

A New Season for the Baylor Nation: Image Repair and Organizational Learning in Baylor's Title IX Crisis

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In May 2016, Baylor University released a comprehensive report to the public detailing the university's inaction and mishandling of Title IX cases, causing Baylor to be the subject of local and national media scrutiny. At the peak of Baylor's Title IX crisis in the summer of 2016, many Baylor stakeholders felt an immense distrust of how Baylor administration and the Baylor Board of Regents were sharing information, protecting students, and staying true to the university's vision, Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana. Interim University President Dr. David Garland issued a letter titled "A New Season in the Life of Baylor University" to Baylor stakeholders in June 2016 that offered guidance and addressed the crisis. This letter was analyzed using Benoit's (1997) Image Repair Theory. Garland engaged in the following strategies outlined by Benoit: corrective action, mortification, and reducing offensiveness through bolstering. Further analysis found that the university engaged in organizational learning by implementing two task forces and allowing alumni to elect a regent for the board of regents.

Introduction

Baylor University is a private, Baptist-affiliated university located in Waco, Texas. Baylor, founded in 1845, is also the oldest continuously operating institution of higher education in Texas. In recent years, Baylor saw increased positive media attention surrounding its winning athletic department, which begat increased admissions and revenue coming into the university. Under the leadership of Athletic Director Ian McCaw and Head Football Coach Art Briles, Baylor experienced winning seasons, ranked nationally, won bowl games, and even had the first ever Baylor player to win the Heisman trophy (Hill, 2012). The board of regents, administration, and fans all appreciated being respected in the world of collegiate sports and being competitive in the Big Ten Conference. In 2016, the legacy of Briles and the reputation of Baylor University came under intense scrutiny in the media and by stakeholders when it was revealed that sexual assault allegations were grossly mishandled and covered up by the university. Baylor saw its prized reputation change to being considered secretive, shady, and unprepared to handle this crisis as many administrators and coaches resigned under pressure.

In this paper, I will analyze Interim University President Dr. Joseph Garland's response to Baylor's Title IX crisis using Benoit's (1997) Image Repair Theory. The crisis response of universities provides a unique area for research because stakeholders find a strong sense of identity in being a member of the university. In addition, universities rely on existing norms and hierarchy to achieve university goals, slowing the process of organizational learning. Private, faith-based schools further complicate how universities respond to crises because, as institutions, they hold themselves to a standard of ethics rooted in religion and theology. These schools can be resistant to adapting university policy along with changing student culture thus leaving the institution unprepared to handle crises that threaten their standard of ethics.

Analysis of how public and private, faith-based universities respond to crises and engage in image repair and organizational learning adds to the larger discussion of organizational communication and public relations crisis management strategies. Baylor's Title IX crisis is important in this area of research for three reasons. First, the scope of the crisis reached national significance and dominated local and national news cycles. Second, the allegations that surfaced in the media directly contradicted Baylor's core values as a faith-based institution, causing Baylor's reputation among stakeholders to diminish overnight. There are distinct differences in the image repair process for private, faith-based universities due to their higher standard of ethics rooted in their faith, but all universities strive to cultivate a strong sense of identity among stakeholders. Third, as Title IX policy continues to change under new federal administration at the Department of Education, it is important for university administration and leadership to learn from peer institutions and to engage continuously in organizational learning so that universities can continue to provide safe and equal learning environments for students.

The Baylor Crisis

The Baylor crisis came to a peak in late May 2016, when the Findings of Fact, a document written as a result of a presentation by Pepper Hamilton, LPP, a law firm, to the board of regents in early May 2016, was published online by Baylor. Media outlets nationwide scoured through the document and put Baylor in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. Baylor stakeholders including alumni, students, parents, peer institutions, and the Waco community read through the document and tuned in to the news to watch the suspected demise of their beloved Baylor University, especially the Baylor Bears football team. In 2012, otherwise known as The Year of the Bear, they won the Big 12 championship and had winning sports teams almost across the board. Briles was considered by many fans to be the savior of Baylor athletics, much like famous Coach Joe Paterno from Penn State University. University President Ken Starr was at first a controversial figure on the Baylor campus due to his independent investigation of President Bill Clinton, and because he was the first non-Baptist president of the university. Starr's reputation among Baylor stakeholders improved when Starr proved himself to be an excellent fundraiser (Boorstein, 2016). After the crisis surfaced, Starr, Briles, and McCaw resigned, and many recruits backed out of their commitment to come to Baylor. Without Starr and Briles, many assumed Baylor's few years of athletic success and university growth through fundraising were over.

Pepper Hamilton, with full access to speak to students, faculty, and staff and look at all pertinent documents, analyzed relevant documentation and interviewed over 65 Baylor-affiliated individuals for a full academic year. The lack of administrative support for Title IX implication and supervision of athletic staff as identified by Pepper Hamilton was a main source of concern for stakeholders in the Baylor community. While the Findings of Fact did not name names, it certainly pointed fingers at administration and coaching staff for failing to implement university policies that complied with Title IX. In some cases, administration or coaching staff "directly discouraged complainants from reporting" and "contributed to or accommodated a hostile environment" (Baylor University, 2016a, p. 2). Baylor should not have been caught off-guard by Title IX; as the report outlines, administration "failed to recognize the significance of the national context" and learn from other "high profile examples of institutional failures at peer institutions" (Baylor University, 2016a, p. 4). The report directly called out leadership in the athletics department and football staff at Baylor for handling most all conduct issues involving its players internally without following university protocol, which lead to a culture on campus where football players were viewed as above reproach.

Throughout the 2016 football season, many Baylor alumni and stakeholders felt betrayed by the board of regents for pressuring Briles to resign. The mood amongst Baylor stakeholders remained uneasy throughout the season, and Baylor stakeholders began to purchase and wear black CAB shirts, which stood for Coach Art Briles, to football games (Martinez, 2016). Unrest reached a new peak when "60 Minutes Sports" learned that 17 female students reported sexual or domestic assault charges against 19 football players, including at least four alleged gang rapes (Axon, 2016). Many Baylor stakeholders and the media pointed fingers at the board of regents for not being transparent about the scandal. The board of regents were viewed by stakeholders as out-of-touch individuals who helped create an environment where pennants of the Baptist faith – total abstinence from alcohol and from premarital sex – were ignorantly thought to be still relevant in student culture and in university policy (Baylor University, 2015; Baylor University, 2018b). Many stakeholders believed that the board of regents' lack of understanding of student culture caught them off guard, and they responded inappropriately by pushing out Briles and other respected Baylor administration.

The Baylor Title IX crisis caused stakeholders to question Baylor's commitment to its vision: Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana, which stands for For Church, For Texas. Baylor's mission, "to provide an environment that fosters spiritual maturity, strength of character, and moral virtue," contradicts the actions of administration that made the campus less safe for victims of sexual assault (Baylor University, n. d.). This contradiction caused many stakeholders to wonder how their university skewed so far from their vision, and since most administration who could answer that question either resigned or were let go, the blame fell mostly on the board of regents. According to Benoit's (1997) Image Repair Theory, "image is essential to organizations" (p. 177). While universities provide their students with an education that will prepare them for a successful career, universities are also selling a sense of identity and group membership. When universities do not hold true to their vision or act in a way that is detrimental to its stakeholders, universities must regain stakeholder trust and realign with the core values of the institution. Also, change moves more slowly at universities because of existing reporting structures and chains of

command. Even still, universities, just like more traditional organizations, must repair their image after a crisis using Benoit's strategies.

In this paper, I will detail a crisis outline, review the existing literature, pose three research questions, analyze a letter written by the interim president, Dr. David Garland, and lastly, I will analyze whether Baylor's attempts regain their image as a university were successful and if Baylor engaged in organizational learning.

Crisis Timeline

Pre-crisis

2013 April

- Student athletes Tre'Von Armstead and Myke Chatman are involved in a sexual assault incident off campus involving another student; neither was charged with a crime.

2015 August

- Student athlete Sam Ukwuachu is found guilty of sexually assaulting another student athlete at Baylor. Ukwuachu was dismissed from Boise State because of alleged domestic violence.

2015 September

- Baylor finally starts to investigate the allegations against Armstead and Chatman. Baylor knew about the incident when it occurred.
- Pepper Hamilton conducts an extensive, year-long investigation into Baylor's response to Title IX cases.

Crisis

2016 May

- Baylor releases a partial report from Pepper Hamilton, LLP.
- University President Ken Starr is let go.
- Interim President David Garland is announced.
- Head football coach, Art Briles is suspended indefinitely.
- Acting head football coach, Jim Grobe, is announced.
- Director of Athletics Ian McCaw resigns.

Post Crisis

2016 June

- Interim President David Garland releases a letter addressed to the Baylor Nation to clarify the Pepper Hamilton report.
- Former head football coach Briles and Baylor release joint statement regarding Briles' termination.

2016 July

- Additional administration and leadership changes take place.

2016 November

- "60 Minutes Sports" broadcasts expose into the Baylor crisis
 - Baylor launches website titled "The Facts" to appear more transparent
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*This timeline was adapted from a *Sports Illustrated* timeline (Ellis, 2016) and Baylor University press releases (Baylor University, 2016b; Baylor University, 2016c; Baylor University, 2016d; Baylor University, 2016e; Baylor University, 2016f).

Literature Review

Crises threaten both an organization's relationship with its stakeholders and an organization's reputation or image (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2002). An organization's image is essential, especially

for universities. Universities have realized that a “positive reputation is a valuable commodity for a university, enabling it to attract high caliber as news sources, lure a greater number of quality job recruiters, and strengthen alumni loyalty” (Len-Ríos, 2010, p. 268). Crises for universities can not only affect “current students, alumni, parents, prospective students, donors, staff, faculty, residents of the local community, sports team fans, and advisory boards,” but they can also affect “funding and support from taxpayers, the state legislators, and the government” (Len-Ríos, 2010, p. 269). Universities must have buy-in from diverse groups of stakeholders if they are to continue operating, especially after a crisis.

Stakeholder relationships and image are irrevocably tied together, and in times of crisis, universities must engage in image repair strategies to mend these relationships. Benoit (1997) lists five general strategies for image restoration – denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of an event, corrective action, and mortification – along with several variants for each strategy. For example, the strategy to reduce the offensiveness of an event has six variants, including bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser, and compensation (Benoit, 1997). These strategies “work together,” (p. 184) and an organization may be better off if it strategically implements multiple strategies at once to address a crisis (Benoit, 1997). Coombs (2007) continued Benoit’s work in crisis and risk communication by developing Situational Crisis Communication Theory, which also looked at image, or, as Coombs called it, “reputation” (p. 163). An organization’s reputation is a “valued resource that is threatened by crises” (p. 167), especially when the crises involve victims who have been adversely affected by the crisis (Coombs, 2002). Both Benoit and Coombs stress the importance of organizations choosing the right strategies for each crisis.

Researchers in crisis and risk communication have applied Benoit’s theory of image repair and Coombs’ theory of situational crisis communication to situations to analyze whether the strategies were successful. This research consists in part of case studies ranging from Australian rugby teams (Bruce & Tini, 2008), universities (Brown & Geddes, 2006), the military (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009), and collegiate athletic teams (Brown & Billings, 2013; Brown, Billings, & Delvin, 2016; Fortunato, 2008; Len-Ríos, 2010). The case studies for collegiate athletic teams range from sexual assault allegations to National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) violations.

University crises involving student athletes and sexual assault allegations generate media attention, as seen in the Duke lacrosse team scandal in 2006. Two exotic dancers were paid to attend an event for the lacrosse team off campus, and one of the women later claimed that three of the men raped her. The charges against the team members “drew national and international media attention, sparked intense local debates, and highlighted issues of gender, race, and class” (Barnett, 2008, p. 180). Dr. Richard Brodhead, president of Duke University, wrote a letter to the Duke community following the scandal outlining what corrective action would take place, and indicating that “the incident was an indication of larger cultural problems that needed to be addressed at the university level” (Fortunato, 2008, p. 120). Duke also responded to the crisis by acknowledging that an emotional response had been triggered on campus, reminding the public that there was a difference between an allegation and a conviction, and emphasizing the seriousness of rape and sexual assault charges (Barnett, 2008). Through the use of Benoit’s image repair strategies, Len-Ríos (2010) found that Duke “addressed its image by focusing on reducing offensiveness through the use of corrective action/separation, bolstering, and attacking one’s accuser” (p. 277) along with denial and mortification. Brodhead continued to communicate with the public via statements as new information about the case was released, and he also talked about positive things happening at the university. Duke was able to take control of the situation and minimize the damage to their image through accepting responsibility and taking corrective action.

Institutional cover-ups involving university staff and administration involving sexual assault cases have also become a hot topic issue in the media. Worthington (2005) analyzed a sexual assault scandal at a private Catholic university where female assault victims left the university because the vice-president would not expel the male perpetrators until the scandal gained media attention, and the vice president resigned. Sexual assaults are underreported, and “unpunished sexual assault against female students was, to some extent, institutionalized” on college campuses (Worthington, 2005, p. 8). University administration should be aware of how their reputation can be damaged in the media if they fail to be transparent about a crisis. Athletic programs and student athletes are often viewed under this “rape culture” view as being privileged because they bring in revenue and encourage alumni and student buy-in with the university. A winning season can help increase alumni donations and new student applications, which are both necessary for the long-term success of a university. Proffitt and Corrigan (2012) stated:

The stakes of athletic success and image, in other words, are extremely high--and it is a competitive marketplace. To the extent that the branding of athletics programs has become a structural imperative, we should not be terribly surprised when rules are bent or broken in the hopes of on-field success or when the image-damaging offenses of players, coaches, or staff are covered up by university officials. (p. 323)

This structural barrier for information is evident in the Penn State crisis, where coaching staff and administration decided that the possible sexual abuse of children should be handled internally instead of involving law enforcement. This crisis created media buzz because university officials covered up Sandusky's sexual assault against children for over a decade to protect the "football program from bad publicity instead of protecting innocent and vulnerable children from further sexual abuse" (Lucas & Fyke, 2014, p. 551). Lucas and Fyke (2014) also discuss how negative upward communication can be stifled because it is "antithetical to organizational goals," (p. 552) and how subordinates fear repercussions from their supervisor for speaking out. In the Penn State crisis, many referred to Coach Joe Paterno as legendary or revered because of his successful career, and this sort of sainthood further prevented the flow of upward communication.

Most of the pressure to win falls on the coaches because their careers are determined by records of wins and losses. These coaches are faced with either losing their jobs and having to uproot their families or violating an NCAA rule. Head coaches play a crucial role on whether or not the team engages in ethical practices. Head coaches admitted that their programs were lacking integrity and thought that more strict sanctions were needed in order to see reform (Cullen, Latessa & Bryne, 1990). According to Cullen et al. (1990), "the prevalence of corruption is not due simply to individual ethical failings but to the structural pressures that erode moral mandates and lead coaches to tolerate minor, if not major, abuses" (p. 62). Student athletes look to leaders on the team, both upperclassmen and the coaching staff, to form their own ethical decisions. If these student athletes feel like they are on a team that doesn't care about one's integrity both inside and outside of the classroom, it becomes much easier for them to rationalize engaging in unethical behavior.

Head coaches are not the only ones feeling the pressure; university presidents feel immense pressure to have winning athletic programs as well. University presidents are able to use athletics to help fundraise for the university by capitalizing on alumni buy-in and alumni support of collegiate sports teams. According to Turner (2015), "[p]residents will do almost anything to make a potential donor feel like an insider" (p. 3). University presidents have an incentive to operate within the existing structure and give privileges to players and coaches because "if a winning team makes a donor more likely to cut a check for a new library, then firing or disciplining a coach can be that much tougher" (Turner, 2015, p. 3). University presidents must "stand strong against the activities and individuals who would usurp those higher values, versus, on the other hand, the allure of the trappings of success that come along with a winning athletic program" (Turner, 2015, p. 5). Between head coaches, university presidents, and other administration, there is a clear lack of accountability for unethical behavior due to a structure that promotes winning at all costs.

This review of literature illustrates a dangerous structural problem for universities, coaching staff, and university administration, prompting otherwise ethical individuals to compromise their own ethical code for the sake of the athletic program and the university at large. The vast corruption and scandal surrounding collegiate athletic programs and the media coverage promote a narrative that if one scratched the surface of most all major athletic programs, "rampant rule infractions" (p. 669) would be revealed (Cullen, Latessa, & Jonson, 2012). These scandal-invoking infractions include anything from sexual misconduct, academic cheating, financial-oriented fraud, and other criminal activity. Long gone is the perception that the ivory tower is exempt from "problems of the larger society but rather are domains marked by such waywardness as binge drinking, sexual victimization, and predatory crime" (Cullen et al., 2012, p. 668). It is up to university administration and head football coaches to set the tone for what is acceptable at their university. Without strong ethical guidance, these structural problems will continue to plague universities and taint the image of collegiate athletic programs. The need for research using Benoit's (1997) image repair strategies for university crises increases with each university scandal.

Research Questions

When the Baylor Title IX crisis reached its peak in late May, 2016, Garland's letter had to cut through the daily drip of negative press in the media and offer guidance to stakeholders. Though the crisis has lasted much

longer than intended by the board of regents and Baylor administration, I will focus my analysis on Garland's first letter addressed to the Baylor Nation. My analysis of Baylor's response to the crisis was directed by the following research questions:

RQ1: Which of Benoit's image repair strategies did Baylor use to repair their image as a private, Baptist university?

RQ2: Were the selected strategies successful in helping Baylor repair their image as a private, Baptist university?

RQ3: In what ways does Baylor show organizational learning in its approach to handling sexual assault allegations and reestablishing trust with stakeholders?

Method

Like in the Duke crisis, Garland, Baylor's newly appointed interim president, released a letter on June 3, 2016, addressed to the Baylor Nation titled, "A New Season in the Life of Baylor University." This letter served as an appeal to many of Baylor's stakeholders, from alumni to current students, during a period of great uncertainty for their university. It was also the first chance for some stakeholders to meet their spokesperson and representative, as Garland assumed the role of interim president from Starr. Garland served as interim president of the university once before from 2008 to 2010 and was a well-known, esteemed member of Baylor administration along with his late wife Dr. Diana Garland who is the namesake for the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work (Woods, 2010). Even though Garland and his late wife were well known to many stakeholders, Garland still had to appeal to new stakeholders who were not familiar with his credentials and reputation, including new students and parents, new local media, and national media.

In order to answer RQ1, I analyzed the letter to find broad themes and strategies used by Garland to repair Baylor's image. In order to answer RQ2, I looked to Garland's letter along with other press releases and outside resources to get a better understanding if Baylor was successful in repairing their image. For RQ3, I looked at the opportunities for Baylor to learn from this crisis and become a more ethical, transparent institution because of the crisis. Through analysis of this artifact, I have a much better understanding of the crisis and the crisis plan that Baylor used to gain control of the narrative and repair their image during the pre-crisis, crisis, and post crisis phase.

Analysis

Although Baylor intended to be transparent by publishing the Findings of Fact online, the dense document, 13 pages in length and full of legal jargon, was difficult for the general public to comprehend. Garland's letter had to respond to both the Findings of Fact and the interpretations of the document and rumors that were circulating through the media. Garland had to offer guidance and clarification to the stakeholders as they themselves read through the scathing report. Garland also had to justify that Baylor was being as transparent as they could while protecting the identities of the victims. The letter is broken into four subheadings: Clarifying Matters; An Enhanced Title IX Office; Improvements Being Pursued; and The Path Forward.

Garland's letter relied heavily on the use of Benoit's (1997) corrective action strategy, mortification strategy, and reducing offensiveness strategy. Garland's letter did not use Benoit's (1997) denial strategy or the evasion of responsibility strategy. Out of the reducing offensiveness strategy, Baylor used the bolstering version to capitalize on all remaining feelings of goodwill amongst its stakeholders. In the following sections, I analyzed Garland's letter through each of these strategies.

Corrective Action

The corrective action strategy, as described by Benoit (1997), consists of the organization promising to stakeholders that they will correct a problem or promising to stakeholders to prevent it from happening again. Presence of this strategy is evident throughout Garland's letter and in his theme of "a new season" for Baylor

(Garland, 2016, p. 1). Garland (2016) recognized “the work lying ahead” and calls on members to come together in “honest action” (p. 1). Garland (2016) acknowledged that “we have taken steps to ensure that we are in compliance with Title IX, the Jeanne Clery Act, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and other state and federal obligations” (p. 1). Garland (2016) then detailed Baylor’s course of action to act on the recommendations of Pepper Hamilton, including the creation of two task forces to address and implement recommendations and to address spiritual life and character in the Baylor community.

Garland (2016) created a new narrative for Baylor when he referred to Pepper Hamilton’s findings as “a roadmap” (p. 2) rather than a roadblock. Baylor administrators went from having limited understanding of how to implement Title IX to wanting to “set the highest standards in this area” (p. 1) as a result of the Pepper Hamilton report (Garland, 2016). In a time when many Baylor stakeholders were thinking that the Baylor University they knew and loved was coming to an end, Garland set a precedent for Baylor stakeholders to think of the positive outcomes already in motion.

Mortification

Benoit (1997) described the mortification strategy as the act of confessing and begging forgiveness. Garland (2016) implemented this strategy when he repeated Board Chair Ron Murff’s words: “We are deeply sorry for the harm that survivors have endured. We, as the governing Board of this University, offer our apologies to the many who sought help from the University” (p. 1). This strategy was also implemented in a less direct way when Garland asked the Baylor nation to “come together in prayerful reflection” (p. 1). Garland used the mortification strategy to help the Baylor community heal from their harmful actions in the years where Baylor administration did not support students who were victims of sexual assault.

Reducing Offensiveness/Bolstering

Bolstering, or supporting and strengthening, is a version of the reducing offensiveness strategy and can be used to “offset damage” for an organization (Benoit, 1997, p. 180). Garland engaged in this version of the strategy, but not any of the other versions. If Baylor had tried to debate the total number of victims that were harmed through their inaction or misdirection, as described in the minimizing version, they would have brought attention to the number of victims and may have compromised the privacy of the victims. One victim of sexual assault who did not receive proper support or who was discouraged from reporting sexual assault is too many. It appears through the Findings of Fact that during the pre-crisis phase, Baylor wrongfully and ignorantly engaged in the differentiation version when Baylor students were involved in a sexual assault case that happened off campus. Since there are no real benefits of sexual assault on college campuses, the transcendence version was not and should not be implemented by Garland in his letter. Attacking the accusers, another version of this strategy, would increase the offensiveness of the whole situation. Compensation, the last version of the strategy, was not utilized in Garland’s letter but has the capability to go over well and help the university repair its image.

There is evidence of the bolstering version of the strategy in Garland’s letter when he praised the board of regents. Garland (2016) said: “I am grateful to the Regents for openly addressing the findings. It demonstrates their unwavering dedication to do what is right for our students, both today and in the future” (p. 2). Through the bolstering version of the reducing offensiveness strategy, Garland highlighted a positive aspect about the university by showcasing the progressiveness of the board of regents. In addition, Garland (2016) bolstered the Title IX office by referring to the office and its employees as a “vital area of University operations” (p. 2). Garland (2016) calls the Title IX office “capable, compassionate, professional, and working hard to care for the needs of students” and mentions how the office has “worked to assist many students in times of need, walking alongside them to a complex and trying process” (p. 2). Through offering praise to the board of regents and the Title IX office, Garland attempted to frame the crisis as an unfortunate series of mistakes instead of a sinister campaign to minimize or cover up sexual assault allegations.

Lastly, there is evidence of bolstering when Garland (2016) referred to his previous tenure as interim president from 2008 to 2010, and to his one goal for that time period: “to strengthen Baylor’s mission of educating men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community” (p. 2). Garland then reiterated that his goal remains the same today. Garland reminded stakeholders of his long history with the university and previous tenure as interim president to

further strengthen his credibility and set himself apart as someone with the credentials and skills to unite Baylor and overcome this crisis.

Discussion

Just as Brodhead led Duke University through its crisis, Garland stepped up and filled an important role as interim president and university spokesperson for the Baylor Nation in both 2016 and in 2008. The choice to select Garland for this role two times in less than a decade speaks highly of Garland's perceived character and credibility with stakeholders and administration. In 2008, Dr. John Lilley was fired by the Baylor Board of Regents after serving as university president for only two years (Woods, 2010). During Garland's first two-year tenure as interim university president, many stakeholders were satisfied with his leadership, with some stakeholders referring to him as "humble," "a servant leader," and a person who brought "a peace to the campus" that was lacking under Lilley's leadership (Woods, 2010, p. 2). Garland's history and reputation has persisted through the decades of his career, and set him apart to be a trusted, successful spokesperson.

Garland even helped Baylor navigate a crisis in 2008, just months after he was appointed interim university president. On November 13, 2008, shortly after the national election of President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, Garland released a letter titled "Update from Interim Baylor President David Garland" regarding tensions between student groups and an incident on the Baylor campus where a hanging rope was found on campus. As Garland (2008) reveals in the letter, it was determined after an investigation that the rope was an abandoned rope swing and not intended to "mimic a noose or to convey a message of any sort" (p. 1). Garland's (2008) letter showcased his ability to unite stakeholders, as he said: "Relentless pursuit of campus unity is a work to which we must continue to commit ourselves if we are to truly embody our unique calling as a Christian university in the Baptist tradition" (p. 2). Garland's letter brought students from differing backgrounds and political ideologies together as one and celebrate being members of a unified and diverse university.

Garland's character and leadership helped Baylor navigate through the 2008 crisis with success, but his task in 2016 was a greater challenge. The lessons that Garland learned in 2008 were evident in his handling of the 2016 crisis, especially in the image repair strategies he utilized. Garland was able move the focus to organizational learning taking place as a result of the crisis and aimed to give stakeholders the ability to see a new future for their university after the crisis was over through his use of image repair strategies.

Strategies

In order to repair the image of Baylor, Garland used Benoit's (1997) corrective action strategy, the mortification strategy, and the reducing offensiveness strategy in his letter. Through these techniques, Garland was able to remind Baylor of their vision, Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana. Garland's letter signaled a return to the university's core values and mission to educate "men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community" (p. 3), language in which Garland borrowed heavily from Baylor's mission statement (Garland, 2016). Garland's appeal to shared values and a shared love of Baylor helped unite the stakeholders by reminding them of why they chose to attend Baylor University and be a member of the Baylor Nation in the first place.

Garland's use of corrective action was especially helpful in the process of repairing Baylor's image because he gave stakeholders a detailed picture of exactly how Baylor was going to navigate through the crisis and be a better university in the future. Garland highlighted the two task forces made up of Baylor administration, faculty, and staff that were going to work immediately; one task force would implement the Pepper Hamilton's recommendations, and the second task force would address spiritual life and student character (Garland, 2016). The second task force is especially important to this discussion of corrective action because the alleged activity detailed in the Pepper Hamilton report went against the student code of conduct and Baylor's vision for a student culture guided by the Baptist faith. For example, Baylor's policy on sexual conduct has not changed as a result of the Pepper Hamilton report. Baylor still uses a biblical understanding of human sexuality where physical sexual intimacy is saved for marriage, and Baylor still expects all students, faculty, and staff to refrain from physical sexual intimacy outside of marriage (Baylor University, 2015). Baylor is not changing its policies to reflect the beliefs of a more secular student culture. Instead, they are challenging their students to consider Baylor's policies as an important

part of the Baylor identity. The goal of this task force is to address Baylor student culture and reestablish the importance of existing student policies that reflect the Baptist faith, but the work of this task force will also help Baylor repair its image.

The use of the mortification strategy helped Garland acknowledge the damage caused by Baylor and offer an apology to stakeholders. Garland could not in any way minimize the allegations of misconduct listed in the document due to the Findings of Fact document released online by Baylor, nor would Garland aspire to do that. Instead, Garland (2016) acknowledged past failures and took responsibility for them. Part of Pepper Hamilton's recommendations to Baylor were to reach out to students who reported Title IX cases that were not adjudicated even if those students withdrew or graduated to offer support and resources (Baylor University, 2016a). A large portion of a Title IX department's job is to adjudicate and to offer support to students in the form of directing them to outside resources and counseling. Although Baylor cannot take back their inaction or misdirection concerning Title IX cases, they can offer a sincere apology and resources to the victims who either had to withdraw or endure a hostile learning environment.

Garland's use of bolstering helped ease some of the tension between the board of regents and stakeholders. Garland aimed to frame the board of regents as an entity that was making tough decisions for the greater good of Baylor, and he did this by echoing the sentiments of the board of regents and praising the way that the board of regents were handling of the crisis. Also, Garland used bolstering by referring to his own legacy at Baylor. Garland's reputation and history with the university and credentials set Garland apart as a great choice to be spokesperson for Baylor. He represents the ideal Baylor scholar and administrator, and his alignment with Baylor during the crisis helps stakeholders see Baylor in the same light that they see Garland.

Were the Strategies Successful?

Garland (2016) was able to successfully frame the Pepper Hamilton report as an "excellent roadmap for the work ahead" (p. 2) through his use of Benoit's (1997) image repair strategies, including corrective action, mortification, and reducing offensiveness, specifically bolstering. Garland's letter helped Baylor manage the crisis through the summer and the following year. Due to Garland's credibility amongst stakeholders, his letter served as a clarifying, trusted voice that helped frame the Findings of Fact for stakeholders who cared so deeply about Baylor.

Baylor's enrollment numbers before, during, and after the crisis show no signs of a university in crisis, and Baylor has seen growth in both undergraduate and graduate programs. In 2016, according to the Fall Enrollment Report (Baylor University, 2016g), Baylor had 14,348 students enrolled in undergraduate programs and a total of 16,959 students attending the university. The number of first-time freshmen attending the university in 2016 also increased by 109 students, from 3,394 first-time freshmen in 2015 to 3,503 first-time freshmen (Baylor University, 2016g). The data from 2017 shows 14,316 undergraduate students and a total of 17,059 total students enrolled in academic programs at Baylor (Baylor University, 2017). Lastly, in 2018, Baylor saw a minor dip undergraduate enrollment with 14,188 students, but still had a total of 17,217 students enrolled in academic programs at Baylor (Baylor University, 2018a). Through the enrollment reports, it seems as if Baylor is on track to continue growing its undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Although Baylor athletics was not solely at fault for the crisis because they were enabled administration and an inadequate Title IX office, they received significant criticism in the Pepper Hamilton report. Garland (2016) lends his voice to speak for the board of regents and the Title IX office, but not the Baylor athletics department. There seems to be little effort on the part of Garland and Baylor administration to repair the image of Baylor athletics separately from Baylor in press releases. In fact, Garland's letter makes no mention of Baylor athletics. Instead, Garland's letter focuses on an institution-wide recommitment to Baylor's mission and values.

It is difficult to determine the scope of damage caused by Baylor's crisis on athletic teams. Morale within Baylor stakeholders, especially fans of the football team, was low during the summer of 2016 as recruits requested to be released from their letters of intent to play at Baylor. This recruiting class, arguably the "best recruiting class in school history," was gone, along with the coaching staff that helped mold Baylor into a powerhouse football team seemingly overnight (Hutchins & Elliot, 2016, p. 2). Baylor stakeholders would feel this uncertainty until they saw the leadership of both Garland and Grobe in action, and again when Matt Rhule took over as head football coach in 2017.

Even though many Baylor alumni and fans remained loyal to Briles and thought he should have been able to stay head coach, they weren't quite ready to give up on their team. This uncertainty continued to settle though as the football season progressed. Under the leadership of head coach Jim Grobe in 2016, Baylor finished with a 7-6 season, and alumni and fans were still filling McLane Stadium each game to see their Baylor Bears. In fact, in early September of 2016, there were 8,000 people on the waiting list for season tickets (Ubben, 2016). The 2016 success of the Baylor Bears, even without the leadership of Briles and recruits who left over the summer, has helped ease the uncertainty among Baylor stakeholders. The 2017 season saw 1-11 record under Rhule, but in a recent teleconference, Rhule said he feels "really good about [the team's] opportunities to develop over the summer and in [August] training camp to maybe have a good football team in the fall" (Stevenson, 2018, p. 1). According to the website, there is a waitlist for season tickets for the 2018 season, and it appears Baylor fans are in it for the long-haul.

Organizational Learning

Although crises are never expected or wanted in an organization, many positive changes can come because of a crisis. Garland (2016) refers to this positive change as a "new season" when he says:

It is a season that calls for clarity, compassion, and collective action as a Christian academic community and as a body of Baylor alumni that spans multiple generations, often within individual families. It is a season that calls for Baylor to stand together and speak as one voice, resolute in our shared commitment to student welfare and safety and to our institutional values. (p. 1)

While Garland no longer serves in the capacity as interim president, his guidance paved the way for the university to move forward, and on June 1, 2017, new University President Linda Livingstone took the reins and continued Garland's mission (Fogleman, 2017). Baylor is a better institution now because of the recommendations from Pepper Hamilton that they have implemented on their campus and the lessons that they learned from handling the crisis. Before the crisis, Baylor administration did not understand the importance of Title IX correspondence, and as a result, they created a hostile and dangerous campus for many victims of sexual assault. Baylor administration also created a culture where their football team was believed to be untouchable and exempt from university policies. If the two task forces are successful in their implementation of Pepper Hamilton's recommendations, then Baylor will reap the benefits of a safer, more ethical campus.

Though it took some time and an exposé on "60 Minute Sports", the board of regents and Baylor administration have learned some important lessons about transparency and about student culture. In order to seem more transparent, Baylor launched a website titled "The Facts" in November 2016 where stakeholders could go to receive information about the crisis, and this website is still live today. The website now features a timeline of Baylor's response both during the crisis and in the post crisis stage. This website addresses lingering issues from the crisis and includes positive news about how Baylor has handled the crisis. For example, Baylor used the website to post Livingstone's (2017) announcement that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges had lifted Baylor's warning. Now anyone who is interested in learning about the Baylor crisis can seek the information straight from the source, and Baylor can frame the crisis and provide positive news all in one place.

The board of regents created a new regent position and allowed alumni to nominate and elect their own regent, with alumni Gordon Wilkerson of Lubbock, Texas, accepting the nomination for the 2017 term (Fogleman, 2017). This new position helped the board of regents seem more open to considering the voices of stakeholders. Stakeholders now have representation and can help make sure that the board of regents is acting in the best interest of Baylor's stakeholders. This position can also help with identification amongst alumni because alumni will now have a say in future decisions of the institution.

Baylor administration and the board of regents also learned from this crisis that they could no longer turn a blind eye to a shifting student culture that has more open views about alcohol and premarital sex. The implementation of the task force to address spiritual life on campus will help the board of regents understand student culture and address problem areas while staying true to Baylor's mission and values. While the board of regents cannot go back to May and undo the damage that they have caused to their relationships with stakeholders,

they have taken corrective action to help Baylor become an ethical, Title IX-compliant campus, both in Baylor administration and in the student population.

Conclusion

The newness of the Baylor crisis limited the research in terms of access to the results of the two task forces implemented by Baylor. Due to this limitation, an area for future research would be an analysis of Baylor's continued journey to repair their image after one-to-five years.

With the purge of administrators who were involved in the scandal, the expanded and functioning Title IX office, and the task forces – especially the task force focusing on spiritual life and character – Baylor aligned itself once again with its vision, Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana, and their mission statement. Baylor still has work to do. Many stakeholders are still unhappy with how little information they were given about the decision to let go Briles or other administration (Ubben, 2016), and football coaches may have a much more difficult time recruiting players for the next few years as the fallout ebbs and alumni learn to trust and support Rhule and the Bears. Under the leadership of Livingstone and Rhule and with the input of the new regent elected by alumni, Baylor may be able to address these problems in the future.

Through Garland's successful use of image repair strategies, he helped stakeholders see the positive outcomes and organizational learning that could come as a result of the crisis. Even though Baylor could not release all information like the stakeholders wanted in order to protect the victims, Garland's letter helped guide stakeholders as they read through the Findings of Fact for themselves. Garland's letter helped establish himself as the spokesperson for the university in the absence of Starr and Briles, and his credibility helped stakeholders to trust him and his framing of the Findings of Fact report.

Baylor can take refuge in the fact that they as a private, Baptist university are in a much better place thanks to the recommendations of Pepper Hamilton. Through Garland's leadership, Baylor may continue to be the oldest continually operating institution of higher learning in Texas.

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