotions may perhaps benefit students if they can learn how to manage feelings of shame in a supportive context. However, if an institution decides to utilize a lifestyle covenant, it must be prepared to find ways to support students through this process. It is

worthy to note that not one staff or faculty member noted feelings of shame regarding the LTC, exemplifying progress along Chickering's third vector of managing emotions.

Interpersonal Relationships. As interactions with others' perspectives stimulates moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981), participants' perceptions and experiences of the LTC varied with interpersonal maturity (Chickering & Reiser, 1993). Cornwell and Guarasci (1993) believe that residential institutions such as Taylor have the potential to help students not only develop the ability to recognize and respect differences, but also successfully work with those fundamentally different from themselves. The content of the covenant promotes this interpersonal growth through its focus on loving one another. Students exhibited Cornwell and Guarasci's aspirations for residential communities as they reflected on the spirit of respecting one another; however, students failed to provide evidence that the LTC had influenced their openness to or reconciliation of differences. Although staff and faculty exhibited more mature interconnectedness and peer accountability as compared to students, they are also still growing in these areas as they look to the LTC most consistently when dealing with conflict and reconciliation.

A handful of participants demonstrated a working maturity within their interpersonal development when reflecting on their struggles to piece together cultural implications with the expectations of the LTC. Most notably, participants grappled with empathizing for students coming from cultural backgrounds which celebrate drinking or dancing. Students displayed growth along Chickering and Reisser's (1993) fourth vector as they were developing an appreciation for intercultural differences. In addition, navigating these cultural implications supports growth in Kohlberg's (1981) post-

conventional moral reasoning as participants have decided that the broadness of the LTC cannot determine what is right for all.

Integrity. The LTC was created in hopes of presenting personal integrity along with personal and group accountability in a positive manner (Campbell, 1990). While students exhibit some qualities of integrity seen through their willingness to adhere to the LTC amidst disagreement with content, employees generally embodied greater progress along Chickering and Riesser's (1993) seventh vector. Staff and faculty have generally progressed to value the interests of others, while practicing congruence and authenticity within their values and actions. Employees also demonstrated high levels of integrity when highlighting the importance of holding one another accountable no matter the difficulty—a requirement of a successful covenant (Bennett, 2002; Mullen et al., 2011).

Familiarity with the LTC

Participants interpreted the LTC differently in part due to the perceived vague wording of specific expectations. Most of the content features detailed language and Scripture references. However, without explicit expectations for all items (e.g., homosexual behavior, immodesty of dress), the LTC leaves room for various interpretations regarding what these expectations mean. Therefore, each member of the Taylor community might interpret the LTC through their own lens or worldview. However, the inclusion of more direct language could lead to a more legalistic document. In addition, as one staff participant noted, the lack of detail in the wording could and should lead to more conversations to challenge community members to help solidify their beliefs. Depending on the institution's intention, the administration should reflect on which path to adopt regarding the specificity of the covenant's wording.

A number of Taylor community members do not accurately know the content of the LTC or the expectations of its implementation. A subtheme of the study was that not all participants were as familiar with the LTC as might be expected. In totality of all participants, all but one faculty member believed themselves to be moderately to very knowledgeable regarding the content of the LTC, yet some participants were inaccurate when discussing the content of the LTC. This lack of knowledge could be rooted in poor comprehension, accepting others' misunderstandings, or the result of prior experiences (e.g., new staff and faculty assume the content of the LTC is identical to a covenant or expectations at a previous place of employment). As an accurate understanding of the LTC's content will benefit the document's impact, the institution should give attention to eliminating misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Implications for Future Practice

The findings of the study uncover some possible implications for future practice. Taylor utilizes a unilateral covenant as the institution offers the terms of the LTC to new members to enter into (Rhodes, 1964) which allows administration to identify attributes of a healthy community despite the fact that not all members may yet recognize its benefits. Consequentially, a unilateral covenant has caused some participants to misunderstand the reasoning behind specific expectations or believe the wording or content of the LTC has not necessarily stayed alive with the current culture.

The re-evaluation of a covenant at proper times is vital to a covenant's success (Mullen et al., 2011; Wickett, 2000). At Taylor, the copy students sign yearly states that the Board of Trustees last approved the LTC in 2013. Some students notice this date; therefore, to communicate the importance of the document, it would be worth the

attention to update the time stamp every few years. However, a simple Board approval update may not serve to increase serious buy-in amongst Taylor members, particularly students. Administration should thoroughly revisit the LTC approximately every decade. Within this review, administration should pay attention to wording that contains highlights of legalism and evaluate the document through diverse eyes. To promote inclusivity—a purpose of the LTC identified from participants in the study—students and employees of various genders, cultures, ages, and institutional roles should be involved in this review process. Students and employees contributed to the creation of the LTC and have influenced various content changes throughout its history; however, this input should be further emphasized. Input from students and employees allow these members to be co-creators of the covenant as opposed to recipients and may result in better wording of rules and consequently less mockery.

Continuing the examination of communication, administration should explore more productive manners of training and discussing the LTC. Communication not only influences the degree, if any, to which one could experience shame (Baldwin et al., 2006), but also influences one's familiarity with the document, the degree to which they view the LTC as legalistic, and their personal development. As students do not desire a greater frequency in discussion, further programming regarding the LTC should be conducted with care. Students could benefit from hearing the intended purpose of both the LTC and covenants in general. Student leaders demonstrated a change in their perception of the LTC following their participation in Residence Life training. These students demonstrated higher levels of understanding and appreciation, in part due to their interests and pre-disposed characters, but also due to the extra training. Student

leaders could benefit from more engaging and personalized trainings to mirror this type of learning for their floors or wings.

As students largely experience the LTC within residential life, Taylor could further incorporate the LTC within the academic lives of students. To assist students in their moral reasoning, students should examine not only the content of the LTC in a cognitive manner, but also their beliefs and reasoning patterns as well (Mellon & Sass, 1981). In addition to assembling engaging learning opportunities during floor or wing meetings, when discussing the LTC in the Foundations of Christian Liberal Arts course, it would be worth contributing time to help students consider how to handle various situations (i.e., resolving a roommate conflict, academic integrity, how to navigate turning twenty-one, or how to balance the authority of the LTC with their own beliefs), modeling the supportive challenge advised by various development theories. Finally, the discussion of the LTC could circle back in an upperclassman course to help students navigate their moral reasoning and explicitly reflect on how to engage the LTC as they approach major life milestones such as turning twenty-one or preparing to leave college.

Staff and faculty also desire different communication regarding the LTC. Staff and faculty typically do not see a copy of the LTC within a given school year. However, they sign their yearly contract which includes a statement of agreement to abide by the expectations of the LTC. Employees could benefit from seeing a physical copy of the LTC when signing their contract to remind themselves what they are agreeing to. In addition, many of the staff and faculty participants did not remember any detailed training or discussion of the LTC upon the start of their employment. Some employees crave more opportunities for discussion, while others deem more discussion unnecessary

as they believe they already understand the document. Therefore, creating more engaging and reflective opportunities for new staff and faculty to engage the LTC may prove most beneficial. In addition, to promote the communal emphasis of a covenant, departments might consider signing the LTC together as a staff at the start of each academic year.

In regards to staff and faculty familiarity with the LTC, Taylor must make evident their position regarding the employee implementation clause. Some participants appear to be very familiar with how to implement the LTC's expectations. However, this understanding is not consistent across all staff and faculty, especially to those who have worked at the university in the midst of changes to the clause. This inconsistency has led to confusion, multiple understandings of the LTC, and some disdain amongst employees.

According to J. K. A. Smith (2009), the purpose of Christian higher education "involves the formation of disciples" as an extension of the mission of the church (p. 34). J. K. A. Smith (2009) noted that as affective beings, daily practices and habits mold, shape, and direct one's loves. The LTC can be particularly helpful as it serves as a mode of shaping the habits and practices of the Taylor community to be image bearers of God, promoting moral and character development in line with Christian principles. However, an institution utilizing a lifestyle covenant should reflect on the following areas of potential concern:

- What opportunities is it giving students to engage in meaningful conversations? Without this exploration, students are expected to commit to lifestyle choices to which they may not have previously wrestled with (e.g., how they want to navigate a relationship to alcohol) or previously adapted from prior environments.

- What types of support does it provide students amidst crisis in relation to the lifestyle covenant?
- How is it engaging its members in higher level moral thinking to avoid legalism?
- What ideas or expectations in their covenant create ambiguity and inconsistency amongst the community? Is it in the community's best interest to change the wording or generate better discussions regarding this content?
- How is it ensuring that the whole campus community has the same, high level of familiarity with the lifestyle covenant given differing roles?

Limitations

The current study has various limitations to take into consideration when interpreting the results. The COVID-19 global pandemic overlapped with the interview collecting period of Fall 2020. To follow state and national guidelines, Taylor required various changes to everyday life (e.g., requiring social distancing and masks, not allowing guests in residence halls). These regulations were not directly tied to the LTC; however, they were presented on the premise of respecting and keeping the community safe—a message parallel to that of the LTC. Because participants' experiences looked abnormal as compared to previous years, participants' interviews reflected some frustrations due to COVID-19 related instances.

The researcher used the validation process of triangulation in hopes of encapsulating the Taylor community's experiences with the LTC, but was not able to capture all voices. All aspects of the study were voluntary, and in most cases, the participants who volunteered were fairly interested in the topic. Due to the bandwidth of the researcher and the methodological decision to limit participants to those who had

been members of the Taylor community for a minimum of three years, the study did not consider underclassmen or new staff and faculty voices.

Finally, there exist some limitations due to the nature of a phenomenological study. Aligned with the requirements of phenomenological research, the researcher made every attempt to bracket personal experience to best understand the experiences of others (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, Moustakas (1994) acknowledges complete bracketing is rarely attainable. In addition to attending an undergraduate university which utilized a lifestyle covenant, the researcher abides by and holds others accountable to the LTC at Taylor. Therefore, some potential for researcher bias is inherent in the study.

Opportunities for Further Research

As mentioned in the study's limitations, new students, staff, and faculty were not included in the study. New members of Taylor come in with preconceived notions and have fresh experiences with the LTC. Research that concentrates on new members, or possibly even pre-admitted students, would further assist university administrators' understandings of how new students and employees perceive the LTC.

The researcher incorporated thick, rich description to assist in the transferability of the results to different universities and settings. However, the nature of the Taylor community is very unique, which makes the results of the study hard to compare to other universities, even other small liberal arts establishments. Although Taylor shares many characteristics with other universities that abide by a lifestyle covenant, these institutions should conduct their own research to get accurate results for their community.

The study did not directly investigate the correlation between the LTC and specific aspects of development. However, due to the nature of lifestyle covenants, the

LTC likely impacts personal development in a variety of ways. The current study leaves room for future research to explore the extent of the LTC's impact on participants' autonomy, sense of belonging, spirituality, and moral development. Results revealing a positive correlation to any of the previously mentioned development theories would further clarify a lifestyle covenant's impact, possibly even justifying its worth or increase adoption by other institutions.

Conclusion

As a foundational document of Taylor University, the Life Together Covenant is an example of a community covenant that lays out the expectations for campus life in pursuit of fulfilling the university's mission. The purpose of the study was to explore student, staff, and faculty perceptions of and experiences with the LTC. Generally speaking, all participants perceived the LTC to be a guide or set of expectations to live life cohesively at Taylor and appreciate its role in setting up the community that the institution embodies today. However, depending on the participant's role, familiarity with the document, interactions with the LTC, and position of personal development, members of the Taylor community widely interpret the LTC. As seen through the alignment of various personal development theories, the LTC can provide a holistic approach for moral, ethical, identity, and character development. The challenge then is for institutions to balance the promotion of autonomous thinking with the promotion of Christ-like behaviors and the prioritization of community needs. Kuh (2000) noted "character development is a product of thousands of encounters over an extended period of time with peers and faculty who model desired attitudes and behaviors" (p. 8). The Life Together Covenant articulates Taylor University's desired attitudes and behaviors

through its aspirational, mission-minded goals. Summarized in words of Colossians 3, the LTC guides its community members towards character and lives that model Christ.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Good morning,

My name is Jana Roste and I am a second year MAHE student at Taylor. Every MAHE student completes a research thesis project upon graduation of the program. I am conducting research regarding student and faculty perceptions of the Life Together Covenant.

To collect my research, I am looking for seniors who are willing and able to participate in an individual interview lasting approximately 30-45 minutes. The hope of these individual interviews is to get a better idea of your perceptions regarding the purpose, drawbacks, and adherence to the LTC. This study is not to quiz your level of knowledge of the LTC, nor will it protrude into any LTC violations. All participants are encouraged regardless of your comfortability of the content or your value of the LTC. To collect reliable results, any thoughts regarding the LTC will be welcomed.

If you are interested in participating in an individual interview to share your perspective on this topic, please respond to this email with a "yes" and I will follow up within the next week with more information. Please respond by DATE if you are interested.

Thank you again for helping with this research.

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Title: Perceptions of the Life Together Covenant at Taylor University
Principal Investigator: Jana Roste
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Timothy Herrmann

Purpose:
Thank you for taking part in this research. The purpose of this study is to explore student, staff, and faculty perceptions of and experiences with the Life Together Covenant.

What will happen if you take part in this study?
Your participation will include a short questionnaire and a 45-60 minute individual interview. Your answers to this questionnaire do not impact the interview questions or your ability to participate in the study, rather it allows the researcher to understand the participants' level of familiarity with the LTC.

How could you benefit from participating in this study?
This study will allow you to reflect on what you believe the LTC is and how it has impacted your time at Taylor. The study will also allow community members, including administration, to understand what the Taylor community thinks of the LTC.

What risks might result from participating in this study?
This study represents no foreseeable risks. However, you are free to pass on any of the questions if you do not feel comfortable responding. If any participant distress or discomfort is noted, the researcher will offer to terminate the interview. LTC violations that are discussed will not be disclosed, unless the researcher believes the issues to be a danger to yourself or others.

How will we protect your information?
Your participation is completely anonymous and will be kept confidential. At no time will your name or any identifying information about you be reported to anyone other than the researcher.

All interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed. The audio recording will be used in addition to taking typed notes in order to assist with accurately documenting your responses. All transcriptions and notes will be stored in a password protected computer. The transcriptions will be analyzed by the researcher and only the researcher will have access to any of this information. The results of the analysis will be reported in aggregate form and self-selected pseudonyms will be given to the quotations with no individual identifying information reported.

Accurately representing your responses is highly-valued. Following the interview, a copy of your transcription will be returned to you via email for additional review, corrections, or additions. Following the analysis of the data, results of the study will also be returned to you for any additional review if desired.

Your participation is voluntary
You have the right to withdraw from this study if you choose to not be audio recorded. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to leave the study at any time. If at any time during the interview discussion you have any questions, please ask.

Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher.
Jana Roste
236 Reade Ave.
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If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to discuss any concerns with someone other than the researcher, please review Taylor's IRB site (https://public.taylor.edu/services/institutional-review-board/) or contact the following:

Taylor University Institutional Review Board
236 West Reade Ave.
Upland, IN 46989 Email: irb@taylor.edu

Your Consent
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be a part of this study, however, you may choose to leave the study at any time. Make sure you understand the purpose and procedures of the study before you sign. The researcher will give you a copy of this document for your records and will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above. Legal rights are not waived by signing this form.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature Date

Consent to be Audio/video Recorded
I agree to be audio/video recorded

***YES*_____ *NO*_____**

Appendix C

Survey Questions

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. Choose a name you wish to be recorded in results (please do not choose your actual name)

2. Have you received extra training on the LTC (i.e., leadership trainings such as PA, in-depth class discussion, Bible classes, etc.). If yes, describe this training/discussion.

3. How knowledgeable would you consider yourself in regards to the content of the LTC?
   (Check One)
   - o No Knowledge
   - o Little Knowledge
   - o Moderately Knowledgeable
   - o Somewhat Knowledgably
   - o Very Knowledgeable

4. To what extent is the LTC of interest to you? (Check One)
   - o No interest
   - o Little Interest
   - o Moderate Interest
   - o High Interest
   - o Very High Interest

5. The LTC lays out biblical expectations for three different groups. What are these three categories?

6. What are five different ideas or expectations discussed in the LTC?

7. [Faculty Only] How many years have you worked at Taylor?

8. [Faculty Only] What department do you work in?

[Audio Recording Begins]

Interview Questions

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase Life Together Covenant?
2. What do you perceive as the purpose of the Life Together Covenant?
3. Do you perceive there to be the drawbacks related to the Life Together Covenant?
4. What are 5-7 ideas or expectations in the Life Together Covenant?
5. In what ways, if any, does the Life Together Covenant impact your everyday life?
6. Do you believe students adhere to the Life Together Covenant?
    a. In what ways do you see or not see this?
    b. Are you satisfied with student adherence to the Life Together Covenant?
7. Do you believe faculty adhere to the Life Together Covenant?
    a. In what ways do you see or not see this?
    b. Are you satisfied with faculty adherence to the Life Together Covenant?
8. Do you believe staff (non-faculty members such as housekeepers, athletic coaches, admissions counselors, secretaries, etc.) adhere to the Life Together Covenant?
    a. In what ways do you see or not see this?
    b. Are you satisfied with staff adherence to the Life Together Covenant?
9. Has your perception of the Life Together Covenant changed throughout your time at Taylor?
    a. If yes, who/what has influenced this change?
    b. If yes, in what ways has this changed?
10. Has the Life Together Covenant impacted your time at Taylor?
    a. If yes, How?
    b. If no, Why Not?
11. Tell of a time/story in which you have:
    a. Made a conscious decision to follow the Life Together Covenant.
    b. Discussed the Life Together Covenant?
12. Does the Life Together Covenant relate to covenants found in the Bible?
    a. What are these differences or similarities?
13. Are you satisfied with the training and discussion regarding the Life Together Covenant?
    a. If no, in what ways would you like to see this done?
14. [Students Only] Do you see faculty make any intentional efforts to express or model the ideas of the Life Together Covenant in the classroom or work setting?
    a. If yes, How?
    b. If no, Why Not?
15. [Students Only] Do you see staff make any intentional efforts to express or model the ideas of the Life Together Covenant in the classroom or work setting?
    a. If yes, How?
    b. If no, Why Not?

16. [Staff and Faculty Only] Do you make any intentional efforts to express or model the ideas of the Life Together Covenant in the classroom or work setting?
    a. If yes, How?
    b. If no, Why Not?
17. Is there anything else I should know?