MAKING SENSE OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITIES OF MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION in THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES (Educational Leadership and Policy)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Vancouver)

April 2019

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Making Sense of Organizational and Occupational Identities of Management and Professional Staff at the University of British Columbia

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Abstract

Universities underwent tremendous change and growth over the last decade triggering a rise in management and professional (M&P) staff. A combination of factors contributed to the changes including the implementation of corporate and new public management (NPM) strategies to manage and monitor specialized and growing areas in higher education. Some of these emerging areas included: internationalization; fundraising and development; community outreach; revenue generating venues; and, innovative teaching and learning initiatives. Universities began to rely increasingly on professional staff, with specialized expertise, to run institutional services and operations.

The University of British Columbia (UBC), a large, publicly-funded, research-intensive university located in British Columbia, Canada, was no exception. In 2018, M&P staff numbered 4,530 members (AAPS, 2018), or 28% of the university’s reported workforce of 16,089 employees (UBC, Overview and Facts). M&P staff now makes up the single largest workforce sector at the university.

This burgeoning group of highly-educated, skilled ‘new professionals’ (Gornall, 1999) is recognized by the university as a unique employee group through its professional organization, the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS). However, despite their professional contributions to the operations and the strategic long-term mission of the university, in institutional literature these employees are bundled under the homogenizing term ‘staff’. This terminology clearly separates them from the ‘other’ employee group, academic faculty, and effectively positions them in a blurred, or ‘third space’ (Whitchurch, 2013), a conceptual place sandwiched between the unionized staff and faculty members. Through one-on-one interviews
with 15 participants and document analysis, this research explored how some M&P staff members made sense of, and navigated, their occupational and organizational identities within that third space at the university. In addition, the study explores how participants coped with challenges around recognition, professional development, and high turnover.

As the higher education sector continues to evolve and grow, the roles of M&P staff will also evolve and grow. This research contributes to understanding how M&P staff make sense of their positioning within the university, and in turn, how this workforce can be better supported in order to minimize the challenges they face and to promote a more productive work environment.
Lay Summary

Universities underwent tremendous change over the last decade triggering a rise in management and professional staff (M&P). Many of these employees hold specialized positions in new areas of higher education. Managing these areas requires specialized expertise, hence universities are relying more on professional staff to run institutional services and operations. At the University of British Columbia (UBC), M&P staff now constitute the single largest workforce sector.

Through one-on-one interviews and document analysis, this research historically situates the growth and changing roles of professional M&P staff at the university. It also explores how they navigate their professional occupational and organizational identities within a blurred, or ‘third space’ (Whitchurch, 2013), at various levels of the university and how they cope with challenges they face in the workplace.
Preface

The research in this dissertation received a Behavioral Research Ethics Board (BREB) Certificate of Approval, H16-02379, October 26, 2016.

This dissertation is an original, unpublished, and independent work by the author, N. Vered.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTE</td>
<td>Agreement on Conditions and Terms of Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAPS</td>
<td>Association of Administrative and Professional Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMS</td>
<td>Alma Mater Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS</td>
<td>Administrative and Professional Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUA</td>
<td>Association of University Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVP</td>
<td>Associate Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BREB</td>
<td>Behavioral Research Ethics Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAUBO</td>
<td>Canadian Association of University Business Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>Canada Foundation for Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFO</td>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEF</td>
<td>Corporate Higher Education Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMEC</td>
<td>Council of Ministers of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTLT</td>
<td>Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUPE</td>
<td>Canadian Union of Public Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full-Time Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWI</td>
<td>General Wage Increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRMS</td>
<td>Human Resource Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;P</td>
<td>Management and Professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>Master of Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASM</td>
<td>Net Available Square Meters</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMS</td>
<td>Position Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFU</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>Student Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBC</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>UVic</td>
<td>University of Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vantage College</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Educational and Training</td>
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<td>VP</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Alison Taylor, for her sustained support, patience and guidance in helping to bring this research to fruition. Also, Drs. Shauna Butterwick and Fei Wang for helping me think in different ways about possibilities in formulating research results.

To Garnet Grosjean, for encouraging me to continue the journey when it seemed impossible.

I appreciate the time the research participants took to share personal stories and experiences of their working environments at UBC. To the AAPS team, my colleagues and at the university who had faith in the study and who were enthusiastic that their, and the participants’, voices would be heard.

Finally, to my husband and children who lived through, and supported me during, the thousands of hours and many years it took to accomplish this personal achievement.
Dedication

To my family and to the pursuit of life-long learning.
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Universities have undergone tremendous change over the last decade specifically in the areas of growing technology, internationalization, competition, student numbers, bureaucracy, and calls for accountability. These changes were coupled with fluctuating government funding to the higher education sector resulting in institutions implementing new public management (NPM) strategies and corporatization initiatives. Managing the rapidly changing higher education landscape triggered a rise in specialized administrative, management, and professional staff in new emerging or growing areas of higher education. Some of these areas include: internationalization; marketing; fundraising and development; community outreach; sophisticated IT systems to manage human resources, finances and facilities; revenue-generating venues; increased student services; and, new teaching and learning initiatives.

The University of British Columbia (UBC), a large, publicly-funded, research-intensive university located in British Columbia, Canada, is no exception. In 2008, M&P staff numbered 2,253 members (AAPS, 2009) or 24.5% of the university’s reported workforce of 11,980 employees (UBC, 2009). In 2018, these numbers had increased to 4,530 M&P staff or approximately 28% of the university’s total workforce complement of over 16,000 employees (UBC, Overview and Facts). They are now the single largest workforce sector on campus. These highly educated and skilled professionals develop, implement, and maintain policies, procedures, systems, and services vital to carrying out the day-to-day operations. As well, they help to carry out the current long-term strategic vision of the university, which is stated as:

Inspiring people, ideas, and actions for a better world [for the purpose of] pursuing excellence in research, learning and engagement to foster global citizenship and advance a sustainable and just society across British Columbia, Canada and the world (UBC,
Overview and Facts).

Yet, this burgeoning group of employees does not seem to fit neatly into either the faculty or unionized clerical and technical staff groups, but rather, sits in a blurred space between the two.

In institutional literature at UBC, all employees are divided into two distinct groups, or identities: faculty and staff. Generally, the term ‘faculty’ refers to all academic staff, both teaching and research, under the umbrella of the UBC Faculty Association, while the term ‘staff’ refers to all other employees deemed to be non-academic. Hence, staff includes technical and trades workers under the CUPE 116 trade union, clerical and administrative support staff under the CUPE 2950 trade union, and management and professional staff under the umbrella of the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS). The only employee group to enjoy unique recognition and a distinct employee label at the university is faculty.

However, embedded within the ranks of M&P staff members is a group of highly-educated and trained professionals who take active roles in the academic mission of the university, and whose positions require them to hold a graduate-level degree and/or specialized training, certification, or license. Despite official recognition of M&P staff as a distinct and unique employee group, and the growing importance of professional staff in the university’s strategic mission, its members are bundled under the generic term ‘staff’ in institutional literature. Sandwiched between faculty members and unionized staff, M&P staff occupy a blurred space affecting their occupational and organizational roles and identities. This research historically situates this employee sector’s rise at UBC and explores how these employees make sense of, and navigate, the challenges posed by their blurred positioning and professional identities at the university.
1.1 Background

Corporatization initiatives and new public management practices (NPM)—the introduction and adoption of private business sector, free-market management practices and values into public sector organizations—began sweeping through western universities in the 1980s, and continue to this day (Carroll & Beaton, 2000; Deem, 1998; Freeman, 2000). Increasingly, specialized professional expertise was required in the workplace to manage the demands resulting from institutional growth as well as these initiatives and practices introduced into the governance and structures of higher education. As a result, the University of British Columbia experienced a dramatic increase in its management and professional staff. From the decade between 2008/09 to 2017/18, this workforce sector increased in number from 2,932 to 4,530 individuals, an increase of over 54% (AAPS, 2018).

The adoption of business practices and NPM in publicly funded institutions, such as UBC, created a struggle to balance decreasing budgets and fierce competition for research grants, faculty members and students, with increased calls for greater accountability and transparency to taxpayers, granting agencies, students, parents, and the community at large. Along with these challenges, rapidly changing technology and new developments in teaching and learning practices added to the areas of expertise required to run universities. As a result, the numbers of professional staff continuously increased to handle emerging responsibilities for: managing complex financial, human resource and student information systems; managing research grants and industrial agreements; developing communications plans for both the internal and external university communities; driving internationalization initiatives; implementing marketing and fundraising campaigns; accommodating increased enrolments and resulting student services; developing and maintaining sophisticated technologies; and operating nonacademic campus
activities, such as residences, bookstores, sports and recreation centres, museums, and other community venues. Significant areas of M&P staff growth are discussed in Chapter 4.

Along with the shifting priorities which occurred as a result of corporatization efforts and NPM practices on university campuses and boards, there were also increased student enrolments and increased academic demands on faculty. As a result, most universities redeveloped their strategic plans to encompass the enormous changes taking place in the higher education environment. Strategic plans are essentially road maps, or sensegiving documents, which are developed and rolled out by senior administration so the university community can understand and make sense of the organization’s values, goals, and direction.

The term ‘sense making’ (Brown et al, 2015; Weick, 1995) describes the process by which meaning is understood, in this case by the university community, whereas ‘sense giving’ is the attempt to influence meaning construction by the community towards shared organizational goals (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Hence, the university’s strategic plans, or sensegiving documents, not only help direct the general mission and vision of the university but also include changes to human resource policies to address evolving developments in the workplace affecting employees’ roles, responsibilities, and experiences.

1.2 The Research Problem
University strategic plans divide employees into the binary of faculty and staff. As mentioned before, faculty members are generally understood to be employees in the academic domain. They hold sessional, tenure-track, or tenured positions dedicated to the teaching, learning, and research missions of the university. On the other hand, the term ‘staff member’ is not defined by the university but is generally considered to be all other employees whose roles do not fall precisely
into teaching or research roles. They are sometimes termed ‘non-academic’, despite contributing in various ways to the teaching, learning, and research missions of the university.

UBC strategic plans, and most university communications, also do not differentiate between different employee groups within the staff category, such as unionized clerical, trade or student employee groups or the management and professional employee group. Hence, this inclusive grouping within the largest and very diverse pool of workers at the university implies staff is a homogeneous group of employees (Leach 1976 in Gornall, 1999, p. 44; Thomas & Linstead, 2002). The division or binary that arises between faculty and staff, or academic and non-academic employees, creates a tiered hierarchy, a sense of ‘other’, or an ‘us and them’ working environment and relationship (Dobson, 2000; Szekeres, 2004). This arising space between binaries can become confused, or blurred, especially when employees cross existing boundaries. This conceptual space is also termed ‘third space’ (Whitchurch, 2011, 2013).

The concept of third space, as used by Whitchurch (2013) in her research on roles within Australian, UK, and American higher education administration, signifies a gap between traditional institutional working relationships and university and employee power structures. The concept captures spaces where roles do not fit neatly into existing organizations or career structures, thereby blurring the boundaries of responsibilities, roles, and identities.

While most employees at the university, whether they are faculty or staff, work in well-defined roles with clear lines of authority and working relationships within and across their respective employee groups, some professional staff members find themselves working across increasingly blurred boundaries between academic and non-academic roles. For example, many M&P develop, implement and manage large units and complex projects within the university that contribute to the creation and dissemination of knowledge and institutional capacity building, an
area once the domain of academic faculty. Many M&P employees have advanced degrees, specialized credentials, and bring significant expertise and experience to their areas of work. Many work between the professional, management, and academic domains, and contribute directly to the teaching, learning, and research missions of the university. One example at UBC is the professionals at the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT), who conduct research, supervise staff, manage budgets, and work across the traditional academic and nonacademic boundaries at the university. Some M&P may float between the unionized clerical/trade workers and the tenured faculty, but they belong to neither employee group -- “they are threshold people, who fall on or between the boundaries of categories” (Leach 1976, in Gornall 1999, p. 48).

Third space poses challenges for these professional staff, and the university as a whole, which manifests in lack of recognition, low morale, insufficient professional development, and high turnover rates. While sessional instructors also fall between the categories, this research was primarily concerned with M&P employees, who may struggle with the challenges in their ongoing day-to-day roles and in their efforts to make sense of, and construct, their professional organizational and professional occupational identities within blurred or third space.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to explore the research problem, the following questions and corresponding sub-questions framed this research:

1. What have been the changes in M&P staff numbers, roles and responsibilities over the last decade at the university?
2. Do M&P staff members perceive themselves to be in a blurred or ‘third space’ at the individual, unit, and/or institutional level? If so, how is this experienced?

3. How do M&P staff members make sense of both their professional occupational and organizational positions and identities? Are the two forms of professional identity complementary?

4. What are some of the challenges faced by M&P staff members in navigating their professional occupational and professional organizational identities at the university?

5. How can M&P employees develop a stronger, more productive, working relationship with the university, AAPS, and their chosen occupations? In turn, how can UBC and AAPS provide more constructive sensegiving to ‘third space’ employees to help them to navigate the university environment?

1.4 Connection to Practice

This research was a personal journey to make sense of what appeared to me as a third space or dissonance between the professional organizational and professional occupational identities of management and professional staff working at the University of British Columbia. UBC was chosen for this single-case study as it is an environment in which I worked for over 20 years as an M&P staff member. Sandwiched between faculty members with whom I generally worked collaboratively, and the unionized staff members I supervised, the question continually arose: How do I, and my colleagues, make sense of our professional identities, or the knowledge, experience, and contributions we bring to the workplace, in an institutional environment where academic credentials, hierarchical positioning, and NPM initiatives seem to be valued over, and may come in conflict with, expertise in professional and management arenas?
I was an M&P staff member at UBC from 1994 to 2006 and again from 2008 to 2018. I was involved in both public and private sector higher education management for over 25 years. My last appointment involved responsibilities for financial management, human resource management, facility management, strategic planning, and policy and procedure development and implementation. As an integral member of the department, I supported approximately 60 faculty members and oversaw close to 65 staff members in three different collective bargaining units. My role extended past the department level to the faculty and university levels, where I sat on multiple committees with wide representation from diverse units and employee groups from across the campus. I was also a Board member of UBC’s Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS), which is the association that manages the relationship and negotiates the collective agreement between UBC and its approximately 4,530 M&P staff members. For the last six years of my career at UBC, I also held the unique position of being both an employee and doctoral student.

Throughout my career in higher education in various capacities and in several institutions, I held diverse roles, ranging from management staff member, board member, and committee member to instructor, senior administrator, consultant, and student. Navigating multiple roles was always challenging and the lines of responsibility, communication, and authority were often blurred and confusing. I often felt I worked in a third space at various times in my career and struggled with conflicts between my professional organizational and occupational identities. While there were certainly many benefits to working in higher education, there were also challenges to being an M&P staff member at UBC.

When I began this research, several personal experiences came to mind that interrupted my personal concept of the role management and professional staff play in the university. These
experiences triggered a process leading me to question my professional identities and my positioning at the university.

One example occurred when starting my last position at the university. The department had over 35 committees and participation was primarily limited to faculty members. This was surprising given that approximately 65 staff members, including a dozen M&P staff, were effectively excluded from important committees making decisions involving departmental operations, policies, procedures, students, and staff. For me, this exclusion indicated not only the lack of recognition given to staff members, but I also found particularly troublesome the lack of voice given to the M&P staff members who were hired specifically for their professional expertise in strategic areas of the department. This gap created a blurred positioning between occupational and organizational identities of M&P at the unit level.

One exception to staff participation on department committees at the time was the Staff Committee. This committee had been formed by the unionized staff as a direct result of feeling excluded from department committees and the decision-making process, specifically to address issues of concern to them. M&P staff were not invited to be on the Staff Committee because the unionized founders did not consider M&P employees to be staff. In this case, M&P staff members were ultimately excluded from almost all department committees because they were not considered faculty or staff. This example represented the unique positioning experienced by M&P staff at the unit level.

At a university level, I participated in an international mentoring initiative to train higher education professionals in a developing country, representing UBC in the participant roster. I was ultimately denied permission by the university’s legal office to use the university’s logo in the organization’s graduation program because I was not a faculty member at UBC. This
experience interrupted my sense of both professional organizational and occupational identities – I was recognized as a university professional by an international organization while UBC did not recognize my credentials and participation. This particular instance represented another example of not fitting into a clearly defined space, this time at the university level.

In another initiative that sent UBC staff members on international volunteer missions, I worked with the Director of a community college in a developing country to help modernize its curriculum. Because of my affiliation with UBC, I was given wide access to the Director and senior leadership at the college. However, despite representing UBC, the university mandated I use vacation time while participating in an organizationally sanctioned initiative. The question that arose here was: Was I a university professional working for, and representing, UBC internationally or was I a professional individual, working on personal time? This was yet another example of not fitting neatly into existing organizational categories at both the university and international levels.

The instances above highlight the often confusing and blurred positioning I felt at multiple levels of the university. I believe my experience and long affiliation with management and professional staff at UBC, and my positioning within the university environment as both an employee and a doctoral student, provided me with the tools to embark on this journey. This research explores how M&P staff fit into the higher education hierarchy at UBC, how they make sense of their unique professional positions and identities within third space at the university, and how they navigate the challenges of two identities.
1.5 Significance of Study

Higher education institutions will recognize that they cannot risk failing to recruit and retain the highest quality managers by denying them parity of esteem. There will need to be overt acknowledgement that a successful academic institution requires more than just high-quality academics. (Lauwerys, 2002, p. 97)

Research on higher education professional and management employees, who are not faculty, is a fairly recent area of study, occurring just over the last fifteen years or so. Before this, there was a noticeable absence of literature on these employees except in their relationship with faculty members (Szekeres, 2004, 2006; Westley, 1990). Initial research on the emerging importance, and rising numbers, of university ‘non-academic’ staff was primarily done in the UK, Australia, and later in the United States (Conway, 2002; Dobson, 2000; Gornall, 1999; Lauwerys, 2002; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Whitchurch, 2013). While all university non-academic staff are under-studied in the literature, this research focuses only on M&P staff within the university environment and broadens the dialogue to a Canadian context.

This research also extends the current literature on the relationship between sensemaking and sensegiving, and the professional identities of third-space M&P. While these concepts are discussed further in Chapter Three, in brief, sensemaking is an attempt to confront and understand a surprising or confusing situation (Weick, 1995) and sensegiving attempts to influence the sensemaking of others (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Current research in the area of sensemaking and sensegiving acknowledges there are few studies on sensemaking in groups and for stakeholders within institutions, in this case M&P staff at UBC, and that most studies usually center on organizations’ leaders and those in senior administrative positions (Maitlis &
Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

UBC provided the site for this case study because it is the higher education environment with which I am most familiar, where I experienced third space, and where I attempted to make sense of my role as a management and professional staff member. For me, one of the sensemaking triggers of the changes taking place at UBC, resulting in the rise of M&P staff, was the increasing corporatization of the university and the implementation of new managerialism, or NPM. However, I found most literature published on the impact of these phenomena in universities primarily centred on how it affected institutional governance at the board level, in addition to the management roles undertaken by faculty members situated in senior administrative positions (Deem, 1998; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Hancock & Hellawell, 2003; Winter, 2009). Very little research has been conducted on corporatization’s effects on ‘new professionals’, the non-academic, non-senior, management, and professional staff in higher education.

Currently, the few references to staff, let alone M&P staff, in the literature usually concern their relationship with faculty members or senior administration (Aronowitz, 1998; Castree & Sparek, 2000; Freeman, 2000; Giroux, 2003; Neem et. al, 2012; Steck, 2003). Considering M&P staff are the largest employee sector in many universities, and primarily responsible for day-to-day operations and the implementation of the institution’s strategic plans, I wondered if this lack of presence in the literature filtered down into their working environment and sense of professional identity. I wanted to make sense of how M&P members worked between the increasingly blurred boundaries in academia, to make sense of some of the challenges they faced, and to explore how they navigated any dissonance, or cognitive gap, in constructing their identities.
This research extends the dialogue on third space university employees (Whitchurch, 2013) to the Canadian context, and attempts to give voice to a potentially untapped and substantive set of highly trained and educated M&P staff members who occupy unique and growing areas within higher education institutions. It highlights some of the challenges faced by this employee sector and how it impacts their professional identities and the university as a whole: lack of recognition, low motivation, and high turnover rates. The dearth of empirical studies on the professional organizational and occupational identities of M&P staff, and the potential ramifications for university policy and practice, suggests a gap in academic and practitioner literature.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This first chapter introduces the initial background to the issues, the study’s problem and research questions, connection to practice, and the significance of the study for both M&P employees and higher education policy and practice. Chapter Two explores the relevant literature on the main concepts of corporatization and NPM, and professions and new professionalism. It examines what other researchers have written about these concepts and then maps how they relate to, and have changed, the face of higher education. Chapter Three explores the conceptual theories of third space in higher education, professional occupational and organizational identities of management and professional staff within higher education institutions, and, finally, the conceptual theories of sensemaking and sensegiving. Chapter Four outlines the research setting in more detail and the rationale for the research method and the methodology used. Some delimitations of the study are also discussed in terms of insider status, role duality, and reflexivity. Chapters Five and Six contain research findings obtained through the one-on-one
interviews with the 15 participants, as well as document analyses of various strategic plans, surveys, annual reports, and published statistics. These findings are discussed in terms of the concepts and theories found in the literature reviews of Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Seven provides a summary and conclusions to this study and discusses some limitations in the research, implications and recommendations for practice, as well as avenues for future research.
Corporatization and new public management (NPM), or ‘new managerialism’, are often cited by researchers as significant contributing factors to the changing face of public-sector higher education. In support, the first section of this chapter explores what various writers have said about these concepts over the past several decades. The sub-sections examine the historical roots of corporatization in higher education, and the effects and manifestations of corporatization on the workplace. The second section of this chapter discusses the traditional notion of professions, the rise of credentialism and the professionalization of workforces over the last century, and finally, the emergence of new professionals who now hold unique positions in the higher education landscape.

2.1 Corporatization, NPM, and New Managerialism

Corporatization in higher education is generally considered to be the introduction of free-market management practices, taken from the business world, into the operations and decision-making processes of universities (Carroll & Beaton, 2000; Freeman, 2000; Steck, 2003). One strategy employed by universities is the implementation of NPM, or new managerialism, whereby the organization adopts a business-like hierarchical structure governed by management personnel and values, in place of the traditional higher education model governed by academic faculty, collegial governance, individuality, independence, and academic freedom (Deem, 1998; Winter, 2009).
2.1.1 Corporatization

Corporatization can be described as a process, a state of being, or a culture within higher education. When researching the effects of corporatization on graduate students in an American university, Freeman (2000) defines corporatization as “a series of developments that have made the presence of corporations on university campuses and boards more prevalent and powerful … by introducing free-market management practices aimed at making universities more efficient and profitable” (pp. 246-247). In Canada, corporatization is also termed ‘commercialization’ or the linking of universities and colleges to the private sector (Turk, 2000, p. 4).

When corporate culture becomes embedded within the policies and practices of higher education, critics see this shift as a fundamental change in the ethos of the university and a challenge to the values of democracy on which universities were traditionally built. Within the Canadian context, Giroux (2003), defines corporate culture as “an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that functions politically and pedagogically to both govern organizational life through senior managerial control and to produce compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens” (p. 181). This definition places responsibility for corporatization at the senior administration level of universities and highlights the effect on institutional employees.

Steck’s definition (2003) of a corporatized university also squarely places the responsibility for corporatization into the hands of university administration. He claims corporatization and managerial practices are not values violently imposed on higher education against its will, but rather a system adopted willingly, at least on the part of senior administration, as a response to political and economic realities:
… an institution that is characterized by processes, decisional criteria, expectations, organizational culture, and operating practices that are taken from, and have their origins in, the modern business corporation. These traits are characterized by the entry of the university into marketplace relationships and by the use of market strategies in university decision making. (p. 74)

In their research on Canadian universities, Carroll and Beaton (2000) also directly implicate hands-on corporate involvement in campus activities, including at the board level, with influencing and changing higher education through free-market practices. For example, at UBC, the eleven provincially appointed members of the university’s Board of Directors are composed of lawyers, chartered accounts, CEOs, CFOs, and other business people from such areas as banking, investments, transportation, real estate, and non-profits. Free market practices, or management decisions based on supply and demand as dictated by competition, are also evident at the senior administrative level of UBC. One example is the opening of Vantage College in 2014. Vantage College, an internal institution aimed at preparing international students to mainstream into the university’s regular curriculum, was created to: 1) attract international students to UBC in order to firmly set the university on the highly competitive global stage of international higher education; and, 2) bring in much needed funds through the high tuition rates charged these students.

In response to corporatization in higher education, its critics proclaim the apocalyptic end to traditional university values, bemoaning the loss of an idyllic institution from which there seems to be no recovery. Academics are particularly concerned with the “shift from collegial or democratic governance in flat structures, to hierarchical models in response to market and state demands that erode traditional conceptions of professional autonomy over work in relation to
both teaching and research” (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 325). Manifestations of corporatization in universities include NPM top-down management and oversight by senior administration in all activities of the university: teaching, research, student services, and administration. Accountability and performance measurement standards now permeate all academic, financial, and human resource areas of higher education.

Over the last several decades, many researchers have produced literature outlining the supposedly villainous phenomenon of ‘corporatization’, most of it lamenting the loss of autonomy and power to faculty and how the professorial ranks and the learning environment are collapsing. A cataclysmic and violent fall of the ivory tower is predicted through works with descriptive, and sometimes comical, titles such as: The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe (Jacoby, 1987); The University in Ruins (Readings, 1996); The Last Professor: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities (Donaghue, 2008); The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom and the End of the American University (Schrecker, 2010); The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All Administrative University and Why It Matters (Ginsberg, 2011); and, How the American University was Killed, in Five Easy Steps (Scott, 2012).

Literature on the impact of university corporatization on employees has primarily centred on how it affects faculty members and students. Very little research has been conducted on corporatization’s effects professional staff in higher education, although they are often constructed as part of the problem of corporatization (Aronowitz, 1998; Castree & Sparek, 2000; Freeman, 2000; Giroux, 2003; Steck, 2003).

More recently, some researchers consider corporatization as an ongoing, inevitable change in the fundamental structure and governance of higher education. Some of these authors
(Castree & Sparek, 2000; Neem et al, 2012; Turk, 2000; Steck, 2003) are attempting to weigh both the benefits and challenges of this phenomenon that has taken up permanent residence within universities.

### 2.1.2 Historical Roots of Corporatization

Corporatization is not a new phenomenon within university settings. Higher education institutions have long been influenced by social, economic, and political factors (Castree & Sparek, 2000; Steck, 2003). Steck (2003) notes “the linkage between business interests and the university as a social situation – particularly leading research universities and professional schools – is rooted deep in the modern history of the American university” (p. 74). Even as early as 1918, work connecting the worlds of higher education and business was explored by economist and social critic Thorstein Veblen in his work, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men* (1918). Later in the century, it was common for successful business entrepreneurs to donate vast sums of money to universities in exchange for the naming of buildings, endowments, chairs, programs, and even entire institutions. In Canada, studies have also shown there is a long history of corporate involvement in university governance, particularly at elite institutions (Carroll & Beaton, 2000), and as previously noted, UBC is no exception.

Social and political forces also influenced universities over the course of subsequent decades, for example: research units aiding government efforts during WW II in the 1940s; the expansion of higher education to accommodate large numbers of returning war veterans in the 1940-1950s; political and cultural upheavals during the 1960s; increased research and development needs for burgeoning industrial, agricultural, and technological advances; and,

The corporatization, or commercialization, of higher education in Canada emerged in the early 1980s with the report, *Publication of Partnership for Growth*, in 1984 (Newson, 2000). This report, sponsored by the newly formed Corporate Higher Education Forum (CHEF), “marked the beginning of a concerted effort to bring about significant changes in government policy toward higher education” (p. 187). A 1988 report by the Science Council of Canada, *Winning in a World Economy: University-Industry Interaction and Economic Renewal in Canada*, called for closer university-industry interaction, stating, “it is imperative that the university’s knowledge be put to work for winning in a world economy” (p. 3). The turning point for corporatization in Canada’s publicly funded higher education system came in 1999 when recommendations were presented to the Prime Minister’s Advisory Council on Science and Technology, Expert Panel on the Commercialization of University Research, *Public Investment in University Research: Reaping the Benefits* (Graham, 2000). One of the recommendations was for universities to redefine their missions by adding the term ‘innovation’ to the existing ones of teaching, research, and service. The following year, in May 2000, corporatization or commercialization visibly manifested itself when 2,200 people and 647 corporate exhibitors attended the first World Education Market in Vancouver, BC, with the intent of building relationships between business and education (Turk, p. 5).

The links between business and higher education will continue to grow as government funding fluctuates or declines and as educational institutions rely more heavily on donors, and corporate or industrial funding for facilities and research. The changes and impacts of corporate values and NPM on higher education will be explored in the next sections; however, the point
here is that despite the outcry from researchers about the imagined loss of a golden age or utopia in higher education, it seems there was never a time when universities were free of political, social, or corporate influence (Castree & Sparek, 2000; Steck, 2003). Corporatization and NPM are long-term influence impacting all levels of employees across campuses, including faculty and professional staff, and is arguably the reason for the dramatic increase in the number of professional staff as well.

2.1.3 Effects of Corporatization

If businesses and corporations have long influenced universities, why is there such an outcry now? Steck (2003) believes corporate values and connections to the business community have become so extensive on university campuses that they drastically affect the operations, culture, and practices of higher education (pp. 74-75). Freeman (2000) argues that the corporatization of universities is not a new phenomenon, but rather “it is occurring in a very different political, economic, technological, cultural and ideological context than in previous decades” (pp. 247-8). A common expectation in universities is that government funding will continue to decrease, enrolments will increase, internationalization and technology will expand, and there will be greater calls for accountability and transparency. Giroux (2003) takes the effects of corporatization’s expansion a step further and foresees “an especially dangerous turn at the current historical moment, one that threatens both the substance of democracy as fundamental to the most basic freedom and civil liberties, and the very meaning of higher education” (p. 179). Canadian researchers Polster and Newson (2009) believe that
corporatization converts universities from public-servicing institutions into knowledge businesses, that is, it changes the university from a publicly accessible resource for social
development that benefits a diversity of groups in a wide variety of ways into an institution that produces products and services for specific markets and paying clients (p. 7).

Most scholars believe the current trend in universities is unprecedented, ongoing, and its impact is profoundly changing the face of higher education (Aronowitz, 1998; Carroll & Beaton, 2000; Freeman, 2000; Giroux, 2003; Polster & Newson, 2009; Steck, 2003). Corporate values are changing the roles and responsibilities of both staff and faculty members within university communities as well as affecting their workloads, interactions with each other, and their professional identities. These changes are manifested in the areas outlined below, and more specifically, in the implementation of new public management initiatives, which has led to the rise of new managerialism and new professionals.

2.1.4 Manifestations of Corporatization

What are the changes in the higher education environment that have occurred over the last several decades as a result of the introduction of corporate values? “Corporatization describes not one or another single element … but a range of many features that link together in a systematic fashion” (Steck, 2003, p. 71). Hence the changes are numerous, complex, and despite a growing body of research, the ultimate impacts on higher education are not fully understood. Below is a synopsis, certainly not exhaustive, of what many researchers from the United States (US), Canada, United Kingdom (UK), and Australia agree are some of the main influences, predominately negative, that corporatization has had on universities, including the roles and responsibilities of both faculty and M&P staff, today:
a) *The language of governance at universities is shifting to that used in the corporate sector.* For example, in some institutions, students are now often referred to as ‘customers’ or ‘clients’; faculty members as ‘knowledge producers’; lectures as ‘courseware’; and donations of gifts and endowments as ‘investments’. In human resource practices, terminations in staffing are now the result of ‘downsizing’, ‘restructuring’, ‘realignment’ or ‘reorganization’ (Castree & Sparek, 2000; Giroux, 2003; Polster 2003; Steck, 2003). The use of private-sector, corporate language in publicly funded higher institutions is an example of how everyday working relationships between faculty, staff, students, and the community have become more corporatized.

b) *Competition among faculty members and institutions for increasingly scarce research funding leads more and more researchers to collaborate with industrial partners.* Critics claim capitalist ventures are a conflict of interest, as institutions change focus from: the traditional practices of teaching, research and service to that of profit making; from an environment of collegiality and transparency to one of competition and secrecy, and; from knowledge production for the social good to research and development for personal gain and the private sector (Polster, 2003; Polster & Newson, 2009). In Canada, some researchers are required to seek funding from industrial partners as a condition for obtaining public funding. For example, the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), requires researchers to raise 20% of the project funding from other sources; in the Sciences this is primarily from industrial partners.

c) *The quality of education in publicly funded institutions is diminishing.* ‘Star’ researchers increasingly withdraw from the classroom and spend less time devoted to undergraduate education, student advising, curriculum development, and participation on key decision-
making committees. Programs and courses in the poorly-funded humanities are disappearing in favour of those funded by or beneficial to the sciences and the private sector (Nussbaum, 2010). In some cases, vocational training is replacing traditional intellectual inquiry to meet job market demands. Scant public funding is causing tuition fees to rise, especially for international students, while university infrastructure, such as library resources and student services, erode. Hence, critics claim students are now effectively paying more for less (Giroux, 2011; Polster, 2003).

d) More corporate involvement in higher education is detrimental to the public and social good. As government funding to public higher education fluctuates, the gap is increasingly closed with donations, industry funding, and for-profit initiatives. In some cases, instead of industry investing in their own in-house research that develops facilities and expertise to boost the national economy, they move their research to publicly-funded institutions. This trend is more prevalent in the sciences, where large industrial grants are extended to faculty members in exchange for research done by graduate students, in university facilities. This is problematic in that profits are retained in the private sector but the increased costs to manage the required university labour and facilities is absorbed by institutions. This, in turn, takes badly needed resources away from campus services such as libraries, student support, courses/programs, and facilities (Polster, 2003, 2006; Polster & Newson, 2009).

e) Faculty members are losing their voice, academic freedom, autonomy, and power in university settings as control shifts to senior administration. Policy, procedures, and strategic visioning for higher education is increasingly swayed by corporate influence on university governing boards and at the senior administrative levels. Course and program
content, along with research agendas, are changing as industrial partners control the flow of dollars into university coffers. In the US, even the viability of tenure is being debated and more and more faculty are hired on short-term contracts (Ginsberg, 2011). In Canada, the number of contract faculty has also increased significantly over the last several decades as a result of declining government funding in higher education institutions (Foster & Birdsell Bauer, 2018).

f) University culture and priorities are changing as economics control the student experience and learning environment. Universities are increasingly operating for-profit businesses with many campuses filled with fast food courts, retail shopping, athletic and performing arts facilities, and student residences. For example, at UBC many of the food venues traditionally run by AMS (Alma Mater Society) or UBC Food Services are now outsourced to private food vendors. Another example is that of individual units selling text books and supplies to increase departmental revenues. Tools for teaching and learning, such as distance education and on-line and mixed-mode technologies, are being developed and slowly replacing traditional models. The variety and frequency of course offerings are increasingly dictated by the economic interests of the university, which influences course viability, faculty availability, and faculty teaching/research interests. Many critics believe these changes are a major shift away from the core mission of universities -- the creation and dissemination of knowledge (Neem et al, 2012; Turk, 2000).

g) University operating costs are rising while available resources are funneled to support increasing bureaucracy and administrative bloat, or ‘managerialism’. ‘Accountability’ is a current buzz-word in university governance and UBC is no exception. The words
‘accountability’ and ‘accountable’ appear nine times throughout the university strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018). It is defined under the university’s values as “being responsible for our conduct and actions and delivering upon our respective and reciprocal commitments” (p. 11). The document states UBC will “establish and implement visible, system-wide accountability mechanisms and metrics that help us assess and manage our progress” (p. 42). Such mechanisms are responsible for an increased bureaucracy and the staff needed to support corporate mechanisms imposed to measure efficiency: performance evaluations for all employees; complex reporting requirements both internally and externally (e.g., funding agencies, donors and the general public); outcome assessments for student learning; and endless statistics and data gathering to measure and analyze enrolments, recruitment targets, and cost/benefit ratios.

Some scholars believe the practices of accountability negatively impact university operations (Castree & Sparek, 2000). Increased bureaucracy and control mechanisms are also reflected in the dramatic increase in senior administration positions, increased administrative burden on staff and faculty, and diminishing resources for core academic activities like teaching and research (Polster & Newman, 2009). In tandem, the number of M&P staff hired to develop, implement, and maintain new systems and to support academics and bureaucratic systems has increased.

Given the range of largely negative elements of corporatization listed above, one wonders if corporatization has any redeeming features or positive contributing elements to higher education. Economist Richard Vedder believes “corporatization is a loaded term, too often used in a pejorative sense. Much so-called corporatization works to make higher education more competitive, efficient, and affordable – not bad attributes at all” (Neem et al, 2012, p. 19). For
example, Castree and Sparek (2000) believe the notion of accountability should be used to encourage intellectual responsibility, and the university community needs to “respond accountably in this age of accountability” to both internal university members and external stakeholders, such as industrial partners, government, granting agencies, and the general wider public (p. 227). Steck (2003) argues universities can no longer pretend to be outside the mainstream capitalist economy when, in fact, they are businesses and look increasingly to the corporate world for guidance and solutions to organizational issues (pp. 75-77).

Some scholars “refuse the more apocalyptic, stygian version of the corporatization narrative” (Castree & Sparek, 2000, p. 227) and do not believe the ‘university is in ruins’ (Readings, 1998) when they see enrolments up, institutions growing and expanding, internationalization initiatives proliferating, and endowments back on the rise. My own observations at UBC over the past few decades saw massive growth in research funding, student enrolments, building projects, and endowments. I also witnessed the forward movement of research projects, as well as facilities and equipment acquisition, which would not have happened without the aid of corporate contributions. I believe a smart, balanced approach to corporatization is a chance to reimagine university space (Freeman, 2000; Newson et al, 2012; Sporn, 1996), and to turn “the academy inside out” (Castree & Sparek, 2000, p. 228) through university and community alliances that benefit both the institution and the mission of higher education. Whatever the ongoing influences corporatization, NPM, and new managerialism have on higher education, they clearly have an impact on employees and the working environment in universities.
2.1.5 New Public Management and New Managerialism

Beginning in the 1980s, researchers interested in higher education governance mainly focused on senior level university administration or on faculty serving at both central and department level administration (Rhoades & Sporn, 2002; Sporn, 1996). In the last decade, there has been a greater increase in the number of senior administrative level positions (e.g., Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice-Presidents, Vice-Provosts) and faculty, department or unit level positions (e.g., Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, Associate Heads) than at any other time. While the majority of these positions are still held by faculty members, non-academics from the private sector are increasingly hired to fulfill the growing number of management and professional positions being created. The changes taking place have given rise to research literature on new managerialism in higher education (Deem, 1998, 2001; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Hancock & Hellawell, 2003; Saunders, 2006; Winter, 2009).

NPM or new managerialism refers to the “adoption by public sector organizations of organizational forms, technologies, management practices, and values more commonly found in the private business sector” (Deem, 1998, p. 47). While new managerialism can certainly be found in many types of public sector organizations, what makes it unique in higher education is it chaffs against traditions valued, at least by academic faculty, such as collegial governance, individuality, independence, and academic freedom (Winter, 2009). In her research into new managerialism and higher education, Deem (1998) comments, the notion that the activities and cultures of universities either required managing or were, in any meaningful sense, ‘managed’ would have been regarded as heretical [and] those running universities were regarded as academic leaders not managers or chief executives (p. 47).
As public universities, specifically in Canada, are increasingly required to operate with fluctuating government funding and changing regulations around tuition fees (Fisher, Rubenson, Jones & Shanahan, 2009), higher education leaders, whether faculty or non-faculty, continually adopt business strategies from the for-profit sector. Hence, new managerialism is marked by corporate management practices and traits such as: strict financial oversight and attainment of budget targets; increased accountability; auditing for quality of products and services; competition among stakeholders; monitoring for greater efficiencies in operations; and systems to measure outcomes and staff performances (Deem 1998; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Winter, 2009). In order to carry out the enormous changes happening within universities, not only do the number of senior and mid-level academic leaders increase, but the number of management and professional staff, or new professionals, also increases.

2.2 Professions and New Professionals

As discussed, the sheer growth of universities over the past several decades, along with the introduction of corporatization initiatives and new public management systems, or managerialism, in universities, are factors that contributed to the emergence of a sector of management and professional employees between the ranks of unionized clerical and trades workers, and faculty members. These ‘new professionals’ (Gornall, 1999) often hold advanced degrees and credentials, and unique expertise and experience in new, specialized areas within higher education institutions. This section explores how the traditional notion of a profession has evolved over time, as well as how workers have become increasingly specialized and acquired credentials to mark the expertise required to carry out their roles, leading to the rise of new professionals, particularly at the UBC.
2.2.1 Professions and Professionalization

The concept of what constitutes a profession has evolved since ancient times when people altruistically devoted their lives to the betterment of society in the traditional fields of medicine, science, academia, law, and religion (Friedson, 1999, 2001; Larson, 1977; Parsons, 1939). Over the centuries, new occupational professions emerged from the old professions, creating specialized areas of expertise in fields such as engineering, architecture, accounting, and teaching. Modern professions developed when specialized educational training arose within trades and occupations, leading to such diverse professions as pharmacists, nurses, social workers, librarians, psychologists, and computing experts (Evetts, 2003). Abbot (1989) theorized professions were simply one division of labour that emphasized the acquisition of abstract knowledge.

The process that transforms a modern-day trade or occupation into a profession involves some of the same concepts which identified professions in ancient times:

1. Acceptable qualifications and credentials through recognized training, usually university.

2. Membership in a professional body or association that advocates for its members and oversees ethical conduct standards.

3. Full-time or lifetime commitment to the occupation.

4. ‘Occupational closure’ or ‘labor market shelter’ preventing entry to the profession from outsiders and the unqualified.

5. High degree of autonomy, control over own work, and professional development.

(Evetts, 1999, 2003; Friedson, 1999, 2001; Larson, 1977; Parsons, 1939)
While professional employees have been part of the university fabric for many years, their numbers and the diversity of the work they do has grown, resulting in a significant workforce outside the perimeters of faculty and unionized employee contracts and working agreements. Over the last two decades, new positions developed that require specialized knowledge and training, membership in professional organizations, and professional commitment to both the occupation and the institution. At UBC, new professionals now occupy key positions in rapidly growing areas such as Information Systems and Technology, Research and Facilitation, Student Management, Education Programming, Accounting, Information Services, Human Resources, Business Development, Scientific Engineering, Counselling and Psychology, and Media Services (see Appendix A).

In keeping with the requirements of professionals, most of them: a) hold an undergraduate or graduate-level university degree and/or specialized knowledge and training; b) are members in professional associations; c) have high degrees of responsibility, autonomy, and take part in professional development; d) work within a sheltered labour market that requires specific qualifications for their positions; and, e) have an implied commitment to both their occupations and the organization as outlined in the Vision Statement of the Agreement on Conditions and Terms of Employment (ACTE) between the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS) and UBC (ACTE, 2014-2019, p. 1):
Table 2-1: ACTE Vision Statement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Champion the vision together</th>
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<tr>
<td>Realize the vision together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share the vision together</td>
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The University of British Columbia and the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff, having created a common vision to their relationship, will:

- **Champion the vision together**
- **Realize the vision together**
- **Share the vision together**

The key elements of the vision are to:

<table>
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<th>Develop</th>
<th>a climate which values continuous improvement and fosters individual and University growth.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include</td>
<td>assurance of respect, ethical values and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfill</td>
<td>the need for meaningful and equitable recognition of the contributions of Management and Professional staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flourish</td>
<td>by integrating the experience of Management and Professional staff into the decision-making processes of the University of British Columbia.</td>
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</tbody>
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We recognize that focusing on our vision will assist us in addressing differences in a constructive manner.

Since one of the methods used in this research involved interviews with selected M&P at UBC with graduate level degrees and/or specialized training, and who belonged to professional associations, it was important to look at what constitutes ‘credentials’ and the concept of closure in professional communities.

### 2.2.2 Credentialism and Closure

Credentialism and social closure are two concepts in the process of professionalization explored in depth by Canadian sociologist Raymond Murphy (1988). While the original theories were developed by Max Weber, a German sociologist, Murphy extends the discourse in his 1988
work, *Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion*, by comparing the work of two researchers: Frank Parkin, a British sociologist; and, Randall Collins, an American sociologist.

Weber primarily considered the traditional professions such as medicine, law, and the clergy, whereby those individuals were formally credentialed through a higher education process and membership in professional guilds or associations. These professionals belonged to status groups that effectively “monopolized advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders” (Murphy, 1988, p. 8). This form of social closure is termed ‘credentialist exclusion’ by Parkin (p. 11), and Collins argues “members of a status group share a common culture and sense of identity based on status equality” (p. 12).

However, Collins also believes the content of higher education credentials for professionals often has little bearing on work requirements, such that the “acquired status culture, life-style, and social honour [are] unrelated to job performance” (p. 329). Parkin, on the other hand, interprets credentials as marketable expertise driven by market forces and the scarcity of skills relative to demand. In his view, social status and rewards are garnered through the market and not solely on educational credentials. While Parkin’s view of credentials seems more corporate and modern in nature than that of Collins, his interpretation is actually narrower and more traditional in focus. Parkin believes the credentialed hold a legal monopoly on their professional services through specific education and a representative association. While Collins broadly views credentialism as *any* formal education diploma required for a position in an organization and for which there may, or may not, be a representative association for those incumbents either inside or outside the organization, e.g., holders of general university degrees.
Murphy (1988) acknowledges the nature of credentials has changed due to new kinds of knowledge and new ways to acquire knowledge.

Some researchers state that the requirement to hold higher education credentials for various types of employment is a form of “creeping credentialism” (Marshall, 2004, p. 77). Marshall compares Collins’ view of creeping credentialism, as the unnecessary inflation of specific credentials required by employers, with Parkin, who believes the rise in credential expectations by employers, specifically in the knowledge economy, is the result of a legitimate increase in the credentials required for various jobs and professions.

Also relevant to this research is Murphy’s suggestion (1988) that the social closure effected through corporate associations and unions is based on the exclusionary device of formal education credentials. He clarifies that:

… unions are associations of workers, whereas corporatist credentialed groups are associations of those claiming professional status. Whereas unions have historically organized the under-privileged and thereby promoted equality, corporatist credentialed groups have organized the privileged and are forces promoting inequality … (p. 188).

At UBC, the main employee groups are both unionized and corporatist groups. Employees in the technical trades, clerical work, and student positions are unionized under the external organizations of CUPE 116, 2950, and 2780, respectively. Faculty are represented by the Faculty Association, a voluntarily recognized union under the Labour Relations Code of British Columbia. M&P employees are represented by a corporatist group, the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS), which is loosely based on both credentials and scope of responsibilities.
2.2.3 New Professionals

The category of professional has undergone changes since the time of Murphy (1988), with the emergence of new professionals in the workplace. The phrase ‘new professionals’ was coined by Lynn Gornall (1999), an early researcher in the area of university management and professional staff working in the UK higher education system. She acknowledges that many of these professionals have advanced degrees, specialized credentials, and bring expertise and experience to their areas of work. Hence, the traditional labels of ‘non-academic’ and ‘non-teaching’ negatively group a heterogeneous group of specialized staff into categories imply “unequal value and differences in perceived status” (p. 44). Gornall (1999) calls this workforce sector “‘new professionals’ because their backgrounds are often specialist or discipline-based – in media, library, IT, training, development, or subject teaching – but also because their professional skills are applied in a new strategic and practical context” (p. 45).

Conway (2000), an Australian researcher, states that the existing roles of new professionals need further clarification in terms of the value they contribute to institutional management. She believes administrators in any field experience the same issues as those in higher education; however, what makes new professionals unique is their link to the academic domains of teaching and learning (Conway, 2002, p. 15). Conway (2000) notes administrative roles in Australian higher education were only recognized as distinct occupations starting in the mid-1970s, and most of them emerged from within the academic profession.

Szekeres (2004, 2006), also researching Australian higher education institutions, discusses how the corporatization of universities over the last five to ten years has given rise to
new forms of public management which, in turn, necessitate the growth of professionals with specific expertise within higher education institutions in areas such as technology and marketing.

Sporn (1996) analyzes one European university culture and its transition from a traditional hierarchical organization managed by academics to a more business-like model managed by non-academic professionals. She believes the integration of the two cultures will steer “university leadership in a new direction combining strategic and symbolic management actions” (p. 41).

Despite the consensus in various institutions around the world that new professionals hold a unique identity and add value to higher education, universities generally do not differentiate between them and unionized staff, in either their strategic plans or human resource policies. The trend over the last several decades is to practice an “all staff ethos” in an attempt to be inclusive and redress the traditional “upstairs/downstairs imbalance” traditionally found within the faculty/staff binary at universities (Gornall, 1999, p. 48). Both Freeman (2000) and Castree and Sparek (2000) make the point that conscious recognition of diverse identities on university campuses, or polyphony—the distinct perspectives between faculty and management and professional staff—is required. Both researchers claim the homogenizing ‘we’, arising in university terminology, is both erroneous and problematic.

In her research on professional administrators and managers in UK higher education, Celia Whitchurch (2004, 2008, & 2013) acknowledges institutional structure and culture have changed dramatically over the last few decades. She explores the changing identities of third space professional staff in universities (this concept is elaborated upon in Section 3.1) and notes the growing need for professional knowledge and how this need questions institutional boundaries, roles, and assumptions. She outlines the evolving organizational structures of
universities and how priorities have changed, from the traditional agendas of teaching, research and service, to now encompass professional areas such as student recruitment, marketing, student support, human resource development, and business enterprise. Whitchurch (2004) notes professional staff are shifting from being “recorders and guardians of information” to “producers and managers of knowledge” (p. 164). She sees “multi-professional staff” as seeking greater autonomy, responsibility, mobility, and professional development, thereby challenging existing institutional cultures through the development of fluid boundaries and the dissolving of what were once clearly defined roles for non-academic staff (Whitchurch, 2004, p. 167).

There is now a growing body of literature dealing with management and professional staff in higher education, primarily in the UK and Australia, that shows how the rise of this sector is changing the face of university governance and the traditional faculty/staff binary usually found on campuses (Conway, 2002; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Dobson, 2000; Gornall, 1999; Szekeres, 2006; Whitchurch, 2013). The rise of new professionals also gave rise to ‘new professionalism’, or a system of controlling and organizing work and workers, in large-scale organizations where this new category of worker is employed (Evetts, 2011, 2013).

2.2.4 Professionalism

Professionalism is generally considered to be a means of controlling and organizing work and workers so the practitioner, worker, or employee benefits from the arrangement as well as the client, customers, or organization (Evetts, 2011, 2013; Friedson, 2001). Traditionally, the work of professionals was guided by their respective associations as they worked in autonomous, collegial, self-regulated environments. As work environments continued to evolve and change, more and more categories of work increasingly became professionalized. With the rise of new
professionals employed in large organizations, these employees were not only guided by their own professional associations but also had to adapt to the values and structures of organizations, which had their own guidelines, rules, culture, expectations, and demands. Professions which once had occupational control of their work were now being controlled by the larger organization. Hence, new professionals experienced the change from occupational professionalism, or control “from within”, to organizational professionalism, or control “from above” (Evetts, 2005, p. 4).

While new professionalism negatively affected the more traditional professions (e.g., doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects) who were working in large organizations in terms of their identities, structure, and practices (Evetts, 2011), new professionals welcomed the changing environment as a form of recognition for their credentials, expertise, and work (p. 412). As organizations saw the rise of diverse groups of new professionals within their ranks, there was a push to professionalize these workers organizationally through “the construction of ‘appropriate’ work identities and conduct” (Fournier, 1999, p. 281). New professionals in organizations embraced the professional recognition and status afforded them from above, however, Evetts (2013) believed the accompanying sense of empowerment they felt from within, was actually a form of control from above (Evetts, 2013).

Professionalism is generally considered to be mutually beneficial to both the employee and the organization. Evetts (2011) outlines the example of organizations incorporating Human Resource Management (HRM) practices over the last 25 years. HRM saw the proliferation of not only human resource professionals but also professional employment practices, policies, processes, and procedures introduced into the workplace: job descriptions, contracts, performance reviews, formal recruiting practices, employee benefits, equity and diversity,
disciplinary standards, employment rights and agreements, and professional development opportunities (p. 417). Evetts (2011) sees the introduction of HRM as a positive benefit for both professionals and the organization but also points out some initiatives in the name of professionalism increase managerial control of the work environment through quality control, audits, target setting, performance reviews, accountability, and reporting.

Fournier (1999) believes the appeal of professionalism through such initiatives is more political on the part of the organization and less beneficial to the employees; it is simply a form of managerial control and discipline. She believes professionalizing the workforce, with the implied ethics around being a professional, allows organizations more flexibility in controlling their workers in terms of hours worked, jobs performed, accountability, expected conduct, professional development, and requested competencies that align with the organization’s goals and values.

In 1987, UBC officially recognized a previously disparate group of administrative, professional, and management employees as distinct from other unionized employees, under the umbrella of Administrative and Professional Staff (APS). At the time, this was generally regarded as beneficial for both parties. For the university, it was easier to negotiate and communicate with what was a workforce of hundreds of diverse individuals and new professionals, under one umbrella. In return, M&P employees received formal recognition as professionals and their first written Conditions of Employment and Benefits (UBC Conditions of Employment and Benefits for the Administrative and Professional Staff of the University of British Columbia, 1987). The wheels were set in motion for more consistent job descriptions, salary administration, working conditions, and benefits. Although the new conditions were imposed from above, there was an implied trust, as outlined in the ACTE Vision Statement, that
the university and AAPS would work together professionally in an atmosphere of collegiality and trust. However, guidelines in the initial and any subsequent framework agreement for expected hours of work and employment security were not specifically outlined. To this day, AAPS deals with these issues, which currently account for many of the grievances and arbitration cases between the association and the university.

Despite the benefits that were forecast for M&P staff, these new professionals found themselves working in conditions where authority was directed from above, which generally conflicts with professional autonomy in the workplace, where authority comes from within. Along with the faculty/staff binary that grouped this new employee group within the general staff group of unionized employees, M&P often operated within a blurred or third space at the university (Whitchurch, 2008, 2013). The blurring of boundaries also affects how M&P make sense of themselves professionally, both occupationally and organizationally.

2.3 Summary

Traditional university governance, at all levels, has shifted over time from being run by academics to a more business-like model. At the same time, there has been a rise in the number of new professionals in the workforce. This chapter mapped the changes in higher education occurring as a result of corporatization and the introduction of new public management practices and values. These changes triggered changes in the landscape of higher education (Deem, 1998; Winter, 2009) and some of the effects and manifestations of these phenomena were discussed, with specific references to UBC.

However, very little research has examined how changes affect the professional staff in higher education and how they make sense of the phenomena and how they fit into the new
landscape. In an attempt to understand this employee sector, the next chapter looks in more detail at the conceptual space this workforce occupies, the theories of professional occupational and occupational identity, and the concepts of sensemaking and sensegiving.
Chapter 3: **UNDERSTANDING MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

The concepts of third space, professional organizational and occupational identities, and sensemaking and sensegiving resonated with me in the undertaking of this research. Hence, the first two sections of this chapter explore the concepts used by different writers in their research on the implications of higher education changes for M&P staff -- third space and professional identity. Third space theory situates professional staff within their unique positioning at the university, where they occupy a blurred space between the institution’s academic and nonacademic binary. Literature on nomenclature used to define this particular employee group, which highlights the blurred identity M&P staff often experience, is also examined. The concepts of professional identity, both occupational and institutional, are explored to help determine how new professionals make sense of their roles and positioning in third space. In this case, organizational identity is not only how the organization identifies an employee, but how an employee identifies with the organization itself and how both affect employees’ professional identities. Finally, the last section looks at sensemaking and sensegiving as a unifying concept to understand the personal and professional experiences of M&P staff working between the university power structures.

### 3.1 Third Space

While the concept of third space has its origins in cultural studies on race, gender and class, it is now widely used in social theory to explore in-between spaces or unique spatial relationships between people and organizations. Whitchurch (2013) uses the concept to describe staff in higher
education who work in the third space between institutional working relationships, power structures, and the traditional faculty-staff binary. Her research shows that, with the rise of a new class of professionals, the once dominant academic faculty now sometimes see themselves as less dominant and more marginalized in institutional decision-making. She explores this concept, along with the roles and identities of professional staff, the tensions and implications of third space staff within institutions, and the future of these developments on higher education.

Whitchurch (2013) believes the current blurring of responsibilities and power is enforced by the fact professionals at universities sometimes hold parallel, if not more, credentials than faculty members. As can be seen in Appendix B, at least 38 job levels, in 14 M&P job families at UBC require master’s degrees and four job levels in two job families require doctoral degrees. It should be noted some academic faculty at the university do not hold doctoral level degrees; for example, in the Faculty of Arts, some hold the terminal degree of Master of Fine Arts (MFA). Adding to the tension, new areas are developing both inside and outside the academic foundations of research, teaching, and service within university settings that require an expertise not found within the faculty cohort. As mentioned before, some of these areas include internationalization, marketing, fundraising and development, technology, community outreach, human resources, finance, facilities, student services, and industrial liaison, to name a few.

Whitchurch (2008) discusses three kinds of third space that developed as a result of higher education changes: integrated, semi-autonomous, and independent. However, Whitchurch (2008) explores third space primarily in relation to the faculty/professional staff binary. I believe it is important to extend the binaries to also include the third space between M&P staff and unionized staff in regard to their working relationships and power structures. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the new descriptions for the three types of third space are: 1) integrated...
third space, whereby professionals and faculty, or professionals and unionized staff, work together within the organizational structure; 2) semi-autonomous third space, where internal projects require adapted boundaries and negotiated collaboration between professionals and faculty, and between professionals and unionized staff; and, 3) independent third space, where new boundaries, rules, and power structures are required in temporary projects, which may or may not involve collaboration between professional staff and faculty, or professional staff and unionized staff. In some cases, all three levels of employees may cross boundaries into new areas and roles requiring recognition and cooperation by others.

The management and professional jobs at UBC often cross all three boundaries, depending on job family, job levels, educational attainment, specialized training, work experience, and individual working environments. The important point Whitchurch (2013) emphasizes is that third space professionals are generally keen to develop and maintain collaborative working relationships, with all levels of professional colleagues. However, she believes this requires a shift on the part of academics and senior administration; they must be willing to recognize the credibility of third space professionals, to consider them colleagues rather than subordinates, and be willing to work collaboratively as peers on projects of mutual benefit.

Whitchurch (2013) questions whether universities need to “design in” third space environments to promote institutional recognition of this group (p. 113). This would require an explicit acknowledgment by institutions that third space professionals exist and that adjustments to institutional structures (e.g., projects, committees, spaces) can help re-socialize this interest group in terms of affiliation, participation, and hierarchy. She suggests organizational structures need to be adjusted or else universities face the prospect of alienating a vital sector of their
workforce. Either way, she feels appealing to this group of professionals is a challenge for universities and needs to be addressed at an institutional level. Whitchurch highlights areas institutions need to re-examine in order to recruit, retain, and realize the potential of third space professionals: motivation, rewards, incentives, professional development opportunities, career paths and promotions, recognition, and networks. According to Whitchurch, third space adds value to academic agendas as it builds institutional capacity with the intention of freeing up academic staff who wish to concentrate more on teaching and research. She believes the third space workforce will continue to grow as universities internationalize, become more fiscally accountable, and collaborate across larger networks of community partners. Whitchurch (2013) believes higher education institutions have the ability to “build a pool of talent for themselves and for the sector as a whole” (p. 145). In the case of UBC, third space staff members are growing significantly in number, but it is not apparent the university is reviewing its policies, practices, and strategic plans with an eye to specifically accommodating this employee sector.

Whitchurch (2013) also explores what it means to be a third space professional and how working within this space poses paradoxes, dilemmas, and risks. She notes they have “a mix of academic and professional credentials, experience and roles” (p. 49): some have doctoral levels of education, some may teach as well as perform professional and/or managerial roles, and many help build institutional capacity through the creation of new academic and institutional knowledge. Hence, many of these professionals have come to demand a level of respect, collaboration, and trust not previously experienced or extended by academics and institutions to non-faculty members.

In addition to overcoming the hurdles between third space professionals and their relationships with faculty, university administration, and other staff, being a third space
professional holds its own particular challenges. Some types of work professionals do may often be short-term, contractual projects, which address specific needs or issues that lay outside the traditional missions of a university. Contracts offer little job security or promise of continuation, and the work may be stressful due to responsibilities and deadlines being met within the contract term. While the autonomy and freedom of this work is often attractive to third space individuals, these same factors may contribute to feelings of frustration and isolation within the institution. These perceptions may also lead to mistrust of each other and the institutional systems in place.

For example, over the past decade at UBC, diverse interpretations of the AAPS collective agreement regarding employee rights and benefits, by both AAPS and UBC, have created tensions between M&P employees, AAPS, and the university. In 2008-2009, AAPS reported 307 advocacy issues handled by their office. In 2017-2018, the number rose to a record high of 584 cases with 14 of those cases proceeding to formal grievances filed against the university. AAPS attributed the continuous increases to “the University’s apparent cost-cutting approach to labour relations (as opposed to upholding their contractual obligations)” (AAPS, 2017).

On a day-to-day basis, management and professional staff at UBC navigate the everchanging organizational structures and relationships at the university. Whitchurch (2013) discusses the interface between third space professionals and organizational structures, and possibilities for the future. While third space professionals interact on individual bases within the institution and with other employees, they also interface with the institution as a group. Group identity for third space professionals fluctuates as their roles, responsibilities, and areas of expertise shift and grow. Whitchurch’s (2013) research shows some third space professionals tend to identify with their professions and projects, their occupational professionalism, more strongly than with their institutions, or organizational professionalism. Hence retention, and the
affiliated costs in recruitment and knowledge loss, may potentially be a large issue for universities. Whitchurch differentiates between dedicated professionals, who work in higher education but who are not necessarily committed to the institution, and portfolio professionals, who are comfortable moving between higher education and other sectors. Those professionals exhibit weaker professional organizational identities and stronger professional occupational identities.

Another indicator of blurred or third space experienced by M&P employees is the confusing nomenclature used within the university to describe their roles, responsibilities, and even their professional affiliations. The following section looks at nomenclature in regard to labelling staff and the role it plays in professional identity.

3.1.1 Nomenclature

Variations in nomenclature and terminology can sometimes cause confusion when reading research texts and analyzing institutional documents. Hence, some clarification is needed on some of the terms used throughout this research and when quoting other researchers.

There is a wide variety of terminology used in the literature around the titles and roles that identify professional and management staff in universities. At UBC, this sector is officially referred to as ‘Management and Professional’ staff (M&P), while the association representing this sector, AAPS, refers to its members as ‘Administrative and Professional Staff’. Also, there is often confusion in the position name by which individual M&P employees are known at the university. On UBC’s Human Resources Management System (HRMS), jobs are classified into Job Families and have assigned Business Titles. However, many M&P staff members at the university adopt other position names on an individual basis. For example, a person may be in
the Job Family ‘Administration’, have a Business Title of ‘Administrator’, but adopt the working title of ‘Director of Finance and Operations’.

Nomenclature confusion appears to be widespread within this employee sector in higher education. Focusing on the Australian context, Szekeres (2004) looks at the representation of administrative staff in academic texts and how these employees are positioned within Australian higher education. She examines the confusing terminology by looking at current discourses in the rising concepts of managerialism, corporatization, and marketization. She uses the terms ‘administrators’ and ‘administrative staff’ to distinguish their roles from ‘academic staff’ and ‘academic managers’ (pp. 7-8), as opposed to the previous term ‘general staff’ used by other researchers when referring to non-faculty staff (Conway, 2002; Dobson, 2000). Szekeres (2004) considers how these concepts change institutional culture and the roles of higher education employees. She argues that with the changing focus of university missions, which encompasses the above concepts from corporate spheres, there is a growing need to recognize the people who manage these functions and to challenge the perception of their roles within traditional university culture.

European universities appear to have adopted an egalitarian, inclusive stance, referring to all employees as ‘staff’. Sporn (1996) noted that the German university at which she conducted research distinguished employees by their roles as either ‘academic staff’ (professors and instructors) or ‘administrative staff’ (all others). Researching in the UK, Whitchurch (2004) is concerned about what she calls “professional administrators and managers” and notes it is “increasingly difficult to define those groups of staff responsible for delivering university strategy and operations” (p. 161). She explores other confusing terms used in literature (Rhoades
& Sporn, 2002; Shatock, 1970) such as ‘the Administration’, ‘academic staff’, ‘academic administration’, ‘professional staff’, ‘administrators’, and ‘managers’ (pp. 159-162).

Other researchers (Castree & Sparek, 2000; Freeman, 2000; Gornall, 1999) claim the homogenizing ‘we’, arising in university terminology, is both erroneous and problematic. On the other hand, in his attempt to develop a philosophy of higher education in his notable work, The Idea of Higher Education (1990), U.K. researcher Barnett (1990), completely ignores nonacademic staff when he considers the university community. His idea of the university community is entirely made up of students and faculty members. All references to staff in the book refer to academic staff or faculty members; even the term ‘administrative staff’ refers to faculty members acting in senior administrative roles. Sporn’s (1996) inclusive use of the term ‘staff’ can be contrasted with Barnett’s narrower view.

Terminology is also inconsistent in Canadian universities. At UBC, university employees are clearly defined as either faculty or staff so there is no confusion as to which sector of employees is being referenced. The term ‘senior administration’ at UBC refers to either faculty members or professionals who have taken on positions within the top offices of the university. However, a researcher at the University of Alberta refers to faculty as ‘staff’, staff as ‘nonacademic staff’, and senior administration as simply ‘administration’ (Renke, 2000, p. 39).

Some researchers use the term ‘middle manager’ to describe the level of employees pertinent to this case study (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Huy, 2001; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Westley, 1990). Even the term ‘middle’ evokes the idea of an in-between space within an organization. Huy (2001) defines middle managers as management staff between senior level executives and line and service workers. He finds “the very phrase ‘middle manager’ evokes mediocrity and these employees are often thought to be “inflexible, unimaginative
bureaucrats” (p. 73); however, he believes middle managers make valuable, but largely unrecognized, contributions. These contributions include: adding entrepreneurial ideas when given a voice, leveraging informal networks (often better than top-level administration); gauging employee moods and buy-in for new initiatives; and managing change, controlling tension, and promoting continuity.

Westley (1990) finds middle managers in large organizations are traditionally viewed as those who provide information and carry out decisions made by senior administration but are largely excluded from strategic planning activities (p. 338). Balogun and Johnson (2004) note middle managers are both the recipients and implementers of strategic change, but generally have little up-front involvement in strategic decision making (p. 523). Rouleau and Balogun (2011) state middle managers are generally the suppliers of the information that enables top-level managers to make decisions, which are then carried out by the middle managers themselves. In the case of UBC, M&P staff members are often those middle managers who furnish important information to senior university administration, and who are then the implementers of consequent policy and procedures.

The job category of the research participants in this study is Management and Professional, however, there is some confusion as to what that means. UBC has no clear guidelines or written policy on the difference between the roles of manager or professional, or on the scope of their responsibilities. The university does not define in writing what the differences are between the roles, even though many job descriptions and employee job families at the university are a mix of the two. AAPS also does not define the two responsibilities, even though the association represents the M&P staff at the university. As mentioned before, the word ‘manager’ does not appear in the association’s name: Association of Administrative and
Professional Staff.

In contrast, the Human Resources Department at the University of California, Berkeley, clearly differentiates between manager and professional. It states managers are “responsible for making significant decisions on what the unit does: its purpose, functions and role, and for making commitments and decisions that require the expenditure of significant unit resources”; professionals, on the other hand, “may achieve and be responsible for many of the same functional responsibilities as a manager but achieve results through their own, personally performed duties, rather than through the efforts of direct reports” (University of California, Berkeley). In analyzing the distinction above between manager and professional, and referring back to Evetts (2011, 2013), it seems a manager’s tasks come from above, while a professional’s work comes from within, or through their own professional ethics and personally performed duties.

At UBC, there is also an anomaly in the title of staff who work in management and professional capacities at the university. The organization representing this employee group is currently named AAPS (Association of Administrative and Professional Staff); however, when it was initially founded in 1977, it was known as APS, or Administrative and Professional Staff. When UBC officially recognized these employees as a separate and unique employee group, the university’s Human Resources department named this employee category, M&P, or Management and Professional staff. This variation in nomenclature has been discussed at the AAPS board level, as the word ‘administrative’ is deemed dated and vague. However, to date no action has been taken to rectify this variation in employee group title. I choose to use the term M&P, or Management and Professional staff, throughout this research.
Due to ongoing confusion and dialogue around terminology for professional staff in universities, there is a need for clarity in identifying this workforce sector. Roles and titles speak to one’s identity within an organization and also reflect on the professional status attained through the acquisition of specialized credentials. Hence, it is understandable ‘nonacademic’ M&P staff members do not want to be identified with what they are not; they want to be identified with what they are – highly skilled, experienced, educated, and trained professionals. As previously noted by Evetts (2011), the rise of new professionalism has an effect on employees’ identities in the workplace. The next section will explore the concepts of occupational and organizational identities for these new professionals.

3.2 Professional Identities

Evetts (2005) suggests there are two forms of professional identity: organizational and occupational. Her concepts are based on classical interpretations of Max Weber’s rational-legal model of organizations and Emile Durkheim’s theories on occupational specializations (p. 5). Weber’s term ‘rational-legal’ stems from a form of authority that dominates from a top-down, or from above, perspective through clearly established rules and reporting lines. Durkheim’s theory is based on a trusting, collegial authority from ‘within’ the professions (Evetts, 2005, p. 6).

Evetts (2005) defines organizational professionalism as “a discourse of control used increasingly by managers in work organizations [that] incorporates rational-legal forms of authority and hierarchical structures of responsibility and decision-making” (p. 5). This type of professionalism results in increased bureaucracy when workplace initiatives such as standardized procedures, target-setting, performance reviews, and calls for accountability are implemented.
In contrast, Evetts (2005) defines occupational professionalism as “a discourse constructed within professional occupational groups and incorporates collegial authority” (p. 5). This form of professionalism is marked by trust, autonomy, and discretion, all of which are commonly dependent upon “lengthy systems of education and vocational training and the development of strong occupational identities and work cultures. Controls are operationalized by practitioners themselves who are guided by codes of professional ethics which are monitored by professional institutes and associations” (Evetts, 2005, p. 5).

The following table, adapted from Evetts (2005, p. 6), compares the two forms of professionalism in knowledge-based work:

**Table 3-1: Organizational and Occupational Professionalism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Professionalism (based on Weber)</th>
<th>Occupational Professionalism (based on Durkheim)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse of control used increasingly by managers in work organizations- ‘from above’</td>
<td>Discourse constructed within professional groups- ‘from within’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational-legal forms of authority</td>
<td>Collegial authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized procedures</td>
<td>Discretion and occupational control of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical structures of authority and decision making</td>
<td>Practitioner trust by both clients and employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and externalized forms of regulation, target-setting, and performance reviews</td>
<td>Professional ethics monitored by institutions and associations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a large institution such as UBC, organizational professionalism is apparent in the strict hierarchical structure and reporting lines used throughout the university—from the unit level, to the faculty level, and up to the senior administration level. For example, the Human Resource Management System (HRMS)—the data base used by the university to record and process
information for all employees from recruitment to termination or retirement—includes clear position descriptions and both solid and dotted-line reporting structures. Most employees at the university, from unionized to professorial positions, are supposed to undergo some form of performance review each year and the performance of employees, units, and faculties is continuously evaluated against respectively set goals and targets. In the case of M&P staff members, merit pay is awarded annually to employees whose pay bracket is between the mid and maximum points of their particular job family. Rating scales are based on the following performance criteria: a) meets job requirements 0%; b) demonstrates above average performance up to 1%; c) demonstrates excellent performance over 1% and up to 2%; and, d) demonstrates extraordinary performance over 2% and up to 3% (UBC Department of Human Resources, 2018). While the allocation of merit is mandatory, the percentage is at the discretion of the unit head, often not accompanied by a formal performance review; sometimes merit is dependent on the financial health of the individual unit. It should be noted that an M&P employee between the middle-maximum pay bracket, and who consistently meets his/her job requirements, may not receive any annual salary increases in the form of merit pay over and above General Wage Increases (GWI) agreed upon through collective bargaining.

Organizational professionalism makes institutional resources and outcomes much easier to control in contrast to occupational professionalism, where employees are considered professional and, therefore, work within a self-regulating environment of trust, discretion, and collegiality. Evetts (2005) contrasts the two types of professionalism and the growing appeal of organizational over occupational professionalism in institutions:

… the discourse of professionalism by managers most often includes the substitution of organizational for professional values; bureaucratic, hierarchical
and managerial controls rather than collegial relations; managerial and organizational objectives rather than client trust based on competencies; budgetary restrictions and financial rationalizations; the standardization of work practices rather than discretion; and performance targets, accountability and sometimes increased political controls. (p. 7)

However, are the two forms of professionalism mutually exclusive? Do professional staff members give up their occupational professional identities when they join UBC; does organizational professional identity take over? Barnett (1990) suggested faculty members at a cocktail party would describe themselves according to their discipline, i.e. “I am a physicist” or “I am a historian” (p. 117), indicative of their self-perception, identity, and security.

Whitchurch’s (2013) research also showed third space professionals tended to identify with their occupational professionalism more strongly than with their institutions, their organizational professionalism. One of the focuses of this research is to explore how M&P staff at UBC self identify and make sense of their two professional identities.

In Professionalism: The Third Logic, Friedson (2001), develops a compromise or a ‘third logic’ between Weber’s rational-legal authority and Durkheim’s theory on professional specialization. His third logic outlines a more constructive medium, whereby organizations and occupations can work collaboratively and respectfully together. While organizational professionalism has been demonstrated to be a concretely effective and efficient form of management control, Friedson believes occupational professionalism should be the guiding principle for service work, as it contributes to greater personal commitment, dedication to good work, and higher levels of client/practitioner trust and satisfaction (Friedson, 2001; Evetts, 2005). This would seem an ideal goal to achieve in a university such as UBC that depends upon
its professional workforce to make sense of its sense-giving strategic mission to “create an exceptional learning environment, foster global citizenship, advance a civil and sustainable society, and support outstanding research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada and the world” (UBC, Overview and Facts).

3.2.1 Organizational Identity

Who are the professionals who occupy third space? Certainly, the questions posed by Whitchurch (2004, p. 159), “Who do they think they are?”, and Szekeres (2004, p. 7), “Who are the administrators?” are relevant when attempting to describe exactly who M&P staff are in higher education and what roles they fulfill in university culture. As this workforce sector has multiple roles and memberships within the university environment, it was interesting to know how they self-identified or perceived their “oneness with or belongingness to” particular groups within the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). Organizational identification is defined as “the process by which the goals of the organizations and those of the individual become increasingly integrated and congruent” (Hall, Schneider & Nygren, 1970, p. 176-77); hence, organizational identification by individuals is a form of identification which ultimately builds self-esteem, professional identity, and answers the question: “Who am I?” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21).

Organizational identification and organizational commitment are sometimes equated in the literature; sometimes the concepts are viewed as connected, and sometimes they are seen as separate but confused (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Researchers are cognizant people maintain multiple identities, often within the same environment. For example, an M&P staff member at UBC may play multiple roles, at multiple levels, in multiple groups, in multiple
situations across the university. A group to which the employee may belong is defined as “a collection of people who share the same social identification or define themselves in terms of the same social category membership” (Turner, 1984, p. 530). The group usually exhibits factors that increase an individual’s tendency to identify with their group, such as: a) distinctive values and practices; b) perceived organizational prestige; c) in-group perception rather than out-group perception; and d) commonality with other members or group goals. Thus, M&P staff at UBC could potentially belong to diverse groups that span units, faculties, associations, interest groups, professional networks, and university-level committees and boards. Some disparate memberships may cause role conflict or social tension when an employee needs to juggle time, responsibilities, and roles between various levels, interests, and/or groups.

At the same time, the university has its own identity, which it outlines in its strategic plan, and which it hopes all members aspire to. Albert and Whetten (1985) argue “there is a shared understanding of the central, distinctive, and enduring character or essence of the organization among its members … reflected in shared values and beliefs, a mission, the structures and processes, organization climate, and so on” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 27). Research suggests “individuals who regard their group identity as synonymous with their organizational identity are unlikely to view other groups negatively. Just as a strong group identity unifies group members, so too should a strong organizational identity unify organizational members” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 32).

Therefore, it would seem beneficial to both the university and M&P staff that a strong organizational identity be formed. Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue “that in the absence of a strong organizational identity, the desire for favorable intergroup comparisons generates much conflict … especially so if a group’s status is low or insecure” (p. 33). A low-status group may
feel threatened, require more validation, or withdraw from the relationship, while a high-status
group may remain socially indifferent, or unaware of the power differential. In either case, it
would seem any conflict that arises would not generally be conducive to a healthy, collaborative
working environment.

3.2.2 Organizational Hierarchies

Several researchers conducted studies to determine whether a person’s place within an
organizational hierarchy affects their organizational identity (Corley, 2004; Cole & Bruch,
2006). Corley (2004) found organizational identity was not a single, holistic experience for all
employees, but rather, was dependent on where they were on the hierarchy of the organization.
Cole and Bruch (2006) agree that individuals at different hierarchical levels use different frames
of reference for organizational identification and commitment. Many researchers acknowledge
organizational identity is a socially constructed concept and employees may hold multiple group
memberships and identities across an organization as well as up and down its hierarchies (Albert
& Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Corley, 2004, Cole & Bruch,
2006).

Corley (2004) conducted research in a large technology organization of over 30,000
employees. He divided the company’s hierarchy into three distinct groups: senior leadership,
middle management, and operational employees. He found that

higher levels of the hierarchy tended to see identity in light of the organization’s
strategy, whereas lower aspects of the hierarchy saw it in light of the
organization’s culture, with middle management often having to straddle the
differences in these perceptions (p. 1147).
He noted middle management often acted as a buffer between the top and lower levels of the organization; thus, they were responsible for planning, operationalizing, and managing the organization’s vision and strategy while directing the operational employees through day-to-day implementation (p. 1156). The study found most middle management garnered a positive organizational identity through their insights into the company’s strategic vision and bridging that vision into working with those they supervise at the lower levels of the hierarchy. However, Corley (2004) also noted both middle management and the operational employees experienced what he termed “identity discrepancy” (p. 1145). Identity discrepancy occurs when organizational members recognize inconsistencies between the organization’s past, current, and future identity. These discrepancies, or interruptions, often occurred when there are either constant, or sudden, changes made by senior management in the organization. Corley believes that in order for organizations to be successful in adopting change and in carrying out their strategic plans, all levels of the hierarchy should be consulted and their organizational identities considered. Needless to say, when changes occur, and when identity discrepancy is experienced, it often falls on middle management to tackle the issues and manage the processes to facilitate and ease the changes.

Cole and Bruch (2006) conducted subsequent research into the effects of hierarchy on employees’ organizational identity, commitment, and turnover in a large steel company. They gathered data from almost 11,000 employees across three hierarchical levels or ‘social categories’: officers, middle management, and workers. Like Corley, they also found employees at different levels of the hierarchy had different perceptions as to the organization’s identity. They were also interested in whether the distinct groups hold parallel frames of reference because, it cannot be assumed employees from different social categories will respond to the
items of a given measure using the same construct definition. Thus, it is possible members of different hierarchical levels will not share a conceptual frame of reference (p. 590).

Cole and Bruch (2006) found social category affects both identity and turnover, which in turn can have negative impacts on organizations. They found employees in the officer and middle management levels of the hierarchy were less likely to leave the organization than the lower level workers who had lower recognition, esteem, commitment, and rewards (p. 600). In universities, similar employee categories are found, with the added exception of faculty members, who are unique to academia. At UBC, the employee categories in the hierarchy are: senior administration, faculty members, M&P staff, and unionized workers.

3.2.3 **Occupational Identity**

If occupational identity is simply the conscious awareness of oneself as a worker (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2011), then professional occupational identity is the conscious awareness of oneself as a professional. Professional identity is based on one's professional self-concept, taking into account variables such as beliefs, values, motives, and experiences. These variables are dynamic, given professionals operate at multiple levels within an organization as well as with others outside the organization. On a day-to-day basis, professionals at UBC may interface with colleagues up and down the institution’s hierarchy, with multiple working groups and units across the campus, and with the general public or associations to which they belong.

In his work with Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals in Europe, Brown (1997), developed a model to illustrate the dynamics at work during the development of occupational identity. He shows the development of skills in professionals is a result of the interaction between individuals and others in the workplace. He looked at the communities of
practice to explore the three levels at play in the workplace: 1) occupation(s); 2) the workgroup; and 3) the institution. He explored the interaction and engagement of individuals with others in the institution. In my research, the levels affecting identity as: 1) the occupation and profession of the individual at the unit level; 2) the interaction of the professional at the cross-unit/faculty level; and, 3) the interaction of the professional at the institutional or organizational level.

Brown’s model shows how the engagement and relationships between individuals and others, through activities and interactions at work, result in professional occupational and organizational identity development through engagement and recognition at the various levels.

Figure 3-1: Brown's Model of Occupational Identity Formation (1997)

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000312.htm

3.2.4 Occupational Affiliations

One of the ways in which professionals identify within their areas of expertise is through memberships in professional organizations and associations. As particular professions grow, they
go through various stages of development in order to be recognized by an accrediting body. In higher education, newly formed professional associations emerged with the professional legitimacy of its members, and umbrella organizations were formed to represent management and professional staff in universities.

In his 1954 book, *Sociology of Work*, Caplow outlined five development stages of particular occupations necessary to attain professional status: 1) the establishment of a professional association; 2) a change in the name of the occupation; 3) the development of a code of ethics; 4) prolonged agitation to obtain the support of public power; and, 5) the concurrent development of training facilities (cited in Lauwerys, 2002). In 1997, the UK’s Association of University Administrators (AUA), identified four key elements deemed necessary for the strategic success of professional bodies such as theirs: 1) education and experience standards for its members; 2) a registry of members; 3) a code of professional conduct; and, 4) systems to maintain professional standards and quality (Allen & Newcomb, 1999, p. 38). With the growth of professional positions in higher education, the growth of professional associations became prevalent at local, national and institutional levels.

UBC management and professional staff members may belong to multiple associations at all three levels that represent their interests, dependent on area of expertise or professional certification. At the local level, all M&P staff are obligated to belong to the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS), the representative association for M&P staff at UBC. At the national level, many UBC M&P staff belong to the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO), founded in 1937 to give Canadian universities and colleges professional representation for their administrative and financial officers. Both CAUBO and AAPS were formed as professional associations to promote the interests of their members,
however, both associations also include the goals and welfare of their members’ institutions as part of their mission or purpose statements. Ideally, the professional goals of management and professional staff members should align with the strategic goals of their institutions; however, organizational development research notes:

In any organization there may be different and competing value systems that create a mosaic of organizational realities rather than a uniform corporate culture…. different professional groups may each have a different view of the world and of the nature of their organization’s business. (Morgan, 1997, p. 137)

Not only do different professional groups have different views, but individuals within those groups also have diverse views and experiences. Given the sheer number of management and professional staff at UBC and their diverse areas of interest and expertise, affiliations with various professional associations are numerous and widespread across local, national and international boundaries. Professional memberships help M&P identify with their professions outside the university setting and in answering Ashforth and Mael’s question, “Who am I?” (1989, p. 21).

However, how do M&P identify professionally within the university environment and make sense of their positioning across hierarchies and power structures? In turn, how does the university make sense of this employee sector? The next section looks at the theoretical framework of sensemaking and sensegiving in relation to the professional occupational and organizational identities of third space M&P staff at UBC.
3.3 Sensemaking and Sensegiving

Many new professionals, in this case the M&P employees at UBC, engage in a cycle of sensemaking and sensegiving in their quest to understand how they fit into, and engage with, the institution and their own professions (Brown et al, 2015; Weick, 1995). Sensemaking is often triggered by situations or events that create ambiguity or confusion and can affect identity construction at both the occupational and organizational levels.

Professional identity for members in this workforce is not simply being conscious of oneself as a worker within an organization, but also of oneself as a professional within an occupation (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2011). Dissonance may occur when an employee’s professional organizational and occupational identities are challenged. This dissonance is likely to be amplified within the higher education environment when professionals find themselves in third space.

Within the organizational context of UBC, professional staff members are continuously confronted with unexpected issues and changes in the workplace that need to be interpreted. As professionals, these interpretations and corresponding responses are based on their perceived position within the environment, perceived expertise, perceived power and decision-making authority, and the perceived relationship and interactions with others. When cues are misread, assumptions and expectations are interrupted and the process of sensemaking takes place to give new meaning to an employee’s professional occupational identity, professional organizational identity, or both. When professionals are responsible for supervising staff, creating new policies, or implementing procedures, the process of sensemaking may also trigger the process of sensegiving.
The cycle of sensemaking and sensegiving in organizations is an opportunity to share meaning across an institution at multiple levels and across multiple employee groups. Weick (1995), an early and influential researcher on sensemaking, and shared meaning, believes it is the glue that holds organizational culture together. He acknowledges that all people do not share similar or equivalent experiences in the workplace; however, he does think those experiences can be shared and given equivalent, valid meanings that empower organizations and their employees to provide a shared vision and shared action.

Many researchers believe the process of sensemaking and sensegiving can lead to increased stakeholder empowerment, strategic decision-making and change, organizational learning, and innovation and creativity (Brown et al, 2015; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick 1995). Maitlis and Christianson (2014) believe sensemaking can be an ordering force, when leaders are successful in influencing the sensemaking of organizational members, these individuals are motivated to make changes in their own roles and practices; they are also able to help others by explaining the vision and co-constructing ways of working that are consistent with it. (p. 89)

### 3.3.1 Sensemaking

People concerned with identity in the social context of other actors engage ongoing events from which they extract cues and make plausible sense retrospectively while enacting more or less order into those ongoing events.

(Weick, 2001, p. 463).

A general consensus from the literature is that sensemaking is a process “by which people seek plausibly to understand ambiguous, equivocal, or confusing issues or events” and how they
“appropriate and enact their realities” (Brown et al, 2015, pp. 265-266). It has been labelled a perspective, a concept, an approach, a lens, and a theory (Brown et al, 2015), but as Weick (1995) states, it is essentially “a developing set of ideas with explanatory possibilities rather than … a body of knowledge” (p. xi). In this research, the concept of sensemaking is used to explore how new professionals in higher education understand their work and working environment.

Most research on sensemaking stems from Weick’s (1995) classic book, Sensemaking in Organizations. In this work, he traces the historical research on sensemaking and develops a theoretical framework, based on seven properties, that still forms the basis for sensemaking research in various social science contexts, streams and methodologies (Maitlis, 2005). Weick believes sensemaking is understood as a process that is: 1) grounded in identity construction; 2) retrospective in nature; 3) enactive of sensible environments; 4) social; 5) ongoing; 6) focused on and by extracted cues; and 7) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995, p. 17). He observed that everyday sensemaking on an individual level and organizational sensemaking were not identical (p. 63); however, he later adapted his original framework for organizational settings in Making Sense of the Organization (2001), where he summarized the concepts in more approachable terms and changes the order from his original list of the seven properties (see Table 3-2 below).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-2: Weick’s Seven Properties</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weick’s Seven Properties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Social Context</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• people consist of multiple, shifting identities that are dependent on their interactions with others; therefore, sensemaking “is influenced by the actual, implied, or imagined presence of others.” (p. 461)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “sensible meanings usually consist of social support, consensual validation, and shared relevance” therefore changing social contexts changes understanding and creates feelings of isolation from social reality. (p. 461)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Personal Identity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• a person’s sense of who s/he is, is garnered from particular settings that provide a center from which to judge relevance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when identity is threatened, or ‘interrupted’, a person’s grasp on reality is shaken from its previous perception and sensemaking occurs. (p. 461)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Retrospective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• since lived/perceived experience is always in the past, sensemaking is usually done in retrospect as an act of intellectual reflection; “people know what they have done only after they do it.” (p. 462).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reflection gives meaning to past experiences/events, and triggers sensemaking.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Salient Cues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• sensemaking is triggered by indicators or cues from one’s environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• intellectualizing these cues promotes successive searches for confirming evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>• when cues “become equivocal, contradictory, or unstable” due to changing preferences or dynamic situations, people begin to lose their grasp on what is happening. (p. 462)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Ongoing Projects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• experience is a continuous flow of ongoing activity, hence sensemaking has no clear beginning or end; it is an ongoing activity marked by ‘interruptions’ of assumptions and expectations. (p. 462)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• in organizations, these ‘interruptions’ can be crisis-related (e.g. major disasters), unexpected short-term events (e.g. reorganizations, takeovers, new policies), or slow, long-term changes (e.g. economic downturns, employee turnover impact). (p. 462)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Plausibility

- sensemaking must be reasonable and meaningful; it does not need to be accurate. The question often asked is “What’s the story here?” or “What is happening here?” (p. 462)

- sensemaking is about “coherence, certainty and credibility, agreements with others, understanding of one’s own stake in events, the recent history, visible cues, familiar scenarios, and actions that have tangible effects.” (p. 462)

7. Enactment

- sensemaking involves reflection and subsequent action in response to an interruption.

- enactment can take many forms of intervention such as negotiation, building consensus, questioning, and probing

- while “one will never know for sure what might have happened had no intervention been made…. to stay detached and passive is not to improve one’s grasp, because much of what any situation means lies in the manner of its response”. (p. 463)


Research since the mid-1990s, specifically in the area of organizational sensemaking, expanded on Weick’s concept and further opened the debate on the definition of sensemaking and its applications in the workplace (Cornelissen, 2012; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Maitlis, 2005; Rouleau, 2005).

Gioia and Thomas (1996) think sensemaking occurs in organizations when members confront events, issues, and actions that are somehow surprising or confusing. In her study of middle managers, Rouleau (2005) believes sensemaking involves the way “managers understand, interpret, and create sense for themselves” based on the information surrounding organizational changes (p. 1415). Cornelissen (2012) refers to sensemaking as the “processes of meaning
construction whereby people interpret events and issues within and outside of their organizations that are somehow surprising, complex, and confusing to them” (p. 118).

Maitlis (2005) describes sensemaking as fundamentally a social process in which “organization members interpret their environment in and through interactions with each other, constructing accounts that allow them to comprehend the world and act collectively” (p. 21) and to “understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or in some other way violate expectations … [whereby] they seek to clarify what is going on … and ‘make sense’ of what has occurred” (p. 57-58). The comprehensive definition she develops encompasses many of the views and concepts outlined above. She defines sensemaking as “a process, prompted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cues can be drawn” (p. 67). The cycles of interpretation are the cycles of sensemaking and sensegiving.

3.3.2 Sensegiving

There is a close relationship between sensegiving and sensemaking, and they often work cyclically in response to one another (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). While sensemaking is an attempt to confront and understand a surprising or confusing situation (Weick, 1995), sensegiving attempts to influence the sensemaking of others (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). As Maitlis and Lawrence note (2007), researchers find a person’s sensegiving may affect his or her own sensemaking, but not all sensemaking involves sensegiving because it is often possible to understand the meanings of confusing events or actions without trying to change the reality of others.
Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) coined the term ‘sensegiving’ and defined it as “the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality” (p. 442). Stakeholders at any level of an organization can engage in sensemaking and in sensegiving. These activities can profoundly affect the work environment through inclusion or exclusion of stakeholders in strategic decision making and other organizational processes (Balogun & Johnson 2004). The symbiotic relationship between sensegiving and sensemaking is apparent in the role of management, who attempt to make sense of the sensegiving of senior leaders, who then in turn implement strategic change or policies and procedures through sensegiving to those they supervise, who then make sense of that sensegiving, and so on (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

In their work on strategic change in a large, public American university, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) state sensegiving by senior management “involves an attempt to change current modes of cognition and action to enable the organization to take advantage of important opportunities” (p. 433). What is noteworthy, is that even in 1991, they noted the changes taking place in higher education due to corporatization and NPM. Twenty-five years after their groundbreaking study, their observations still apply today:

The environment of higher education has been undergoing a significant change that has required universities to operate more like businesses, and to think about such business concepts as competitive analysis, differentiation strategies, etc. This change means that universities must ‘act strategically’ because of the increasing call for educational institutions to be made more accountable to society and to justify their ‘return on investment’. (p. 445)
They believe the strategic changes taking place in higher education due to corporatization and NPM precipitate a round of stakeholder sensemaking and sensegiving. They note strategic changes and plans have the “potential for altering the accepted culture, practices, priorities, and goals of the organization” (p. 444).

Sensemaking and sensegiving cycles are often triggered by crises that suddenly interrupt an environment and which then require immediate action. However, triggers can also be the result of slow, long-term changes over time, as in this case, the effects of corporatization and NPM in higher education. University leaders engage in sensegiving to “maintain the long-term viability of the institution in the face of changing conditions of change…[and] to reframe existing conceptions and interpretative schemes toward the espoused vision” (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 445).

### 3.3.3 Triggers and Enablers

Sensemaking and sensegiving in organizations are often set in motion by ‘triggers’ that interrupt stakeholders’ reality and prompt them to interpret and make meaning of events or situations they find ambiguous or confusing (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). While not all employees engage in sensemaking and sensegiving in organizations, those who are motivated and able to do so, succeed when they are enabled by expertise, legitimacy, and opportunity (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

Sensemaking in organizations can be triggered by events that are sudden and unexpected, such as a major crisis (e.g., fire or death), an anticipated or planned event (e.g., takeover, merger, or promotion), or by a slow process where the effects are still unknown (e.g., economic downturn, corporatization, or NPM). In each case, sensemaking is triggered when contradictions
arise that generate ambiguity and confusion for employees (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 77). For example, at UBC, an unexpected crisis occurred in 2015 with the sudden departure of the new university president one year into his appointment, subsequent to the planned departure of the outgoing president in 2014. This event caused much confusion not only in the senior administration, but also for the university staff, students, alumni, and the greater community. The campus community rallied to make sense of the events and the university attempted to give sense to the crisis. An instance of a slow process or trigger where the effects are still unknown, is that of corporatization and NPM at UBC resulting in the increased hiring of M&P staff over the course of the last decade.

Triggers take various forms in organizations, such as issues, events or situations, and cause disruptions of meaning and uncertainty for those involved. At both the unit level and the university level, discrepancies arise between expectations and reality, thereby creating a gap or cognitive dissonance. “This experience of a discrepancy, or violation, is subjective, and how significant it feels will be influenced by a variety of factors, including its impact on individual, social, or organization identity and personal or strategic goals” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 70). Professionals in the workplace are often responsible for bridging the gap and must rally to quickly make sense of the situation themselves and then, in turn, provide guidance or sensegiving to others. For example, an M&P staff member in a supervisory role may be involved in strategic planning that involves organizational restructuring and the termination of employees. This results in triggering a cycle of sensemaking and sensegiving: the responsible supervisor makes his/her sense of the situation and gives sense by providing the rationale for the reorganization to the employees; the employees in turn must make sense of being terminated, and so on.
Issues that trigger sensemaking or sensegiving are usually significant or important for the employees themselves, for the group whom they represent, or for the organization as a whole. However, not all stakeholders engage in sensemaking when an issue arises. Reasons for noninvolvement may include time limitations, lack of interest, lack of perceived responsibility, fear of repercussions, or lack of motivation (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Working environments may enable, and promote, sensemaking and sensegiving when there are opportunities available that allow issues to be aired and listened to by others. However, stakeholders, or organizational actors, vary in professional backgrounds, training and education, roles and responsibilities, and interest in engaging in sensemaking or sensegiving.

Maitlis and Lawrence (2007) outline three conditions they believe need to be present to enable stakeholders to engage in sensegiving: 1) stakeholders should possess relevant expertise or training related to the issues; 2) stakeholders should have legitimacy through some form of formal authority or responsibility which lends credibility to the sensegiving; and, 3) the opportunity or environment must exist to engage in sensegiving and/or sensemaking behavior.

Some management and professional employees at UBC are in positions of authority or leadership, where they are enabled or expected to make sense of the situation and are expected to give sense to others. This situation may put M&P staff in a blurred third space between the needs of leadership and those who are expected to carry out the associated tasks, such as their colleagues or unionized employees they supervise.

Maitlis and Lawrence (2007) note much of the research done on sensemaking and sensegiving is through storytelling in case studies. However, they suggest sensegiving goes “beyond simply telling a good story: for stakeholders to engage in sensegiving, they must tell sensible stories (drawing on relevant expertise) at the right time and place (opportunity), and
occupy a social position that leads others to listen (legitimacy)” (p. 79). This research draws on the lived experiences of M&P staff at UBC, related through one-on-one interviews, to explore their sensemaking and sensegiving activities in the workplace and how it affects their positioning and identities.

3.3.4 Sensemaking and Identity

As Weick (1995) points out, “sensemaking is triggered by a failure to confirm one’s self” (p. 23). As outlined in the first of his original seven properties, he believes it affects identity construction. Maitlis and Christianson (2014) expand on Weick’s premise:

Given the central place of identity in sensemaking, it is not surprising that identity threat is a significant trigger for sensemaking, seen at the individual, organizational, industry, and institutional levels. Research has shown that when identity is threatened, or even when it simply becomes ambiguous, people respond by working to understand the basis for the challenge, and often to alleviate it by enacting and constructing new accounts for themselves and their organization. (p. 75)

When peoples’ realities or expectations are interrupted, or when they are confronted with an ambiguous or confusing situation, their personal or professional identity may be threatened (Maitlis & Christenson, 2014; Weick et al, 2005). In organizations, this threat can be on an individual, group, or institutional level. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) discuss professional identity from the perspective of sensemaking and how the process can destabilize that identity:
… who we think we are (identity) as organizational actors, shapes what we enact and how we interpret, which affects what outsiders think we are (image) and how they treat us, which stabilizes or destabilizes our identity. Who we are lies importantly in the hands of others, which means our categories for sensemaking lie in their hands. If their images of us change, our identities may be destabilized and our receptiveness to new meanings increase. (p. 416)

The interface between organizational and professional identity—and the resulting dissonance or cognitive gaps that may arise on a day-to-day basis within the ranks of management and professional staff at UBC—occurs because this group interacts with multiple layers of the institution or the community. For example, as part of their professional roles, M&P staff frequently interact with colleagues within the unit, at the faculty level, at the university level, and outside the university. Hence, M&P members attempt to make sense of, and construct, their identities at various levels.

Sensegiving is enacted primarily from above: university senior administration to the faculty, department/unit and individual levels; faculty level to the unit and individual levels, and AAPS to the individual level. However, depending on the positions of M&P members and the roles they play within their units, sensegiving may also occur within and across the various levels. On the other hand, sensemaking is usually enacted from below: faculties, units and individuals try to make sense of the sensegiving emanating from senior administration; units and individuals from the faculty level, and individuals from the unit level and AAPS. Dissonances, cognitive gaps, or a third space, may arise when sensemaking assumptions and expectations are not met by sensegiving provided, for example, between UBC and AAPS.
I believe corporatization and NMP initiatives at UBC are slow process triggers that contributed to the rise of M&P staff and the creation of third space professionals, who are now trying to make sense of their positioning within the university. This research aims to explore how these M&P staff make sense of their organizational positioning in third space.

3.4 Summary

The research literature suggests that for professional staff, sensemaking is an opportunity to explore the triggers, or interruptions, occurring in the workplace. Through this process, they may be empowered in strategic decision making, organizational learning, and innovation. The cycle of sensemaking and sensegiving is an opportunity to share meaning; however, it also affects identity at both the occupational and organizational levels (Evetts, 2005; Weick, 1995).

Professional occupational identity involves how M&P staff perceive their “oneness with or belongingness to” their occupation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). On the other hand, organizational identity involves how M&P staff identity with the goals and vision of the university. The cycle of sensemaking and sensegiving, with accompanying triggers and enablers, often creates a blurred positioning or third space between traditional institutional working relationships and hierarchical power structures, which in turn can affect professional identity. Therefore, the concepts of third space, professional occupational and organizational identity, and sensemaking and sensegiving are used in this research to explore the unique positioning and work environment of M&P staff.
Chapter 4: **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will outline the research methodology used in this study. The approach and rationale are initially discussed, followed by the research methods used. The rationale is accompanied with a brief overview of the research setting in order to provide organizational context. The section on data collection outlines participant recruitment, participant profiles, and the means by which data was collected (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, and documents). The next section discusses the analysis of the data. The final sections discuss the construction of quality criteria used in this research, as well as my insider status at the university.

### 4.1 Approach and Rationale

A case study is an empirical inquiry often used in qualitative, interpretative research when unclear phenomena or relationships take place within contemporary, real-life contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Clough & Nutbrown, 2007; Roulston, 2010). The case study approach is a flexible strategy that supports multiple sources of evidence and methodological triangulation to supplement interviews (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Case studies are commonly used in sensemaking research, as they draw on textual analysis of documentation and archival data, as well as interviews and observations (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Another rationale for the single case study approach is that it “can be used to determine whether a theory’s propositions are correct [and by capturing] the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” (Yin, 2003, pp. 40-41). In this case, my study examines how M&P staff members at UBC make sense of, and navigate, their professional identities in the work environment.
An interpretative, constructionist approach assumes meaning is constructed by people experiencing specific events, in this case M&P staff members who attempt to make sense of their working environment. At the same time, researchers also attempt to make sense of, or construct meaning, through interpreting the lived narratives of those who experience it (Roulston, 2010; Stake, 1995; Thomas & Linstead, 2002). Bogdon and Biklen (2003) note “if you want to understand the way people think about their world and how those definitions are formed you need to get close to them, to hear them talk and observe them in their day-to-day lives” (p. 31). Therefore, much of this research emerged from my interviews to explore the personal experiences of professional employees at UBC, from my reading and analysis of various institutional documents, and through my own working experience and observations over time.

Research on higher education professional and management employees who are not faculty members is a fairly recent area of study. Hence, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the professional organizational and occupational identities of third space professional staff in higher education. The potential ramifications of a dissonance between these identities suggests a gap in academic and practitioner literature. This study involved a multi-layered process conducted in situ at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver campus.

4.2 Research Methods

The multi-layered process used in this research involved the recruitment of M&P participants and data collection from recruitment questionnaires, interviews, and relevant documents. Until January 2018, I was a M&P staff member at UBC, and, therefore, able to easily access participants on site, as well as public university and AAPS documents. The following sections outline the research setting, data collection, and data analysis.
4.3 Research Setting

To provide context and background information, the following section includes brief organizational and occupational profiles of the main players contained in this research: 1) the University of British Columbia; 2) the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff; and, 3) the management and professional staff (M&P).

4.3.1 The University of British Columbia

This research was conducted at a large public sector, research-intensive university in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), Canada. The University of British Columbia consists of two main campuses: 1) a large urban campus in Vancouver (UBC); and, 2) a smaller campus located in Kelowna, BC approximately 350 kilometers north-east of Vancouver, in the Okanagan Valley (UBCO). The university also operates specialized satellite centers around Vancouver, multiple health care facilities across BC, and several overseas offices for alumni outreach and student recruitment initiatives. Due to geography, travel times, and limited resources, this research was conducted on the Vancouver campus.

To indicate the size and scope of the university, in 2017/2018, UBC consisted of 16 faculties, 18 schools, and three colleges. In the same year, UBC brought in $658M in research funding and had a $2.6B annual operating budget. The university also reported 207 companies spun off from research and 1,375 research projects with industrial partners (UBC, Overview and Facts). The total reported student population was over 65,000 at its two campuses, which includes both undergraduate and graduate enrolment for both domestic and international students.
Enrolment at UBC increased over 28% in the last decade from over 50,706 students in 2008/2009 (UBC, 2009, p. 28) to over 65,000 students in 2017/2018 (UBC, Overview and Facts).

### 4.3.2 Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS)

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS) at the University of British Columbia is currently recognized as the official representative of, and bargaining agent for its approximately 4,530 management and professional (M&P) members. AAPS, formerly known as Administrative and Professional Staff (APS), was informally founded in 1977 by a handful of its own members, primarily as a venue for social and professional networking. By 1987, UBC officially recognized AAPS as a separate and unique employee group, as it was deemed easier for the university to work with one united employee group as opposed to hundreds of individual employees. However, it was not until 1992 that AAPS became the sole legal bargaining agent for its members. AAPS has no formal mission statement, however the association currently describes its purpose as follows:

… (AAPS) is the professional association for the Management and Professional Staff group at UBC … AAPS represents over 4,000 members in collective bargaining and dispute resolution with The University. AAPS supports members in resolving workplace issues and strives to improve their work experience at UBC. The Association also creates a connected community of members through networking and professional development opportunities (AAPS, Who We Are).

This research also recognized that the employee group, Management and Professional, or M&P, is a socially constructed entity representing a designated employee group under the
The university’s human resource job classification system. This unique employee group necessitates engagement with an ‘other’, or other employee groups such as faculty and unionized staff, in order to make meaning and construct identity (Thomas & Linstead, 2002).

4.3.3 **Management and Professional Staff**

Management and professional staff are the most rapidly growing employee group at the university; see Figure 5-1 and Appendix A for growth rate trends from 2008/09 to 2017/18. UBC statistics clearly show M&P staff numbers have consistently grown over the last decade in relation to student growth, and to other employee groups such as bargaining-unit faculty members and unionized staff. Reports show the other rapidly growing employee group is contract faculty, or sessional instructors. Unfortunately, there are no clear statistics published by UBC on contract faculty to show their rise in numbers over the last ten years, and neither the UBC Faculty Association nor UBC Faculty Relations were able to provide a clear or consistent breakdown between regular and contract faculty. However, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) released a study in 2018 which notes that between 2005 to 2015, the number of full-time, full-year faculty positions across Canada declined by 10% while contract faculty working part-time, part-year increased by 79% (Foster & Birdsell, 2018, p. 7).

The *Focus on People Benchmark Reports* from 2008/2009 to 2017/2018, indicate the M&P FTE (full-time equivalent) staff headcount went from 2,790 in 2008/09 to 4,302 in 2017, or a 54.19% increase. In comparison, over the same period of time, bargaining unit academic faculty went from an FTE headcount of 2,988 to 3,055, a 2.24% increase; CUPE 116 trades and technical employees went from an FTE headcount of 2,030 to 2,182, a 7.49% increase; and,
CUPE 2950 clerical employees went from an FTE headcount of 1,699 to 1,531, a 9.89% decrease. The decrease in CUPE 2950 employees may be a result of attrition but may also stem from unionized jobs increasingly being reclassified into M&P positions. Over the years, some units have responded to budgetary constraints through reclassifying difficult-to-terminate CUPE 2950 employees into lower-level M&P employees whose positions can then be eliminated at any time “as a result of department reorganization [and] budget cuts” (AAPS, Agreement on Conditions and Terms of Employment, Article 9.1.1).

Membership growth recorded by AAPS for the same period of time show different headcount figures: 2,938 in 2008/2009 to 4,530 in 2017/2018, or an increase of 54.19%. The headcount differences may be a result of the inclusion or exclusion of part-time employees, contract employees, or when the headcount was taken during the year. However, despite the difference in headcounts, the growth of M&P staff is 54.19% by both calculations, which far exceeds that of any other employee group (see Figure 5-1 below).

![Growth by Employee Group](image)

**Figure 5-1:** UBC Employee Growth by Employee Group Headcount
Statistics adapted from the Focus on People Benchmark Reports 2008/09 to 2017/18 and AAPS Annual Report 2017/18. Note: the above statistics do not include non-bargaining faculty or sessional instructors, excluded management and professional, non-unionized staff, daycare or student employee groups.
M&P staff hold diverse jobs in 35 different job families at the university. Using the statistics from the AAPS Annual Reports of 2008/2009 and 2017/2018, Appendix I outlines each of the M&P job families, the number and percentage of members in each of the families, and the percentage of growth over the ten-year period. Over the last decade, the five largest M&P job families consistently constituted over 58% of the total M&P employees. These job families are highlighted below in Table 4-1, which also shows the growth of these job families, in terms of both numbers and percentages. The growth in all five areas reflects the work in strategic areas of the university where M&P are largely responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing initiatives and projects. As mentioned before, these areas include: the rapidly changing field of information technology; managing and facilitating thousands of research projects; managing tens of thousands of undergraduate and graduate students and programs; development and the fundraising of millions of dollars annually; managing and analyzing the university’s multi-billion dollar annual operating budget and millions of dollars in research funding; and, maintaining over 875,000 nasm (Net Assignable Square Meters) of classroom, research, office and meeting spaces (UBC, Overview and Facts)

Table 4-1: Five Largest M&P Job Families: 2008/09 to 2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of M&amp;P</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td># of M&amp;P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info Sys &amp; Technology</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Facilitation</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>15.42%</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>11.91%</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Management</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>8.37%</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Programming</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>5.65%</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Data Collection

The research methods used in this case study were: 1) gathering preliminary information from questionnaires; 2) conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews; and, 3) analysis of documents from the university and AAPS. The following sections outline how the participants were recruited, their profiles, and processes for data collection from the research methods.

4.4.1 Participant Recruitment

As the total number of M&P staff members at UBC was over 4,200 individuals at the time of initial selection (see Appendix A), criteria for participation in this research was focused on employees whose position at the university required a graduate degree, and/or an undergraduate degree plus specialized training/certification (Appendix B outlines the degree requirements for all M&P job families and position levels). The rationale behind this choice was that these employees most closely match the definition of professionals and new professionals and are also most likely to hold membership in a professional association outside of UBC and AAPS.

To recruit participants, I contacted the AAPS Office and asked if they would be willing to send out an email to their membership asking for volunteers for this research study. An email with an explanatory attachment on my research project (see Appendix C) was sent out to the AAPS membership. A rider stated the call for participation was not an initiative of AAPS and directed interested employees to contact me directly via email. Thirty-eight responses were received from the initial call-out.

In order to select an appropriate and manageable group of participants from the 38 respondents, each was emailed a recruitment questionnaire requesting preliminary information (see Appendix D), to be completed and returned along with a copy of their job description or
position number on the Position Management System (PMS), which enabled me to obtain a copy of their job description from the on-line system. The questionnaire asked for details such as: job family, position and position level; degree, certification and specialized training qualifications; professional affiliations; years of service at UBC; faculty and unit; and, gender and age. Potential participants were assured their names, identities, and institutional affiliation would be kept confidential, and in the case of not being selected for the study, the information they provided would be shredded.

After ensuring the participants met the required criteria, both according to their job descriptions and their levels of education and training, the pool of potential participants was sorted to ensure representative diversity and balance in: gender, age, faculty, unit, job family, job level, and years of UBC service. Ultimately, a balanced group of 15 participants, or ‘ideal-types’ (Roulston, 2010), were selected from the respondents, taking into consideration the above factors and their willingness to proceed with interviewing. I determined 15 participants was a reasonable number to capture the required diversity of the M&P sector. Those not selected were notified about their non-selection and thanked for their time and interest; any information they had submitted was shredded.

Reasons for exclusion from the candidate pool included: a) location not at the Vancouver campus; b) less than one year of service at UBC; c) qualifications did not match criteria; d) I had worked with the employee in some capacity in the past; or, e) overlap with other participants from the same unit, faculty, job family or job level, necessitating considering other deciding factors such as age or gender.
4.4.2 Participant Profiles

A diverse pool of 15 participants was established based on gender, age, faculty, unit, job family, job level, and years of service. Ultimately, the participants included six males (40%) and nine females (60%). This breakdown was roughly in keeping with gender statistics published by AAPS (2018), which shows membership of 64% female and 36% male. This gender ratio has been consistent throughout the years since AAPS published its first formal annual report in 2006.

Six participants had graduate degrees at the doctoral level, five participants had attained a graduate degree to the master level, and four participants had undergraduate degrees supplemented by further training and credentials in their areas of expertise. Ten participants began their careers at the university with their degrees and qualifications already in place, while five participants obtained supplementary degrees or specialized training during the course of their employment at UBC.

The participants’ ages ranged from 33 to 61 years old, with the average being 42.7 years and the median being 47 years. This age range was reflective of AAPS membership statistics (2018), whereby 88% of the 4,530 employees fell within the age distribution of 30-64 years and 28% of all employees fell within the participant average and median ages of 40-49 years of age.

As shown in Table 4-2 below, at the time of interviewing, the participants’ years of service at UBC ranged from 2.5 years to 29 years, with the average time being 11.7 years and the median time being 15.75 years. According to AAPS (2018), 69% of M&P employees at the university had less than ten years of service, with an average of 8 years of service. 23% of AAPS members fell within the average and median years of service of the research participants in this research. These figures contrasted slightly with the 2007 AAPS annual report, whereby 75% of
M&P employees at that time had less than ten years of service, while 19% of M&P employees fell within the average and median years of service of the current research participants. These differences are probably reflective of the higher level of education and job levels attained by the research participants, which may have affected either the entry date of service into the university or the number of years required to climb into the higher job levels.

Table 4-2: Research Participant Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>UBC Experience</th>
<th>Institutional Location</th>
<th>Job Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexa</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Educational Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gale</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Institutional Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Research &amp; Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>26 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Facilities Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaylin</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Educational Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Information Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynda</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Educational Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Student Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>3.5 years</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>29 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Educational Programming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were reflective of the UBC campus community. They came from a wide variety of central units and faculties/schools across campus, including: Faculty of Science,
Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Medicine, Allard School of Law, Faculty of Applied Science, upper administration at various VP levels, UBC IT, Building Operations, Enrolment Services, and Development and Alumni Engagement. Nine different job families at various levels were represented, including: Accounting, Administration, Education Programming, Facilities Management, Information Services, Information Systems and Technology, Institutional Analysis, Research and Facilitation, and Student Management.

According to AAPS (2018) statistics, membership in these nine job families constituted 73.18% of the total M&P employee count and represented eight out of the top ten largest job families within AAPS. As shown in Table 4-3 below, membership in the job families to which the participants belonged increased over 59% during the decade between 2008 and 2018.

**Table 4-3: Participant Job Families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Family</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>2017/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Programming</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info Systems &amp; Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Facilitation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2077</td>
<td>3315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistics from AAPS Annual Report 2006 and AAPS Annual Report 2017/2018*
The individuals who took part in this research held various professional positions, varying in scope and responsibility, in the management and operations of the university. Participants worked across campus in five different faculties, one professional school, administration at the VP levels, and three auxiliary units. Their positions were: Director (5 people), Associate Director (2 people), Assistant Dean (2 people), Manager (3 people); Specialist (2 people); and, Coordinator (1 person). The participants all held multiple duties within their job descriptions including: strategic planning, finance and budgeting, facilities management, human resource management, communications, education programming, operations management, student services, research and grant facilitation, data analysis, and information technology in various capacities. One participant also occasionally taught as a clinical instructor in her area of expertise, hence her duties crossed the line between M&P and faculty.

Depending on the workplace, participants either reported to a higher-level M&P staff member who then reported to upper administration (Provost or VP office) or they reported directly to a faculty Dean. All participants except one had supervisory responsibilities and directly received reports from other M&P staff, CUPE 2950 clerical staff, CUPE 116 trades staff, CUPE 2278 student workers, non-union technical staff, and/or excluded staff who did not belong to a union or association. The size of the units where the participants worked range from 3 to 180 staff members. Many of the participants were responsible for their unit’s budgets and/or worked within an allocated operating budget.

Within their individual units, participants interacted with a diverse community of faculty members, higher level staff, peer colleagues, unionized staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and the general public. Their responsibilities often called for cross-unit or cross-faculty collaboration and consultation at all levels, and some worked directly with upper administration.
in the President’s and Vice-Presidents’ Offices where institutional policy and practice is formulated.

Given the changing landscape and growth of professional employees in higher education, many of the positions held by the research participants were new to the university in the last decade. The two Assistant Dean positions were only about ten years old, as those duties were once carried out by faculty in Associate Dean positions and lower-level M&P or unionized employees. Two of the participants in Director positions were recruited from outside the university into newly created portfolios to meet changing university needs. The four participants working in the area of Educational Programming were all involved in initiatives established over the last ten years, for example, implementing new technology in the learning environment, developing distance education tools, enhancing curricula to include First Nations history and diversity/equity issues, and maximizing new funding opportunities in developing teaching and learning technology. The interviewees involved in student services saw a dramatic change in the last two years when the Enrolment Services portfolio underwent a major organizational change that saw the mass hiring of new employees, the redistribution of duties, and new approaches to student advising, classroom services, and teaching facilities. This organizational change was implemented as result of the increasing need for one-on-one advising, student demands, and a perceived need by the university to improve the student experience, especially for undergraduates. As a result, some higher-level M&P positions were eliminated but dozens of new M&P staff positions were created to implement these changes.
4.4.3 Interviews

One-on-one interviewing was selected as a research method because of the kind of research questions I was interested in exploring; in addition, much research on sensemaking and sensegiving is conducted through narrative. The purpose of this method was to elicit every day examples and stories as a way of detailing the participants’ personal experiences in the workplace. Maitlis and Lawrence (2007) suggest the ability to engage in sensegiving goes beyond simply telling a good story: for stakeholders to engage in sensegiving, they must tell sensible stories (drawing on relevant expertise) at the right time and place (opportunity) and occupy a social position that leads others to listen (legitimacy) (p. 79). Brown (2006) states, “narratives are stories about organizations that actors author in their efforts to understand, or make sense of, the collective entities with which they identify” (p. 734).

Fifteen one-on-one, face-to-face interviews form a key data source for this qualitative case study. The interviews were semi-structured with both guided and open-ended questions. Each interview was approximately one hour long and conducted in quiet locations on campus, at the convenience of the interviewee. Interviews were conducted over a six-month period between December 2016 and May 2017. A log was kept with details, including: interview locations and arrangements; distinguishing features of either the interviewee or session to facilitate recall during analysis; and, notes of informal conversations either before or after the interview.

The interviews were recorded using a phone voice recorder and subsequently uploaded onto a secure computer file. Assurances were extended several times, both verbally and in writing, that the interviews were completely confidential, and participants’ identities would remain anonymous. Consent forms (see Appendix E) were signed at the start of each interview.
and copies were emailed upon request. Afterwards, I personally transcribed the interviews and emailed the text to each participant upon completion. This opportunity enabled participants to ensure the accuracy of wording and facts, as well as to ensure the transcript reflected the essence of the stories and information they communicated during the interview.

Questions for the interviews were configured to collect data in the form of narrative in support of this proposal’s research questions and theoretical concepts. Questions included both topical questions to garner more general background information, as well as questions that were open-ended to elicit examples from the interviewees’ experiences (Stake, 1995). Questions varied for purpose, context and situations, such as: introducing, follow-up, probing, specifying, direct and indirect information, structuring, and interpretation (Kvale, 1996).

The research questions were informed by the theoretical concepts of corporatization and NPM, professionalism, third space, professional identity, and sensemaking and sensegiving. Since M&P employees work in multi-layered environments, the questions considered university, cross-unit/faculty, and individual unit level experiences for analysis (Yin, 2003). The interview questions were piloted with three individual M&P staff members who were not part of this research study. I also engaged a fellow M&P colleague to interview me. These pilots allowed me to judge the clarity of the questions, interview flow, relevance of the questions, and general strengths and weaknesses of the interview process.

4.4.4 Documents

A variety of university literature was reviewed before, during, and after the one-on-one interviews to support the research questions and later to analyze narrative data gathered from the interviews. In order to help make sense of how M&P staff identified occupationally and
organizationally, relevant sensemaking documents from both the university and the association were examined for the years 2006 to 2018. This time period was chosen to ensure consistent and sustained data was collected. These documents included participant job descriptions, UBC strategic plans, UBC policies, UBC and AAPS annual reports, UBC human resource benchmark reports, UBC surveys, and UBC and AAPS published statistics, and AAPS archival literature.

Taylor (2006) emphasizes the importance of text, terminology, language, and context in policy, in relation to meaning, interpretation, effects, linkages and consequences of policy. “Texts form the way in which we see the world, and the uses of policy texts lead to a chain of operationalisations that have an effect on the world” (Saarinen, 2008, p. 725). In my research, the documents were helpful in analyzing past and present management and professional staff roles at UBC, the evolving identity of AAPS and its membership, and the relationships between professional groups within the M&P network.

The participants’ job descriptions were useful in determining the qualifications required for the specific positions, reporting structures within the unit and university hierarchy, and expectations for professional skills, professional development, professional affiliations, and performance.

The university’s strategic plans, which I consider as sensegiving documents, shed light on how the university identifies M&P staff within its institutional human resource policies, and in the university’s overall strategic plan. The analysis of institutional documents, such as annual reports, benchmark reports, and published statistics, gave information and context to the growth of M&P and the effects of corporatization and new public management on this employee group.

Literature from AAPS included AAPS annual reports, surveys, and newsletters. These documents helped analyze the growth and membership of M&P staff and its positioning both
organizationally and occupationally within the university. They also looked at the issues between AAPS and the university in such areas as collective bargaining, advocacy, and professional development.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the questionnaires and job descriptions returned by the participants. While this was initially used as a recruitment tool, the questionnaires provided information such as: job family, position and position level; degree, certification and specialized training qualifications; professional affiliations; years of service at UBC; faculty and unit; and, gender and age. The participants’ job descriptions provided more detailed information on their specific positions. All staff job descriptions at UBC are formatted into the following standardized areas: Business Title, Employment Group, Job Family, Job Code, Faculty, Department, Pay Grade, Salary Level, Job Summary, Organizational Status, Work Performed, Consequence of Error, Supervision Received, Supervision Given, and Qualifications. This consistency allowed for ease of analyses and comparison of participant job descriptions.

Once the validated texts of the interviews were returned, the data from the transcripts was analyzed. The transcribed interviews were then sorted in terms of responses to questions, research concepts, and emerging themes from the interviews. Participants, and responses, were colour and font coded. For example, responses were coded if they pertained to sensemaking, sensegiving, corporatization and NPM, professionalism, occupational identity, organizational identity, or third space. Other themes emerging from the data (e.g., job security, professional development, morale, turnover) were also sorted and documented. A further level of manual
sorting occurred if the above concepts occurred at the individual unit, cross-unit/faculty, or institutional levels. For the purpose of confidentiality, and to ensure no increased risk of an individual being identifiable in this research, participants were allocated a same gender pseudonym.

The following coding categories, outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (2003, pp. 161-172), were considered and loosely used as a general resource:

**Table 4-4: Coding Categories, adapted from Bogdan and Biklen (2003)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settings and Contexts</td>
<td>General information (e.g., faculty, unit, location)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situations</td>
<td>Type of participants (e.g., job levels, job families, years of experience, gender, age)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives Held by Subjects</td>
<td>Shared rules, norms, points of view (e.g., orientation or positioning to setting, management or professional role, reporting structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects Ways of Thinking about People/Objects</td>
<td>Understanding of other M&amp;P members, AAPS, UBC, peer professionals; assumptions, attitudes, opinions about organization, profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Experience at UBC and in profession, changes over time, sequences of events, stages of development (e.g., career development or organizational changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Kinds of behaviors (e.g., decision making, involvement in associations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Activities that occur in settings, events (e.g., committees, meetings, conflicts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Tactics, methods, techniques, maneuvers, ploys and/or ways to manage professional identity, organizational identity, third space (e.g., passive, confrontational, wait-and-see attitude)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships and Social Structures</td>
<td>Relationships or informal behaviours among colleagues not defined by organizational chart (e.g., friends, groups); social structures in more defined professional relations, e.g. social professional roles, organizational chart positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>Structure of narratives and how stories are told by interviewees (chronological, issues) and what this demonstrates (e.g., conflicts, beliefs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Isolates data pertinent to research procedures, problems, highlights, dilemmas, weaknesses and strengths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.6 Construction of Quality

In order to assure the quality of this research, Tracy’s (2010) model of eight criteria for qualitative research was used as a guideline. Those criteria are: 1) worthy topic; 2) rich rigor; 3) sincerity; 4) credibility; 5) resonance; 6) significant contribution; 7) ethics; and, 8) meaningful coherence. I reflected on how each one defined the parameters to achieve quality and on how I would apply them to this research. The following Table 4-5 outlines each criterion, followed by a description of how each one was examined in its application to this research.
### Table 4-1: Tracy’s Model of Eight Criteria for Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Method to Achieve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worthy Topic</td>
<td>The topic was relevant, timely, significant, and interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Rigor</td>
<td>The study used sufficient and appropriate: theoretical constructs, data and time in field, sample(s), context(s), and data collection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>The study was characterized by self-reflexivity and transparency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>The research was marked by thick description, triangulation (interviews and document analysis), multi-vocality, and member reflections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resonance</td>
<td>The research affects the audience through aesthetic representation, naturalistic generalizations, and transferable findings to other groups or institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Contribution</td>
<td>The research contributes: conceptually, theoretically, practically, methodologically, and heuristically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>The research considered ethics related to procedures, specific situations/ cultures, relationships, and exiting and sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Coherence</td>
<td>This study: achieved its purpose; used appropriate methods, and interconnected literature, research questions, findings and interpretations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research (p. 840).*

**a) Worthy Topic**

This research arose from both my personal and professional experience as an M&P staff member at UBC. I personally experienced and was privy to the stories and experiences of fellow M&P colleagues regarding the feelings of being in third space; these experiences were accompanied by dissonance between our professional occupational and organization identities within the changing landscape in higher education brought about through corporatization and NMP. With the start of a new presidential regime at the university, and the continued increase in M&P employees, this research was particularly timely.
b) Rich Rigor

This research used theoretical constructs, including: third space, organizational and occupational identity development, and sensemaking/sensegiving. Four interview pilots clarified the questions, refined the flow, and garnered general strengths and weaknesses of the initial interview questions. Subsequently, one-on-one interviews were conducted with an appropriate sample size followed by analysis of the data collected.

c) Sincerity

The interest for this study arose from my professional life at UBC as a long-time M&P employee, AAPS member, and ex-board member of AAPS. I acknowledge I had the dual roles of researcher-practitioner in this study. I shared this information with interviewees at the beginning of each interview. I believe my insider status helped me understand the university hierarchy, terminology, history, and mission, as well as the experience of being an M&P member at UBC. There was an initial assumption that M&P staff shared a common experience. However, during the interviews and data analysis, I was sensitive to, and reflected on, this assumption and appreciated that each M&P experience at the university is different from my own.

d) Credibility

Fifteen interviewees for this research were invited to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings regarding how they made sense of third space and any dissonance between their organizational and occupational identities. Interviews were recorded verbatim. Contexts were explored and used in the analysis. Each participant reviewed a completed verbatim interview transcript to ensure accuracy. They were invited to add additional thoughts and experiences before resending to me. Document analysis helped support the research findings.
d) Resonance

This research is presented as a written dissertation. The interviewees consisted only of M&P employees whose official job descriptions required them to hold a graduate degree and/or specialized training or certification. The themes and generalizations drawn from this research may be applicable to M&P employees in other job families or at other job levels, and other employee groups within universities, e.g. contract faculty. This research may be relevant to other higher education institutions in Canada or internationally.

f) Significant Contribution

Using case study methodology and document analysis, this study brought together the concepts of corporatization, NPM, and professionalism to analysis the rise of M&P. The research then situates M&P using third space, professional identity, and sensemaking theories. Findings will be shared with UBC HR and AAPS, which may generate discussion for collective action to bridge gaps in understandings between the institution and its professional staff.

g) Ethics

This research received approval from UBC’s Research Ethics Board. All potential participants received an invitational letter outlining the scope of this research project and assurances of anonymity (see Appendix C). All interviewees signed an informed consent document before the interview (see Appendix E) and permission was asked to audiotape the interview. A supportive atmosphere of trust and respect was established in order to elicit personal narratives within a safe interview environment. Verbatim transcripts are stored in a secure location. Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcript of their own interview for accuracy. Interviewees were given pseudonyms and any identifying information was eliminated in the research text.
h) Meaningful Coherence

The purpose of this research was to explore how M&P employees made sense of and constructed their occupational and organizational identities within third space at UBC. I did this by interviewing a sub-set of M&P employees at the university. The research questions in this study are supported by a literature review within the relevant theoretical concepts and methodologies. Findings from the interviews and my subsequent interpretations are interconnected with those questions and the literature.

In addition to using the eight criteria above to construct quality in this study, I was also conscious of conducting transparent research. I retained all email correspondence, collected data (preliminary questionnaires, job descriptions, and consent forms), recorded interviews, written transcriptions, and participant-validated transcriptions. All information is stored and easily retrievable.

4.7 Insider Status and Role Duality

This research arises from my professional life at UBC as a long-time M&P employee, AAPS member, and ex-board member of AAPS. Some researchers believe having first-hand involvement and subjective grounding in an organization’s culture is beneficial for conducting research studies (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). On the other hand, insider research can also be seen as problematic. Some critics believe it lacks intellectual rigour or objectivity because the researcher is perceived to have a personal or emotional stake in the setting (Alvesson, 2003). Researchers may also make assumptions as to work context and shared experiences; however, I would argue my status enabled me to theoretically reframe, or attempt to make sense of, those shared experiences.
I believe my insider status helped me understand the university environment as well as the experience of being an M&P member at UBC. I was interested to know whether other M&P staff members experienced the same feelings and conflicts as I did, and how they made sense of them. There was an initial assumption on my part that M&P staff share a common experience, however, during the interviews and data analysis, I was able to acknowledge and appreciate each M&P experience at the university is unique in itself. Despite this, shared meanings did emerge from our common experiences, which further enriched this research.

During the interview process, I was able to understand the university structure, environment and history, and specific UBC terminology. At each interview, I informed the interviewee that I was a long-term M&P staff member and shared my work experience at UBC with them. I believe the participants freely shared their views and stories with me because I was a colleague and was therefore more likely to understand the M&P experience. However, my familiarity may also have been a disadvantage for me because it could have possibly hindered exploration into some areas where I assumed meaning.

Brannick and Coghlan (2007) believe the most problematic areas that normally pose challenges when conducting insider research are around access, pre-understandings, role duality, and organizational politics. However, they also point out that insider research provides valuable knowledge about the inner workings of organizations. They argue:

… as researchers through a process of reflexive awareness, we are able to articulate tacit knowledge that has become deeply segmented because of socialization in an organizational system and reframe it as theoretical knowledge and that because we are close to something or know it well, that we can research it. (p. 60)
In my case, pre-understanding—my own knowledge, insights, and experience of the university—is limited to my lived experience. However, I brought knowledge of UBC from the point of view of a M&P staff member through: first-hand experience in three separate units and faculties across campus; committee work at the institutional level; working relationships with M&P colleagues and supervision of M&P staff; and, board and committee knowledge of AAPS. Also, access to the organizational system to undertake research did not pose an issue. In my previous position at the university, and with my current professional network, I was able to obtain access to available documentation, data, and people required to undertake this research.

As both a researcher and an organizational member, conducting research on M&P, UBC and AAPS, I also needed to recognize preconceived assumptions from my M&P experience in order to explore and make sense of the experiences of other management and professional staff (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Rouleau, 2005; Thomas & Linstead, 2002). For instance, I assumed most M&P staff experienced third space, professional identity dissonance, and equated the rise in M&P numbers with corporate values on campus. These assumptions were reconsidered during and after the interviews as it became apparent that M&P staff members have unique experiences, perceptions, and opinions about their positioning at the university, their professional identities, and corporatization and NPM in higher education.

Despite these preconceived assumptions, I believe there was ultimately an inherent advantage to being an insider. It allowed me to understand the systems, contexts, and structures of the interviewees’ experiences while ultimately incorporating that knowledge into their unique perspectives. The interviewees were fellow management and professional colleagues; however, I did not interview anyone who I personally knew, with whom I ever had a direct working relationship, or with whom I had worked in the same unit, at any time. I was aware of the
confidentiality issues arising from a limited sample and the need to protect the identities of interviewees. Thus, in this way I managed my dual identity of ‘researcher–practitioner’ to avoid conflict of interest for the study and the participants.

Managing organizational politics sometimes becomes necessary, especially when research findings from insider research have practical or political implications. I hope that findings from this research have a bearing on future policy in regard to the relationship between UBC, AAPS, and M&P staff, as well as on professional opportunities for M&P members. I communicated to interviewees that research outcomes were meant to improve the working environment for M&P staff members and ultimately the university, not threaten it.

As mentioned before, as an insider I was forced to adopt the dual role of ‘researcher-practitioner’ in this study. Role duality sometimes arises as a conflict with insider research when the researcher studies a familiar setting and interacts with colleagues who are part of the organization. Questions arise, such as: Will organizational members who are interviewed be forthright in their responses? Will interviewees be cognizant of confidential information they may reveal to me? Will the professional relationship between me and the organizational member be affected by the research? Will my dual roles of M&P member and graduate student come in conflict? Will I be able to interpret the information gathered from interviews in an open, unbiased manner and report fairly what was conveyed? By being transparent and at ease in my roles as colleague and researcher, and emphasizing confidentiality in the information interviewees shared, I was able to manage any conflicts in role duality that arose and respond reflexively to the questions posed. I also believe being ‘one of them’ may have made the participants more comfortable relating their working experiences.
4.8 Summary

I decided the case study format, using one-on-one-interviews and document analysis, was the most suitable methodology to explore how M&P staff make sense of their positioning at UBC and in their relationship with AAPS. This format allowed me to capture “the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” experienced by new professionals at the university (Yin, 2003, pp. 40-41). The interviews were supplemented with analyses of sensegiving documents issued by different senior offices at the university and by AAPS. This approach offered multiple sources of evidence, or methodological triangulation. In order to reflect on the credibility and quality of this qualitative research, Tracy’s (2010) Model of Eight Criteria proved a powerful tool and a guideline for exploring my insider status and role duality.
Chapter 5: FINDINGS: NEW PROFESSIONALS AT UBC

This chapter explores the perceived impact of corporatization and NPM on the working environment of the research participants and how their roles as new professionals, are affected. The first section examines the effects of corporatization and NPM on a day-to-day basis and on the working relationships at UBC. It also looks at the dramatic growth of M&P and how research participants perceive this growth. The next section explores the components of being a new professional in relation to how M&P staff view their occupational and organizational positioning and expectations at the university.

5.1 Perceived Impact of Corporatization and NPM

UBC has grown dramatically over the last decade, and at the same time, introduced more NPM initiatives. While the research participants experienced these changes, not all of them perceived this strictly as a result of negative corporate practices. They reported changes in their working environment in regards to their roles, responsibilities, and interactions with others. As a growing employee sector of new professionals, their expectations of the university and their affiliations were changing.

5.1.1 Working Environment

All the M&P staff interviewed witnessed corporate values and new public management policies, or new managerialism, in the workplace. They also felt the impact, in some capacity, of those changes in their units or at the university as a whole. However, there were differing perspectives on whether corporate values within the university environment had a positive or negative impact.
on the day-to-day work environment. Some of the NPM initiatives at the university the
participants noted were aligned with what other researchers have found: imposed budget models
and tighter financial controls; fee-for-service and cost-recovery programs; outsourcing; increased
fundraising, donations, and named buildings; use of business language; higher international
student enrolments; larger class sizes; and industry-sponsored events and research programs
(Castree & Sparek, 2000; Giroux, 2011; Polster, 2003; Polster & Newson, 2009; Steck, 2003).

Five of the M&P staff are responsible for large budgets and supervise large numbers of
staff, with two of them holding accounting certification. These participants were more apt to note
the introduction of more NPM accounting practices, such as frequent internal and external audits
and increased reporting requirements, and were comfortable with how it affected the university,
their units, and their working environments.

The monitoring of unit budgets became decentralized at UBC during the last decade. A
new financial reporting system, Hyperion, was implemented to augment and interface with the
Financial Management System (FMS), the Human Resource Management System (HRMS), and
the human resource Position Management System (PMS). Therefore, units now have increased
oversight of their operating budgets and are responsible for controlling expenses and increasing
revenues, if possible. M&P staff who worked with the university financial and human resource
systems noted the increased complexity of managing budgets, increased reporting functions and
tighter deadlines that needed to be overseen. In the face of decreasing provincial funding, Susan
and Christine were two participants who viewed balanced budgets, fiscal restraint, increased
monitoring of expenses, fundraising from donors, and stricter restraints in hiring and retention as
good things for the university and their units:
Some corporate initiatives (e.g., fundraising) have good aspects. We have a new building because of fundraising. (Susan)

There is more attention paid to finance to ensure we are close to a balanced budget and that all initiatives are fully funded. I see corporatization happening at the university especially since we moved to a budget model, whereby we are funded for different activities and for generating additional revenues for the university. (Christine)

Another area of the university deeply affected by changes in job categories is IT, a fast-paced and rapidly growing area whose employees are almost all classified as M&P at UBC. IT is one of the sectors that experiences marked fluctuations in hirings and firings as major university IT projects are undertaken and subsequently completed. The three participants in the Information Systems and Technology job family (Guy, Deborah, and Dylan) mentioned how corporate values impact the workplace when it comes to staffing, research, and changes in the workplace. As opposed to the accountants above, IT and research professionals such as Guy and Deborah were more cynical about the effects of corporate values and NPM on the university in regard to internationalization, fundraising, increased student numbers, donations and named buildings, research funding, and university messaging.

I see a lot of development on campus to bring international people to UBC. I see a lot of focus on things like the new Alumni Centre. There was a lot of money that went entirely for one purpose – to bring money to the university through donations. From my perspective, it seems the university’s goal is just to get bigger, more students, more money. (Guy)
There are obvious signs of corporatization on campus with the naming of buildings after individuals and companies, more focus on research supporting corporate objectives, and the messaging the university puts out. (Deborah)

Dylan in particular noted changes at the unit level in terms of outsourcing to save money, which he viewed as a compromise:

Yes, corporatization affects my position as I am now outsourcing. We needed to make some compromises in order to make things more manageable. (Dylan)

Participants who worked in the delivery and programming of education saw corporate values and business culture affecting the workplace environment in a different way. These five M&P employees (Wesley, Lynda, Kaylin, Alexa, Matthew) saw a conflict between the traditional purpose of a university, defined as “the unqualified pursuit and public dissemination of knowledge and truth” (Turk, 2000, p. 3), and the more business-like model where a publicly-funded institution needs to be accountable to tax-payers by being cost efficient. Wesley noted the use of corporate language in the workplace with his references to business models and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Both Wesley and Matthew advocated for a balanced approach between traditional collegial governance and that of a corporatized model run by management.

I see that the corporatization trend has affected the university. I work at the interface of corporatizing administration and the academic side. It is a concern but it isn’t clear to me that the business processes and choices made fit with the kind of work that the university does. We have taken a more business culture [which] was not true 5-10 years ago – using business models and language, e.g., KPIs. (Wesley)
The university is dealing with big money; it is a big business … [however] the university is unique, it is about life-long learning, it is not a business. There is a very delicate balance because there is also the ‘people aspect’ and the ‘learning aspect’, which makes it a little bit different than a place of business. (Matthew)

Fourteen of the fifteen participants interviewed felt corporate values were becoming part of the university culture, and equated those values with a form of accountability, which they thought necessary in a publicly funded academic institution. Two participants (Lee, Matthew) who worked closely with faculty members around policy and academic delivery in tightly budgeted administrative and infrastructure areas were quite markedly on the side of accountability. While the participants who managed large budgets and are accountants by profession viewed accountability in terms of finance, others viewed accountability in terms of upholding moral principles within the university and towards the wider community. Lee, who worked in developing policy and practices in central administration, saw accountability as an ethical stance. On the other hand, Matthew, who worked with students and in the delivery of academic programs, saw accountability as an obligation to the taxpaying public.

Yes, I see corporatization at the university. Is there something wrong with people being accountable to the work they do? I think it is important to be accountable; it is an ethical stance, not so much a support for corporate practices. The university environment is changing, and in my responsibilities, I’d like to see people be more accountable. (Lee)

Over the 12 years I’ve been here, yes, it has definitely become more corporate … we are just being held more accountable. It is public money, not private money. (Matthew)
In contrast to the M&P staff who thought corporate values were infiltrating the university culture and the workplace, there was only one participant, Alexa, who did not feel they affected her working environment: “I’m not sold on the arguments about corporatization. I don’t really feel that corporatization has affected my job function or how my unit operates.” However, given she had only been at UBC for a short time, came to work directly from being a graduate student, and worked in a closed unit with little contact other than with students, she possibly had limited working experience with which to compare environments.

Despite their area of work, professional credentials, length of service, and career experience, participants generally acknowledged that a university is a unique environment which strives to deliver its academic mission in a climate of declining government funding. Many felt a balance needed to be struck between the traditional, publicly funded learning environment and the increasing influence of the corporate world’s efficient business models and practices. As professionals in the university, Susan, Christine, Paul and Kaylin were all genuinely concerned with the effect corporate practices have on the university’s ability to fulfill its teaching and learning mandate. Susan and Christine believed a balance is necessary:

Corporatization does impact us but I think in a positive way. A corporate environment has a lot of good things in it, but you need to get the right balance; it doesn’t always have to be negative. It brings fiscal responsibility but in a university you have a bigger agenda than just the bottom line. (Susan)

There needs to be a balance between pedagogy and how it is financially supported. (Christine)
Both Paul and Kaylin saw the benefits of corporate practices but noted universities are unique environments where caution should be exercised:

I would support us not becoming too corporate but there are some best practices from [the IT] industry that are worth adopting and promoting. They should also be challenged because they may not be what is right for the university environment. Challenging and evaluating is what we should do best in a teaching and learning environment. (Paul)

Publicly funded education is in a tough spot, less money flowing in from governments that often gets cut back. I see a need to look at more innovative ways for the university to sustain itself financially. [However], it causes me some moral distress in terms of what I see the ideal of the purpose and mandate of the university when for-profit sectors are involved. (Kaylin)

While the experience of corporatization for M&P employees varies, it seems those who felt the greatest impact were those who managed budgets, supervised staff and students, administered operations and facilities, developed policy and procedures, and generally had longer years of service with the university. While there were differing views on scope and value, all the participants except Alexa noted corporatization and new public management policies impacted the workplace.

5.1.2 M&P Growth

During the interviews, participants were informed that M&P staff had grown 50% over the previous decade from approximately 2,800 members to approximately 4,200 members (at the
time of the interviews). Most participants were surprised to hear the numbers and did not know management and professional staff were the largest bargaining unit on campus.

They expressed various views for the reasons they believed were behind this rapid growth and whether it was a result, or combination, of: 1) corporatization and the need for increased manpower to carry out the university’s business operations; 2) simply ‘administrative bloat’ and increased bureaucracy; or, 3) increased growth of the university’s academic mandate and the need to provide more professional staff.

One participant, Christine, a long-term employee who worked with budgets and finance, thought increased M&P staff was a direct result of corporatization:

I think that M&P numbers have increased substantially to take over revenue-producing ventures of the university. With the corporatization of the university, it does require more professional staff with the expertise and knowledge to balance the books, present reports, think strategically. (Christine)

Deborah believed M&P levels were rising as a result of both increased workloads and poor resource management. However, she also noted that ‘administrative bloat’ is happening not only within the M&P ranks but also within the university’s senior leadership:

The term ‘administrative bloat’ resonates with me as I’ve wondered why there are so many people involved in a project. These are mainly M&P people … [but] the senior leadership is also growing, and I think it is just the volume of work to be done and the easiest way is to throw bodies at it to keep up with the speed of growth. (Deborah)

The general consensus among the participants was M&P growth is a result of steady growth at the university and the natural need for increased services and professional staff to
manage new areas. Over the previous decade the total student population increased by 28% (UBC 2009, p.28; UBC, Overview and Facts). Participants noted the addition of the Okanagan satellite campus in 2005 as a mitigating factor. Particular areas of growth noted were: finance, educational programs, IT services, general administration, student numbers, student services, and facility management. These areas, and most of the M&P who participated in this research, were also contained within the largest M&P job families as outlined in Table 4-1.

Many of these employees confirmed their positions and/or responsibilities were either fairly new or did not exist a decade ago. Kimberly confirmed her role “didn’t exist 15 years ago” and viewed the university’s growth as the reason for the increase in M&P numbers. Four other participants (Alexa, Wesley, Matthew, and Susan) also viewed the university’s growth as the cause for the rise in M&P staff, but for slightly different reasons. Alexa and Wesley regarded the increase in students, program offerings, and required infrastructure to accommodate the students as the primary reasons for more M&P staff:

One of the factors is the growth in graduate programs and all the degrees being offered. (Alexa)
I think the growth in M&P is mainly around accommodating the growth in students. The cafes and shops, the increasing infrastructure, and the number of people commuting and living here every day. (Wesley)

On the other hand, Matthew and Susan viewed the complexity of tasks and new functions at the university as requiring more professional staff:

… the numbers have increased because the university and the duties of people are becoming more complex. (Matthew)
As the university has grown, there is a requirement for the faculties to get more professional staff, which they didn’t have before. I can see the areas of the greatest increase probably occurred in administration, finance, IT, and educational programming because of e-learning. (Susan)

As noted above, not only did the student numbers increase, but building on campus increased dramatically over the past decade. This was not only to accommodate students and programs, but also to replace aging infrastructure through government funding, fundraising campaigns, and donations from the private sector. Over the last ten years, I personally observed multiple changes and initiatives in infrastructure at the university, which required professional expertise and additional employees to manage. For example:

- Public Realm Project to make UBC a walking campus and ecologically sustainable
- District Energy Project to convert the campus from steam to hot water heating
- New transportation hub
- New Student Union Building
- New Alumni Centre and Central Commons
- New recreational facilities
- New and renovated Faculty of Arts complex buildings
- New and renovated Faculty of Education complex buildings
- New and renovated Faculty of Science Buildings
- New Faculty of Law building
- New and renovated buildings in various Health Science faculties
- New food venues and vendors
- New and increased student residences
• New international student college: Vantage College (VC)
• New residential areas
• Implementation of new learning strategies and techniques in classrooms and the curriculum
• New and updated Student Information System (SIS)
• New and updated Human Resource Management System (HRMS)
• New and updated Financial Management System (FMS)

The above projects caused major disruptions to classes, traffic and pedestrian flow, research, and working environments. They all required employees, often M&P staff with expertise in the various areas, to plan, implement, manage, and maintain the projects.

In addition to the increase of professional personnel required as a result of infrastructure projects, the university’s growth also led to increased work in administration and research. Participants who work in administration and research also cited the changing roles and responsibilities between CUPE 2950 unionized staff and M&P, and between faculty members and M&P, which resulted in a shift of traditional work from one employee group to another. As Matthew and Susan noted previously, the sheer growth at the university required more staff; however, Christine saw the complexity of new tasks as being more appropriate for professional, or M&P staff, who had expertise and training in specialized areas:

There is a shift in the 21st century with digitization, computer, and student expectations on campus; there is less of a need for junior level work in data processing, transactional work. Rather, there is more of a need for student support
(counselling, mental health), finance support (budget preparation, analysis), HR
support – job duties more aligned with M&P classifications. (Christine)

Guy believed administrative tasks had increased in both volume and complexity, and there was
also a shift of duties to M&P staff in order to alleviate the growing administrative tasks of
faculty members:

There is more pressure on faculty on the teaching side with higher enrolments and
with research, especially with the competition. The administrative service that
faculty used to provide is now done by administrative staff. (Guy)

What is interesting about the perspective that M&P staff take on tasks traditionally done
by faculty members is that, in my experience, some faculty feel they are being asked to perform
more administrative tasks than ever before. It should be noted that while M&P staff numbers
steadily increased by over 50% during past decade, tenured faculty numbers increased by only
2.25% over the same period of time. The slight increase in faculty is probably attributed to cost
saving measures by the university and reflected in the rise of part-time sessional instructors
(Foster & Birdsell Bauer, 2018; Ginsberg, 2011). However, despite the small increase in tenured
faculty, the rise in M&P staff would seem to suggest there is a need for more M&P staff, or new
professionals, to fulfill new roles at the university and to take on new responsibilities added to
the workload of faculty members, whether they be tenured or sessional.

5.2 New Professionals

The concept of ‘new professional’ evolved from the traditional notion of what constitutes being a
professional. Many of the M&P staff at UBC, and more specifically those participating in this
research, clearly represent this new employee group. The following sections look at the
components of being a new professional: professional credentials, ongoing professional development, membership in professional associations, and occupational and organizational commitment. However, despite fulfilling most of the requirements to be deemed professionals, there was some notable gaps at the organizational and occupational levels in the components listed above.

5.2.1 Professional Credentials

According to the framework agreements between AAPS and UBC, the role of the professional in the workplace should be based on the qualifications and training of the individual, the needs of the organization, and the mutual recognition that ongoing professional development contributes to both the growth of the employee and the organization. The framework agreement outlines that the two organizations share a common vision that “values continuous improvement and fosters individual and University growth” (ACTE, 2010-2012, p. 1).

The university now requires almost all its professional and management staff to have at least an undergraduate degree and, in some cases, higher-levels of education and specialized training. As previously noted, the research participants in this study held a total of six doctoral degrees, five master’s degrees, and four bachelor’s degrees supplemented by further training and credentials in their area of expertise. I was interested in knowing whether the knowledge, experience, and credentials of the M&P research participants were legitimately utilized and recognized in their roles or whether there was a sense of ‘creeping credentialism’ (Marshall, 2004; Murphy, 1998). The interview participants were asked during the interview whether they used the professional knowledge and training for which they were hired in the workplace and, if not, why not.
Eleven of the interviewees felt strongly that they used their professional knowledge and training on an ongoing basis. Within their individual units, they were generally happy in their positions, were engaged in the workplace, and felt recognized and supported for the work they did. Alexa was particularly engaged, noting, “I use my professional knowledge and training in my current job. Nothing is underutilized. I feel like there is room to propose ideas, projects, and be critical. There is enough room to use all my tools.”

Four participants felt their professional knowledge and training was not utilized and recognized in the workplace. Two of these individuals, Guy and Lynda, hold PhDs and have backgrounds in research. They experienced a professional gap between managing their administrative and managerial responsibilities and the research side of their training and job duties. Both of these respondents initially planned on research careers in academia but eventually changed paths to administrative roles within the academic institution. Both expressed dissatisfaction with their current work environment and seemed to resent being non-faculty, or in what they considered, a less recognized position at the university.

I rely on my [degree] in decision making. [However], I haven’t had a lot of opportunities in terms of what is particularly useful for my job. This is a very different skill than what was the focus of my PhD. (Guy)

Unfortunately, I don’t use a lot of my professional knowledge and training in my job. The training I have in research is not put to good use or really related. I’m stuck at the bottom of the hierarchy because I don’t get to apply that PhD knowledge for which I was hired. All the management work in my job is not really PhD stuff. (Lynda)
The other two participants, Kimberly and Paul, were fairly new to UBC and to higher education. Both came from large, corporate organizations and held senior-level executive positions for many years in the IT and Communications fields. They experienced a gap between their professional knowledge, training, and expertise, and their ability to fit into the hierarchical structure of higher education, specifically UBC.

The level of experience and the skill set I have is not fully used in my position. Other organizations are more sophisticated in their use of professionals, especially in roles such as mine. Therefore, I don’t use my skills here because UBC does not fully understand how to use [them]. The higher-level administration needs to shift its understanding how you use people and what the benefits are … If I was in a different environment, I would be recognized for my years of experience. (Kimberly)

From all of the professional knowledge, training, and experience I have, I use about 2025% here. The risk I run into is not using some of the skills I have developed, so I keep involved in things outside the university. (Paul)

The comments made by these two professionals new to higher education reflect a dissatisfaction with the hierarchical structure of UBC, lack of fulfillment in their professional work, and lack of recognition. All four individuals—in their 40s and in mid-career stages—did not feel they were using their expertise to the full extent, nor were they growing professionally within the organization; not surprisingly, all four show a low commitment to the university as well. Their situations reflect instances of creeping credentialism, whereby they were either overqualified for the positions they were hired into, or were underemployed, meaning the
individuals’ units did not know how to work with, recognize, or fully appreciate the expertise within their midst.

5.2.2 Professional Development

Also, in keeping with what constitutes a new professional, almost all the participants, except for one person, take part in professional development (PD) of some kind, either internally at the university or externally through courses, workshops, and/or conferences. However, there appears to be a gap between individual professional occupational needs and the opportunities provided by the organization in terms of the availability of PD offerings, relevance, and funding.

There are three principal paths for M&P staff to participate in PD: AAPS has an ongoing professional development series; Human Resources conducts general staff development workshops; and, UBC has an M&P Professional Development Fund to cover expenses for external PD up to $550 per annum. UBC states the purpose of providing funds for M&P professional development is to cover “those activities that enhance the knowledge, performance or career progression of an employee’s work at the University … such as courses, workshops, conferences, professional journals, books, or memberships” (UBC HR, M&P Professional Development Fund, 2018). However, a list of excluded expenses outlined in another document, M&P Fund Guidelines (UBC HR, M&P Professional Development Fund Guidelines, 2018), states the “M&P PD Fund does not cover job-required professional memberships or training expenses. Departments are responsible for providing job-related skill development required for, or integral to, the effective functioning of a position” (UBC HR, 2013). Given departmental budgets are vastly different and are controlled by department or unit Heads, funding for PD
varies across the university from unit to unit, affecting M&P staff in an inconsistent, and often unequal, manner.

Most of the participants took advantage of the annual $550 available from the university for PD expenses. Some attended the free AAPS workshops, and about half reported their units were supportive of funds and time for ongoing PD. Matthew and Christine both enjoyed additional funding, over and above the $550. They were also recognized for their professional development during the annual performance review and granted the necessary time to participate in PD, as well as to maintain their professional memberships.

I pay fees to belong to [professional association]. I also go to 2-3 conferences per year and present at those. I am supported to go to these conferences with both time and funding, over and above the $550 … I am very much recognized for the PD I take and for the conferences I go to. (Matthew)

I hold memberships and take part in ongoing professional development … I’ve been fortunate with my supervisors and they have been very supportive … I get recognition for participating in PD. (Christine)

However, not all M&P enjoyed recognition for their professional development achievements, despite generous PD funding by their units. Neither James nor Wesley were recognized or rewarded within their units for their PD but rather their participation was viewed as an organizational expectation.

We have a PD budget of $2000 every three years plus the $550 per year [from UBC]. I am supported financially and with time, however I am not recognized or rewarded for professional development. (James)
My unit is supportive with PD funding of $3000 per annum over the $550. There is no explicit acknowledgement for taking part in PD, there is just an expectation that we are doing it. (Wesley)

In contrast to the generosity of some units, other M&P staff (Kimberly, Paul, and Gale) reported their PD participation had fallen behind because their units did not support them financially or through recognition. Time off work to participate in PD was also an issue despite some of the participants reporting long working days without additional compensation. In 2017/18, AAPS reported handling 43 cases of issues related to long hours of work (AAPS, 2018, p. 18). Participants cited lack of motivation and job satisfaction, as well as ongoing training not being maximized occupationally and organizationally. Kimberly noted that despite PD being an expectation of her job, “I do not get recognized for my professional affiliations or activities”. The others cite funding issues and lack of time at the unit level as impediments to their PD.

I haven’t got a lot of support to remain active in associations as part of the scope of my role … My unit would not be supportive of any PD with either funding or time … I usually work 10-15 hours a day. (Paul)

I’ve been told our unit is in deficit and there are zero dollars for any PD. (Gale)

Interestingly, most of the respondents who experienced lack of funding or recognition for professional development came from more centralized units at the university under the umbrella of various VP offices. Budgets may be tighter in these units or there may be more scrutiny and accountability on funding expenditures for professional development at this level. On the other hand, the M&P who received the most funding from their units worked in either cost recovery services or ‘wealthier’ units with large operating budgets.
In any case, the disparity in funding across the university affects M&P staff professionally, and ultimately, organizationally. Lack of recognition affects employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. At the same time, lack of professional development affects the professional growth of management and professional staff who need to keep up-to-date with changes in their fields of expertise in order to contribute to the organization’s growing needs.

### 5.2.3 Professional Membership

Professional affiliations and memberships offer important contributions to the ongoing training, development, and networking of professionals in their areas of expertise. They provide what Ashforth and Mael (1989) describe as “oneness with or belongingness to” (p. 21) their professional occupational identities. All research participants, except for one person, belong to at least one professional association other than AAPS. Involvement in external professional associations range from sitting on boards and committees, organizing annual conferences, taking part in professional development through seminars and workshops, or simply paying the annual dues. A small sampling (in order to maintain anonymity) of some of the provincial, national, and international professional organizations to which the participants belong, includes but is not limited to:

- American Education Research Association (AERA)
- Association of Accounting Technologists (AAT)
- Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP)
- Association of Registrars of Universities and Colleges in Canada (ARUCC)
- Canadian Association of Business Officers (CAUBO)
• Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS)
• Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS)
• Certified Management Accountants of Canada (CMA)
• Charted Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA)
• International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)
• International Society for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL)
• Project Management Institute (PMI)
• Society for Learning Analytics Research (SLAR)
• Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE)

The participants were proud of their memberships in, and involvement with, their professional associations, which enhanced their professional identities. However, it is interesting that not one of the participants reported belonging to AAPS when listing their professional affiliations on the preliminary questionnaire. Only when exploring professional affiliations during the interview process did participants acknowledge membership in AAPS, despite membership being mandatory for all M&P staff at UBC. This lack of acknowledgement indicated a weak professional identification with AAPS as a professional association, in comparison to the professional associations they voluntarily joined.

5.2.4 Occupational Commitment

Researchers have noted professionals and new professionals show a high degree of occupational commitment (Evetts, 1999, 2003; Friedson, 1999, 2001; Larson, 1977; Parsons, 1939). All the participants in this research reported a lifetime commitment to their chosen professions. Many
have experienced changes within their respective professions and were committed to working at the university as long as there were continued professional learning opportunities and career growth. Matthew, Susan, and Wesley were examples of M&P staff who enjoyed generous professional development funding, were stimulated in their work environments and continued to grow professionally. They exhibited strong commitment to their respective professions:

I’ve been lucky with the skill set I’ve developed and I see my roles and projects changing and growing. (Matthew)

I love what I do. In my position, I have the opportunity to learn new things and there are challenges in each area, so the job is really interesting … I’ve been fortunate in that way. (Susan)

I have a lifetime commitment to my occupation, but I don’t know what that will look like. It has taken different forms. My experience is fluid and isn’t well defined. (Wesley)

In addition to commitment to their professions, they were generally happy employees of the university. At the time of the interview, each of them planned to stay at the university throughout the duration of their working careers. In the case of these individuals, organizational recognition, rewards, and nurturing contributed to strong commitment to their professional occupation as well as their organizational identity.

5.2.5 Organizational Commitment

All 15 participants expressed commitment to their professions, but in contrast to Matthew, Susan, and Wesley above, only eight expressed commitment to UBC. While they voiced satisfaction with their positions and enjoyed the benefits of working on campus, they were hesitant to
commit to fulfilling their professional careers at the university. A concern expressed by several of those committed to the university was whether the university would remain committed to them. Deborah and Matthew cited the fact that M&P staff are the only permanent employee group at UBC without job security; they felt their own positions were vulnerable:

If the projects aren’t there, there is no work. I am committed to the institution but the institution is only committed to me if there is a project. M&P are in a precarious position. (Deborah)

I know that M&P job security is not guaranteed and if there is a major reorg, I may be out the door. (Matthew)

There were various reasons why the participants were not committed to UBC and would choose to leave the university to fulfill their professions elsewhere: 1) stagnation in the work place; 2) lack of recognition; 3) upward mobility; and, 4) more exciting opportunities. Both Paul and Dylan worked in the dynamic, fast moving IT sector where change is frequent and learning is constant. Neither of these employees partook in ongoing professional development due to time and budgetary constraints. They viewed the university as a large institution that was slow to change, and ironically, not an organization that supported learning:

I see UBC as not being the right environment for me. It is too slow moving and too far behind the times, it is quite archaic here in comparison to the [IT] sector as a whole. I need to do more interesting and different things. (Paul)

I’m not necessarily committed to fulfilling my professional life at UBC … What interests me is to continue learning; therefore, if I was to critique where I am now, the pace of learning has slowed down. (Dylan)
Guy cannot commit to UBC as he is discouraged by the lack of recognition afforded to the university staff. He is also frustrated by his own ability to be part of the hierarchical decision-making process:

I am not committed to fulfilling my professional occupation at UBC. How the university views its staff, and the lack of my ability to get recognition in the decisions that really affect us, has questioned whether I can be useful in my role here. (Guy)

Guy’s remarks reflect a feeling that the university is not committed to him professionally.

Organizational commitment is seen as a two-way street – there is organizational commitment of an employee to the organization, and there is the commitment of the organization to the employee. Just under half of the participants are committed to UBC, which may help to explain the high M&P turnover statistics of the university.

Statistics from AAPS (2018) show 734 AAPS members left UBC in 2017/2018, out of a total 4,530 M&P staff (p. 22). This reflects a 16.2% turnover, with the highest terminations/resignations coming from the following job families: Research and Facilitation, Information Systems and Technology, Student Management, Education Programming, and Development. Coincidentally, eight of the 15 research participants, or 53%, are in job families that show the highest turnover. The turnover rate cited by AAPS is more than double of that reported by UBC in the 2017/2018 Focus on People Benchmark Report. UBC statistics show a 6.9% voluntary turnover for M&P employees. Voluntary turnover was cited as consisting of “resignations, job abandonment, and return to school only” (p. 38). UBC does not report on involuntary turnover or those M&P who are let go without cause due to firings, reorganizations, or the end of their contract. The statistics selected by the university appear more favorable in
comparison to the 2017 overall Canadian Benchmark of 6.1% employee turnover quoted in the report (p. 15). In comparison, UBC reports a total employee turnover of 6.3%, with bargaining unit faculty members at a low 0.9% voluntary turnover rate (p. 15).

In both the 2011 and 2014 UBC Workplace Experiences Surveys, statistics showed 42% of AAPS members who responded had actively looked for employment outside the university over the previous three years and were ‘very/somewhat likely’ to leave UBC in the next three years (p. 29). The top two reasons cited by M&P employees as the barriers to achieving long-term career objectives at UBC were: 1) the limited number of career opportunities; and 2) the career advancement process not being clear (p. 31). Unfortunately, M&P statistics were not reported in the 2018 Workplace Experiences Survey. In comparison, the 2014 survey reporting on all employee groups at the university show those who had actively looked for employment outside of UBC in the past three years: 41% for all staff groups combined, and 37% rate for faculty.

There appears to be a gap in the university’s ability to retain its M&P staff and its ability to build in, and develop, PD and career opportunities in order to retain them. This is similar to Whitchurch’s research (2013), where she notes universities need to re-examine the potential of third space professionals in order to retain them through motivation, rewards, incentives, PD opportunities, clearer career paths, promotions, recognition, and meaningful networks. In effect, the discrepancy between the participants’ strong occupational commitments and the lack of organizational commitment exhibited by over half of the research participants positions them in that same third space.
5.3 Summary

All the research participants experience the impact of corporation and NPM in the work place. Many of their positions are the result of dramatic growth at the university, as well as the introduction of corporate management practices. Despite the growth in M&P employee numbers, they generally think a balance needs to be struck between corporate values and those of traditional academia. Most of the participants fit into the definition of new professionals, although they cite gaps in areas such as professional development opportunities and funding, and recognition. They all have strong occupational commitment and identities, but organizational commitment and identity are weak for over half of the participants. This gap positions them in a third space within the university working environment. Perceptions of third space and how it affects the professional identities of the research participants, will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 6: **FINDINGS: WHO ARE MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF AT UBC?**

This chapter looks at how the research participants experienced third space, how it affected their professional occupational and organizational identities, and how they navigated their identities on a day-to-day to basis throughout the university hierarchy and in their working relationships with other employee groups. The final section looks at sensemaking and how tensions and triggers can initiate the process, along with sensegiving as provided through organizational documents.

6.1 **Third Space**

I work in one of those in-between spaces. (Wesley)

I was interested in exploring whether M&P staff at UBC experience a blurring of boundaries, a feeling of working in an in-between space—a blurred space or third space (Whitchurch, 2004, 2008, 2013). If so, how do they navigate this third space in relation to their roles and identities at the university, their institutional working relationships given the existing power structures, and in carrying out their day-to-day responsibilities at the university? Most of the participants were new to the theory of third space but easily understood the concept of working in a blurred and sometimes confusing in-between space, especially after discussions during the interviews about professionalism, occupational and organizational identities, and hierarchies within their working environments.

All the interviewees reported the feeling of working in some type of third space whether it be integrated, semi-autonomous, or independent (Whitchurch, 2008). The following sections
explore the experiences of M&P participants and how they made sense of their roles in the three types of third space.

6.1.1 Integrated

The optimal form of third space is integrated, when professionals work collaboratively with other employee groups. Over half the participants reported positive experiences working between university hierarchies and binaries, e.g., faculty/M&P staff and M&P/unionized staff, and between the various levels of the university. Matthew, Lee, and James came from quite different areas of the university but the scope of their projects were generally university wide and involved a wide variety of interest groups from senior management, faculty, staff, and students. James commented he works “in that third space all the time” and relies on communication across the units to bridge divides. Matthew and Lee found third space to be an opportunity for collaboration and to effect productive outcomes:

I work to bring groups together and seek collaboration for the success of UBC; I see it as a collaborative space. We work collaboratively between groups; it is an opportunity that I see as positive. (Matthew)

In my role, I am constantly collaborating and bringing people together from across the university and units. I think collaboration is bringing people into that third space in order to get done whatever needs to be done. It can be an opportunity for building relationships, being productive, addressing systemic issues, and reactive problem solving. (Lee)

In the cases above, Matthew, Lee, and James, strengthened their professional occupational identities from within, through collaboration and communication, in order to bridge
the hierarchical strata of the university in their roles and to manage the strategic vision of their projects that came from above.

6.1.2 Semi-Autonomous

Several of the participants found working in groups on projects and initiatives across the university often created a semi-autonomous third space, whereby boundaries needed to be delineated, and collaboration negotiated, between M&P and faculty members, or between M&P and unionized staff. For them, in order to be successful, boundaries needed to be defined at the onset by each of the players (e.g., committee, unit, project lead, and university). After that, collaboration usually lead to a successful working relationship across hierarchies and binaries, whether with faculty, senior administration, colleagues, unionized staff, or students. Deborah, Susan, and Wesley all played bridging roles and often found themselves acting as buffers between the various levels of the hierarchy.

Deborah worked on projects with faculty members, staff, and students that crossed faculties and units. She described herself as a ‘catalyst’ and as the bridge towards a common goal:

Third space is key for working in roles like mine when you are trying to support the success and objective of the project … [I am] the catalyst in the middle to connect the various parties … There is sometimes a power struggle and you need to navigate and make everyone understand the importance of working together towards a common goal. (Deborah)
Both Susan and Wesley worked at the faculty level, and their work involved bringing faculty members together with staff and students. Susan saw her role in terms of relationship building, while Wesley used ‘influence’ to bridge divides:

When a new faculty member is hired, we introduce them to the staff as part of onboarding and this helps to build that relationship between individuals in order to build respect and rapport. (Susan)

Yes, I feel like I work in third space most of the time, at the individual level and at the unit level. The expectations are not set especially when collaborating with faculty … A strategy we use in the unit, especially when working with junior positions [unionized staff or lower level M&P], we ‘influence’ rather than use authority. (Wesley)

Deborah, Susan, and Wesley strengthened their professional occupational identities from within, especially when they found themselves in working relationships and situations where the boundaries and expectations needed to be defined. Once the parameters were set, they bridged the hierarchy to manage the strategic vision from above.

6.1.3 Independent

Independent third space is the most difficult to navigate, as it requires the implementation of new boundaries, rules, and power structures. Tensions can arise between the various social categories (senior leadership, middle management, and unionized staff), especially when frames of reference are not parallel (Cole & Bruch, 2006). These tensions, which impede understanding and collaboration, are also called identity discrepancies (Corley, 2004). It often falls on M&P
staff to act as a bridge between power structures or the upper and lower levels of project members (Corley, 2004; Cole & Bruch, 2006).

Kimberly was a high-level M&P member who worked closely with senior administration at UBC. As a professional working to implement the university’s strategic vision using her expertise, she noted her role was often misunderstood; her frame of reference was not parallel with those to whom she reported. She also seemed to experience a conflict between values that came ‘from within’ her professional identity and values that came ‘from above’ in the organization (Evetts, 2011).

I consider myself to be a communicator, which is not really understood or valued [by leadership] which causes frustration. Sometimes I feel like I get caught between what I think leadership wants and what I think the institution wants. (Kimberly)

Kaylin was a professional M&P member who also taught in her unit’s internship and practicum programs. Her official job description and social category at the university is within the M&P family, however as often the case when M&P staff teach, she did not hold any official faculty appointment for her part-time teaching roles. Despite this, she successfully straddled her two roles, in two different levels of the hierarchy, and found job satisfaction from her work. However, her professional and organizational identities came in conflict, as the two roles entailed differing frames of reference, benefits, pay, recognition, and inclusion/exclusion in university activities.

I feel like I work in third space [because] I teach, which is not traditionally a staff thing, so I am not recognized for that. My job description has functions of both categories, which keeps the faculty/staff binary going. I fall between the two
roles. I am keen and excited to be in that third space but I don’t think the faculty is that forward thinking or innovative ……There are committees that I cannot sit on because I am not faculty … I feel there are missed opportunities to engage and inspire people. (Kaylin)

For M&P employees who fall into the kind of third space experienced by Kaylin, there are missed opportunities for creative and constructive collaboration that would benefit the individual and the university. This is the kind of third space Whitchurch (2013) believes universities need to ‘design in’ or build into their working spaces. This would entail explicit acknowledgment that third space professionals exist and that adjustments to institutional structures can help to re-socialize employee groups in terms of affiliation, participation, and hierarchy. Whitchurch (2013) suggests organizational structures need to adjust or universities face the prospect of alienating, or losing, a vital sector of their workforce. My interviewees would agree.

6.1.4 Navigation

On a day-to-day basis, management and professional staff at UBC navigate the organizational structures and relationships at the university and try to make sense of their positioning both occupationally and organizationally. The M&P staff who took part in this research were generally keen to develop and maintain collaborative, working relationships, with all levels of professional colleagues. The participants were asked how they navigated third space and how they reduced tensions at various levels of the university. The techniques used by these M&P staff ranged from active engagement and action, to collaboration and compromise, and varied depending on where these employees were located in the hierarchy, length of service,
professional background, and personality. There were also some conflicting identities and struggles to make sense, especially when there was a discrepancy or conflict in values between decisions made from above or from within.

James, Deborah, Susan, and Matthew are long-term employees of the university who made many connections across the hierarchy over the years. Their professional values often come in conflict with higher-level management in terms of value-for-money. When experiencing third space in the course of work, when tasks came from above, these M&P employees successfully problem solved from within, and navigated conflicts through connections, collaboration, commonalities, and communication across the hierarchical levels. To navigate the blurred spaces, James relied on his institutional knowledge and connections: “I handle third space by virtue of my institutional knowledge and my connections with all the different groups. I determine who is the best person to call; long term employees have lots of historical knowledge.” Both Deborah and Susan also used collaboration and connections to navigate third space, while Matthew emphasized commonalities rather than differences:

I look for a holistic solution and something that is not polarizing … I put a lot of effort into people and I think it important we are not the same, but we do have commonalities and I try to build on those. (Matthew)

Another participant, Lee, had only a short work history at the university, and held a PhD. Given her credentials and involvement with educational programming and delivery, she saw herself more on par with faculty. Her strong sense of professional identity was displayed strongly in the interview. She was enthusiastic about working in third space environments, as it allowed her to bridge the space between M&P and faculty levels of the university. Lee understood she approached projects with a different frame of reference than faculty but welcomed the challenge
of working across the hierarchy. She was an active proponent of third space and designed it into her working environment for positive outcomes:

I usually approach third space with a fair bit of excitement and interest; it is different and unpredictable. My general approach is that the space be productive and positive, but that takes work. It needs facilitation, leadership, and reminders of why people are coming together, and coaching. The space doesn’t happen naturally in a competitive, hierarchical environment like a university. (Lee)

In contrast to Lee, several other participants were not comfortable navigating third space, and experienced dissonance between their occupational identities and organizational identities. They tended to have a shorter work history at the university and occupied very blurred positions, given their credentials and job responsibilities. For example, Wesley held a PhD degree and was originally on a career path as an academic; hence, he found himself uncomfortable working in an M&P role. His fallback method for dealing with conflict in third space was to compromise and suppress his own ego. His professional identity was overshadowed by the organization and decisions made from above.

You need to suppress ego to feel like the outcome is more important. I would compromise rather than fight. I’m not comfortable enough in my position, I’m more of a compromiser. (Wesley)

On the other hand, Kaylin was an M&P member who taught courses; hence, her duties crossed management, professional, and faculty boundaries. Kaylan collaborated in her position but tended to avoid any conflict that arose when performing her duties. Her professional identity was overshadowed when dealing with conflict in third space, especially when decisions from above in the organization conflicted with her professional values from within.
When I encounter third space, I focus first on my job and the duties that are in my mandate … I use my best judgement, in collaboration with my colleagues when necessary, [but] I struggle with being that more outspoken voice. (Kaylin)

Paul was a high-level M&P professional who supervised a large staff. He felt unjustly denied professional development opportunities due to financial and time restraints within his unit. This organizational decision from above did not align with his values when dealing with his own staff’s professional development needs. Within his own unit, he operated with a different frame of reference; hence, professional development decisions he made for his staff came from within.

When I experience injustice or unfairness, I don’t generally tend to fight it from my own end unless it is a key thing that I can’t do on my own. If it was affecting my staff, I would fight tooth and nail. (Paul)

As shown above, M&P staff attempt to make sense of third space, then they navigate any conflicts that arise in different ways. There are some conflicting identities while attempting to make sense, especially when there was a discrepancy in decisions made from above or from within. Most of the respondents navigate third space successfully and in a professional way, despite some conflicts between their professional occupational and organizational identities.

6.2 Professional Identities

This section looks at the professional occupational and organizational identities of the research participants. First, I explored professional occupational identity in the interviews by asking how the participants identify outside the university and also how they operate within the university using their professional codes of ethics. Secondly, I examined the roles of ‘manager’ and
‘professional’. This was primarily based on the two sides of the M&P identity, manager and professional, and how those roles differ in terms of duties and sources of authority or control.

Thirdly, I investigated the blurred roles and titles M&P experience within the organization to see how it affects professional occupation identity and how M&P make sense of, and navigate, the two identities.

6.2.1 Occupational Identity

In order to explore how M&P identified professionally, I presented Barnett’s (1990) scenario to each participant, in which they were asked how they would self-identify outside the university. I wondered whether third space professionals working at UBC would identify primarily with their profession or with the organization. Given the strong occupational identities of professionals and the strong organizational identity of the university, I was interested in whether the two forms of professionalism were mutually exclusive and how M&P staff self-identified. Did some M&P staff members give up their professional identities when they joined UBC, allowing organizational identity to become the stronger of the two? I was also curious as to how these staff members made sense of their two professional identities and whether the two ever came in conflict or affected their commitment to their occupation or the organization.

6.2.1.1 What Do You Do?

Adapting Barnett’s (1990) cocktail scenario, each of the interviews began with a hypothetical scenario in which the participants were asked to imagine themselves at a private social event, unrelated to work, and not on campus: “You strike up a conversation with someone you do not know. After a brief conversation, the person asks: ‘What do you do?’ What is your gut
response?” I did not offer the participants an explanation to the question, but rather informed them we would return to the response for discussion later in the interview. During later discussion on their responses, I probed the participants on whether they ever felt their professional identities were in conflict.

Out of the initial fifteen responses to ‘What do you do?’, seven identified with their professions, five identified equally with both their professions and UBC, and three identified organizationally with UBC. This aligns with Whitchurch’s (2013) findings that new professionals have strong professional occupational identities and may, or may not, identify strongly with, or be committed to, their organizations. Only two people, Deborah and Paul, experienced conflict between their two identities.

During this exercise, almost half the participants identified more strongly with their professional identity than with the university. They evoked strong, clear affiliations and commitments to their professions and professional credentials. Despite the strong professional identity and weaker organizational identity, most did not experience conflict between their identities. While Christine, Lee, and Kaylin all primarily identified with their professions and did not experience conflict, their sense of commitment to UBC was not strong.

I feel like my professional identity is stronger than my organizational identity. I am more attached to being a [profession] than I am to being a UBC employee. I don’t think there is a conflict between my professional and organizational identities. (Christine)

I wouldn’t say my professional identity and my position are in conflict at the university … I see myself as a professional working at a university. (Lee)
My professional occupation is definitely the stronger identity. I work within my profession, which just happens to be at UBC. At this point, there is no conflict between my two identities. (Kaylin)

Lynda, Deborah, and Paul also had strong professional identities but expressed very weak organizational identities, which lead to some conflict as well as a lack of commitment to the university. Lynda and Deborah both noted their primary allegiance is to their professions and they could easily work at other institutions. Deborah and Paul experienced conflict between their professional identities, primarily for occupational reasons:

There is some conflict between my identities, especially when I am trying to find increasingly higher roles of responsibility … there is no career ladder. (Deborah)

Yes, I would say my roles come into conflict. My history, experience, and skills are broader than what I do here … I don’t feel that it really showcases or leverages my skills and capability. (Paul)

On the other hand, five participants who had strong professional occupational identities, and who also had strong organizational identities, did not experience any conflict. They identified equally with, and were committed to, their respective professions and UBC as an organization. Susan in particular identified with the organization and had a strong commitment to UBC. Susan felt her identities were tightly linked: “My professional identity has given me the tools in [profession] which is exactly what my position is at the university … the two are intertwined.” Gale, Kimberly, Dylan, and Alexa identified with their professions within the context of UBC and felt the two identities were dependent on each other:

I identity with both my profession and the organization. (Gale)
I don’t see a conflict between my professional identity and my position at the university, as they are one and the same. (Kimberly)

I don’t think there is any conflict between my professional identity and my organizational identity. There is a uniqueness to my position so I have to identify myself with UBC maybe more than the average employee. (Dylan)

My professional identity is pretty much tied up together with UBC. I do not feel like my professional identity and my organizational identity ever come in conflict. (Alexa)

Three participants (Matthew, Guy, and Wesley) identified solely with UBC and seemed to have relinquished their professional identities in favor of the institution’s identity; their strong organizational identities overshadowed their occupational identities. Matthew did not have a conflict with his professional positioning within the organization. He noted he has a long history with UBC as a student, staff member, and campus resident. Both his professional occupational and organizational identities, as well as his personal identity, were very much tied up with UBC.

I see my identity wrapped up in the organization of UBC more so than professionally. My frame has always been that anyone working at UBC, whether it be a faculty member or custodian, is UBC … The two identities have never been in conflict. (Matthew)

On the other hand, both Guy and Wesley experienced conflict between their occupational identities and organizational identities. Guy experienced a conflict in his occupational role as a professional and a manager, but, in addition, his identity within the organization conflicted with his own view of himself professionally:
I feel my identity is more wrapped up organizationally. I think that is how I am viewed at the university. My professional identities as [profession] and as a manager come into conflict. For example, my manager side is reluctant to provide time and funding to go to a conference but it is at the conference that I get to be the professional. (Guy)

Wesley also experienced a blurring of his professional identities. He felt it was easier to primarily identify with UBC rather than to identify professionally, because he considered his role at the university to be confused and not easily explained. He noted during the interview that his position was unique to academia and had evolved only over the last ten years.

Identifying myself with UBC instead of my profession is easier. My job is pretty confusing to people, especially if they are not from the university … I’m not part of a professional society and I don’t have a job that most people encounter. (Wesley)

Both Guy and Wesley occupied a form of third space where their professional occupational identities were eclipsed by their organizational identities.

Out of the 15 research participants asked to make sense of their professional roles both occupationally and organizationally, twelve of them had strong professional occupational identities with varying degrees of organizational identity, conflict, and commitment. Only three participants had stronger organizational identities than their occupational identities. There is no clear pattern in the participants’ statistics (age, gender, profession, credentials, length of service, job family, unit, or position) in relation to the strength of their professional occupational identities and their professional organizational identities. However, it appeared the stronger the professional identity, or for those experiencing conflict between their identities, the less
committed they were to the organization. Conflict and commitment reflect on overall morale in the workplace, and in turn, affect staffing turnover rates.

6.2.1.2 Manager versus Professional

M&P staff at UBC often have two professional organizational identities, that of manager and that of professional. However, neither the university nor AAPS has clear guidelines or written policy on the difference between the two roles or on the scope of the respective responsibilities. Evetts (2005) notes the two roles differ in terms of duties and sources of authority or control. She believes that managers generally operate from authority coming from top-down, or from above, and that professionals generally operate from within. I was interested to know how M&P self identify between the two roles. Therefore, during the interviews, participants were asked whether they considered themselves a manager, or a professional, and whether they experienced any conflict between the two roles, and if so, how conflict was navigated.

Seven participants categorized themselves as professionals, seven claimed to be both managers and professionals, and one deemed himself to be a manager only. The consensus among the participants was that managers support and supervise staff, and/or work on day-to-day transactional tasks (e.g., financials, student problems). On the other hand, professionals were considered to work on larger projects and issues where specialized expertise was required through education, training, and experience. In seven cases, the interviewees felt they performed both functions in their jobs and there was generally no conflict between the roles.

Guy, the participant who considered himself to be a manager only, did not feel he had an opportunity to use his professional expertise on a regular basis, nor did he feel recognized as a
professional. Most of his work came from above, as his position dealt mainly with day-today finances, cost recovery initiatives, purchasing, and human resource issues:

Very rarely do I have an opportunity to present myself as a professional, but as a manager, every day. A professional is someone who people go to for knowledge and they respect that knowledge … 98% of my job deals with management and very rarely do I get to be a professional. (Guy)

Seven participants (Alexa, Dylan, Gale, James, Kaylin, Kimberly, and Lynda) labelled themselves as professionals, as many of their responsibilities and decisions came from within. In particular, Dylan, Gale, and James strongly aligned with the concepts of what constitutes being a professional and cited their qualifications through education and training, ongoing professional development, experience in the field, and their high degree of autonomy in the work environment.

There is a combination of things that make a professional. The number one thing is experience, a track record of delivering results and building trust with stakeholders. The second thing is formal training and maintaining that training.

(Dylan)

Professional means being qualified, having a higher education, taking your job seriously, continuously growing, and improving your skill set. (Gale)

Being professional means to work autonomously, have responsibilities in the field, and to take part in ongoing learning. (James)

Seven other participants (Deirdre, Christine, Lee, Matthew, Paul, Susan, and Wesley) considered themselves both professionals and managers at the same time. For them, it made sense that the two roles go hand-in-hand, and they successfully balanced tasks that came both
from above and from within. These employees performed top-down managerial functions such as managing staff, budgets, and performing day-to-day transactional duties, but they also took part in projects, initiatives, and decision-making processes which strongly aligned with their concepts of what constitutes being a professional. Paul successfully navigated both roles and thought “you can be a professional without being a manager, but I don’t see how you can be a manager without being a professional”. On the other hand, Matthew, saw his job as compartmentalized:

   My role is split because I manage a group of people but I also see myself as a professional because of my work in projects. I see management as partially a HR role and supporting staff … [and] the professional part is being autonomous in managing projects. (Matthew)

Lee, Christine, and Susan thought the skill set and duties involved in the roles of manager and professional are quite different:

   Being a manager means I have responsibility and am accountable for the work of my team … as a professional, I also bring a level of education, background, and practices that I’ve trained for as a professional. (Lee)
   As a professional, I’m obligated to conform to both professional and university policies. As a manager I’m responsible for leadership, mentoring staff, and supervising/leading staff. (Christine)
   I think of management as managing people and helping them move their agendas and units forward … [but] professionalism means doing things ethically, equitably, and fairly in a professional manner. (Susan)

   For those participants who felt they were both manager and professional, I was interested in whether they ever experienced personal conflict between the two roles, and if so, how did they
navigate those conflicts. For instance, were their professional ethics from within ever challenged in carrying out requests made of them from above? Except for one participant, the responses were unanimous that the two roles rarely come in conflict. However, when a conflict did arise, the participants were able to successfully solve the issue. Christine and Susan both cited examples when conflict arose in the workplace, but in each instance, there was enough autonomy and support from colleagues and supervisors to successfully navigate any ethical issues arising between the two roles.

If I’m uncomfortable with anything or which goes against my ethical professional standards, I would say ‘no’. I’ve been very supported by my supervisor in situations that I’m uncomfortable with or that goes against policy. (Christine)

I’ve had to deal with the conflict of addressing something that I did not feel was handled ethically. I addressed that with my supervisor; it makes a difference if your supervisor is supportive. (Susan)

Since neither UBC nor AAPS has clear guidelines on what defines a manager and a professional, and participants often carry out both roles, there is some blurring as to the duties of each role. While the participants noted little conflict, the blurring of roles appeared to occur when managerial duties that came from above conflicted with their professional duties, and sometimes ethics, that came from within. Another example of how roles became blurred was in the nomenclature surrounding job titles denoting rank and duties. The following section examines the blurred nomenclature used to describe positions at UBC and how it affected the participants’ professional identities.
6.2.1.3 Blurred Titles and Professional Identity

Titles are used by employees and organizations to identify job levels, duties, and ranking within the hierarchy (e.g., Director, Assistant Director). Due to ongoing confusion and dialogue around terminology for professional staff in universities, there is a need for clarity in identifying this workforce sector (Sporn, 1996; Szekeres, 2004; Whitchurch, 2004). Roles and titles speak to one’s identity within an organization and also reflect on professional status. This section explores how the blurred nomenclature around the M&P employees at UBC reflects on their professional identity within the organization.

Given the changing landscape and growth of professional employees in higher education, many of the positions held by the research participants were fairly new to the university, with titles and duties that did not previously exist. For instance, two participants who held the title Assistant Dean were in new M&P positions that did not exist just over a decade ago. These roles were previously Associate Dean positions, which were held by faculty members, with the administrative work largely supported by clerical, unionized employees. Two of the participants in Director positions were recruited from outside the university into newly created portfolios to meet changing university needs. The four participants working in the area of Educational Programming were all involved in initiatives established over the last ten years, for example, implementing new technology in the learning environment, developing distance education tools, enhancing curricula to include First Nations history and diversity/equity issues, and maximizing new funding opportunities in developing teaching and learning technology. As previously mentioned, the interviewees involved in student services saw a dramatic change when the
Enrolment Services portfolio underwent its major organizational change where new M&P staff positions were created.

At UBC, there are official Position Titles as well as Business Titles for each position within the Human Resources Position Management System (PMS). Employees are also free to change their position titles on a more casual basis in contact information and signage. I was interested to know whether M&P employees identified with the official position (the title given by the university on PMS) or whether they adopted other titles to more clearly define what they do in the workplace and their professional status. For example, my own position was titled Administrator on PMS, however my adopted Business Title and contact identification was Director, Finance and Operations. Research participants were asked to provide their titles on the initial survey, which was then compared to their titles on official job descriptions from PMS and their email signatures.

Ten of the participants felt their job duties and status were reflected in their position titles. They also had consistent job titles between their official job descriptions on PMS, their Business Title on PMS, and their email signatures. However, five participants either did not agree with their official position titles or are in fluid positions, whereby their duties change depending on project. In these cases, business titles and email titles were changed to reflect the employees’ responsibilities, professional identity, and status: 1) Manager vs Analyst; 2) Lead vs Specialist; 3) Program Director vs Associate Director; 4) Acting Director vs Associate Director, and 5) Coordinator vs Educator.

Lynda commented that “every job I’ve had at UBC has had a confused role title between what the Job Family call the job, what the job description calls the job, and what the person calls themselves.” She did not agree with her current position’s job classification in the Educational
Programming family and considered the Institutional Analysis job family to be a better fit. Her formal business title as registered on the Human Resource Management System did not align with her title as written on her formal position description, on her formal email signature line, or how she self-reported to me on the Preliminary Information Request Form before the interview process. She found her position classification and title to be unclear and not reflective of her true duties, or professional identity, at the university.

As highlighted above, titles, roles, and hence identities of M&P staff sometimes do not make sense and are confusing, not just for themselves but for others within the organization. This contrasts greatly with the limited and more clearly defined variations to identify faculty members at UBC: Sessional Lecturer, Lecturer, Instructor, Senior Instructor, Professor of Teaching, Acting Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor (Faculty Association Collective Agreement, 2016-2019). The ongoing confusion in M&P titles speaks to a need for clarity and agreement, as it not only reflects upon identity within an organization but on professional status as well. This lack of clarity affects organizational identity, as discussed in the next section.

6.2.2 Organizational Identity

As noted throughout this research, the UBC campus community consists of three distinct groups: faculty, students, and staff. Again, the general interpretation of their roles is that ‘faculty’ carry out the academic mission of the university through teaching and research; ‘students’ actively learn in the teaching and research environment, and ‘staff’ support the learning, teaching, and research mission and environment. The above organizational roles may seem very clear, however, they do not cover multiple identities that can occur at any time on campus, such as:
faculty working in administration; students working in research, teaching, and administrative roles; and, staff actively teaching, conducting research, and taking courses. For example, I was an M&P staff member at the university and, at the same time, a graduate student. On a number of occasions, this caused problems within the various university IT systems (e.g., Access Services; Research Information System) that could not accept both an employee and student with the same name, date of birth, and/or SIN number. At the university, and in higher education in general, roles are becoming increasingly blurred and may not always accurately reflect a person’s organizational identity. This blurring of roles ultimately affects working relationships and employee power structures within the organization; hence, it can be confusing to navigate. The following sections look at the multiple roles and working relationships that M&P staff can hold throughout various levels of the university. On a day-to-day basis, M&P staff navigate the organization’s hierarchy at the university level, the cross-unit level, and at the individual unit level. Navigation involves the juggling of multiple roles, working with diverse employee groups such as faculty, M&P colleagues, unionized staff, and students, and finally, trying to make sense of the university culture and mission.

6.2.2.1 Hierarchies

Almost all organizations are hierarchically structured, with the intent to affect efficient decision-making, promote clear communication, and define roles and responsibilities to move the organization towards its strategic vision (Corley, 2004; Cole & Bruch, 2006). This structure is seen in both the corporate world and in institutions of higher education. All participants in this research noted that UBC as an organization is top-down and vertically structured, with the hierarchy flattening out somewhat at the cross-faculty/unit level. The participants held multiple
identities across the university and had varying degrees of involvement and interactions within the university hierarchy. They also employed different frames of reference than faculty, unionized staff, or students, when dealing with communications, policies, procedures, and strategies emanating from senior level management.

Generally, the M&P participants in this study did not feel part of the decision-making process in a professional capacity at the university level, but more so at the cross-unit/faculty level, and yet again within their particular units. This change in dynamics between the various levels of the organization affected how these M&P staff interacted, and made sense, in their working environments.

At the organizational level, the research participants unanimously agreed UBC is very hierarchical. The consensus was the Board of Governors, the Senate, and the university President are at the top of pyramid, followed by senior administration (e.g., VPs), faculties and faculty deans, then administrative units. There was some discussion about the positioning of employee groups within the hierarchy; there was no consensus about whether students or faculty members were next in the hierarchy, but sadly, it was generally agreed staff occupy the lowest rung on the ladder. There were also varying views on whether there is a hierarchy within the staff groups (CUPE 116, CUPE 2950, M&P): several viewed all staff as equal; two viewed M&P as being above CUPE members; and, the others viewed M&P at the bottom of the staff hierarchy.

Professionally, most participants did not interact with the Board of Governors, the Senate, the President’s Office, or senior administration. M&P staff did not feel part of the decision-making process of the organization, nor that their professional roles and responsibilities were recognized by senior administration. Lee described staff as “more or less invisible, they are the worker bees.”
Interestingly, when dealing with senior administrative levels, four participants (Kimberly, Gale, Deborah, and Dylan), identified organizationally with all other staff at the university and did not differentiate themselves from unionized staff. There was a pervading sense that all staff lack recognition and esteem within the organization, and they are excluded from university-wide decision making. Deborah commented that UBC is particularly hierarchical and she felt more excluded from the decision-making process than she was at another institution:

I’ve worked in higher education my whole career. UBC is more hierarchical than other institutions where I would have been more involved in decision making.

Very top down here, and at the bottom of the hierarchy is the staff. (Deborah)

Despite holding senior M&P positions, these participants should be the bridge between senior management and lower level workers, however, they often felt powerless in dealing across the upper echelons of the hierarchy at the university level.

In contrast to the organizational level, most of the participants were involved in various activities outside their individual units in cross-faculty/unit capacities. Only three interviewees did not work outside their particular units and were not involved in any cross-unit or cross-faculty committees, projects, or working groups. While the participants who worked across the university noted there is still a hierarchical structure in place, there was a greater sense of professional recognition and involvement in the decision-making process at the cross-unit/faculty and unit levels, when compared with the university level.

Involvement in projects, committees, and working groups across the university is most often part of M&P members’ professional organizational roles and responsibilities. In some cases, participants also volunteered to be on committees or to take part in initiatives outside their units because of professional occupational interest. While M&P staff are not financially
rewarded for taking part in these activities, Susan, Lee, and Kimberly felt professionally
recognized by their units for their involvement at multiple levels of the university. Susan was
recognized through increased autonomy and flexibility in her position, as well as through the
formal, annual performance review process:

I’m supported with time to be on the committees as it is part of my job; I have a
flexible work schedule so I can take part. My involvement is part of my
performance review, so yes, I am recognized. (Susan)

Lee was encouraged by her unit to take part on various committees and to build both professional
and university connections:

I’m in a unit that leads university-wide committees, so I am supported by the unit
to be part of [those] communities in order to build relationships. (Lee)

Kimberly found both personal and professional satisfaction in being included in activities outside
her unit:

I tend to sit on committees that are institution wide … it is just part of my job but
I am appreciative because then I am part of the conversation. My frustration was
not being fully part of the conversation, so I am grateful as it helps me to do my
job. (Kimberly)

Corley (2004) found middle management thrive in their bridging roles within the
organization he studied because they were afforded insights into senior management’s strategic
vision while working with the lower-level employees. However, in contrast, the M&P
participants were more comfortable working on projects and initiatives at the faculty and unit
levels.
Hence, the participants felt the greatest sense of professional recognition for the work they did within their individual units. All but three participants reported their units were highly hierarchical, but all noted they were an integral part of the decision-making process. They also felt recognized for their professional roles and responsibilities. Susan and Guy noted the hierarchical structures of their units but they were also clearly given decision-making authority in their areas of authority.

My unit is hierarchical … I am involved in all decisions within my unit in regard to finance, HR, operations, and strategic planning. (Susan)

Our unit is hierarchical. It is clear who is on top and who is on bottom … I have 95% decision making authority in the unit in terms of purchasing and budgets … [and] 50% input into curriculum and the teaching/learning process. (Guy)

Participants in the larger units who supervised the highest number of staff tended to personally approach management in a flatter rather than a more hierarchical manner. Dylan, Kimberly, Kaylin, and Lynda were largely responsible for the flattening of their unit’s hierarchy, resulting in their active involvement in decision-making processes and in the empowerment of other staff. In effect, they provided sensegiving to the staff they supervised, which stemmed from their professional ethics coming from within. Dylan saw the flattening of the hierarchy as a “philosophical standpoint” and Kaylin believed it led to empowerment and success:

The structure within [my unit] is hierarchical. However, what we are trying to do within my staff is flatten the organization. From a philosophical standpoint, we are encouraging a flattening of the organization, however the unit org chart is still a traditional hierarchy. (Dylan)
Our unit is quite flat which is empowering and leads us to achieve successful program outcomes. (Kaylin)

Lynda, who already worked in a hierarchically flat unit, believed the structure allowed her to be more involved in decision-making processes:

I think the unit is pretty flat. I have full input into the area of work that is mine and I offer feedback into decisions made around strategic planning and hiring.

I’m consulted on the learning side because of my expertise. (Lynda)

The greatest sources of professional recognition and professional identity for the participants were found within their own units. With the flattening of the hierarchy at this level, M&P staff felt the most intimately involved in the decision-making processes; making strategic decisions from within rather than from above. The unit level contributed to the highest level of occupational professional identity through empowerment and involvement with other employee groups.

6.2.2.2 M&P Relationships with Other Employee Groups

On a day-to-day basis, M&P employees interacted with many other employee groups within the university: faculty members; other M&P colleagues; and unionized workers from the trades, clerical, and student groups. The participants were asked how they viewed themselves organizationally and how they interacted with other employee groups on campus. The objective of these questions was to gain insight into how M&P employees personally identified within the organization and how they made sense of their roles vis-à-vis others in the work environment. From the participants’ responses, there appeared to be collegiality between the groups; but at the
same time, a pervading sense of ‘us vs them’ surfaced between these M&P employees and the other groups with whom they interacted. Two binaries were explored: M&P/faculty and M&P/unionized staff.

Despite being in a high administrative level position, Susan felt like she acted as support staff to faculty members and, therefore, they were above her within the organization. While she embraced an ‘us vs them’ attitude towards faculty, she exhibited the inclusive ‘all staff ethos’ (Gornall, 1999) towards her M&P staff colleagues and the staff she supervised. This particular employee was primarily involved in finance, hence she took much of her direction from senior level administration and faculty members on issues around research grants, employee salaries, and expense reports.

I see myself as support for the faculty members … there is a hierarchy with tenured faculty [and] there is a level of respect that I give [them]. They are more superior to staff in the organization and I personally feel that they are. I don’t feel like I am above the staff. (Susan)

Two interviewees involved in educational programming, James and Wesley, also experienced an ‘us vs them’ divide between faculty and staff members, specifically in their attitude towards work. These M&P held specialized credentials and acted as consultants in curriculum development and e-technology. They felt faculty, who were primarily interested in the delivery of their own courses, did not recognize, understand, or deem the M&Ps’ background work for preparing academic courses as important as their own work.

They [faculty] approach work differently and don’t tend to understand the importance of [our] work in relation to their own work. (James)
Most faculty don’t really understand what [staff] do. (Wesley)

Both James and Wesley did not embrace the ‘all staff ethos’, as they both felt M&P staff were higher within the university hierarchy than unionized workers. This may stem from their work within the academic arena of program delivery and development, as Wesley noted a more appropriate term for them would be ‘academic staff’.

In contrast, Dylan and Lynda felt faculty were their peers and not hierarchically above, or below, M&P or any other university staff members. They both practiced an ‘all staff ethos’ in their work environments to redress the traditional upstairs/downstairs imbalance between faculty and staff (Gornall, 1999). They did not adopt a homogenizing ‘we’ in their relationships but rather consciously strived to flatten the hierarchy. They also recognized the unique contributions of others and were appreciative of the distinct perspectives between faculty and management (Freeman, 2000; Castree & Sparek, 2000).

Dylan, who managed a large number of employees and was involved in highly specialized IT work, believed philosophically that all employees, whether faculty or staff, are part of the same eco-system, and he strived to recognize everyone equally:

I cannot keep calling a faculty member I work with ‘doctor’ all the time. It is not a matter of respect but one of working with a peer. I do not differentiate between the Dean, the Receptionist, or the President of the University. I see myself as part of the eco-system; I’m not higher up or lower down. If you reinforce hierarchy you are going to pay for it in different ways – staff disengagement, missing opportunities for people to contribute amazing ideas because you are reinforcing the fact they are lower on the totem pole. (Dylan)
Lynda also felt on a peer level with faculty members as she herself held a doctorate and was primarily a consultant for faculty members in program delivery. She disagreed with the ingrained hierarchy between faculty and staff, and felt she was split between the two identities. She saw inequality between the two binaries in terms of both recognition and respect.

I see myself on more of a peer level with faculty and I am happy to give respect and credit where it is due to people because of their work, achievement, and service ethic. (Lynda)

Three participants spoke about the dynamics between M&P and unionized staff and the ‘us vs them’ attitude they experienced from others in the workplace. James noted a definite hierarchy within the staff in his unit; they considered M&P staff to be at a higher level than unionized staff members. Wesley and Dylan, who supervised diverse unionized staff, mentioned how those employees thought of them as higher in the hierarchy, and treated them differently than their unionized colleagues. However, their responses came from two different frames of reference -- Wesley viewed himself as higher in the hierarchy while Dylan did not.

As noted earlier, Wesley did not embrace the ‘all staff ethos’ and felt M&P were higher within the university hierarchy than unionized workers. He appeared to resent tension coming from those he supervised, which he viewed as lower in the hierarchy, while he carried out work he considered ‘academic’:

There is some tension between unionized staff and M&P. I try to appreciate the jobs that all people do without getting dumped on by others. (Wesley)

On the other hand, Dylan, who strived to flatten the hierarchy in his immediate work environment, was clearly uncomfortable with being treated differently by co-workers. He explained the steps he took to remedy the imbalance:
… staff members treat me differently because they believe I am higher or they are lower in the hierarchy. I try to approach this by giving everyone air time and controlling the constructs to engage people to the highest degree … It is treating people like people … I’ve confronted a person and identified that if we are going to have a professional distance between us, it will be impossible to get any work done. (Dylan)

From the participants’ responses above, there appeared to be general collegiality with other staff and faculty members at the individual unit level. However, a pervading sense of tension and an ‘us vs them’ attitude also surfaced. These M&P responded differently, ranging from acceptance of the hierarchy as imposed (from above) to active attempts (from within) to flatten the hierarchy. In a large hierarchical institution such as UBC, responses are also influenced by organizational positioning whether it be at the unit, cross-unit/faculty, senior administration levels. Organizational identity of M&P staff is often influenced by reporting lines at the various levels. The next section looks at how UBC as an organization views and responds to its M&P staff. University documents are examined in terms of language usage and terminology.

6.2.2.3 M&P and UBC

At UBC, employees are distinctly classified as either faculty or staff, thereby reinforcing an ‘us vs them’ environment, or a sense of ‘other’. While the labelling serves the purpose of differentiating faculty from all others, it ignores and homogenizes a very large and diverse staff group within the ‘other’. The division of university personnel is an integral part of UBC’s culture
and is reinforced from above by Human Resources in its framework document, *Focus on People, Workplace Practices at UBC* (2008). The document states:

> [t]hroughout this Framework, we have referred to people in the workplace as faculty and staff (or staff and faculty). Language is an important reflection of the culture of the organization. We have not used the word ‘employees’, as notwithstanding the reality of the employment relationship, it does not resonate consistently with faculty and staff. (p. 2)

In other words, since university staff are referred to as ‘employees’ by Human Resources (UBC HR, Employee Relations, 2018), it would appear it does not resonate with faculty at UBC to be referred to as employees despite receiving their paychecks from the institution. As acknowledged in the document, the language reflects the university culture and reinforces the ‘us vs them’ hierarchy and attitude.

An analysis of university literature over the last decade, including policy documents, annual reports, strategic plans, and human resource reports, shows the consistent division of campus community members into the categories of faculty, students, and staff. In an attempt to be inclusive and egalitarian, the terms have been routinely reordered in an attempt to give everyone equal voice and coverage. However, there is a marked difference in the number of times employee groups at the university are mentioned, thereby creating the impression one group is more important than another. In the university strategic plan *Place and Promise* (2008), the word ‘faculty’ appears 52 times while ‘staff” was mentioned 34 times. The new strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018), reveals an even more extreme gap in terms of how many times each of the individual groups is mentioned: ‘faculty’ appears 55 times while ‘staff” appears only 24 times.
The term ‘non-academic’ staff is sometimes used in literature to refer to university staff members who are not faculty members. The term has fallen out of usage as it denotes what employees do not do, as opposed to what they do. The 2008 document, *Focus on People*, clearly addresses this terminology: “it does not appeal to staff to be referred to as ‘non-academic’ staff. Their contribution is a positive one, as opposed to the absence of something” (p. 2). However, despite the clarification on this nomenclature, the term ‘non-academic’ still appears in some UBC literature:

a) UBC Policies (UBC University Counsel)

b) Communiques regarding the Board of Governors (UBC, Board of Governors)

c) Statements from the Faculty Association (Faculty Association, 2018)

d) Legal Publications (UBC University Counsel)

e) Human Resource Reports (UBC HR, Summary of UBC policies and expectations for UBC faculty and staff, 2014)

While the term ‘employee’ may not resonate with academic faculty members, the generic term ‘staff’ should not resonate with staff either. The term is used throughout the university literature and unfairly implies all staff are equal, and ‘other’. Parsing the roles of M&P staff at UBC further, it becomes apparent many are involved in the academic mission of the university. Seven of the participants in this research are actively involved in educational programming, analyzing learning metrics, research, and teaching. Two participants, Lynda and Matthew, report feeling ‘split’ in their roles and identities because of blurred roles. This split caused by blurring roles, or the occupying of third space, challenges the traditional working relationships and university employee power structures. The next section explores how the participants navigate and make sense of third space in the university environment.
6.3 Making Sense

The sensemaking and sensegiving cycles of M&P staff can be triggered by sudden interruptions, or ‘identity discrepancies’, in the work environment. They can also be caused by long-term changes, or lack of changes, over a period of time. If sensemaking is an attempt by the M&P staff to confront and understand those discrepancies, sensegiving, as put forth by the university and M&P themselves, also needs to be explored in order to understand discrepancies that arise and influence these employees’ professional occupational and professional identifies.

This next section explores some of the triggers and tensions experienced by the research participants. I examined how those interruptions required them to interpret and make meaning of ambiguous or confusing situations and discrepancies that arose between their expectations and reality. I also explored sensemaking and sensegiving in the following section, primarily through how participants made sense of various UBC and AAPS documents, policies, practices, and issues that influence their professional occupational and organizational identities.

6.3.1 Tensions and Triggers

While discussing third space during the interviews, the participants touched on various issues and situations that caused them tension while navigating the different hierarchical levels of the university and/or the M&P/faculty and M&P/unionized staff binaries on a day-to-day basis. These tensions set in motion the ‘triggers’ that interrupted and caused ambiguities and discrepancies. This gap, or cognitive dissonance, impacted both their occupational and organizational identities as they attempted to make sense of, and give sense to, the anomalies encountered in third space between the hierarchical levels or binaries.
Key tensions recurred through the stories of the interviewed M&P staff are: 1) lack of professional recognition and exclusion from decision-making processes; 2) lack of professional development support; and, 3) lack of job security and high turnover rates. These triggers were generally imposed from above but they also came from below when dealing with lower-level employees. Interruptions or triggers occurred at different levels impacting both the professional occupational and organizational identities of the participants. These triggers are discussed in succession in the following sections.

6.3.1.1 Recognition, Inclusion, and Exclusion

Several participants spoke about the lack of recognition for their professional and management roles, as well as feeling excluded from decision-making processes in faculty-wide or university-wide committees.

Kimberly, Susan, Christine, and Dylan all worked at the Faculty or senior administration level, where they interacted frequently and closely with faculty members. All four employees experienced an identity discrepancy when acting in a professional role with others deemed higher in the university hierarchy, in which they felt excluded and disrespected as professionals. In the examples they provided, they believed their roles were on par with others in the working environment. However, triggers were set off due to a lack of professional recognition by faculty members or senior leadership. Kimberly did not feel recognized for her professional affiliations or activities, “even though it is written in [her] job description.” Susan cited her experiences on committees where she either did not have voting rights or did not receive respect as committee chair:
I am on a Faculty Council where there is staff representation, [however] we don’t have voting rights, we are only there for support. Students have voting rights but staff do not … I also chair a department committee, but it is difficult to get faculty representation as they don’t want to come to a meeting chaired by a staff member.

(Susan)

Christine reported being excluded from important strategic planning and decision-making processes, which sometimes affected her job and the performance of her duties:

[Admin Managers] have a lot of responsibility but they are not included in the leadership meetings where these topics are discussed … When I was in [another department], staff were included in meetings. I believe since then the culture has shifted and meetings are now faculty only. (Christine)

Dylan described his experiences at faculty meetings, which triggered his feelings of working in third space. For him, third space occurred at multiple levels of the university:

I was invited to our Faculty Executive Meeting [but] I feel in that ‘third space’ as a result of being invited but also being invited to leave at the end of my agenda item … I also feel like I am in ‘third space’ at the university level not just at the unit level. The phenomenon repeats itself, it doesn’t always look the same and each instance is unique in its own construct. Sometimes we are invited to the club and other times are excluded from the club at the university, faculty and the unit levels. (Dylan)

The M&P staff above all experience exclusion from areas of responsibility they see as part of their positions. These four M&P staff did not feel they were treated respectfully or as equal participants in work relevant to their roles, responsibilities, interests, and professional
growth. In trying to make sense of their roles, they experienced conflict and identity discrepancy between their professional occupational and organizational identities.

6.3.1.2 PD Funding Levels

Participants also frequently mentioned professional development (PD) funding levels and opportunities as triggers causing tension between some M&P staff, their units, and the university. The participants thought the university level of funding for PD was generally insufficient. As professionals, they believed it was extremely important for their individual professional growth, for the growth of the position within their units, and, ultimately, for the university in achieving its mission. However, the general consensus was that M&P staff fell between employee groups at the university, and thus, were not adequately recognized, and rewarded, in terms of professional development.

M&P staff at the university have the lowest allocation of PD funds of any employee group. In the 2017/2018 fiscal year, the level of PD funds allocated by the university to each of its employee groups on the Vancouver campus were as follows, in descending order (UBC HR, M&P Professional Development Fund, 2018):
Table 6-1: Professional Development Funding 2017/2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Group</th>
<th>Annual Funding</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>$2000</td>
<td>Non-bargaining faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded Admin &amp; Professional Staff</td>
<td>$1500</td>
<td>Non-unionized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUPE 2950 Clerical Staff</td>
<td>$1400</td>
<td>Unionized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Members</td>
<td>$1100</td>
<td>Faculty Association members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUPE 116 Trades Staff</td>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>Unionized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Union Techs &amp; Research Assistants</td>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>Non-union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Directors &amp; Excluded M&amp;P</td>
<td>$1500</td>
<td>Non-unionized, non-AAPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;P Staff</td>
<td>$550</td>
<td>AAPS members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants generally considered the allotted amount of $550 from the university too low for any meaningful participation in many courses, workshops, and conferences, or for the purchase of professional journals, books, or memberships. There were inconsistencies in funding reported at the unit level and in recognition afforded to M&P for participation in PD.

Gale, Paul, Guy, and Dylan reported their PD participation has fallen behind because their units did not support them financially. Gale noted her unit did not have available funds for professional development and Guy commented he had not “attended a conference for three years due to budgetary constraints”. Paul pointed out that insufficient PD resulted in added personal expense:

The budget is continually axed and the $550 is not enough to cover the kind of training I want to do so I would be out of pocket for the cost. (Paul)

Dylan, who supervised other M&P staff and who worked in IT, expressed alarm at the lack of funding across the university to support ongoing professional training:
I am seeing an alarming trend at the university with budget cutting where PD for staff is pulled back. (Dylan)

In contrast to UBC, other universities in British Columbia have more transparent, consistent, and generous policies around M&P professional development funding. Simon Fraser University has an annual entitlement of $700 per calendar year, with a carry-forward policy to enable unused funds to be banked to a maximum of $3,500 (SFU HR, Support for Learning: APSA staff, 2018)). The University of Victoria (UVic) has a relatively low annual PD allotment of $250 per M&P staff member that can be carried forward and accumulated, however, they also have a centralized funding pool whereby a maximum of $3,000 in PD expenses can be claimed (UVic, Professional development funding, n.d.). In both instances, these institutions centralize PD funding for their staff. Adopting such a policy at UBC could eliminate the inconsistency in M&P funding, where the availability of funds over the university allotment of $550 is at the discretion of individual units.

6.3.1.3 Job Security and Turnover

Half the participants mentioned lack of job security as a tension that triggered feelings of third space at the university, by putting them in a position other permanent employee groups do not experience. Other permanent employees have guaranteed job security either through the tenure process for faculty, or through union agreements for CUPE members. The only other employee group at the UBC who experiences tenuous job security is part-time sessional lecturers who are hired on contract. Turnover of M&P staff, whether through voluntary resignations or involuntary terminations, was a worrisome issue for the participants.
The anomaly of tenuous job security for M&P employees dates back to 1987, when UBC created the original AAPS handbook outlining terms and conditions of employment for M&P employees. As previously mentioned, Article 9 of each successive AAPS collective agreement since then has included the right of the university to terminate the employment of staff members without cause “as a result of departmental reorganization, budget cuts or the elimination of her/his position” (ACTE, 2014-2019, p. 10). Despite the continued concerns and contract negotiations over the years, Article 9 continues to be part of the every-day working reality for M&P staff at UBC. The AAPS Annual Report (2018) noted “job security – or lack of job security – was the number two priority” (p. 16) for its members, followed by salary issues. The report goes on to acknowledge fear of job loss often means M&P do not address problems or issues in the workplace, and involuntary turnover creates an unsettled and unproductive work environment. However, UBC has steadfastly refused to renegotiate this clause during collective bargaining primarily because it allows the university flexibility in budget expenditures. This is a prime example of NPM, which allows the university control over its workforce—in this case, control over its new professionals (Evett, 2013; Friedson, 2001).

Alexa, Kimberly, and Lynda worked in fairly new and specialized areas at the faculty and senior administration levels of the university. Their work in educational programming and information services interfaced directly with faculty members and in university-wide projects. As the projects in these areas expanded and changed over time, the numbers of employees fluctuated as tasks were initiated and subsequently completed. As previously noted, these employees’ areas have some of the highest M&P turnover rates at the university. These particular employees expressed feelings of being undervalued and fear around their job security. This conflict between their professional identities at both the occupational and organizational levels contributed to
identity discrepancy and feelings of working in third space. Alexa compared the job security between M&P and other employee groups:

Yes, I feel like I work in ‘third space’ especially in terms of job security. I think job security is the main issue for all of us working in that in-between space. We don’t get the best of both worlds like union and faculty. (Alexa)

Kimberly and Lynda expressed feelings of fear, shock and being undervalued in the workplace, which are human resource issues affecting morale and productivity:

We can be fired at any time … so we are all in fear of our jobs. We come to work worried that we are going to be fired so why would we feel valued. (Kimberly)

People have suddenly been let go and marched off campus. I’ve been shocked that this can happen. (Lynda)

As presented earlier, AAPS reports on involuntary turnover, while UBC does not. In 2017/18, there were 112 involuntary terminations of M&P staff (AAPS, 2018); hence, the fear of job loss is a real issue for this employee sector. Of those who were terminated without cause, 45 were the result of reorganization, 34 for lack of funding, 13 because the project ended, 9 for lack of suitability, seven for lack of work, and four did not pass the one-year probationary period due to performance issues.

At the same time, the direct and indirect costs of turnover at the university are significant, whether it is voluntary or involuntary. The direct cost of replacing employees involves such expenses as severance pay, advertising, interviewing, testing, training, and orientation. While the direct cost of replacing an employee is dependent on position and industry, middle-management positions are estimated at approximately 20% of an employee’s annual salary (O’Connell & Kung, 2007). Indirect costs are much harder to calculate but they involve such things as lost
productivity, loss of engagement or commitment, loss of institutional knowledge, and reduced morale amongst employees. Using the 20% direct cost formula and figures from the AAPS 2017-2018 Annual Report (2018): M&P employee turnover of 734 members (both voluntary and involuntary) with average annual earnings of $84,422 amounts to an approximate annual turnover cost of $12,400,000. This cost is a low estimate as it excludes benefits, severance pay, and indirect costs that are not measurable. Turnover costs, just in this one employee group, are a significant expense to a publicly funded university.

According to the 2017-2018 Focus on People Benchmark Report (2018), staff turnover had risen across the university but given the “lack of a consistent, university-wide offboarding process…it [was] difficult to fully understand the reasons for these staff resignations that led to the higher turnover rate in 2017” (p. 15). Yet surprisingly, the reasons outlined in the report (p. 17) for staff leaving the university were the same as they were a decade earlier.

6.3.2 Sensegiving

If sensegiving attempts to influence the sensemaking of others (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), then university leaders and associations engage in it primarily through their strategic plans, publications, annual reports, and media outputs, to name a few. These documents and communication avenues outline long and short-range objectives, goals, initiatives, policies, and plans that elaborate a shared vision and mission for its stakeholders at the level of the institution. The institution or association not only attempts to outline its own organizational identity but also influence the identity of its workforce in relation to the organization. Given employees, in this case M&P employees, arrive at the university with their own professional occupational identities in hand, sometimes an interruption, conflict, or identity discrepancy occurs as M&P try to
navigate their two professional identities at the occupational and organizational levels. The next sections look at the primary sensegiving documents that influence the day-to-day working environment of the M&P staff: 1) two university strategic plans which guide the organization’s mission and attempt to give sense and purpose to its workforce; 2) a human resource strategic framework which guides the university’s policies and practices for its staff; and, 3) various documents from AAPS which guide and communicate to its membership the issues and concerns most relevant to M&P staff.

6.3.2.1 UBC Strategic Plans

In order to make sense of the university’s mission in society and its place in the community, the President’s office creates a strategic plan that provides the overarching sensegiving document for the institution. This research spans the decade, 2008 to 2018, during which two strategic plans have been in place at UBC. President Toope was UBC President from July 2006 until June 2014 and released his strategic plan, Place and Promise, in 2008. Dr. Arvind Gupta succeeded Dr. Toope but held office for only one year and did not implement a strategic plan of his own. Dr. Ono succeeded Dr. Gupta in 2016 and is the president of UBC at the time of writing. President Ono released his strategic plan, Shaping UBC’s Next Century, in mid-2018. Despite the title, this plan will likely guide the strategic mission of the university only over the next decade or less.

*Place and Promise* (2008) was the strategic plan in place at the time of data collection. It was based on six core values: 1) Academic Freedom; 2) Advancing and Sharing Knowledge; 3) Excellence; 4) Integrity; 5) Mutual Respect and Equity; and, 6) Public Interest. Supporting those values were six commitments to underpin the plan’s structure: 1) Aboriginal Engagement; 2) Alumni Engagement; 3) Intercultural Understanding; 4) International Engagement; 5)
Outstanding Work Environment; and, 6) Sustainability. Under each commitment were goals and related activities designed to achieve those goals. The “Outstanding Work Environment” commitment specifically addressed UBC’s human resource strategy to provide “a fulfilling environment in which to work, learn, and live, reflecting our values and encouraging the open exchange of ideas and opinions” (p. 24). The commitment outlined two goals: “1) be the place of choice for outstanding faculty and staff; and, 2) be a healthy, inspiring workplace that cultivates well-being, resilience and commitment, and be responsive to the family needs of faculty and staff” (p. 25). The corresponding action plans are highlighted and compared in Table 6-2 with those in the subsequent strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018).

President Ono’s strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century*, was rolled out in May 2018 with a mission to outline the vision of the university for the next five to ten years. It was released after the research interviews took place but is included here because it builds on the university’s previous strategic plan, *Place and Promise* (2008), and potentially affects the current M&P employees. The new plan outlines 20 separate strategies to support the university’s purpose and values but narrowed the focus to three themes or priorities: Collaboration, Inclusion, and Innovation. The plan contains four pillars to underpin the themes: 1) People and Places; 2) Research Excellence; 3) Transformative Learning; and, 4) Local and Global Engagement. The pillar specific to human resources is “People and Places”, and it outlines five sensegiving strategic goals and strategies: Great People, Inspiring Spaces, Connected Communities, and Inclusive Excellence (pp. 20-23).

In comparing the sensegiving documents, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018) and *Place and Promise* (2008), the goals and action plans around recruitment and retention, and creating a healthy, inspiring workplace, are very similar. The noticeable difference between the two
strategic plans is the lack of a specific goal or action plan for professional development at the university in the new strategic plan.

### Table 6-2: UBC Strategic Goals and Action Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit and Retention</td>
<td>Recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff.</td>
<td>Attract, engage and retain a diverse global community of outstanding students, faculty and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development for Staff and Faculty</td>
<td>Expand opportunities for professional and personal development and career progression.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure academic and administrative heads and directors have the training, time and support required to be effective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance communication skills of faculty and staff; implement the internal communication strategy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy, Inspiring Workplace</td>
<td>Diversify and expand healthy workplace initiatives.</td>
<td>Support the ongoing development of sustainable, healthy and connected campuses and communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be a healthy, safe, inspiring workplace that cultivates well-being, resilience, and commitment.</td>
<td>Create welcoming physical and virtual spaces to advance collaboration, innovation and community development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster a respectful, inclusive and collegial work environment.</td>
<td>Cultivate an institutional and individual capacity for inclusive discourse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above goals set out in both *Place and Promise* and *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* are attempts by the university to share its vision and engage all staff in fulfilling and committing to its mission; in other words, it aims to give sense to the everyday working environment and career goals of its employees. The sensegiving inferred from the two plans is that the leadership aims for the university to be a healthy, inspiring workplace through inclusion, respect, diversity,
communication, collaboration, and initiatives that contribute to the well-being of its employees. However, professional development, or supporting tools that build capacity for both employees and the institution, seem to have dropped off the overarching strategic agenda of the university.

6.3.2.2 HR Focus on People

*Focus on People: Workplace Practices at UBC* (2008) is the Department of Human Resources’ strategic framework meant to accompany the overarching strategic plan of the university. It was released in tandem with *Place and Promise* in 2008. At the time of the interviews and writing, *Focus on People* had not been updated and was still in force. However, there were plans underway to release a new framework in 2019 to accompany the new strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018).

*Focus on People* (2008) attempted to provide strategic direction to the university employees in accordance with the vision, commitments, goals, and actions of UBC. Work on the framework began in 2002 as an initiative to improve human resource practices at the university and address some ongoing issues and concerns regarding employee morale, retention, and recruitment. The document was framed around the questions: “Why should I join UBC? Why should I stay at UBC?” (p. 2).

Following extensive consultation with the university community in 2002, the *Focus on People* (2008) framework team learned most employees were generally satisfied with their working environment; however, a number of areas of concern became apparent and it was those the framework sought to address:

1. Lack of opportunity for career advancement, promotion, and professional development.
2. Lack of collaboration and communication between units.

3. High workloads leading to a poor personal/professional, life/work balance.

4. Unprecedented informational and technological growth

5. Lack of recognition and acknowledgement

6. Lack of understanding how employees’ contributions relate to the overall university mission. (p. 3)

What the process highlighted was a failure by UBC to communicate and engage with its employees, which resulted in feelings of disillusionment and alienation from the institution. The main consequences for the university were twofold: 1) retention issues; and 2) low morale and productivity in the workplace. To respond to the concerns, UBC Human Resources outlined five strategies in the framework to align employees with the university’s strategic plan, *Place and Promise* (2008). Those strategies were:

1. Develop a sustainable, healthy workplace.

2. Retain staff and faculty through positive opportunities and incentives.

3. Foster leadership and management practices.

4. Attract outstanding talent to UBC.

5. Identify and share institution-wide goals. (p. 8)

Subsequent to the release of *Focus on People* (2008), Human Resources issued annual benchmarking reports to provide the UBC community with progress metrics and employee statistics on how it was doing in relation to its five strategies. The UBC *Benchmark Report 2017-2018* (2018) reported staff turnover had risen across the university. The report acknowledged the reasons for resignations were basically the same as they had been in earlier years but given the “lack of a consistent, university-wide off-boarding process…it [was] difficult
to fully understand the reasons for these staff resignations that led to the higher turnover rate in 2017” (p. 15). What is concerning about the benchmarking report is that staff retention was identified as a HR concern back in 2002, and goals and actions were addressed in both Focus on People and Place and Promise in 2008. However, more than fifteen years later, the university is still struggling to understand how to deliver on its HR strategy.

The M&P staff in this research expressed their own concerns about the areas outlined in the HR strategic goals. The interviews showed M&P often felt they lacked opportunities and incentives that rewarded and recognized them, such as: professional development opportunities and funding, professional recognition, and inclusion in the decision-making process at multiple levels of the university. They noted these were some of the reasons for their lack of organizational commitment and for looking outside the university for employment. The M&P employee association AAPS is also concerned about the same issues that plague its membership, but there appears to be little collaboration between the two organizations to collectively address ongoing issues affecting the university’s largest employee group.

6.3.2.3 AAPS

In some capacity, the fifteen participants in this research either currently belong to, or have been affiliated in the past, with over 23 different professional organizations. However, one association common to all the UBC research participants is AAPS, hence its sensegiving as an organization impact was worth considering. The association, as with other professional bodies, was established to further the interests of, and advocate for, its membership.

AAPS is an independent body into which all M&P staff at UBC pay dues. The organization is governed by an elected Board made up of M&P employees and is managed by a
paid Executive Director who is supported by five office staff. All committees are run by M&P volunteers across the campus community. AAPS does not have a formal mission, vision, values statement, or a published strategic plan. However, the association describes its strategic functions as:

1. Representing its members in collective bargaining and dispute resolution
2. Supporting its members in resolving workplace issues
3. Improving the work experience
4. Creating a connected community of members through networking and professional development opportunities (AAPS, Who We Are).

Each year AAPS issues an annual report to its members stating: “As professional staff, you play a critical role in every function of UBC. Your leadership and professional expertise are essential to creating a world-class institution” (p. 5). The sensegiving implied in that statement, as well as from the association’s strategic functions, is that AAPS also aims to ensure a healthy, inspiring workplace through recognition of its membership’s professionalism. However, the only explicitly pro-active initiatives to achieve that goal are through the collective bargaining, networking, and professional development functions. The other functions—such as representing members in dispute resolution and supporting members in resolving workplace issues—are essentially functions for cleaning up some of the HR issues plaguing the university since 2002, as was previously noted in section 6.3.2.2.

The AAPS Annual Report 2017-2018 (2018) is primarily about the negative issues faced by M&P staff. Over the year, AAPS reported they had 731 queries from members regarding issues in the workplace, including: terminations, harassment, hours of work, leaves of absence, reorganizations, performance reviews, conflicts in the workplace, job reclassifications, salary and
benefit issues, professional development, and collective bargaining. These queries ultimately resulted in 584 active advocacy cases and 14 grievances and arbitrations against the university (pp. 17-20). In the 28-page AAPS Annual Report 2017-2018 (2018), only two pages were dedicated to reporting on more positive achievements accomplished by AAPS over the year around networking and professional development.

Outside of the annual reports, communication to membership is primarily functional in terms of items such as benefit updates, AGM meetings dates, and upcoming PD workshops. AAPS occasionally conducts membership surveys asking for input on issues or initiatives, however, most important membership decisions are made at the board level. While the research participants confirm they read the annual reports, email communiques and sometimes attended professional development workshops, none of them were actively involved with the association. As mentioned before, the M&P participants also did not initially acknowledge AAPS as one of their professional affiliations during the recruitment process. Despite the hard work AAPS does on behalf of its membership, it does not seem to emit strong sensegiving, which results in M&P not feeling a “oneness with or belongingness to” (Ashforth & Mael, p. 21) the association in comparison to their other professional affiliations.

6.3.3 Sensemaking

Sensemaking in an organization, whether it be in an institution like UBC or an association such as AAPS, occurs when employees attempt to understand, extract clues from, and interpret circumstances in their working environment in order to clarify and make sense of issues and events they find somehow surprising, confusing or ambiguous (Cornelissen, 2012; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Maitlis, 2005). Strategic plans, framework documents, and annual reports are the
sensegiving tools whereby employees interpret the organization, and in turn, their own identity within, and relationship to, the organization and their occupations. During the interviews, the M&P participants were invited to make sense of the sensegiving tools provided by UBC and AAPS. The following sections look at how M&P make sense of the organizations through those tools and how they influenced their professional occupational identities within the organization.

6.3.3.1 Making Sense of UBC

The UBC sensegiving documents reviewed in this research emanated from different sources, the President’s Office and the Department of Human Resources. However, the M&P staff interviewed for this research did not differentiate between the origins of the documents; to them, they are organizational documents from senior UBC leadership. Therefore, the university’s strategic plan and the HR framework can be seen as a set of sensegiving documents from which these employees made sense of their work environment and how they fit into the university.

If the goals outlined in the strategic plan, Place and Promise (2008), are synthesized with the strategies in the Focus on People framework (2008), then we can understand UBC strives to be a healthy, safe, inspiring workplace that cultivates well-being, resilience, and commitment through positive opportunities, incentives, good leadership and management practices, and communication of institution-wide goals. The research participants shared how they made sense of these goals and strategies at both the university level and the unit level. While their professions, levels of responsibility and workplaces were vastly different, many common threads ran through their combined experiences. Many of the participants had a markedly positive experience working at UBC; however, there were notable concerns, many of which initiated the consultative process back in 2002 when work on Focus on People began. There were also
differences, both positive and negative, in how M&P experience the workplace at the university, cross-unit/faculty, and individual unit levels.

Three participants (Matthew, Wesley, and Susan) cited positive, healthy, inspiring workplace experiences at all levels of the university. They enjoyed support and professional growth at the organizational, unit, and individual levels. There were no clear correlations between the participants’ demographics (age, gender, profession, credentials, length of service, job family, unit, or position level) and why their working environment was professionally and personally fulfilling. These M&P were inspired by working on campus and saw themselves as having a long-term commitment to the institution. They were actively involved in, and took advantage of, the many initiatives, benefits, and opportunities available to them on campus, such as: flexible work schedule options, healthy work place initiatives, and ongoing professional development. For these M&P staff members, working at UBC made sense for them on both the professional occupational and professional organizational levels.

Matthew saw the cycle of sensemaking and sensegiving as being the responsibility of both the individual and the university:

The reason I feel very supported by the university is because I take advantage of the opportunities available … It is not just about what the university can do for me, but also about what I can do for the university. (Matthew)

Both Wesley and Susan were inspired by UBC and were committed to the organization:

For me personally, my job has been positive around aspects of well-being and this inspires commitment from me towards the university. (Wesley)

The university provides a healthy, inspiring workplace. I’ve been here [a long time] and there is a reason for that. I’ve been fortunate and have had opportunities
to move up through UBC … I also like the fact that we are educating students and that we are part of something bigger. (Susan)

Four other participants (Christine, Kaylin, Lee, and Alexa) expressed dissonance, and even conflict, in their well-being and commitment between the university, cross-unit/faculty, and individual unit levels. These participants were generally more satisfied at the unit level than they were at the university level. Besides all these participants being female, there were no other clear correlations between the participants’ demographics (age, profession, credentials, length of service, job family, unit, or position level) and why they experienced dissonance in the workplace. The difference seems to be individual and dependent on personality, personal circumstances, and at what stage they are in their particular careers. Organizationally, Christine was not inspired by UBC but she did feel inspired within her individual unit:

I can’t name any initiative the university has done that provides the kind of support for inspiration, well-being, and commitment. From a [unit] point of view, I can name a couple of initiatives that provide an inspiring workplace environment. (Christine)

Neither Kaylin nor Alexa were inspired by the university organizationally, but their work units provided environments that enabled strong occupational satisfaction:

I feel inspired on a daily basis with the team I work with, but I struggle to feel inspired by UBC as an organization. Occupationally I am inspired but organizationally less so. (Kaylin)

I really feel like we are nothing at the university, but I don’t feel that at the unit level. Actually, in my experience, I’ve been lucky in my positions. I feel inspired professionally. (Alexa)
On the other extreme, Lee felt inspired organizationally by the university learning environment but not professionally:

I love being at the university in a learning environment but I wouldn’t say the university inspires me professionally. (Lee)

Seven of the participants did not identify with the UBC goals nor did they feel inspired or committed to the university at any level. On a day-to-day basis, they experienced a gap between their two professional identities. Some of the issues and concerns cited are the same ones that initiated *Focus on People* back in 2002 and addressed again in strategic plans, *Place and Promise* (2008) and *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018): career advancement, promotion, and professional development. M&P staff expressed concerns that professional development support and funding is falling behind and not up to levels expected for professionals. Professional ‘stagnation’ was also cited as a problem impeding career advancement at the university. This may contribute to individuals leaving to seek other opportunities:

M&P staff work at an institution that does not recognize or help its professional staff, where our expertise is seen as old and non-competitive. Outside communities, industry, and business see us as not moving things forward. A lot of risk personally, especially if you spent many years at UBC and you need to go out into the marketplace. (Deborah)

Lack of time, or the flexibility to take time off, was also a reason given by the participants for not taking part in professional development. As Paul previously commented, he often worked 10-15-hour days. The lack of time was also mentioned as a contributing factor in poor life/work balance, which resulted in medical/health issues, increased sick time, stress, and retention problems. The university outlined initiatives to address a healthy work place in all three
strategic documents (*Focus on People, Place and Promise, Shaping UBC’s Next Century*) and currently offers a range of healthy workplace initiatives (UBC HR, Healthy workplace initiatives). Despite this, some M&P members reported excessive hours of work, lack of professional development, and health issues:

Overwork compromises the health and wellness of staff … We have a number of people in our unit who have gone on extended sick leave … Retention is also terrible. (Paul)

Everyone seems to be overworked. I see it all around me in the office and now there are medical issues due to stress. The work/life balance is off. Last year I found myself taking more time off as my health was being affected by stress. (Gale)

*Focus on People* (2008) and *Place and Promise* (2008) also strived to address the issue of communication. The documents outline the need to increase collaboration and communication between units, between the university and the units, and between the university and its employees. The ‘silo effect’ across the various levels of the university was mentioned as an impediment to sharing goals and promoting clarity of communication. Susan found a lack of clear communication from the university level down to the unit level. This impeded her ability to give sense to the staff within her unit.

It would be nice when the university comes up with a mental health and wellness plan, if they could also identify certain programs and communicate those so we have it as a resource to share with our staff. (Susan)
On the other hand, Gayle found communication between units to be unclear and confusing, which interfered with her ability to make sense of the strategic direction of her unit and how to respond operationally:

I gave a presentation and found out there was a lack of communication between their unit and ours; it just emphasized that we are siloed. I need better definition and clarification of our unit’s mission and vision – What are our priorities? Who are our priorities? Who supports our priorities? How are priorities decided? What falls within our responsibility and what does not? (Gale)

The participants were passionate about their perceived lack of recognition and acknowledgement, as well as to how they contributed to the overall university mission. Recognition and acknowledgment were goals highlighted in *Focus on People* (2008) but the issue still seems to be pervasive. The lack of performance reviews at the unit level was mentioned by five participants. Both Christine and Guy did not receive annual performance reviews and commented that this process should be mandatory so M&P staff know how well they are performing, as well as how much they are valued and recognized.

Lack of recognition at the unit, faculty, and university levels was also mentioned by several participants. Kimberly, a fairly high-level professional at the university, thought the university could go beyond the annual staff awards to recognizing staff on a regular basis: “We have staff awards once a year but I would like to see recognition throughout the year. It would be great to find ways to demonstrate that staff have value besides feeling we are only here in a support capacity.” Deborah thought M&P staff in particular deserved more recognition at the university level for their contributions to the strategic mission of the institution:
M&P staff could be valued more through the age-old value of recognition, what we do and how we contribute to the university … identify those people who are leading in their profession, pushing boundaries, presentations they have done, innovative practices they are engage in—highlight their achievement to the whole UBC community. (Deborah)

Susan felt faculty members, in individual units, could also advance recognition to M&P staff for their contributions in the research and teaching missions of the university:

M&P staff could be valued more by recognizing their contributions and how they support research and teaching. For example, a faculty member who gets support from staff in getting grants and in publishing could mention those staff members in their research. (Susan)

I asked M&P participants what they felt were the consequences for the university if UBC failed in its outlined strategic goals. Common themes running through the responses were the issues of low morale, high turnover rates, and accompanying low efficiency as a consequence. UBC’s goals in all three of its strategic documents, Focus on People (2008), Place and Promise (2008), and Shaping UBC’s Next Century (2018), is to “recruit and retain outstanding employees”, however, some participants believed the university has not achieved its goal.

Susan, Christine, Guy, Kimberly, Alexa, and Kaylin all supervised staff as part of their responsibilities and, in addition, were in positions where they worked with a number of other M&P colleagues. They witnessed low morale and a high turnover, with staff leaving the university to work elsewhere. Kimberly reported working with M&P colleagues who were “incredibly committed and inspired but who later became frustrated when they didn’t get supported, so they went elsewhere.” Susan and Christine, who managed large budgets, also saw
the financial repercussions to high turnover. Both believed staff are investments to be protected by the university, and high morale increases the value of the investment, while low morale costs the university. Christine commented that “the organization overall becomes ineffective when people don’t see action or believe in what the university mandates in its vision. The consequences are retention issues, knowledge gaps when people leave, and [lost] time and money to retrain.”

Five participants also thought a workplace with low morale causes health and performance issues, which ultimately affects UBC and its reputation as a whole. Susan and Kaylin noted employee turnover is a consequence of low morale but also commented on how it affects performance at the unit and university levels:

… good people will leave. That is a huge risk if staff are not supported. If they don’t leave they will be discouraged and not do their best work. (Kaylin)

An unhealthy workforce is stressed out, unhappy and mistake prone. So there is a risk to the university if morale is low, performance is low, and that affects the university’s reputation. (Susan)

The research participants in this study made sense of the interruptions, or triggers, they encountered while navigating various levels of the university hierarchy. The university’s strategic plan and the HR framework are meant as sensegiving documents, from which employees strive to make sense of their work environment and how they fit into the university. However, despite the university’s sensegiving attempts, some M&P staff still face organizational and occupational gaps in areas such as: organizational commitment, professional development, communication, morale, and work performance.
In order to provide assistance to M&P employees navigating the issues above, AAPS also issues its own sensegiving documents to its membership. M&P staff strive to made sense of the messages and goals from both the university and AAPS. I was interested in how M&P staff make sense of AAPS, their professional association, vis-à-vis UBC, the institution.

6.3.3.2 Making Sense of AAPS

On the initial survey sent out to the research participants, they were asked to list the associations in which they were members. Interestingly, not one of the research participants included membership in AAPS in their list of professional affiliations. Probing this anomaly during the interviews, participants did not feel a strong connection to AAPS and viewed the organization solely as a resource for occasional free professional development opportunities or advocacy issues. Only two of the participants, Paul and Gale, had previously used AAPS to resolve a workplace issue for staff they supervised, and those interactions were not constructive:

… the response was not positive or supportive. They pointed out the rules and regulations, of which we were already aware; what we needed was help in interpreting [them] to support the person in need. (Paul)

AAPS could not solve the issue. They mentioned that other members had come to them about workload. They said this was a widespread issue but there wasn’t much they could do. (Gale)

None of the participants were actively involved in AAPS (e.g., the Board or committees) and only two attended the Annual General Meetings. Despite this lack of involvement, these M&P staff regularly read publications issued by AAPS in the form of the Annual Reports,
newsletters, bulletins, surveys, email updates, and website information. They considered communication from AAPS to the membership to be adequate for their needs.

The consensus of the participants is that AAPS is fulfilling two of its stated purposes: 1) representing the membership in the areas of collective bargaining, dispute resolution, and advocacy; and, 2) resolving workplace issues. However, most of them do not feel AAPS fulfills its other two purposes: improving the work experience; or creating a connected community of members (AAPS, Who We Are). The overall strength of AAPS’s sensegiving to its membership “falls a little bit under the radar on a day-to-day basis”, as noted by Matthew.

Eight out of the 15 participants reported they attended professional development activities put on by AAPS and several considered them to be excellent. However, in general the professional development content failed to address the professional needs of most of this particular group and was deemed “superficial” (Guy) or more “organizational in nature than individual and professional” (Deborah). Lynda reported “[AAPS] doesn’t offer any PD that I need or want.”

The biggest gap, or dissonance, between AAPS’ mandate and its members was in the areas of developing a connected community through meaningful networking, and in advocating for the M&P staff to the university. Most participants felt AAPS could do more to help them make sense of how they “fit into the organization” (Lynda) and strengthen their professional identity at UBC. Guy, who worked in a highly specialized area of the Research and Facilitation job family, related to AAPS’s general purpose but did not identify professionally with the association. Both Lee and Kaylin worked in highly specialized areas with many M&P colleagues across the university as part of their positions. They both felt AAPS could provide greater
leadership. Lee did not think the association adequately advocated for more professional recognition at the university level:

I don’t see a level of advocacy that is productive for staff to be recognized as a professional category of university employee. AAPS could help us to become more visible. The association is relevant to a small fraction of M&P but for others it is not part of their identity. (Lee)

Kaylin believed AAPS needed to communicate more with its membership, and with the university, in order to improve relationships between the three entities. She did not identify professionally with AAPS:

I don’t think AAPS has generated a community of M&P; they have not connected very well … It would be great if they could educate people better on what they do outside of the workshops because I don’t know what they do to advocate on behalf of us to leadership. They should open the conversation by talking about the value we bring to the university … I don’t see a clarity of voice with AAPS. As an organization, I don’t really identify with them. (Kaylin)

Deborah, Christine, and Lee also recommended AAPS hone its networking and PD to address M&P professionalism and communities of practice in order to strengthen this sector’s identity within the university, with AAPS, and in their individual professions:

AAPS could offer more structure and micro-professional PD opportunities to support communities of practice, connecting members with each other, and giving us an awareness of what is out there and what is going on with our colleagues … they could help us understand. (Deborah)
AAPS could connect people more effectively by creating clusters of people who do similar jobs. I usually wouldn’t connect with someone outside my [professional] area. (Christine)

Staff aren’t really linked to the academic mission of the university, and if so, very casually. There is a lot of work to do in this area for staff visibility and their contributions to the university. The lack of networks has an impact on one’s sense of community. (Lee)

In general, the participants’ sensemaking of AAPS as an organization was that it is a useful resource when required for issues in the workplace, such as dispute resolution and advocacy. A number of participants commented on AAPS and the collective bargaining process, but only in connection to the associations’ inability to renegotiate Article 9. The association’s purpose made less sense to the participants in terms of improving their working environment, specifically in terms of job security, or creating meaningful connections at any level of the university or professionally. Unfortunately, one of the challenges faced by AAPS is that membership is composed of diverse groups of different job families and professions, hence, many M&P employees have nothing in common professionally.

6.4 Summary

All the interviewees reported the feeling of working in third space. They described their experiences of working between the faculty/staff and M&P/unionized staff binaries (Whitchurch, 2008), as well as the blurring of power structures emanating both from above and from within (Evetts, 2005). Recurring triggers that arose during their cycles of sensemaking and sensegiving, were cited as: 1) lack of professional recognition and exclusion from decision-making processes;
2) lack of professional development support; and, 3) lack of job security and high turnover rates. These triggers, or interruptions, sometimes created tensions between their professional occupational and organizational identities. While all the participants held strong occupational identities within their chosen profession, their organizational identity varied depending on where they worked within the university hierarchy. At the unit level, organizational identity was generally strong, however, at the cross-faculty and university levels that identity progressively weakened.
Chapter 7: CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate how M&P at UBC make sense of and navigate their professional organizational and occupational identities within third space. My assumptions were: 1) corporatization and NPM practices in higher education created a need for new professionals in the work environment; 2) this increasing workforce sector of M&P staff, worked between the university’s traditional binary of faculty and unionized staff, and resulted in a blurred, or third space; and, 3) working within third space created challenges in the ongoing day-to-day roles of M&P staff as they strived to make sense of, and construct, their professional occupational and organizational identities. This chapter interprets and highlights the key findings and significance of this research by connecting the collected data with the concepts outlined in the previous chapters in relation to the original research questions.

First, to address my first research question, I will discuss the changes in M&P staff at UBC in terms of numbers, roles, and responsibilities over the last decade. Second, I will address my findings in relation to research question number two about whether M&P staff perceive themselves in third space within the university hierarchy. As per research question number three, I will speak to the professional occupational and organizational identities of these new professionals and how they make sense of their roles. I will then address the fourth research question by discussing the challenges faced by M&P staff in navigating their professional identities and relationships at the university and within third space. Finally, I will address the fifth research question by discussing the implications of third space on the professional identities of M&P staff and the university and by making recommendations on the issues that became evident during the course of this research. This chapter will conclude with comments on the
limitations in this study, suggested areas for future research, and personal reflections on the learning I experienced in the course of this study.

### 7.1 The Rise of New Professionals

The number of M&P staff at UBC rose over 54% over the decade from 2008 to 2018 (AAPS, 2008; 2018), while over the same period, the total student population increased by 28% (UBC 2009, p.28; UBC, Overview and Facts). The discrepancy in growth percentage rates signals there are other factors contributing to the rise in M&P staff rather than just a growth in student numbers and extra staffing required to accommodate those increases. During the interviews, I discussed with the research participants whether they viewed the rise in M&P numbers as strictly the result of institutional growth or whether the introduction of corporate values and new managerialism models also necessitated a growth of new professionals at the university.

Over their tenure at the university, all the participants experienced the effects of corporate-style initiatives and NPM within their immediate working environment and at the university in general. Interestingly, while most of the participants felt the impact of those changes at various levels of the university, most were reluctant to attribute them directly to corporatization. They also did not view the growth in M&P staff as solely the result of either corporatization or student growth; but rather, saw their roles as necessary for the successful operation and mission of the university. Since comments by some of the research participants reflected a less than positive attitude towards corporatization, they may have been reluctant to align themselves with initiatives that some view as having a negative influence. However, given the data collected and the interview responses, 11 out of the 15 M&P roles of the participants were in positions that only existed in the last 10-15 years. I suggest many M&P positions at the
university are the result of the implementation of NPM and corporate values into the workplace, as well as institutional growth in areas such as IT and student services. The need to manage emergent and growing areas appears to be the raison d’être for the very existence of many M&P employees at UBC.

While the fifteen participants were only a sample of the more than 4,300 M&P members at UBC, they represented a sub-category of new professionals. They all held the necessary criteria that constituted them as professionals. They brought discipline-based credentials, expertise, and experience to new applied strategic and practical contexts in the university. Many were hired or moved into positions in order to develop, implement, and maintain corporatization and its manifestations. In short, this diverse group developed and implemented important aspects of the university’s strategic plan and they believed themselves to be, and were, an integral component in contributing to the university’s academic mission.

However, the M&P employee group is sometimes viewed by faculty members at the university as driving corporatization and new managerialism, hence they are often constructed as part of the problem. Some researchers and faculty perceive M&P staff as contributing to administrative bloat and destroying the traditional academic governance and fabric of universities. This perception contributes to a less than constructive ‘us vs them’ working environment where M&P staff find themselves within a third space that is the result of power structures created as the university strives to respond to new outside influences. As universities continue to grow in complexity, student numbers, programs, research scope, and buildings and facilities, senior administration seems destined to continue looking to the corporate world for guidance in managing operations, and solving organizational issues (Steck, 2003).
However, my interviews suggest M&P staff are often the result of, and sometimes the victims of, institutional practices and policies that come from above as the university grows and encounters organizational issues. This research highlights how M&P staff try to make sense of, and navigate, within a third space created by those institutional policies and practices at all levels of the university. I believe the changes in higher education have increased the burden on both faculty and professional staff who work in environments of diminishing resources but who still must deliver the teaching, learning, and research missions of the university. Ideally, this should be done in collaboration among all members of the university community.

7.2 Working in Third Space

As explored, third space is an in-between, and often confused space experienced by new professionals in higher education. It is a concept that describes work between the power structures emanating from the traditional faculty-staff binary. This research also includes the space M&P staff experience in the working relationships and power structures between themselves and unionized staff. As outlined, working in third space affects both professional occupational and organizational identities. The strength of those identities affects how M&P staff are able to make sense of, and navigate, their diverse working environments on a day-to-day basis.

All the research participants reported feeling they worked in some type of third space, whether it was integrated, semi-autonomous, or independent (Whitchurch, 2008). The majority of participants noted challenges with being in any type of third space, including the fact that collaboration was not always constructive professionally, for the unit or the organization. Independent third space, where boundaries are often crossed, and when collaboration is effective,
has the potential to be the most creative, constructive, and rewarding. However, it also caused the most conflict for M&P staff who wanted to exert their professional values from within but found themselves working with others who wanted to impose their values from above. Independent third space requires new boundaries, rules, and power structures in order to successfully collaborate across various levels of the organization (Whitchurch, 2013). This requires changing the dynamics in university governance, committees, projects, etc. and looking at who, what, when, how, and why voices and participation are included or excluded, and who is in charge and who takes direction, and who gets recognized and rewarded.

M&P staff with the strongest occupational identities faced the most negative experience in trying to navigate blurred space. Conflicts arose when they considered themselves as knowledgeable and experienced members of a team but were not afforded appropriate recognition and respect for their contributions. While some examples of conflict were noted between the M&P and unionized staff levels, most of the examples involved faculty members who did not consider the M&P staff member to be equal colleagues on the team or project, despite having professional knowledge and experience.

The resulting ‘us vs them’ mentality was discussed by the participants in relation to the faculty-staff binary, but also in relationships with unionized staff they supervised. As previously noted, the homogenizing term ‘staff’ at UBC is problematic in that it strives to incorporate a diverse group of employees in terms of educational background, qualifications, and job responsibilities. Since the participants were often perceived as, and performed the duties of, middle management, they were often the bridge between the top and lower levels of their units and at the university. They acted both from within and from above when planning, operationalizing, and managing the strategic vision, or sensegiving, of senior administration, and
when directing their colleagues and lower level staff in the day-to-day implementation of that vision.

Because of their unique positioning, the M&P participants used different frames of reference in their professional and managerial roles than those used by senior administration, faculty, or unionized staff. Hence, they sometimes experienced an identity discrepancy or interruption to their sensemaking and professional values in the working environment. This sometimes resulted in a blurring of both occupational and organizational identities in terms of their understanding of responsibilities, power structures, inclusion/exclusion, and recognition. The ability of the research participants to navigate third space seemed incumbent on the strength of their professional identities.

7.3 Occupational and Organizational Identities

The professional identities of the M&P staff in this research were dependent on the various roles the participants played across multiple employee groups, and across levels of the university hierarchy. As noted, the strength of the participants’ professional identities affected how they were able to make sense of, and navigate, their diverse working environments on a day-to-day basis, especially in third space.

The M&P staff I interviewed generally had a stronger professional identity both occupationally and organizationally at the unit level. These M&P were the most likely to work in integrated, or sometimes semi-autonomous, third space with higher degrees of collaboration from colleagues. They enjoyed greater autonomy in the unit and were able to act more professionally from within. In some cases, the participants were actively engaged in trying to flatten the hierarchy within their control, and noted they received more recognition from those in
positions both below and above. In the more intimate setting of the individual unit, the participants generally felt they were treated as professionals and therefore identified more closely with, and were more committed to, their immediate work environment. There appeared to be less conflict between the participants’ two identities on a day-to-day basis at this level, however, some still reported issues around recognition and professional development opportunities.

At the cross-unit/faculty level, when attempting to bridge the hierarchy between the senior and junior levels, the strength of both professional occupational and organizational identities appeared to weaken. At this level, there was more influence from above, which affected autonomy and weakened occupational identity. These M&P staff were more likely to work in semi-autonomous third space, which required adapting boundaries and negotiating collaboration. Some of the participants noted that although the environment was still collegial, there was slightly more conflict and a lesser degree of respect and recognition for their roles. Many commented on an ‘us vs them’ mentality arising either between themselves and the unionized staff they supervised and/or between themselves and faculty members. In general, the participants still felt they were able to act professionally but they reported more conflict when values, attitudes, and behaviors from within diverged from those that organizationally came from above. These conflicts not only weakened these participants’ sense of occupational identity but I noted their organizational identity and sense of commitment was weaker than at the unit level. The M&P staff I interviewed who worked at this level of the university, either frequently or on a full-time basis, were generally less happy in their positions than those who worked at the unit level.

At the university level, M&P employees who interfaced with senior administrative units experienced the greatest conflicts between their occupational and organizational identities. M&P
staff working at this level usually found the most difficulty collaborating on, and spanning, new boundaries, rules, and power structures. These M&P staff tended to have the highest credentials but generally felt powerless and unrecognized for their professional contributions to the university. They felt a lack of recognition and esteem within the organization, and exclusion from university-wide decision making. At this level, the strong organizational identity of UBC sometimes conflicted with, or in several cases eclipsed, the professional identities of the participants. Some of the repercussions for M&P discussed by the participants were low morale, high stress levels, lack of commitment to the university, and high staff turnover rates. For the university, and as related by the participants, these repercussions manifested in poor performance, inefficiency, and high turnover costs.

Two of the M&P in this study who worked at the senior administration level in independent third space, have since left the university for other opportunities. Not surprisingly, they expressed very strong professional identities, exhibited weak organizational identities and commitment, and had difficulty navigating the power structures and identity discrepancies they encountered. In saying this, there may be other missed opportunities for creative and constructive collaborations and projects at the university that could have been supported by helping M&P employees, hired for their professional expertise, successfully navigate through third space.

In general, the strengths of the participants’ professional identities were as varied as their professions, experience, length of service, credentials, work unit, and placement within the hierarchy of UBC. The ways M&P staff made sense of, and navigated, those identities, varied from participant to participant and was dependent on their roles, level within the hierarchy, and their interactions with others. However, the overall sense of exclusion from the wider university mission, and the lack of recognition and respect the M&P participants felt, especially at the
university level, was a concern for them both personally and professionally. They were affected personally when close colleagues left the university and professionally when high turnover had an impact on performance, morale, and budgets within their units. The participants who worked at the senior administrative level of UBC, were more conscious of the fallout and implications that the above issues had on the university.

7.4 Challenges and Navigation

Third space M&P staff in this study encountered challenges that affected their professional identities, ranging from blurred roles resulting from confusing nomenclature, their position in the hierarchy, to feelings of tension and frustration resulting from lack of job security, exclusion from decision making, and nonrecognition for their professional roles. The challenges these M&P staff encountered varied depending on circumstances, and their management techniques ranged from active engagement and action to compromise and inaction.

Several of the participants noted their university positions and titles were sometimes confused and blurred, which affected how they identified professionally. Another source of blurring was the nomenclature at the organizational level between being an AAPS administrative and professional staff member, or a UBC management and professional staff member. While the term ‘administrative’ is outdated and unclear, there is also no clarity by AAPS or UBC on what constitutes being a manager or a professional. Hence, the confusing nomenclature blurred roles and responsibilities both occupationally and organizationally.

Despite some of the challenges noted above, on a day-to-day basis M&P staff navigated, tried to make sense, and managed the challenges encountered in third space and in their professional identities. Most of the respondents managed quite successfully and professionally
with conflicts or tensions that arose, and they were generally keen to develop and maintain collaborative, working relationships, with all levels of professional colleagues across the hierarchy. Some of the techniques used by these employees to manage identity discrepancies varied from active engagement and action, to collaboration and compromise. There was no apparent pattern across the research participants in how they managed conflict, in regard to position, level, age, gender, or length of service. However, it appeared the employees with more professional autonomy and recognized authority within their units managed tensions through collegial relationships, higher communication levels with both those higher and lower in the hierarchy, and greater collaboration. These participants were also more satisfied in their positions professionally and more committed to the university organizationally. My findings are similar to Corley’s (2004) research that showed most management and professional staff garner a positive organizational identity when: 1) they are involved with the company’s strategic vision; and, 2) they are successful in bridging senior leadership and the lower levels of the hierarchy.

The respondents who managed less successfully worked in units where authority and tasks came from above, and where collegiality, communication, and collaboration were less evident. These participants were more apt to withdraw from a conflict and were generally less satisfied with their positions. In these cases, participants experienced feelings of powerlessness, as well as increased dissatisfaction with the university.

All the participants noted that interruptions, or triggers, occurred at different levels of the university and affected both their professional occupational and organizational identities. Some of the tensions or conflicts that consistently ran through the stories of the interviewed M&P staff were: 1) lack of professional recognition and exclusion from decision-making processes; 2) lack of professional development support; and 3) lack of job security and high turnover rates. These
triggers were imposed from above and the participants engaged in sensemaking to understand how these changes affected them, their immediate working environments, and the university as a whole.

7.5 Implications of Sensemaking and Sensegiving

Sensemaking by M&P staff and sensegiving by organizations such as UBC and AAPS are opportunities to share meaning at multiple levels and across third space. However, as discussed above, tensions initiate sensemaking which often stems from organizational sensegiving. This section looks at the predominant tensions highlighted by the research participants, and the arising gaps between the sensegiving as outlined by the university in their strategic documents, and the sensemaking engaged in by M&P in their attempts to navigate and construct their professional identities.

UBC’s goals in all three of its strategic documents, *Focus on People* (2002), *Place and Promise* (2008), and *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018), is to recruit and retain outstanding employees; however, many participants in this research believed the university has not achieved its goal, specifically in the M&P employee sector. Many of the workplace issues and tensions cited in the 2002 *Focus on People* are still notable areas of concern to the participants in this research. These issues have an impact on both the professional occupational and organizational identities of M&P staff and potentially the organizational effectiveness of the university.

Given the 2018 release of a new strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century* (2018), and the failure of UBC to address long-standing human resource issues, the university’s policies and procedures should be re-examined, so the new strategic plan can be successful in recruiting and
retaining outstanding employees. A new *Focus on People* framework is currently under development and is scheduled to be released in 2019.

The findings and recommendations from this research study will be shared with the M&P participants, the Executive Director of AAPS, and several connections in UBC Human Resources. Hopefully, senior university administration will institutionally acknowledge the third space this group occupies and work collaboratively with AAPS and M&P staff to develop policies and practices to address issues. This research highlights the following issues: professional recognition; professional development opportunities and funding; job security and turnover; and the relationships and communication between UBC senior administration, UBC HR, AAPS, and M&P staff.

### 7.6 Recommendations

The following sections outline recommendations to address the issues outlined in the previous sections of this chapter.

#### 7.6.1 Recognition

The M&P participants often experienced exclusion and lack of recognition, which negatively affected their professional identities. However, there was no overwhelming indication the M&P participants strongly advocated for their own inclusion and active participation on important committees and projects. While the participants expressed frustration, they generally accepted the status quo. Discussions with supervisors or project leaders could have promoted the inclusion and participation of these M&P staff but there was no indication from the interviews
that such discussions took place. Exclusion from important decisions can affect one’s professional position and job performance, but some of the M&P participants, Kaylin in particular, struggled to communicate to their units the importance of this issue and the potential consequences. Understandably, and unfortunately, some M&P are concerned for their job security and, therefore, did not advocate forcefully for increased recognition and participation.

Suggested recommendations for increasing recognition for M&P staff include: 1) AAPS taking a great leadership role in sensegiving and advocating for and ensuring more active participation of M&P members on university committees; 2) active collective sensemaking through the formation of focus groups of M&P staff, AAPS, and university leadership to outline how to increase meaningful participation; 3) UBC acknowledging the recognition gap and consciously changing the university culture by including more M&P staff in university activities; 4) UBC encouraging units and faculty members to include more M&P in unit and cross-unit participation; and 5) UBC and AAPS collectively engaging in more wide-spread, consistent recognition initiatives for M&P staff at the university and faculty levels.

7.6.2 Professional Funding and Opportunities

Professional development was another area where tension was noted. In keeping with the definition of being a professional, PD is an important component of fulfilling one’s professional identity. Participants highlighted the following reasons for not taking part in ongoing PD: 1) lack of adequate PD funding; 2) lack of available time; 3) lack of recognition; and, 4) lack of relevant offerings.

Lack of adequate funding and time to participate in PD can also be equated with lack of professional recognition when units, faculties, or senior administration do not see the value of
spending their budget dollars on M&P PD. One ongoing issue between AAPS and the university is the heavy workloads and long hours that hinder M&P staff from participating in PD. This issue was the source for 43 advocacy cases in 2017/2018 (AAPS, 2018, p. 18). Some respondents did not think PD offered by either UBC Human Resources or AAPS was relevant to their professional work. Unfortunately, there was no indication from the interviews that any of the participants advocated for this to HR or AAPS, and only two participants took advantage of free tuition credits offered by the university. Again, individual M&P staff were hesitant to complain or push back when job security was an issue.

Some recommendations include: 1) UBC centralize PD funding for staff and create a central pool of funding for M&P PD and consider the option to accrue carry-forward funds over several years to a maximum set amount, as at other institutions; 2) UBC encourage units to support M&P PD through time off and funding; 3) M&P staff engage in collective sensemaking and become advocates to both UBC and AAPS regarding their PD needs; and 4) AAPS and UBC engage in collective sensemaking and sensegiving by reviewing current offerings, and suggesting new PD options through HR and AAPS that appeal to specialized fields of professional expertise and M&P needs.

For example, AAPS and HR could make a concerted effort to work more closely in order to expand PD offerings more suitable to the professional needs of M&P. In addition, AAPS could sponsor smaller PD opportunities or networking sessions, addressed to the specific needs of certain job families. AAPS could also look at providing more professional development funding opportunities to individuals wishing to pursue more specific training needs or attend conferences outside the university.
7.6.3 Job Security

Job security posed the biggest disconnect for M&P staff in the study. It impacted both their occupational and organizational identities and sense of commitment. AAPS notes job security is a primary concern for its members. M&P viewed tenuous job security as another indication their work is deemed less important, leaving them feeling like disposable professionals.

The growing number of M&P staff vis-à-vis unionized staff indicated new staff roles established at the university may purposely be set up as M&P roles, as a strategy to enable the university to control rising costs. This manifestation of control from above through corporate, NPM, or new managerial style of governance is highly useful for the university but has negative consequences for M&P employees. AAPS has not been successful in renegotiating contentious Article 9 in the collective agreement. However, there is also fallout for the university in exchange for Article 9: the low morale among M&P staff, lack of commitment to the organization, and higher-than-average employee turnover.

Suggestions to alleviate the lack of job security and the accompanying fear and low morale are: 1) collective sensemaking and renewed discussions between UBC and AAPS on Article 9, including goodwill on the part of the university to ensure job security for this employee sector; 2) more transparent sensegiving on the part of UBC during reorganization, with consideration to the potential repercussions for M&P staff; 3) more effort by UBC to relocate displaced M&P staff within the university when reorganization takes place; and, 4) collective sensemaking through renewed discussion between AAPS and its membership on the opportunities and benefits of unionizing M&P staff, as at the University of Victoria.
7.6.4 Turnover

High turnover rates for M&P at UBC, both voluntary and involuntary, is costly in terms of the direct costs for replacing employees, but also in terms of the indirect costs. For example, high employee turnover rates result in hard dollar costs and has implications for staff morale, the retention of institutional knowledge, and for the ability of the university to sustain innovative, beneficial change. Involuntary turnover is most often the result of reorganization, budget restraints, or lack of research funding. Except for performance issues, the other causes of involuntary turnover are outside the M&P employee’s power, hence, there are organizational issues that should be addressed. The university should also be concerned with voluntary turnover so the reasons for leaving can be explored and addressed organizationally. The research participants also dealt with their staff’s concerns around job security as well as their own.

Given the responses shared in the interviews regarding staff turnover, some recommendations to help alleviate the impact are: 1) UBC should review the financial repercussions of employee turnover and its HR policies and practices; 2) UBC and AAPS should collectively engage in sensemaking to work collaboratively to address the ongoing issues for M&P turnover; 3) UBC and AAPS should form focus groups with M&P staff and university leadership on how to improve the M&P working experience at UBC, which will lead to active sensemaking; and, 4) with the help of AAPS, M&P employees at UBC should empower themselves to a greater degree both occupationally and organizationally to reduce dissatisfaction in the workplace, which should reduce the number of voluntary exits from the university.
7.6.5 Employee Levels

While M&P staff numbers have steadily increased during past decade, unionized employee levels have remained fairly constant, and faculty numbers have increased only slightly. This would seem to suggest there is a need for more M&P staff to carry out new responsibilities at the university because: 1) the number of unionized employees to be supervised has not increased, and, 2) student numbers, hence the workload and responsibilities of faculty members, have increased. There is no clear communication from senior leadership about whether employee numbers in the various employee groups are strategically planned at the university level based on need and/or budget. Ironically, the very mechanism that allows the university to control costs, workers, and provide short-term economic benefits may ultimately threaten the institution’s long-term sustainability due to high turnover.

My research findings lead me to recommend senior administration and Human Resources staff engage in more transparent sensegiving to help clarify the direction the university is taking in terms of its employee numbers and their responsibilities. Transparency in this area would help to alleviate concerns M&P feel around the ongoing issues initially outlined in the 2002 Focus on People report and to help them “understand how employees’ contributions relate to the overall university mission” (p. 3). This would ultimately contribute to stronger professional occupational and organizational identities for M&P staff.

7.6.6 AAPS

The majority of M&P staff are not active in and do not rely upon their professional association, AAPS. Feedback from the participants shows M&P staff do not professionally identify with AAPS or think the association provides guidance or direction for them, either occupationally or
organizationally. Since many M&P employees have nothing in common professionally, it is
difficult for the association to hold wide appeal to its members. Sensegiving by AAPS to its
membership is perceived as weak, and generally the participants feel removed from the
organization. This relationship is unfortunate, given the issues at stake for the M&P staff at UBC
and the potential added clout the association could garner with the university through increased
participation of its membership.

Therefore, AAPS may want to actively engage in sensemaking as an organization, and
with UBC, to review how they give sense to their membership on campus. Along with increased
and specialized PD opportunities and funding as previously noted, AAPS could contribute to
clarifying responsibility guidelines and consistency in terminology to help strengthen
professional identity of M&P at UBC and within AAPS. For example, AAPS should consider
dropping the outdated term ‘Administrative’ in its name and replaced it with ‘Management’ to
align with the university; define the scope and responsibilities of managers and professionals;
and work with UBC on clearer, more consistent job titles. To strengthen the apparently weak
sensegiving of AAPS to its membership and to UBC, M&P focus groups could advocate for their
needs and help AAPS make sense of the gaps between members and the university.

I also suggest M&P can empower themselves to a greater degree, by acting from within
their professional occupational identity, and by playing a greater role in sensegiving within their
realms of influence, and in making visible some of the disconnects encountered organizationally.
This may entail some pushback which may pose a very real threat to individuals’ job securities.
Therefore, AAPS as the representative organization needs to increase its organizational influence
in helping M&P navigate the tensions between its members and the university.
7.6.7 **Human Resource Practices**

If UBC continues to experience high turnover in its M&P staff due to its HR policies and procedures, the university may well experience difficulty retaining and recruiting M&P staff in the future. Therefore, human resource practices should ideally “improve the supply of requisite staff and skills into the organization, while staff development policies, incentives and training schemes should aim to improve existing skills” (Gornall, 1999, p. 48).

However, a dilemma arises in the overall management of UBC in regard to its M&P employees. The university enjoys staffing flexibility as a way to control overhead, but this flexibility may prove to have negative implications in terms of staff morale, the retention of institutional knowledge, and the ability of the university to sustain innovative, beneficial change (Gornall, 1999). Therefore, at some point, the university may find new professionals increasingly difficult to recruit and retain in a competitive marketplace.

This research suggests greater consideration be given to the institutional interface between third space M&P staff and the university in order to successfully sustain and maintain this workforce. In other words, and in the case of M&P staff at UBC, the university needs to ‘design in’ third space (Whitchurch, 2013).

Designing in third space involves the tacit acknowledgment and active engagement of this employee sector as projects and initiatives are developed, and where decisions are made. It would entail UBC explicitly acknowledging the unique positioning of new, or third space, professionals, which entails, at least in part, making accommodations in institutional structures in terms of affiliation, participation, decision-making, and hierarchy. This would not only benefit and enhance this employee group’s professional occupational identity within the institution, but
also strengthen the organizational identity of this group, and organizational capacity as a whole, through increased participation and unique insights.

As per interviewee input, accommodations would involve increased participation and empowerment on committees, in strategic planning groups, and in the decision-making process at all levels. It would also involve increased professional recognition across the campus in terms of rewards, incentives, professional development opportunities, and social networks. Perhaps even a unique identity could be considered which would define M&P staff outside the homogenizing term ‘staff’, currently used at the university.

Ultimately, if there are more challenges than benefits for M&P staff navigating their organizational and occupational identities, the university threatens to marginalize the experience and contributions of its largest employee group, thereby creating a disconnect between them and its official HR strategy. I suggest there is a need for UBC and AAPS to engage in collective sensemaking by working together when planning, implementing and managing strategic goals that are beneficial for both the university and M&P staff.

As other researchers have shown, and as is highlighted in this research, there is a chance to reimagine university and employee alliances, specifically third space new professionals, which would contribute to building a stronger, more constructive organization and work environment (Castree & Sparek, 2000; Freeman, 2000; Newson et al, 2012; Sporn, 1996; Whitchurch, 2013). Both the university and AAPS have a unique opportunity to build and retain a talented pool of professionals who can contribute to the institution’s academic agenda while building capacity, introducing cutting edge systems, and also being fiscally responsible to the students, donors, and wider community. While universities require the expertise and contribution of all their employees, it would seem prudent for the university to recognize, and to give voice to, M&P
staff who occupy a unique position and perspective at the university, thereby maximizing participation and collaboration within the university environment.

7.7 Limitations of the Study

This is a single institution study and the participants were limited to M&P staff members with graduate degrees and/or certification in a specialized field at UBC. This sub-category of M&P staff was selected because it is under-represented in the literature on higher education and it is the group with which I have the most experience and interest. The number of participants was relatively small, therefore generalizing the findings to other M&P employees, work units, or institutions should be cautioned.

The participants’ profiles must be considered within the limitations of this study. The initial call was sent to approximately 4,200 employees and expressions of interest were received from 38 M&P. It is unknown whether there was a self-selection bias in the participants who responded and if they had significantly different views than those who did not respond. Since the participants had graduate degrees and/or specialized training, they tended to hold higher-level M&P positions; hence their views may be different than the majority of M&P staff on campus. Also, the fact that the call for participation was sent out by email from the AAPS office may have also influenced the number and type of member who responded.

As noted earlier, I had the dual roles of ‘researcher-practitioner’, at the time of this study. I believe my insider status has helped me to understand the university hierarchy, terminology, history, and mission, as well as the experience of being an M&P member at UBC. While my insider status had benefits in access and shared perspectives, it may also have limited my ability to probe further in interviews, since common understandings may have been assumed on both
my part and on the part of the participants. However, in striving to construct quality and credibility to this research during the interviews and data analysis, I was sensitive to, and reflected on, these assumptions (Tracy, 2010). I understood and was observant that each M&P experience at the university is different.

Finally, the case study methodology used in this research study has limitations, as it captures a snap shot of particular M&P employees during a particular time period; data collected was from 2006/07 to 2017/18 and interviews were conducted in 2016/17. Because it is not a longitudinal study, it is unknown whether employees’ perceptions and experiences have since changed, or will change, over time. While it may have been interesting to learn how M&P are perceived by other employee groups such as faculty, senior administration, and unionized employees, that was beyond the scope of this study. Further, this study research was conducted at the UBC and acknowledges circumstances may not be similar at other institutions.

7.8 Future Research

Evett (1999) believes studying professional groups “is one key element in understanding contemporary societies and social change [and] the connections between professions and other institutional forms such as organizations … and the emergence of new professional groups” (p. 76). This research, studying the M&P employee group at UBC, is a step in trying to understand how these new professionals connect with the university and how it affects their identities. It addresses a gap in literature on management and professional staff in higher education, especially in the Canadian context.

This study also suggests the need for further research in relation to the research questions and other employee groups at UBC and in other universities across Canada. Making sense of
occupational and organizational positions and identities is not limited to M&P staff at the university. Given the different frames of reference and positions across the hierarchy of the university, other employee groups may engage in sensemaking and experience sensegiving in different ways. For example, how does corporatization, NPM, and third space affect the working environment and professional identities of contract faculty? It may also be worthwhile researching why the levels of some employee sectors at the university grow while some remain static or decline in relation to university and student growth. Further research could explore the professional occupational and organization identities of faculty members, contact academic faculty, senior administration, and unionized staff, in relation to the sensemaking cycle.

The concept of third space in this research explored how M&P employees straddle the divide between senior management and unionized employees. Further research can explore how this phenomenon is experienced at other universities by their management group and how those institutions are addressing issues that arise. Also, other employee groups may experience third space dependent on the power dynamics they encounter in their working environments. For example, one group that would appear to experience third space is contract academic staff who also occupies a blurred space in academia.

Another area for further research is in the area of boundary crossing. This is a more detailed kind of third space that affects professional identity within the dimensions of space, knowledge, and relationships (Whitchurch, 2013). This area of research is more suitably explored using a specific specialization or job family instead of the generalized participant pool in this research.

Gender was only touched on in this research study. However, it should be noted that 64% of AAPs members identify as female, hence this workforce sector within the university is
implicitly gendered. Further research could explore this area in relation to other public or private sectors, and/or in relation to the job levels and job families that are occupied by different genders.

Finally, new professionals in third space provide valuable contributions and unique perspectives to institutions because of the knowledge, expertise, and experience they bring to the workplace. More research needs to explore this phenomenon as universities, professional associations, and employees themselves may be able to collaborate and construct a third space for working committees and projects. This would not only develop stronger, more productive working environments but build capacity, professionalism, and identity for both individuals and the organization. Other institutions may develop alternative avenues for employees experiencing the challenges of third space; hence options and results can be shared, compared, and perhaps applied to UBC or other higher education institutions across Canada.

### 7.9 Closing Comments

The phenomenon of working in a blurred or third space was a personal experience during the course of my career in higher education. For many years, this feeling had no name, but I knew it affected how I made sense of my professional identity both in terms of my positions and in my relations with the institution(s). Therefore, the concepts of third space, professional occupational and organizational identity, and sensemaking were useful tools in the exploration and development of the findings in this research.

This study was an opportunity to explore, and to make sense of, this once unnamed phenomenon within the context of the professional group at the institution where I worked until retirement. The concept of third space is extended in this research from Whitchurch’s
faculty/staff binary that works in collaborative spaces (Whitchurch, 2013) to include the third space that arises between M&P and unionized employee groups. This research also explored the concepts of professional occupational and organizational identities of the two separate binaries and how the sensemaking cycle can trigger and manifest in identity discrepancies (Cole & Bruch, 2006; Corley, 2004).

For me, a surprising result of this research was how satisfied most of the research participants are working at UBC. At the same time, they all have opinions, complaints, and individual experiences that cast shadows over both their professional occupational and organizational identities. These new professionals also had constructive ideas on how the university can move forward to make a more supportive environment that promotes more innovation and commitment on their part. This dissertation was an avenue to give space to their voices, both positive and negative, with the view to share the findings and recommendations from this study with UBC and AAPS.

Another surprising outcome of this study was how un-engaged the M&P participants are with their representative association, AAPS. The participants seemed to be indifferent to AAPS, suggesting the association can improve its outreach and engagement activities with membership, as well as strengthen its presence and clout with UBC. Professional development, an important factor for professionals, also did not meet the respondents’ needs. With the change in leadership at AAPS in the last few years, along with the current new leadership at UBC, it may be an opportune time to review the relationship between the university and its professional staff in order to strengthen identities for both the employees and the organization.

The day-to-day experiences of M&P employees are not homogeneous nor do they reflect all challenges experienced in the workplace. Differences in personalities, conditions of
employment, workplace relationships, areas and levels of expertise, assumptions, expectations and goals exist within all employee sectors, as they do within the ranks of management and professional staff. However, the research participants have strong occupational identities and prefer a workplace with greater autonomy, more professional development and career opportunities, and wider recognition. This research finds almost all the M&P participants thrive in an environment where their professional occupational identity is recognized and rewarded at all levels of the university, which in turn, strengthens their organizational identity. A strong organizational identity is a goal UBC should strive to attain as it decreases turnover, boasts morale, and increases participation in carrying out the university mission.

There are certainly some challenges for M&P working in third space and for UBC as an institution in managing these employees and the working environment. As UBC continues to evolve and the numbers of M&P continue to grow, these findings may help both AAPS and UBC develop policies and practices that allow M&P staff to make sense of, and navigate between, their professional identities in ways that enhance the vision set out by senior administration.
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## Appendix A

### M&P Job Families, Headcounts, Percentages, and Growth Differentials

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<td></td>
<td>HC</td>
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<td>HC</td>
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<td>34 Clerk to Board/Senate</td>
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<td>35 Unassigned</td>
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<td>16 .35%</td>
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<td>0 0%</td>
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<td>39 Horticulture</td>
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<td>0 0%</td>
<td>.00%</td>
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<td><strong>2938</strong></td>
<td><strong>4530</strong></td>
<td><strong>+54.19%</strong></td>
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### Appendix B

<table>
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<th>M&amp;P Job Families and Required Education and Training Levels</th>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Athletics and Recreation***</td>
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<td>Business Development</td>
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<td>Business Operations Mgmt***</td>
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<td>Clerk to Board/Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conferences, Accomm., Ceremonies and Events</td>
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<td>Cooperative Education</td>
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<td>Counsellors and Psychologists</td>
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<td>Genetic Counsellors</td>
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<td>Graphic Design and Illustration</td>
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<td>Job Family</td>
<td>College Diploma</td>
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<td>Health, Safety and Environment</td>
<td>A,B</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>Industry Liaison***</td>
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<td>Information Services</td>
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<td>Info Sys and Technology***</td>
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<td>Institutional Analysis***</td>
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<td>Marketing and Sales</td>
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<td>Media Services</td>
<td>A,A2</td>
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<td>A,B,B2,D</td>
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<td>Student Mgmt</td>
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<td>Supply Mgmt</td>
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Notes: Alpha letters A-K indicate job levels with A being the lowest and K being the highest. Some letters appear in multiple columns due to some jobs in same family, at same level, requiring different qualification dependent on the position and unit needs. *** indicates Job Family under development at the time data taken, July 14, 2015. Table adapted from [http://www.hr.ubc.ca/compensation/jobfamilies/mp-jobfamily-descriptions/occupational-guidelines](http://www.hr.ubc.ca/compensation/jobfamilies/mp-jobfamily-descriptions/occupational-guidelines).
Appendix C

Initial Email Call for Participation through the AAPS Email List Serve

Dear AAPS Members:

One of our M&P members, Nancy Vered, is completing an Ed.D. program in the Faculty of Education. On her behalf, we are forwarding a request for participation in her research study; please see below for details. If you are interested, please contact Nancy directly.

Thank you,
Joey Hansen
Executive Director, AAPS

Hello, my name is Nancy Vered. I am a Management and Professional (M&P) staff member at UBC and a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. program in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC. My doctoral research supervisor is Dr. Alison Taylor. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in participating in my doctoral research.

The purpose of this research is to explore how a sub-set of UBC Management and Professional (M&P) staff members, whose job descriptions require a graduate degree or specialized training, ‘make sense’ of and navigate their professional occupational and professional organizational identities at the individual, unit, and institutional levels within ‘third space’ at UBC. This research will historically situate the growth and changing roles of professional M&P at the university and explore the challenges of this workforce’s two identities.
I am collecting data for this research project initially through two methods: individual interviews and document analysis. With permission, the individual interview will be tape recorded. Individual interviews will take about one hour during which time I will ask participants to tell me about their professional experiences at the individual, unit, and institutional levels at UBC. After transcribing and doing an initial analysis of the individual interviews, each participant will be sent his/her interview summary for confirmation and comment.

Study participants’ names, identities, and institutional affiliation will not be revealed. Data will be assigned a code and that information will be kept in a password protected computer file. Other than my research supervisor, Dr. Taylor, no other persons will have access to the study data. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy. There are no anticipated risks to this study.

If your current and official M&P job classification and level requires you to hold a graduate degree, specialized training or professional certification, and you are interested in participating, please contact me via email or phone. I can be reached by phone at XXXX or email XXXX. Dr. Alison Taylor can be contacted via phone: XXXX or via email XXXX.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Signature
Appendix D

Follow up to Invitation Letter and Request for Information

Date:
To:

Hello, my name is Nancy Vered and I want to thank you for contacting me and for your interest in participating in my research study.

In order to have a diverse pool of interviewees, I am requesting that you complete the attached information sheet and return to me, via email. Please be assured this information will be used only to create a balanced pool of candidates and will not be used for any other purpose.

If you are selected to take part, I will contact you again to arrange a time and place for a more in-depth interview of approximately one hour in length. If you are not selected to take part, I will contact you again to follow up and will subsequently delete or shred the information you initially send.

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact me via phone XXXX, or email XXXX. Thank you again for considering participating in my research study.

Nancy Vered
Preliminary Information Request Form

Please provide the following information and return to me ______________________.

Name: _______________________________ Position Title: ______________________

Job Family: ___________________________ Job Level: ____________________________

Faculty: _____________________________ Unit _____________________________

Number of years of service at: UBC_______ Unit___________

Gender: ___________ Age: ___________

Total # of years in profession: __________

Highest degree level: __________________

Specialized Certification and Training: 1. ____________________________
                                               2. ____________________________
                                               3. ____________________________

Membership in professional associations: 1. ____________________________
                                               2. ____________________________
                                               3. ____________________________
                                               4. ____________________________

I am able to attach an up-to-date job description: Y_______ N________

Thank you.

Name
Appendix E

Consent Form

Research Project:
Making Sense of Organizational and Occupational Identities of Management and Professional Staff at the University of British Columbia

Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Supervisor):
Dr. Alison Taylor, Associate Professor, UBC Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Studies, Phone: XXXX; Email XXXX

Co-Investigator:
Nancy Vered, Graduate Student, UBC Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Studies, Phone: XXXX; Email: XXXX

Purpose:
I am interested in learning more about your professional work experiences at UBC from the individual, unit, faculty, and institutional perspectives. I will be using data from this interview with you as part of my doctoral dissertation.

This research will historically situate the rise of M&P staff at UBC and explore how this group of ‘new professionals’ currently makes sense of and navigates its professional organizational and professional occupational roles and identities within ‘third space’ at the university.
I am particularly interested in the challenges faced by this employee group and any dissonance that occurs between its two identities. This research may show that greater consideration should be given to the institutional interface between ‘third space’ M&P staff and the university, in order to successfully sustain an effective, highly-skilled, and productive workforce.

You are invited to take part in this interview because of your experience at UBC and as an M&P employee who currently holds a university position in a job family and at a job level which stipulates that a graduate degree, specialized training and/or professional certification is required to perform your job.

Study Procedure:

I will be conducting individual interviews in a mutually agreed upon location that is convenient for you although it is best to avoid noisy public places or venues where it is hard to hear tape recordings and hard to maintain confidentiality. I will be asking you to tell me about your professional work experience at UBC and how you make sense of your organizational and occupational roles and identities. The interview will take approximately one hour of your time. It will be audio-taped (with permission). A transcript of your interview will be sent to you for confirmation and comment.

Potential Risks:

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this interview.
Potential Benefits:

UBC may better recognize M&P staff working in ‘third space’ and address issues arising from dissonance these employees are experiencing in constructing both their professional and organizational identities in the workplace.

Confidentiality:

All documents and recordings will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Names of people, locations, institutional affiliation, and any other data that may lead to identify persons or places will be transcribed so that confidentiality is maintained. Electronic data records will be kept on a password protected computer accessible only to the researcher.

Remuneration/Compensation:

Participants will be provided with coffee, tea, or juice, and a small snack at the interview.

Contact information regarding the study:

If you have questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Nancy Vered, phone XXXX, email XXXX, or the research supervisor, Dr. Alison Taylor, phone XXXX, email XXXX.

Contact for concerns regarding the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line at the UBC Office of Research Services, phone 604-822-8598 or email ORSIL@ors.ubc.ca.