THE PAST IS NOT DEAD: LEGACY IDENTIFICATION AND ALUMNI AMBIVALENCE IN THE WAKE OF THE SANDUSKY SCANDAL AT PENN STATE

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We investigate how the temporal effects of past, present, and future influence organizational identification. We examine an underrepresented but important stakeholder group—organizational alumni—whose prior organizational experiences can leave a "legacy identification," such that alumni continue to define themselves in terms of the organization's ideals and values, even after leaving. We examined alumni responses to the Jerry Sandusky child sexual abuse scandal at Penn State by analyzing a subset of more than 25,000 communications sent by more than 14,000 alumni in the year following the scandal. We found that alumni drew upon their legacy identification as they went through an emotion-laden struggle involving predominantly positive experiences in the past, predominantly negative experiences in the present, and uncertain experiences in the future. We show how targeting processes toward insiders and outsiders affect identification states, including three previously undocumented forms of ambivalent identification: "reconciled identification," "selective identification," and "conditional identification." Our grounded model illustrates the broad applicability of the legacy identification concept, which has strong implications for studying the temporality and complexity of identification processes.

"The past is never dead. In fact, it's not even past."
– William Faulkner

"We are Penn State and always will be. Success with honor still exists and I will live my entire life under this mantra." – Penn State alum

"I'm done with Penn State!" "I am no longer proud to be a Penn State alumna. The actions of all of you are reprehensible." "I want a refund on my diploma!" – Penn State alumni

How does who we were in the past shape who we are in the present and future? People often identify strongly with organizations to which they once belonged (Beyer & Hannah, 2002), especially those that have had a marked influence on their identity development—i.e., their ideals, values, and actions—as well as their personal and professional development. Further, members of an organization can compare their current identification with their past identification, even regarding the same organization. Identity and identification can diminish, yet still linger or even be resurrected, while maintaining a longstanding hold on members (Howard-Grenville, Metzger, & Meyer, 2013). For example, in a media story that captured national attention, employees and former employees of the supermarket chain Market Basket banded together to bring back their "beloved CEO [chief executive officer]" who had been ousted (Semuels, 2014). One former employee said, "Even though I left the company 15 years ago…I still feel like part of the MB [Market Basket] family."

Studying organizational alumni presents a rich opportunity to understand the role of temporality

(accounting for the past, present, and future) in identification processes. For example, in a study of corporate alumni networks, Bardon, Josserand, and Villesèche (2014) found that alumni sustain their identification with a firm via processes that include *nostalgia*—reliving memories of their past experience at the organization. Other work has examined the lingering identification issues faced by those who left their professions, such as Maitlis' (2009) study of professional musicians whose physical impairments impeded their ability to continue to play music. Indeed, research has suggested that "psychologically threatening experiences" (Routledge, 2016: 37) can trigger nostalgia. To explore this temporal phenomenon of sustained identification with a former organization, our grounded theorizing led us to develop the concept of "legacy identification" to capture the way that members of an organization or group maintain, in the present, part of their self-definition from their past. Because of this legacy identification, individuals remain "partially included" (Katz & Kahn, 1966), still associating themselves with their former organizations, despite now dwelling only on their boundaries (Gioia, 1976). We also note that legacy identification is not limited solely to *former* members of the organization or group. Rather, current members can also experience legacy identification as they reflect on how they previously identified with an organization—such as nostalgia for the "good old days" before a leadership change, merger, or scandal.

We studied organizational alumni during a key sensemaking time—when their organization became embroiled in a scandal and their identification with that organization was threatened. How would alumni respond to a scandal that constitutes a potential "identification threat"? Would they continue to identify with a scandalized organization? If so, how, and via what processes? Unlike internal stakeholders such as current members, alumni are separated temporally from their experiences with the organization—they do not typically receive day-to-day cues and reminders about the organization; they are not beholden to it for their employment; and their autonomy suggests they would have more latitude in how they deal with their identification and/or respond to crises. Given these differences, we could not predict, based on previous research, how alumni would respond to a scandal. Given that the vast majority of research on organizational identification has been conducted with current employees, this presented an opportunity to add a more temporal

dimension to theorizing about identification with organizations.

We studied alumni of Penn State in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky child sexual abuse scandal. Studying this group of former organization members provided deeper theoretical insight into the temporal aspects of organizational identification. Jerry Sandusky, a retired former defensive coordinator for the Penn State football team, was accused of 40 counts of child sexual abuse in November 2011 (Viera, 2011), some abuse incidents having occurred on Penn State's campus. In just the first few days after the news of the scandal broke, the alumni association staff responded to more than 4,000 communications from alumni and friends (R. Williams, personal communications, October 20, 2015). The tenor of the alumni responses was wide-ranging, but many of the responses expressed deeply felt emotions and evidence of a pronounced identification struggle.

"Legacy identification" should become salient during such an external threat that has the potential to damage the organization's reputation. Yet we know relatively little about how even current members who identify with the targeted organization are affected by such a threat. Mael and Ashforth (1992) argue that intra-organizational unity can be enhanced by external threats, which suggests that members might adopt an us-vs-them (ingroup/outgroup) orientation, identify even more strongly, and defend the organization against assaults on their shared character. In fact, Zavyalova, Pfarrer, Reger, and Hubbard (2016) found that individuals who strongly identify with an organization will support it, even when it is involved with wrong-doing, whereas individuals who identify to a lesser degree will be far less likely to support the organization engaged in wrong-doing. Others imply, however, that the "courtesy stigma" (Goffman, 1963) associated with scandal will lead members to dissociate themselves from the tainted organization, and thus disidentify with it by essentially disowning it (Adut, 2008). Evidence also exists that individuals might simultaneously identify *and* disidentify in the wake of a scandal, such as Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville, and Scully's (2010) study on members of the Catholic Church, who maintained identification with the normative aspects of the Church, while disidentifying with organizational aspects of it. Thus, the effects of scandal on identification are unclear, even where current *members* are concerned. We view alumni as a stakeholder group that might help inform our still nascent understanding of temporality, an

understudied element of identification, both for those inside and for those outside of an organization's formal boundaries. For that reason, we adopted a grounded theory approach to examine how former members of an organization respond to an identification threat.

As described later, many alumni were profoundly affected by the allegations against Sandusky as the perpetrator of an egregious crime, as well as allegations against some organizational leaders as his putative, if perhaps unwitting, enablers and protectors. Some alumni saw the Board of Trustees as executioners (in particular, of Joe Paterno, the legendary football coach), and the media as purveyors of a rush-to-judgment, salacious, and sensational story. Headlines of news stories and opinion pieces read: "Former Coach at Penn State is Charged with Abuse" (*The New York Times,* November 5, 2011), "If Jerry Sandusky Allegations are True, Penn State and Joe Paterno Deserve Part of the Blame" (*The Washington Post,* November 5, 2011), "In Penn State's Scandal, Where Was the Leadership?" (*The Washington Post*, November 7, 2011), and "Inside Penn State Board of Trustees, Battle Brews Over Sex Scandal" (*The Patriot-News*, November 9, 2011).

Alumni e-mails and phone calls flooded the university during the year following the breaking of the scandal, and as several key events unfolded (e.g., Paterno's death, Sandusky's trial, National Collegiate Athletic Association sanctions), the story reappeared in the headlines. Expressed thoughts and feelings were intense and heartfelt, and expressions of identification were pervasive in our data. Somewhat surprisingly, our findings suggest that despite the torn-from-the-headlines scandal, most alumni communicated that they were nevertheless maintaining their identification with Penn State in some form. In so doing, they were also struggling with their responses and holding inside agents of the organization (i.e., individuals and collective bodies such as the Board of Trustees) and/or outside enemies (e.g., the media) responsible for negligent or questionable actions or inactions. Our findings allowed us to develop theoretical avenues for understanding how former members of an organization draw upon legacy identification to navigate an identification struggle and respond to scandal. In addition, we learn a great deal about emotion and identification—and even more when we add time to the picture.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The convergence of social identity theory and organizational identification theory provides a theoretical backdrop to investigate how alumni respond to an identification threat such as a scandal. We also consider how prior research might inform the way that past, present, and future work together in affecting identification, especially its underexplored component—temporality. We sought to explore both cognitive and affective components of temporality.

Social Identity Theory and Organizational Identification

Social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978: 63). Social (or group) identification "is the perception of belongingness to a group classification" (Mael & Ashforth, 1992: 104). Via social identification, individuals perceive their identity to be at one with a group. The individual perceives the group's purpose, successes, and failures to be their own. Identification with a group is strengthened by members possessing common characteristics (e.g., language or history), carrying on distinctive rituals (e.g., songs), rallying around a common goal (success), and even sharing common enemies (Tolman, 1943). This definition clearly applies to alumni of a university with a strong culture, especially a culture that emphasizes athletics with its common goal (to win), its common language (e.g., chants such as "We Are Penn State!"[1]), rituals (e.g., tailgating), and common enemies (e.g., opposing teams). Ashforth and Mael (1989) also argued that individuals tend to engage in events and activities that align with the salient characteristics of their identities and, perhaps more importantly, support the organizations that symbolize those identities.

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[1] This innocuous-sounding chant actually has a telling history in the struggle for civil rights, which bears on the identity and identification of Penn Staters. In late 1947, Penn State was scheduled to compete in the Cotton Bowl, played on January 1, 1948 in Dallas, Texas. Their southern opponent wanted to call a meeting to ask Penn State not to include its black athletes in the game. Penn State's white team captain replied, "We play all or none. . . . there will be no meetings" (Boyer, 2009: par. 2 & 8) because "We are Penn State." Because of the presence of the black athletes, the team was refused accommodation in Dallas hotels, so the entire team stayed at a naval base 14 miles away. The latter part of this assertive statement later became Penn State's rallying slogan and is used to this day.

Using social identity theory as a base, scholars have developed an expanded model of identification that notes three additional ways for an individual's identity to be influenced by an organization beyond traditional identification: disidentification, neutral identification, and ambivalent identification (Dukerich, Kramer, & McLean Parks, 1998; Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Disidentification involves a separation or distancing between individual and organizational identities (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), a distinct possibility for alumni responding to a scandal. Neutral identification occurs when an individual neither identifies nor disidentifies with the organization (Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Finally, ambivalent identification occurs when an individual simultaneously identifies and disidentifies with the organization (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Pratt, 2000). Individuals may both identify and disidentify because of hybrid identities, conflicting goals, roles, and temporal factors (Ashforth, Rogers, Pratt, & Pradies, 2014). Gutierrez et al. (2010: 692) also identified a particular manifestation of ambivalence, which they called "split identification," by which members are collectively able "to retain their high level of identification with valued aspects of a target of identification while discerning other aspects that were unworthy of continued identification and demanded repair." Recent conceptual work has called for a deeper exploration of ambivalence, given its widespread occurrence in organizations (Ashforth et al., 2014). Indeed, an understanding of these diverse modes of identification suggests an opportunity to explore how alumni would identify with an organization when it undergoes an identity threat such as a scandal or significant change.

The Temporal Dynamism of Organizational Identification

A person's identity is not fixed over time, but will "require repeated work to be sustained" (Anteby, 2008: 203). Indeed, an individual's identity can hold perceptions involving the past, present, and future, and Beech (2008) notes that this temporal aspect of identity can result in dialectic tensions that are difficult for an individual to resolve. Prior work has suggested that the *current* self can be informed by the *past* as well as a potential *future* self (Ibarra, 1999; Maitlis, 2009). This process of actively maintaining or changing the sense of self inherently implicates the social groups to which a person belongs—organizations, groups, professions—and

suggests that identification with each group can wax or wane over time. Given that individual identity changes, identification is not necessarily stable over time. Indeed, prior research has shown the importance of studying the variability (if not the instability) of identification.

One part of this variability comes from time. "Time" has been represented in two distinct ways in the management literature (Shipp & Jansen, 2011)—"clock time," which represents the actual passage of time, and "psychological time," which represents perceptions in the present moment that refer to the past and/or future. Given our interest in the interplay of past, present, and future in the context of an identification threat, we focus primarily on psychological time. That said, we also note the importance of clock time on identification processes, especially in light of legacy identification—as clock time passes, one's self-perceptions vis-à-vis an organization can change. And yet, although temporality is clearly an important facet of identification, it is rarely studied.

Regarding the *past,* Routledge noted (2016: 52–53) that individuals may "reflect nostalgically" to feel a sense of belongingness that enables them to "revisit fulfilling experiences from the past." Conversely, regarding the *future*, Ibarra (1999) explored how individuals might experiment with "provisional selves," temporary versions of a potential future aspect of self. The state of the literature, then, is that we know identity and identification are dynamic and temporally oriented, but we do not know *how* individuals craft identification using past, present, and future conceptualizations. Indeed, Ybema (2010: 483) noted an important deficiency in identity research, observing that it has "not systematically explored how 'temporal resources,' i.e., the past, present, and future, are utilized and deployed," and Pratt (2012: 27) recently lamented that "explicitly theorizing about time in identity research is relatively rare…."

Additionally, we still have relatively scant knowledge of the effects of an identity threat such as scandal on organization members, much less *former* members, despite the promising work by Gendron and Spira (2010) studying former employees of Arthur Andersen two years after its collapse in the wake of the Enron scandal. The open question is whether (and how) alumni would respond to an identification threat either by identifying and associating with the organization (Cheney, 1983; Downing, 2007; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Seeger & Ulmer, 2002) or choosing instead to distance themselves from the organization.

Affect and Identification Over Time

Because our findings demonstrated the strong role of emotions over time on identification, behavior, and intended actions, we now briefly review how their interplay has been treated in the literature. When organization members experience an identification threat—an experience that can call into question the values, meanings, or sense of who they are—a number of responses is possible. Petriglieri (2011) posited that if individuals define themselves in a way that is related to the organization's identity, and the organization undergoes an identity threat, then the individuals' identities might also be threatened. She also suggested that "[o]rganizational members who feel a direct threat as a result of the threat to their organization's identity may respond in various ways, such as altering the meanings they associate with their professional identity" (2011: 657). When an organization's actions are consistent with its expressed identity, a member is more likely to express positive emotions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Stets, 2005), but when an organization's actions are inconsistent with its espoused identity, that member is likely to experience and express negative emotions. Likewise, when a person's "identity is verified by his/her organization, he/she is likely to experience positive emotions toward the organization," whereas "[w]hen his/her identity is non-verified, such as when the organization promotes values and practices that are in opposition to his/her identity beliefs, frustration and other types of negative emotions toward the organization are more likely to ensue" (Wang & Pratt, 2008: 592). Traumatic events often trigger affective responses (Hartel, McColl-Kennedy, & McDonald, 1998) and situations involving identification threat, in particular, can be expected to evoke strong emotional responses (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Kovoor-Misra, 2009; Petriglieri, 2011, 2015). In some instances, individuals express emotions that are positive such as pride or joy; in others, they may express emotions that are negative such as shame or sadness (Ashforth et al., 2008). Hence, an individual's cognitions and affect regarding their organization will likely ebb and flow based on the organization's actions.

When an organization undergoes an identity threat such as a scandal, one might expect former members to respond with negative emotions expressed toward the organization, and also to decrease their identification with it (see Kessler & Hollbach, 2005). Or, one might also expect former members to respond with negative evaluations of the organization, as there is the tendency for it to continue to be viewed negatively by internal and external stakeholders, because "changing surface structures or behavior" alone are often not enough to change stakeholders' beliefs about the organization (Mishina & Devers, 2012: 208). Thus, we need to understand how former members' affective responses to an organization that undergoes identity threat might play out, and also to consider associated effects on their continuing identification with that organization. Further, given the numerous calls to study discrete emotions rather than just general "affect" (e.g., Barsade & Knight, 2015), it would be important to investigate what *specific* emotions are associated with identification processes during threatening times.

In addition to studying the intertwining of emotions and cognitions, intended and actual behaviors can also shed light on identification processes. Past work has shown a reciprocal relationship between organizational identification and positive actions toward the organization—those who identify strongly are more likely to take actions to benefit the organization (Newbold, Mehta, & Forbus, 2010) and positive actions toward the organization can reinforce or reinvigorate identification with it (Petriglieri, 2015). Mael and Ashforth (1992) suggested that alumni identification with an organization will predict behaviors such as donating, recruiting, and participating in events and activities, and Muller (2004) found that organizational identification was related to the norm of reciprocity and to alumni promotion of the organization. One might expect that former members who identify with an organization would continue to support it, even when an organization undergoes an identity threat, whereas those who do not so identify would not. Further investigation is needed, however, to understand if and how former members identify with the organization when it faces a scandal, to then assess the extent of their intended support.

To summarize our approach to the study, we did not set out to investigate "legacy identification," but developed that concept via grounded theorizing. Our initial research question was: How do former members of an organization respond to a scandal? As we delved into the study, the theme of legacy identification emerged from our analyses and became central to our theorizing. We saw high potential in learning about identification processes by studying former members. Our more focused research question then became: How do former members of an organization experience "legacy identification" as they struggle with identity threats such as a scandal? As our data analysis proceeded, we increasingly

turned our attention to the temporality of identification.

METHODS

To inform theory about identification and responses to identity threat, we adopted a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to investigate the thoughts, feelings, and behavioral intentions of alumni. Although grounded theory is usually applied to nascent or absent theoretical domains, it is also applicable for elaborating existing theories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Hence, we deemed grounded theory as most appropriate to investigate identification because how alumni manage complex identifications with their former organizations is notably under-theorized.

Background on Penn State and the Sandusky Scandal

Penn State is a large, multi-campus university with more than 673,000 alumni and the world's largest dues-paying alumni association with some 174,000 members (Penn State Alumni Association, n.d.). The university is known for its quality academic and athletic programs. Also notable are its official principles (e.g., respecting the dignity of all, academic integrity, and social and personal responsibility—Penn State, 2014), which the alumni referenced frequently in the communications that served as the database for this study. As noted earlier in a footnote, the origin of the story behind the university's chant, "We Are Penn State!" is also core to the university's identity. The Sandusky scandal, the associated inconsistencies with these principles, as well as the accusations against the legendary head football coach (Joe Paterno) and others, tainted the university as a whole.

The scandal broke in November 2011. Jerry Sandusky, the university's retired former defensive coordinator for the football team, was accused and (about seven months later) convicted of multiple child sexual abuse charges and sentenced to prison, essentially for life. Within a week of the former employee's arrest, the Board of Trustees removed the president of 16 years, Graham Spanier, the iconic head football coach, Joe Paterno, the athletic director, Tim Curley, and the senior vice president for finance and business (who was responsible for police services), Gary Schultz (Penn State, 2012a). All were deemed to have failed to protect children after an allegation had surfaced in 2002. Although the football coach (Paterno) reported the allegation that was brought to him by a graduate assistant (Mike McQueary) to his superiors (the legally correct action at that time), he did not report it directly to the legal authorities (what many deemed the morally correct action). Paterno died shortly after being terminated, and hence the degree of his knowledge and involvement remain to this day somewhat ambiguous, but the others were accused of perjury, failure to report, and other charges (Penn State, 2012a). Although most of these charges were later dropped, they remained in place for some time and contributed to perceptions of a corrupt organizational environment.

The university's Board of Trustees quickly employed a high-profile law firm (Louis Freeh and his firm, Freeh Sporkin & Sullivan, LLP) to examine the case as it related to its former employees' actions. In July 2012, the Freeh Report findings were released; the report was extremely critical, and accused the four men of conspiring to cover up the sexual abuse—a cover-up allegedly motivated by a desire to protect the university's football program. The findings within the report were met with wide-ranging responses from various stakeholder groups. Many stakeholders who were close to the university tended to reject the report's conclusions, including its condemnation of the university's culture, as faulty and based upon thin or questionable evidence. The media and general public tended to accept the report's findings, however. Headlines of news stories and opinion pieces read: "Report: Penn State Did Nothing to Stop Sandusky" (*NPR*.org, July 12, 2014), "Abuse Scandal Inquiry Damns Paterno and Penn State" (*The New York Times,* July 12, 2012), "Freeh Report Fallout is Only Beginning, at Penn State and Elsewhere" (*The Washington Post*, July 12, 2012), and "More Storms Looming for Penn State in Wake of Freeh Report" (*CNN*.com, July 14, 2012). Based upon the findings, the NCAA imposed a series of major sanctions against the university including a $60 million fine, vacating 111 football victories, reducing football scholarships, and placing a four-year ban on post-season play for the football team (Penn State, 2012b). Although the post-season ban was lifted and the scholarships restored in September 2014 (Shultz, 2014) and the victories restored in January 2015 (ESPN, 2015), they had not been restored during the time of data collection.

Data Collection

As is often the case with grounded theory, we used a combination of purposeful sampling and

theoretical sampling; our strategy was to sample a wide range of alumni data to gain a sense of the "lay of the land" of the data and then theoretically sample within that dataset once we began to identify theoretically promising areas of inquiry. We acquired access to 25,335 communications from 14,309 alumni sent to various university offices from November 2011 to December 2012. We chose this period of time so that the communications would represent alumni responses to a number of key events during that year, including Jerry Sandusky's arrest and several leadership changes, the death and mourning of Joe Paterno, the appointment of the new president, Jerry Sandusky's trial and verdict, the release of the Freeh Report (outlining the findings of the investigation), the removal of the statue of Joe Paterno located outside the football stadium, and a series of severe NCAA imposed sanctions against the university and its football program.

All these communications were preserved and forwarded to a central office for record-keeping; they consisted of copies of alumni e-mails and summaries of phone conversations. Some of the alumni e-mails were prompted by an initial message sent from a university representative or department; many others were self-initiated e-mails by the alumni. In the instances when alumni responded to a university representative's or department's e-mail, the initial message was also typically archived with the response, which provided the opportunity to read and further understand the response in context (all personal identifying information had been removed). The e-mail communications varied in length, from one sentence to several paragraphs. In some of the e-mail communications, alumni articulated their reasons for identifying and/or disidentifying with the organization, as well as their reasons for supporting and/or not supporting it (which enabled us to gain insight into not only how alumni responded to the scandal, but also why they did so). Some of the telephone conversations were elicited by a phone call from a student caller on behalf of the university's telefund organization or another university representative, whereas others were alumni-initiated phone calls. The summaries of phone conversations were brief. Our analyses focused on the e-mails, rather than the telephone summaries, which served mainly as supplementary data.

Furthermore, we employed two additional data sources. The first included the results from the university's alumni opinion surveys from May 8–20, 2012; November 28–December 11, 2012; December 4–15, 2013; December 5–14, 2014; and December 4–28, 2015. For the first three surveys, the alumni association "provided a sample of 10,000 records [to the firm administering the survey], selected at random from among all alumni for whom a telephone number and/or email address was available" (Penn State Alumni Association, 2012: par. 1, 2013: par. 5, 2014: par. 5). For the fourth and fifth surveys, the alumni association provided a sample of 19,000 and 30,000 records, respectively, to the research firm (Penn State Alumni Association, 2015, 2016). The surveys yielded the following responses: the first survey yielded 1,282 respondents (779 completed it online and 503 completed it on the phone); the second survey yielded 1,172 respondents (672 completed it online and 500 completed it on the phone); the third survey yielded 1,297 respondents (993 completed it online and 304 completed it on the phone); the fourth survey yielded 1,304 respondents (958 completed it online and 346 completed it on the phone); and the fifth survey yielded 1,294 respondents (936 completed it online and 358 completed it on the phone) (Penn State Alumni Association, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016). The surveys served to inform the patterns that emerged in the communications from alumni. The second additional source included the university's alumni magazine, *The Penn Stater*, during the study period. Five of the first six issues following the breaking of the scandal contained one or more stories related to the scandal and its fallout and also included references to the scandal in the section titled, "Your Letters" (i.e., letters to the editor). We included these letters to the editor in our database. Eisenhardt (1989: 533) suggests that combining various data-collection methods "[s]trengthens grounding of theory by triangulation of evidence."

Data Analysis

Throughout the study, we wrote informal notes (Charmaz, 2006), which began with the first author reading more than 700 communications from the November 2011 to December 2012 timeframe, and recording observations and questions in a reflexive journal (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This initial sampling and simultaneous note-taking/memo-writing process provided a means for beginning to analyze the data and the codes early in the study. Through memo-writing and peer debriefings, we identified many codes and categories that became input to a comprehensive coding "dictionary," which evolved throughout the coding process and the data analysis and guided the theoretical sampling procedure.

Our sampling strategy involved collecting data to refine and elaborate categories that emerged in our initial sampling (Charmaz, 2006). We selected and coded 40–60 communications from across the year, followed by another 40–60 communications, and then another 40–60 communications, and so on. We repeated this procedure as needed, "to develop the properties of [the] category(ies) until no new properties emerge[d]" (Charmaz, 2006: 96). As new categories emerged, we continued to consult as a team to update the codebook, seeking theoretical saturation, such that (a) our codes were sufficiently rich and multifaceted as to explain the observed phenomena and (b) repeating the sampling pattern no longer yielded distinctive codes or new theoretical insights. After analyzing more than 1,000 communications (after repeating the above sampling procedure 18 times) our codebook no longer substantively changed. For thoroughness, and to be able to look at a significant amount of data with our finalized coding scheme, we repeated this procedure 12 more times, coding approximately 500 more communications; this further consultation with the data mainly identified additional representative quotations.

Grounded theory development. Using NVivo software, we employed grounded theory analytic techniques (e.g., Charmaz, 2006; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Kreiner, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to analyze the communications from the alumni. In the initial phase of grounded theory, we allowed codes and categories to emerge, with little attempt to identify overarching themes. More specifically, we applied word- and line-level coding (Charmaz, 2006), and Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method across communications and across the year's data. While comparing communications throughout the year following the scandal, we sought to document changes in the first-order data, e.g., changes in emotional and cognitive expressions or targets over time (Gioia et al., 2013). We then conducted more focused coding, using the most frequent or significant initial codes to sort, synthesize, and organize the data (see Charmaz, 2006: 46), as well as axial coding to connect ideas and concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These processes contributed to the development of the second-order themes and, importantly, provided a means to focus on whether the emerging themes helped to explain alumni responses to organizational scandal. Finally, we assembled the second-order themes into aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al., 2013). (See Appendix A for representative data for second-order themes).

These coding and analysis procedures generated the data structure that served as the basis for our findings. We also note that examining the assembled data structure, with particular attention to the co-location of codes (i.e., passages that contained more than one code), as well as changes in emotional and cognitive expressions or targets over time, gave us insight into the dynamic relationships among the codes, themes, and dimensions, thus allowing us to better discern not only *that* concepts were related, but *how* they were related. Appendix B lists several examples of passages that were coded in two or more ways that were theoretically revelatory. For example, we noticed many passages that had co-occurrences of past, present, and future cognitions regarding identification, which spurred our thinking about the importance of capturing the *juxtaposition* of these three cognitions. As another example, we saw that many passages had co-occurrences of a temporal struggle, a state of ambivalence, *and* an intended behavioral response, which prompted us to consider how these might flow together conceptually. An important methodological procedure here, then, was to not merely code the passages and assemble them independently into a grounded model, but to carefully scrutinize the co-occurrences of important codes to derive theoretically meaningful patterns. These analytical procedures enabled us to identify and empirically document two notable dynamics in our findings: (1) how past–present–future were closely intertwined as individuals experienced a legacy identification struggle, and (2) how affect influenced the entire identification process, including alumni cognition and behavior.

FINDINGS

Alumni responses to the scandal and ensuing events were complex, wide-ranging, and theoretically informative. Our Findings section is organized to correspond to Figure 1, which depicts the grounded model that emerged from our analysis and captures the concepts and relationships that describe the identification processes by which alumni worked to resolve a difficult legacy identification struggle, and shows how alumni reassessed their identification in the wake of an identification threat (i.e., the scandal). The left side of the model shows key concepts germane to the legacy identification struggle—the conflicting combination of *past* positive experiences *(Who I was)*, *present* negative experiences *(Who I am)*, and *future* uncertain experiences *(Who I will be)*. We see

FIGURE 1
Grounded Model of Legacy Identification in the Wake of Identification Threat
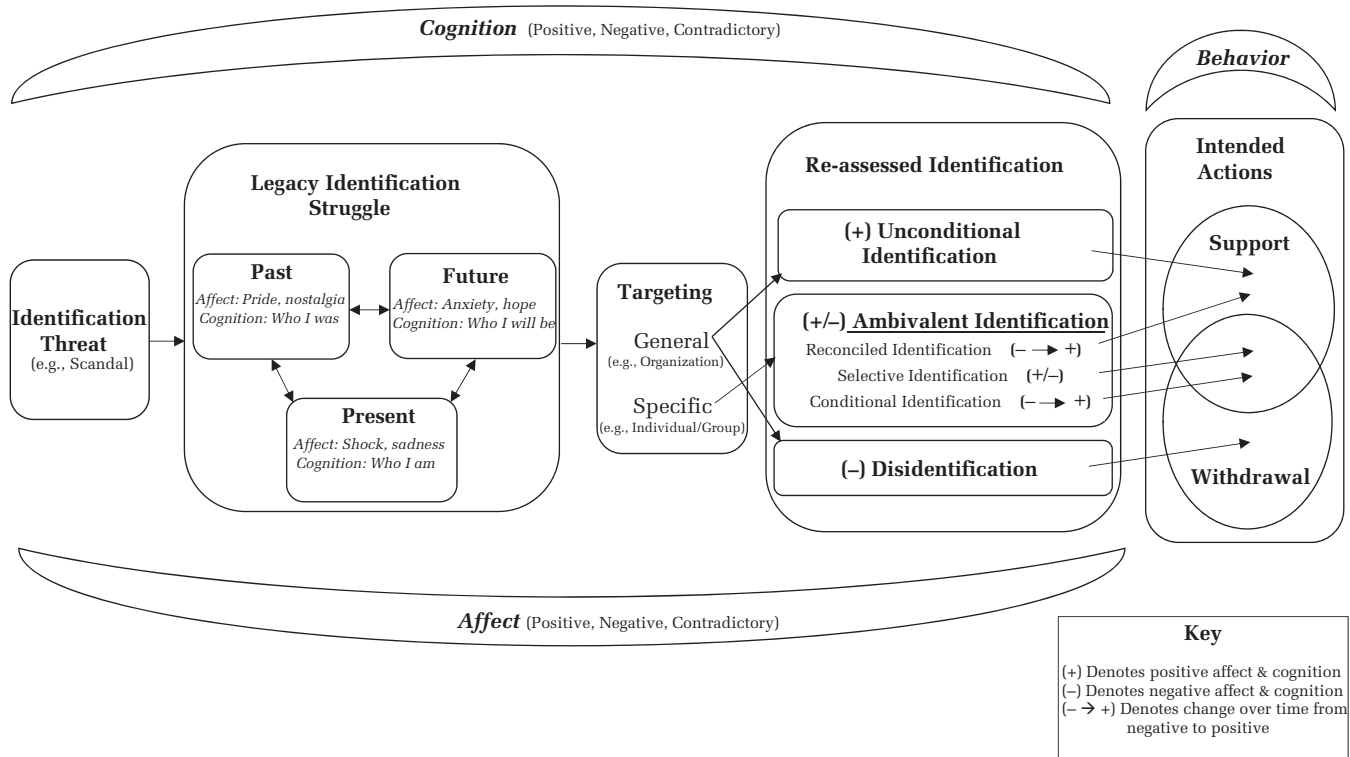
evidence of how psychological time intertwines the past (e.g., nostalgia and pride), the present (e.g., feelings of shame and anger), and the future (e.g., wishes for changes, intended actions) in potentially disrupting identity continuity and shaping the legacy identification struggle. The legacy identification struggle led alumni to "target" general and specific agents or groups with positive, negative, and/or contradictory emotions, which then were associated with reassessed identification modes—unconditional identification, disidentification, and three new emergent forms of ambivalent identification, which we termed "reconciled," "selective," and "conditional" identification—and intended actions of support and/or withdrawal.
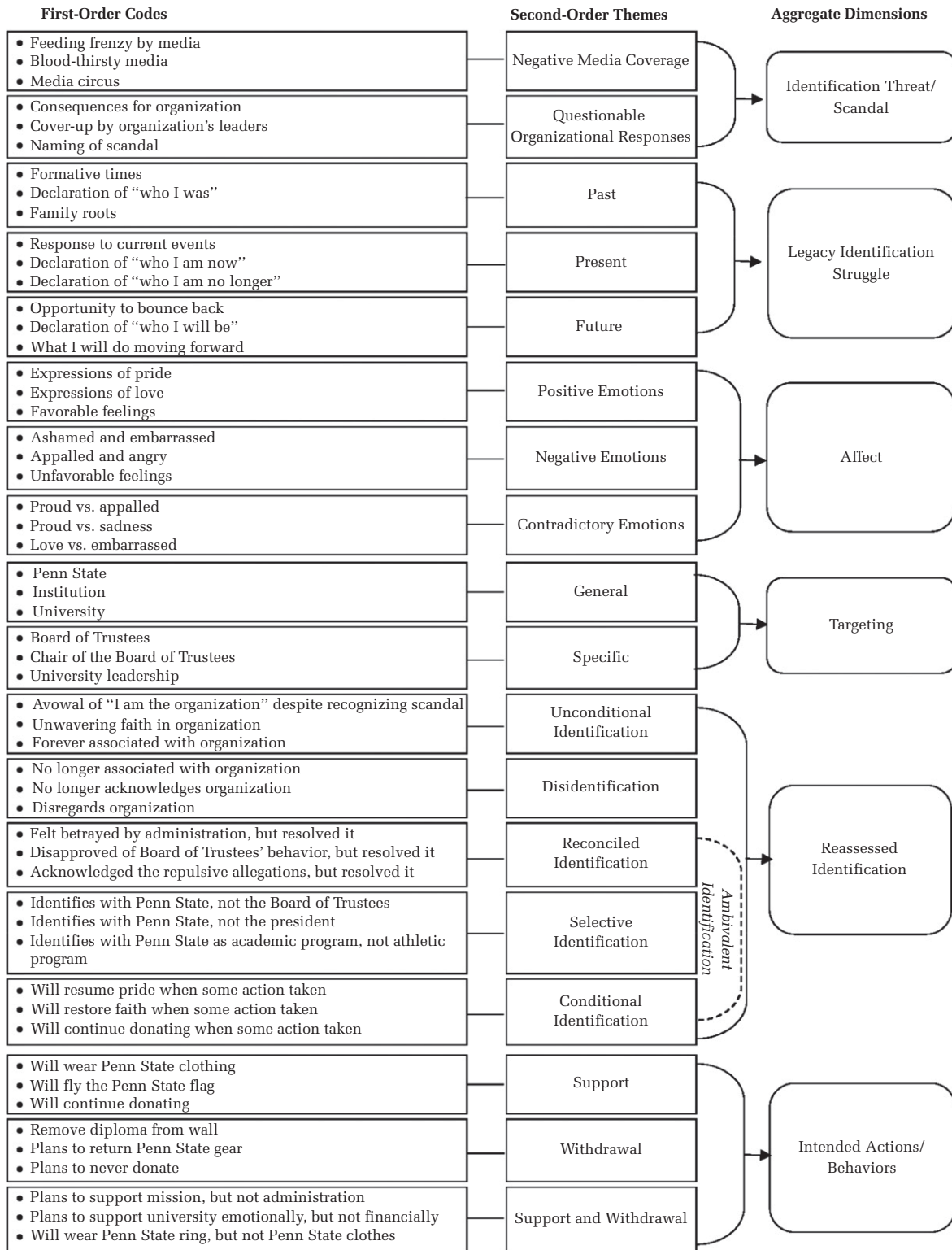
We note the role of cognition and behavior (depicted at the top of the model) and affect (depicted at the bottom) because individuals not only expressed thoughts about their identification under threat, but, as will soon be evident, they also expressed a range of intense positive, negative, and contradictory emotions, as well as intentions for action. Specifically, individuals expressed positive discrete emotions such as love and pride, as well as negative emotions such as

shame, shock, embarrassment, dismay, sadness, upset, anger, and disgust. Individuals also expressed emotionally laden sentiments such as fond remembrance. Figure 2 illustrates the data structure with first-order codes, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions all displayed. We also note that there are overlaps among some of the concepts in our model—i.e., there is frequently evidence of multiple phenomena within any given quote. We see these overlaps as further illustrating the interplay and/or simultaneity of past–present–future and on the effect of affect on cognition and behavior. Throughout the Findings section, we will "deconstruct" some of the quotes to highlight such co-occurrences.

Legacy Identification

We define legacy identification as the part of their self-concept that members retain from their past experiences with an organization, group, or profession—a residual identification that individuals carry with them into their current self-concepts and experiences. It can serve as a reservoir from which members draw during identification threats, and also provides a way to compare past with present, past with

FIGURE 2
Data Structure

First-Order Codes	Second-Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions

- Feeding frenzy by media
- Blood-thirsty media
- Media circus

→ Negative Media Coverage

- Consequences for organization
- Cover-up by organization's leaders
- Naming of scandal

→ Questionable Organizational Responses

→ Identification Threat/ Scandal

- Formative times
- Declaration of "who I was"
- Family roots

→ Past

- Response to current events
- Declaration of "who I am now"
- Declaration of "who I am no longer"

→ Present

- Opportunity to bounce back
- Declaration of "who I will be"
- What I will do moving forward

→ Future

→ Legacy Identification Struggle

- Expressions of pride
- Expressions of love
- Favorable feelings

→ Positive Emotions

- Ashamed and embarrassed
- Appalled and angry
- Unfavorable feelings

→ Negative Emotions

- Proud vs. appalled
- Proud vs. sadness
- Love vs. embarrassed

→ Contradictory Emotions

→ Affect

- Penn State
- Institution
- University

→ General

- Board of Trustees
- Chair of the Board of Trustees
- University leadership

→ Specific

→ Targeting

- Avowal of "I am the organization" despite recognizing scandal
- Unwavering faith in organization
- Forever associated with organization

→ Unconditional Identification

- No longer associated with organization
- No longer acknowledges organization
- Disregards organization

→ Disidentification

- Felt betrayed by administration, but resolved it
- Disapproved of Board of Trustees' behavior, but resolved it
- Acknowledged the repulsive allegations, but resolved it

→ Reconciled Identification

- Identifies with Penn State, not the Board of Trustees
- Identifies with Penn State, not the president
- Identifies with Penn State as academic program, not athletic program

→ Selective Identification

- Will resume pride when some action taken
- Will restore faith when some action taken
- Will continue donating when some action taken

→ Conditional Identification

Ambivalent Identification

→ Reassessed Identification

- Will wear Penn State clothing
- Will fly the Penn State flag
- Will continue donating

→ Support

- Remove diploma from wall
- Plans to return Penn State gear
- Plans to never donate

→ Withdrawal

- Plans to support mission, but not administration
- Plans to support university emotionally, but not financially
- Will wear Penn State ring, but not Penn State clothes

→ Support and Withdrawal

→ Intended Actions/ Behaviors

future, and present with future. In this sense, it can provide either a sense of identity continuity (continuing on as before) or *dis*continuity (changing the character of one's identification). It is important to note here that legacy identification might stem from past *or* current organizational and group memberships. Although perhaps easier to see the phenomenon among past members (such as alumni and former employees), current members also experience a legacy identification when they contrast their current and past identification levels and states within a given organization. For example, an employee might reflect upon his/her stronger identification during past eras of the organization, with previous leaders, or simply yearn for days when times were better and they identified more strongly.

In our study, the identity-related sense of the past, present, and future, were all expressed by alumni. In fact, nostalgic feelings for their former organization were evident in the data, sometimes even overwhelming the alumni. They expressed positive thoughts and feelings, referencing their previous membership as well as their relationship with the organization. One alum wrote:

> I may not have been the best academic student; I may not have been an athlete; I may not have given millions in donations to the institution; and I may not be the most financially successful graduate that has ever studied within its walls. However, I am Penn State; I along with my alumni brothers and sisters and current students.

Here, the alum reflects on his/her past affiliation with the organization and expresses positive thoughts about his/her identification with the present organization ("I am Penn State"). Note how this quote illustrates the co-occurrence of time, emotion, and cognition. Another alum wrote:

> I hold 2 degrees from Penn State, have been employed by the university as both a student and a professional, serve/have served on alumni boards and councils, and have a husband and daughter who are Penn State graduates. Penn State certainly is a part of my heart and my life.

Again, the alum draws on his/her past and current affiliations with the organization, including past and current behaviors ("serve/have served on alumni boards and councils"). Note how this quote illustrates the co-occurrence of time and behavior, as well as emotion and cognition ("Penn State is certainly a part of my heart and my life"). Alumni also reflected positively on the shared values of the university, and the extent to which these values influenced the

development of their personal identities and values. Other alumni wrote, "As a young man enrolled at Penn State, I learned that carrying yourself with dignity and honor meant more than anything," "The values learned during our time there run much deeper than anyone could imagine," and "As a Penn Stater, I still believe in the virtues, morals, ethics and high standards that I learned while going to school there, and continue to try to live by." The lingering identification with the organization was clearly evident, with language of values, meaning, and pride permeating the data. Alumni also wrote messages such as, "My Penn State heritage means more to me each day," and "It is still my privilege to say I am a Penn Stater!"

Identification Threat: Scandal

In our study, legacy identification was clearly threatened by the Sandusky scandal at Penn State, which triggered a wide range of emotions, cognitions, and intended actions. From shock and anger to sadness and embarrassment, as well as attributions of blame for the event, which in media portrayals, as described by one alum, ". . .went from 'The Sandusky Scandal,' to the Penn State Scandal." Another alum commented on the "black clouds of shame hanging over our University. . ." (Your letters, 2012: 9). Yet another commented on the allegation that "Penn State permitted boys to be terrorized and worse. . . ." The media hype and ". . .relentless 24-hour media assault. . ." described by one alum, combined with the alleged cover-up by the university's leadership and, in turn, the organization-wide implications, continued to elevate the intensity of the scandal. The scandal, and perhaps especially the reprehensible nature of the crime at its heart (child sexual abuse), prompted alumni to consider and reconsider who they were and how they would relate to the organization in the future—a threat to their identity continuity. The scandal juxtaposed thoughts and feelings from the past and present, leading to a pronounced legacy identification struggle. One alum wrote:

> . . .we alumni find ourselves in limbo, not knowing what it is we are representing. The ideals that were once 'Penn State' are forever tarnished. Penn State and Happy Valley [the nickname for the local community around Penn State] have been reduced to punch lines for comedians. (Your letters, 2012: 7)

The dismay was palpable in their communications. Although they were no longer fully included in the organization as current members, many individuals carried this legacy identification with

them long after their formal separation from the university, and drew upon it in their responses to the Sandusky scandal. In their communications, alumni often invoked their legacy identification as a way to frame their messages about what was happening in the present, by articulating their past ties with the organization. These included straightforward statements such as, "I grew up in State College, my father and brother went to Penn State, my wife and I went to Penn State, my 3 daughters attended Penn State. . . ." In fact, alumni referred to "identification anchors" (Tom & Elmer, 1994: 58), such as their class year, major, family legacy, and membership in the alumni society or in a giving society. Their legacy language was not only indicative of the past, however—alumni also often began or concluded their communications with a description of their current experiences and continued affiliation with the organization (e.g., volunteer work on campus, donations, alumni groups, connections to an athletic team or the athletic program more broadly). All the above constituted evidence of legacy identification—markers that the individuals still defined themselves vis-à-vis the organization, even many years after leaving it and even in the face of the scandal.

By articulating their affiliation with the university prior to the scandal, these communications showed the many contours of legacy identification, accounted for many of the ways it played out, and conveyed its intensity. For instance:

> Since graduating in December 2000, I have receipts for $11,620 of gifts to Penn State...My lifetime membership for the Alumni Association is paid in full. I am a dues-paying member of two Penn State clubs. . . A near majority of my wardrobe displays the Penn State logo.

Such alumni had reason to identify avenues for maintaining their identification with Penn State, despite the scandal and its fallout. As we will show later, some alumni identified unconditionally and sought to maintain a continuing association with their alma mater in the present and into the future; some others effectively disowned the university; yet many others created new avenues for maintaining some degree of association. Perhaps most notably, alumni communications suggested that they found themselves engaged in a disquieting legacy identification struggle.

Juxtaposing Past, Present, and Future: Legacy Identification Struggle

Legacy identification is not always associated with exclusively positive thoughts and feelings in the present, and indeed, this is apparently what made the struggle so difficult. In our study, some alumni were experiencing negative thoughts and feelings about their former organization as they compared and contrasted their *past* experiences with their *current* experiences and also often their *future* images of organizational affiliation. With legacy identification, the individuals brought the past into the present to move forward into the future, either with or without identifying with the organization. For example, one alum wrote:

> Up to this moment I had been able to look back upon my years at Penn State with a type of fond remembrance that I'm sure many alumni also feel. After reading the news today I'm afraid I will never be able to experience those feelings again. I quite honestly do not have the words to describe the disgust I feel regarding the news. . . I will never view Penn State, nor my time there, the same again.

Note how two overarching themes in our findings are simultaneously evident in this quote—past–present–future and the influence of affect on behavior and cognition—"fond remembrance" of the past, "disgust" after reading the day's paper (present), and the prospective sense that he or she will "never be able to experience" the positive feelings again (future). Another alum wrote:

> I am, as I know you and everyone else at Penn State are, overwhelmed with sadness about the events of the past few days. There is not much to say except we share the feelings of shock and dismay, and hope we can all help each other through this. A friend to whom I was venting yesterday said that most of what I love about Penn State is still true and that it will prevail. I hope she's right. Meanwhile, I am thinking about you and all others there, and hope by sharing our grief, we can make it easier to bear. . . .Looking forward to the day when we will again be proud to say 'We Are...Penn State.'

Note how this quote illustrates legacy identification—"what I *love* about Penn State is still true" (emotion-laden sense of the past and present)—and compares and contrasts it with his/her present experience ("overwhelmed with *sadness*" and "feelings of *shock and dismay*") and his/her future affiliation with the organization ("looking forward to the day when we will again be *proud*").

Another alum wrote, "Just as Penn State's success over the years has enhanced the value of all alums' education, including their personal reputations, this event has severely eroded it. We're livid, sad, and ashamed of our beloved Alma Mater." Here, we see how the alum closely coupled past positivity ("enhanced the value") with current negativity ("livid,

sad, and ashamed"). These contradictory thoughts and feelings about the current situation juxtaposed with the past led to a pronounced legacy identification struggle for many alumni in our sample. Indeed, most of these alumni worked to maintain their identification with Penn State (or specific parts of it) despite the scandal. In contrast to literature that implies that people often disidentify with an organization stigmatized by scandal (Devers, Dewitt, Mishina, & Belsito, 2009), and that people often respond negatively to and sever ties with an organization with a spoiled image (Sutton & Callahan, 1987), we found that it was not easy for these alumni to disown or disidentify with their former organization. Instead we found evidence of a manifest legacy identification struggle. For example, one alum wrote, "During the middle of the week, I was having conflicting thoughts about how my support to PSU would be impacted by the events..." and another alum wrote, "I love my school and I hope that you realize this as I try to organize my thoughts as I write this, since my emotions are essentially all over the place, it is difficult to organize them." One more wrote, "I don't particularly know where I stand right now with a lot of what has come to light at this moment. I'm in no man's land as an alum and I have been for a while. Stung by everything that has taken place..."

Despite positive thoughts and feelings, alumni also expressed negative thoughts and feelings about the organization (and its leadership) and the current circumstances. Illustrating the contrast between past and present, as well as the interplay of cognitions and discrete emotions, one alum wrote, "I have always had great pride in Penn State because of the conduct of the institution and the example it set for not only its students, but the state and nation as a whole. However, I now find myself ashamed of how the leadership of the university is conducting itself in the scandal...." This co-existence of moral emotions such as pride (past) and shame (present) was typical of much of our data. Another example of a similar juxtaposition between past and present and pride and shame:

> You are asked where did you attend college and with great pride you say PENN STATE. The person asking the question always shows great respect and admiration to the answer. BUT.... now we are holding our heads down. We have been punched in the stomach. Our hearts are broken. We are taking are decals off of our vehicles because we are ashamed and embarrassed.

Targeting

Given the above data, it was apparent that many Penn State alumni were trying to resolve the inconsistencies between the scandal and their legacy identifications. Part of their resolution strategy was to aim their expressions of thoughts and emotions toward multiple types of targets as they tried to re-evaluate their legacy identifications. We saw this occurring in two ways—*general targeting* (toward the university as a whole) and *specific targeting* (toward particular individuals or groups).

General targeting. Alumni targeted almost all their positive (and some ambivalent) expressions toward the university as a highly-valued organization. (Although far less common, alumni who expressed disidentification targeted negative thoughts and feelings toward the university). Because most of the data presented thus far are examples of this general targeting toward the university as a whole, we provide only a few additional examples. One recurring theme was that alumni cited the ethical standards and principles long touted and enacted at the university as defining identity elements of Penn State and (sometimes) the apparent hypocrisy of not upholding them. Such organizational ideals included "dignity and honor," "ethical responsibility," "excellence and integrity," and "loyalty." Illustrating a combination of past, present, and future, one alum wrote, "I am confident in the potential our university has to prove again that Penn State stands for people who are leaders with character, integrity, and compassion ...This is the heart of our university...." Another wrote, "I... truly believe and live the ideals of excellence, integrity and honesty that the University represents. Penn State has given me the chance to succeed professionally and personally, and I am forever grateful." Again, note the sentiment here of the past (what the university gave him/her), closely coupled with the present and implied future (being forever grateful).

Specific targeting. It soon became evident in our analyses that, rather than more generalized emotional and cognitive expressions, alumni often directed their emotions at specific targets, including (a) inside agents of the organization and (b) outside "enemies." Somewhat surprisingly, given the vast amount of positive affect data toward the university as a whole, our findings suggested that the negative emotions expressed in the communications were most often directed toward the putative failures of organizational agents, the leaders who are often thought to symbolize the organization (e.g., the president). Our findings also suggested that many of the negative emotions expressed in the communications were directed toward outside enemies

(e.g., the media who were often seen as mischaracterizing the university's culture and ethos). These targets seemed to provide alumni with a way of directing their negative emotions away from the organization itself.

Inside agents included the Board of Trustees (as well as its chair), the university leadership (particularly the presidents, Graham Spanier and his successor, Rodney Erickson), the head football coach, Joe Paterno, the athletic department (as well as athletic director, Tim Curley), and the university's alumni association. Alumni expressed negative emotions toward all entities potentially involved in the alleged cover-up. They also expressed negative emotions toward those leaders they perceived to have managed the scandal poorly. As the scandal and its fallout unfolded, the Board of Trustees consistently emerged as the primary target for negative emotions. Recall that the board was responsible for the firing of the president and, more importantly to alumni, Joe Paterno, the revered head football coach. One alum explained, "I am a proud PSU alum, but the actions of the Board of Trustees really embarrassed me over the last few months," and another wrote, "I've never doubted the integrity of my school or the high-character individuals it's produced, but I am honestly ashamed by ALL of you." Alumni also made comments like, "I am embarrassed and saddened by the weak and cowardly rationalization of our Board of Untrustees [sic]," and "Please resign no later than tomorrow and take the BOT with you! You have been a disgrace to this great university."

Outside enemies included individuals and groups external to the organization, as well as reports prepared by outside groups. Alumni targeted the media and the governor of the state (and other government officials) during the year following the scandal. Especially after the trial verdict, alumni targeted Louis Freeh (who had been hired by Penn State to investigate the situation) and the Freeh Report itself, as well as the NCAA and its sanctions. One alum wrote, "...I am extremely angry once again at Penn State being inaccurately put down by the media." Another wrote, "I am angry about the NCAA sanctions and feel they are excessive and unfair, especially to the football players." Although not mentioned extensively, the perpetrator, Jerry Sandusky, was also considered to be an "enemy" and a target of negative expressions. Expressed thoughts and feelings directed at outside enemies were almost exclusively negative. As we explore later, this process of targeting meant that alumni could bifurcate their strong emotions, facilitating ambivalent identification wherein one target received positive feelings, while another garnered negative feelings.

Reassessed Identification Modes: Disidentification and Unconditional Identification

Alumni expressed their identification with the university and/or its ideals via five modes of reassessed identification: *unconditional identification, disidentification*, and three previously undocumented forms of ambivalent identification (*reconciled, selective,* and *conditional*). Because the majority of our data fell into the ambivalence category—and because it offers the richest potential for theoretical development—we only briefly address unconditional identification and disidentification before turning our major attention to the new forms of ambivalent identification.

Despite the scandal and ensuing events, there was a subset of alumni who expressed exclusively positive orientations toward the university as a beloved, idealized organization, one that they continued to identify with in the present and intended to identify with in the future. For example, "I will forever support Penn State and have not lost faith in what our University stands for." Not surprisingly, these positive expressions were associated with alumni *unconditionally identifying* with the organization. Much of the data shown earlier reflects this unconditional identification—when alumni sent communications consisting of *solely* positive messages. In these unconditional responses, the past, present, and future selves are continuous; continuity is cognitively maintained, "I am then, now, and always Penn State," and the consistent emotion is pride which overwhelms the temporary period of the alum's struggle with shame or doubt.

Data on *disidentification* indicate how the scandal and its fallout brought about negative feelings of personal shame and embarrassment for a subset of alumni; they expressed feeling tainted because of their association with the organization (and its leadership). As one alum noted, "This is personal and should be personal to all PSU Students, Educators and Alumni." We note here the importance of showing the interconnectedness of discrete negative emotions (e.g., embarrassment, shame, shock) and disidentification. Alumni wrote, "Not only is this a national embarrassment for the university, this is a personal embarrassment and humiliation for every

Penn State alum," and "The Penn State adminis- tration has brought shame and disgrace on the whole of Penn State." Other alumni also wrote, "I'm embarrassed to admit I'm a PSU alum," "You make me ashamed to be associated with you people!," and "I didn't do anything and my PSU credentials have been harmed by these people." Thus, because of their personal embarrassment, which they attrib- uted to the actions of Penn State's leaders, these alumni expressed their desire to sever further as- sociation with the organization. In these responses of disidentification, there is a discontinuity be- tween the past self vs. present and future self that can be summarized as "I am not now and will never be Penn State." The affective aspect is revulsion, shame in the *present*, which seems to overwhelm *past* positive emotions. Alumni also expressed in- tentions of non-support (often related to financial giving), demonstrating a connection between pres- ent emotion/cognition and future behavior. They wrote, "No more donations!" "Gift – to Penn State!!!!!!! You must be joking!!!!!!!!!!!!!," and "Don't ever ask this alum for another penny." Not surprisingly, these negative expressions were as- sociated with alumni disidentifying, even disown- ing the organization. For some, the identification break was final.

Reassessed Identification Modes: Ambivalent Identification

As noted, given the focus of past literature mainly on negative responses to scandal and the in- clination of a variety of stakeholders to distance themselves from tainted organizations, we were surprised at the prevalence of a legacy identifica- tion struggle and the resulting ambivalent identifi- cation modes. More specifically, we found three distinct emergent forms of ambivalent identifica- tion, which we termed: *reconciled identification, selective identification,* and *conditional identifi- cation.* These patterns represented how alumni maintained their legacy identification despite the scandal and its discomfiting fallout, and represent a "both/and" approach (Ashforth et al., 2014) to (re) assessing legacy identification. These patterns constitute some useful and informative findings from the study. For that reason, we devote in-depth attention to them.

Ambivalence occurs when individuals simulta- neously express both positive and negative orienta- tions (Ashforth et al., 2014; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). When ambivalent individuals express positive

emotions, they seek to express their strength of re- lationship with an organization. When they express negative emotions, they seek to convey their anger, frustration, and rage (Pratt & Doucett, 2000). Alumni often expressed such contradictory emotions to- gether. As one wrote, "I *love* Penn State and am *devastated* by 'the scandal' and *angry* about your hasty reactions" (emphasis added). Some alumni expressed feeling both proud and ashamed. One wrote, "I am *proud* of being a Penn State gradu- ate. . .and now I feel *shame* to be a Penn State grad- uate" (emphasis added).

Reconciled identification. As noted, identifica- tion states can ebb and flow—particularly amid a scandal or crisis. Petriglieri (2015), for example, found that some executives at BP re-identified with their tainted organization after the Gulf oil spill once they immersed themselves in clean-up and related efforts. In our data, we found a distinctive, although common state of what we termed "recon- ciled identification" in which alumni showed evi- dence of both (a) having wrestled with intense ambivalence, yet also (b) still having decided to at least tentatively support the organization. This co- occurrence in data segments of acknowledging that they first mentally wrestled with, but elected to continue to identify, was an important distinction between reconciled and unconditional identifica- tion. Despite the scandal and its fallout and some negative thoughts and feelings directed at one or more targets, those alumni displaying reconciled identification chose to acknowledge the negative events and their negative feelings explicitly, but nonetheless chose ultimately to express positive thoughts and feelings and to renew their present and future identification with the university. Our data further suggest that this reconciled state re- flected the outcome of their struggle with ambiva- lence, not a "one-shot" resolution of cognitive dissonance. Indeed, we noted considerable cognitive/ affective effort as alumni strove to resolve their neg- ative thoughts and feelings to reconcile their identi- fication despite the scandal. One alum put it this way:

> I have to be prepared to represent Penn State well when colleagues, family, friends, and often complete strangers lay charges at my feet and I have to defend myself and my university. In a sense, we have been the foot soldiers, engaged in hand to hand combat for many frustrating and emotionally draining weeks, while the general and his staff have been comfortably situated at HQ developing battle plans, but being distant and behind the scenes.

Another alum wrote:

> Today was a tough day trading emails with many of my Penn State friends. We all traded emails and thoughts, much of which was wondering what to think of all of this. My one friend mentioned on Sunday he had a Penn State sweatshirt on and needed to run an errand, so he consciously took it off before going out because of embarrassment. That was really tough to hear, because I'm so proud of being a Penn Stater, and I know he is too, that I can't ever imagine being embarrassed to be a Penn Stater. I told my friend and others, that now, more than ever, all Penn Staters need to show their pride and support for the University… However, we can't let the wrong doings, no matter how atrocious and unspeakable they are, take away from the morals, ideals and foundation that Penn State has instilled in all of us. The culture that Penn State has was built on the passion and love of countless men and women, all of whom believed in a University that could do things in the right way. It is still there and it will always be. If it is proven that those accused did do wrong, we cannot let the actions of a few undo the greatness built by thousands. It's in this time that all Penn Staters need to pull together and show humility for the wrong doings, compassion for the victims and our continued support and love for our University, Students and alumni. Our University is not defined by a few, but by the thousands of alums and current students that believe in what Penn State is all about. Now more than ever, we can't lose that passion and vision.

Note how in this quote, the alum draws on his/her legacy identification and references feeling "proud" (positive emotion), but acknowledges it was a "tough day" exchanging so many e-mails about the scandal and recognizes the friend as "being embarrassed" (negative emotion). Ultimately, though, the alum says, "Now more than ever, we can't lose that passion and vision," and decides to support the organization. Taken together, these multiple facets of the quote illustrate reconciled identification—both the wrestling with and resolution to the struggle. In these reconciled responses, the cognitive pattern is that the past, present, and future self are maintained continuously, but the emotional pattern is that the positive feelings about the past and the hope for the future outweigh the negative emotions of the present.

For many alumni, there were enduring expressions of pride in the organization itself and/or its ideals despite the negative affect brought on by the scandal. One alum wrote, "Not quite as Penn State Proud as I was. But there are still lots of things to be proud of, and whenever I get that sick feeling in my gut, I think of those." This quote shows the power of legacy identification to bring the past into the present—the alum is drawing upon the past sources of positive affect to cope with the current negative affect. Despite their contradictory expressions, alumni continued to articulate their identification with the university even as the scandal faded. For example, "I am still a proud Penn Stater and know we will get through this but it is not pleasant," which combines current positive and negative emotions ("proud" and "not pleasant") with the future emotion of hopefulness, again illustrating how legacy identification combines elements of past, present, and future.

Selective identification. Alumni expressed selective identification when they sought to associate with some parts of Penn State (individuals or collective bodies), but not others. With selective identification, both positive and negative emotions and/or cognitions are simultaneously represented. What varies, however, is whether the target of the positive and/or negative expression is general (the organization overall) or specific (e.g., its particular leaders or affiliate groups). This partitioning provides a more nuanced way to understand the contours of ambivalence than previous research has implied. Alumni generally separated students, alumni, faculty, and staff from the university's senior leadership; they saw some entities as representing the university and its ideals while other entities did not, e.g., "Aside from academics, this is NOT the Penn State I knew and believed in," so this alum chose to identify only with the organization's "academic parts." Another alum wrote:

> The BOT [board of trustees] does not represent my Penn State. I am so angry at all of you! You have not helped the victims of Sandusky. They did not want Joe Paterno fired! You only added to their pain. Penn State is known for philanthropy. The largest student run philanthropy in the world is THON.

Here, the alum focuses on a well-known positive aspect of Penn State, THON, the annual student-run dance marathon fundraiser for pediatric cancer. Another alum wrote:

> As a child, I thought Joe Paterno was Penn State. Once I became a student, I realized Penn State is so much more than Paterno and our football team. They are very visible aspects of our University, but they are not Penn State. We are Penn State, and I am still proud to say that. (Your letters, 2012: 9).

Another wrote:

> We are fighting to retain what 'WE ARE PENN STATE' means. These "men" – THEY ARE NOT PENN STATE. Unless we completely clean house, all of our ideals and pride about who we are, and what we preach are our standards, will mean exactly nothing. For shame, these men had children of their own and still did not contact police. They must go. All of them must go. And if anyone on the Board of Trustees knew about Jerry Sandusky, they should go too. Please, scrub Penn State clean and make it the University we said we were.

Here, the alum not only draws on his/her legacy identification, considering "who we are, and what we preach," but targets negative thoughts and feelings toward the Board of Trustees, separating them from the university at large (to "scrub Penn State clean"). Another alum wrote:

> My husband & I are absolutely livid! You just don't get it, do you? There's nothing wrong with our PRIDE in Penn State…we have always been & will always be Penn State Proud! We are NOT proud of the way the president, BOT & others at the top have handled themselves from the beginning of this crisis. Instead of showing leadership and pride in your institution, you instead showed shame. WE…Penn State… did NOT abuse children nor do we condone the abuse of children. You have to work to restore TRUST because we do not TRUST anything you say or do! We continue to be proud of students & alumni who hold their heads high and are not afraid to stand up for what is right…something you folks don't seem to know how to do or to comprehend!! Until we see significant changes in the board and their shameless way of thinking & acting, we will not contribute to your cause.

Note the vivid, and contrasting emotions, in this quote — "livid" and "proud." Here, the couple draws on their legacy identification to target the university with positive emotions, and the Board of Trustees, president, and university leadership with negative emotions, thus separating these individuals from the university itself. Note also how this quote clearly underscores the themes explored earlier—(1) the intermingling of past, present, and future in such language as "we have always been and will always be Penn State proud," and (2) the comingling of affect, behavior, and cognition by using highly emotional language to explain their cognitive processing and intended behaviors. Thus, alumni engaged in selective identification by: (1) expressing positive emotions toward one target and negative emotions toward a *different* target, and/or (2) expressing positive emotions and negative

emotions toward *one* target, such as the university. Selective identification, then, allowed individuals to at least partially segment or sequester the most problematic components of the organization, enabling identification with other components. The cognitive pattern is that the past, present, and future self are maintained continuously, and the emotional pattern is split between positive emotion for some targets and negative emotion for other targets.

Conditional identification. The distinguishing feature of this form of identification was that contradictory thoughts and feelings were associated with alumni identifying with the organization in a *conditional* fashion (i.e., if you do A, I will do B). Here, we see how thoughts about the envisioned *future* affected current identification, as identification was conditional upon some corrective future action. Unlike when reconciled identification occurred and alumni maintained their identification with the organization despite concerns about the scandal, or when selective identification occurred and alumni expressed discriminant associations with the organization, conditional identification occurred when alumni declared that their future association with the organization was dependent on the organization making some change(s). Therefore, the link between present and future was clearly invoked in this identification mode. For example, "I will never donate another nickel until the BOT [Board of Trustees] and Erickson [the president] are gone," also showing the link between identification and behavior. Another example includes alumni taking a "time-out" and placing a hold on their association/ identification with the organization until the changes occurred:

> I will always love Penn State, and the ties that bind me to it run deeper than you would understand. But my association with the university is at an end until the Trustees who have perpetrated this shameful series of events are gone, until Dr. Erickson [the new university president] is gone, and until the university really enters an era of transparency.

Note how the alum declares his/her "association with the university is at an end" *until* the organization undergoes a number of changes, including its leadership. Another alum wrote, "After 50 plus years of association with the place, I am done with Penn State until EVERYONE associated with how Joe Paterno was treated is gone from the University, including the Board of Trustees, Erickson, and Corbett

[the then governor of Pennsylvania]." One more alum wrote:

> …I am appalled and embarrassed at the actions (or more specifically lack thereof) of my Alma Mater's most senior staff in the handling of the apparently not so recent incident(s) involving a former coach. There is no excuse for not elevating this situation to law enforcement for investigation, none.…. Instead, grave errors in judgement by a select few have cast a shadow over all members of the Penn State family. Regardless of the outcome of the legal proceedings, extraordinarily poor judgement was exercised at the highest levels and I do not choose at this time to support financially an institution that would allow the protection of its reputation to overshadow investigation of actions that clearly warranted further investigation. I wish it to be communicated to the highest levels that these actions are having an impact on funding–clearly the only thing that realistically gets any attention any more within the hallowed halls of an institution that I once held in high esteem. These actions have left me ashamed of Penn State for they could only exist if supported and sanctioned at the very highest level. Please remove me from your pledge list until I see the resignation of the University President and the issuance of a formal apology by him to the victims instead of a statement of full and unconditional support for the staff, no further pledges will be forthcoming.

Once again, an alum targets and blames the university's leadership, expressing negative thoughts and feelings ("appalled and embarrassed"). The alum no longer wishes to receive communications or make a donation until the president resigns and the university apologizes. In these conditional responses, the pattern is a disruption between the past vs. present self, but the future self could return continuity.

Shortly after the scandal broke and before President Spanier and Coach Paterno were fired, an alum wrote, "I do not intend to donate money to Penn State while Spanier and Paterno hold their current positions." Other alumni wrote, "We may not be the wealthiest alumni, but I assure you that my father (also an alum) and I will not be donating any money to the University until things have been handled in a manner we find satisfactory," "I, for one, refuse to donate another dime until and unless I am convinced that the University has purged itself of every individual who had knowledge of the big cover-up," and "So instead of terminating my contributions to PSU, similar to what the Trustees did to Joe Paterno, my future contributions are on administrative leave until this is resolved and all of the facts are known and disclosed."

Intended Actions

As has been seen throughout our findings thus far, in addition to reassessing their identification with the organization in response to the scandal and its fallout, alumni also expressed a wide range of behavioral intentions (some, "I'm not going to give"; others, "I'll nonetheless continue to give"), as well as actions they had already taken to express either continuing support or displeasure with the scandal and the university's response to it. Although these expressed thoughts and (perhaps especially) the expressed emotions were notably intense, the most interesting feature of these expressions was that they were often "targeted." Alumni expressed intended actions associated with support through unconditional identification and withdrawal through disidentification, as well as intended actions that combined both support and withdrawal through ambivalent identification. Next, we provide evidence for the linkages between various identification states and behavioral intentions.

Expressions of support. Alumni who expressed *unconditional identification* wrote about their continuing intentions to give financially, to attend football games, to vote in future Board of Trustee's elections, and to offer general support to the organization or specific units within it. For example, "We are continuing with our current pledges and have all intentions of making a major gift in the future." Another wrote, "We stand firm that 'we will be Nittany Lions until the day we die.'" Continuing the theme of the intertwining of past, present, and future, it is noteworthy how many of these expressions of future support were closely coupled with past positivity. For example, an alum wrote:

> Success with Honor still exists at Penn State and I will live my entire life under this mantra and no one can take that away from me or any other student or alumni who had such a great experience at Penn State.

Here, the alum combines positivity from the past (referring to the great experience), the present ("Success with Honor still exists"), and the future (pledging to live one's entire life under that mantra).

In addition to the positive expressions of support from those alumni who showed unconditional identification, we also noted an interesting pattern among those whom we classified as experiencing *reconciled identification*—they, too, showed high levels of future support, perhaps as evidence of having reconciled their identification. An alum wrote, "In the meantime, don't worry—I am, & remain, a committed supporter of PSU," and another noted, "I will still give because, as one of the board members said, the university is bigger than

one person." Other alumni also wrote, "I will continue to give to Penn State in the modest way that I am able," "I am still Penn State proud and will do all I can to help restore the reputation the public/media have trashed due to the actions of 4 individuals," and "Our support to the students, activities like Thon, the NLC [Nittany Lion Club, the fundraising arm of the university's athletic department], and general funds will continue. Our support of the University is not the issue." Another alum wrote:

> I'm done feeling sorry for myself and letting issues beyond my control hurt me so deeply. Now I'm angry! No One stains my University and I do nothing…I WILL be attending the Society Reception and Dinner or at least the reception part… I want to attend the reception because I want to shake hands with my fellow Alumni and Friends. I want to hug them ever so briefly. I want to sing the Alma Mater loudly or maybe to myself. I want to say WE ARE PENN STATE because I AM PENN STATE.

Note not only the wide range of emotions here, but the references to the present and future, as well as the alum's decision to maintain a strong association and support the organization going forward.

Expressions of withdrawal. Alumni who expressed *disidentification* wrote about their intentions not to give financially, to cancel football tickets (or not return to campus for football games), to request to be removed from university mailing lists, e-mail list serves or phone lists, to discourage prospective college students (including their own children) from attending the university, and to forego general support to the university or specific units within it. Some alumni also declared strong rationales for their withdrawn support. For example, an alum wrote, "With the continuing leadership failures at my alma mater, I am done offering any future support," and another wrote:

> To say the least, I am devastated. I have gone through all of the stages of grieving about this unbelievably devastating situation and have reached a decision. I am renouncing all affiliations, donations, and support for any and all things associated with Penn State. I was strongly urging my 14 year old son to keep Penn State in the front of his mind when choosing future colleges for an advanced degree. That is CERTAINLY not going to be happening…. Anything is better than sending him to an educational institution that has allowed such an enormous amount of shame and embarrassment to erase DECADES of honor, ethics, and high moral standards. This situation is so unbelievably out of control that I hope all alumni throughout the world do the exact same thing I am, and stop sending any more financial support for a sick, twisted, disgusting institution.

Note the extraordinarily powerful negative emotions, and the alum's firm decision to disidentify ("I have gone through all of the stages of grieving…and have reached a decision") and to withdraw a wide range of support from the organization.

Expressions of both support and withdrawal. Alumni who expressed selective and conditional identification cited their intentions to both show *and* to withdraw support. Consider this quote that vividly illustrates not only the support-withdrawal duality, but several themes from our study:

> From the shock and horror of what one of our own allegedly did, to the disbelief at the alleged cover-up by our leaders, to sadness and pain for our beloved coach, I find myself feeling disassociated from a university that I once considered at the core of who I am. As the largest alumni association in the world, now is the time that we stand up as the only leader of our great university. No one else will. My Alumni Association dues had lapsed; I am now going to pay them as a small gesture of support. With this donation, do me one favor: Stand up and tell the world that "success with honor" [a slogan used by Penn State Intercollegiate Athletics] is what we stand for. More than anything else, be the force for what we thought we stood for. (Your letters, 2012: 7)

Here, we can see legacy identification being invoked (he/she once considered Penn State "at the core" of who he/she was) as he/she wrestles with the scandal. We also see that his/her intentions of behavior (both support and withdrawal) are directly linked to negative emotions (shock, horror, sadness, pain) and cognitions (disassociated), but are *also* coupled with a hope for a positive change in the future (use his/her money to show the world "success with honor is what we stand for").

Those alumni experiencing *selective identification* with the organization also showed intentions to both support *and* withdraw support. Alumni expressed their intentions to support one area of the organization (often financially) and to forego or withdraw support from another area. One alum wrote, "Unfortunately we can no longer support the University financially given this situation. We will continue to contribute to THON because unlike the University's administration we are truly for the kids." Another wrote, "I WILL renew my membership in the Alumni Association, but due to my dissatisfaction with the handling of Joe Paterno and the scandal in general, I will not make any other donations to Penn State this year." Another wrote, "I will choose for the foreseeable future to support

individual colleges and activities of my choice, within the University." In all these examples, alumni chose to identify with and support one area of the university while not supporting others.

Along with *conditional identification* came conditional behavioral intentions toward the organization post-scandal; alumni expressed conditions for future support if, and only if, they observed desired changes within the university. These conditions for giving also provided insight into the apparent sense that placing a "hold" on their giving to the organization provided some alumni with another means for expressing their contradictory thoughts and emotions. One alum explained, "Money has power... We have the power to show them that we will not allow our dollars to support child abuse." Much of the data on conditional identification allowed us to "connect the dots" between discrete emotions (e.g., anger) and intended behaviors (e.g., donating). For example, an alum wrote, "As an expression of my outrage regarding these events, I am suspending further contributions to the University until all those responsible are held accountable." And another wrote:

> Unfortunately, with any big organization such as PSU, money is the only thing that talks, so I am pulling my meager contribution, which will be a symbolic gesture to let them know how strongly I feel that they have mishandled this whole thing... I will see how this plays out and may reconsider my decision later.

DISCUSSION

As a result of our grounded study, we introduce the notion of "legacy identification," which shows the importance of incorporating a more temporal lens into identification research. Our findings, as depicted in Figure 1, show that individuals carry with them both latent (from the past) and manifest (from the present) elements of their identification. When identification is challenged (e.g., by a scandal in our case), the latent becomes manifest, leading to an identification struggle that individuals work to resolve. Alumni express positive, negative, and contradictory thoughts and feelings toward general and specific targets, leading toward the reassertion of deeply held identification (unconditional identification), rejection of the former identification (disidentification), or one of several forms of ambivalent identification (reconciled, selective, or conditional), and ultimately leading toward support for and/or withdrawal from the organization. In that process, individuals discover that who they *are* is in great part a legacy of who they *were*. Such intense current experiences can also reverberate into the future, influencing *who they might become* as well. Yet, identification has most often been treated statically in the literature, with less regard for how the lived past and anticipated future informs and shapes present identification. This study of organizational alumni responding to an identity threat provided the opportunity to show that a dynamic, temporal focus on identification offers a more thorough and revealing treatment of one of the core concepts in management theory.

We investigated how former members of an organization experience legacy identification as they struggle with identity threats (e.g., a scandal), and our findings show how people consider, "Who am I now, and who am I going to be, in light of who I was" (see Table 1). Not only do we see that identification is a complex intertwining of the past, present, and future, but that it also involves the interplay of affect, behavior, and cognition. That is, in the case of threat, the cognitive juxtaposition of past–present–future prompts intense emotions, as well as uncertainty about behavior in the future. Given that the

TABLE 1
Reassessed Identification and the Experience of Time

Reassessed Identification	Cognitive & Affective Expressions	Experience of Time
Unconditional Identification	*I love the university, and I will always identify with it.*	Positive expressions in the present and positive expressions toward the future
Disidentification	*I hate the university, and I will no longer identify with it.*	Negative expressions in the present and negative expressions toward the future
Reconciled Identification	*I was upset by what has happened, but I will still love and identify with my university.*	Negative expressions in the past, but positive expressions toward the future
Selective Identification	*I now love and identify with parts of the university, but not others.*	Positive and negative expressions in the present and positive and negative expressions toward the future
Conditional Identification	*I will love and re-identify with the university, if certain conditions are met.*	Negative expressions in the present, but *possible* positive expressions toward the future

identification literature has devoted more attention to the cognitive aspects of identification (who am I?), our accounting for affective (how do I feel?) and behavioral (what will I do?) elements provides a more comprehensive approach by illuminating the emotional underpinnings and action elements of identification. Hence, individuals not only experience the cognitive temporality of identification, but also deal with the swirl of positive, negative, and contradictory emotions and the possible behavioral consequences of both.

Our findings show that the often latent elements of one's identity that pertain to membership in a former organization contribute to individuals' current identities, such that involvement with a previous organization informs their self-concepts, and produces a legacy identification. Not all identifications are created equal, however; some can be quite fleeting, with others lasting a lifetime. As is apparent in our data, certain identifications appear to have greater "stickiness" than others. Some memberships—whether organizational, group, or professional—have an especially strong influence on identity that has a longer-lasting effect on an individual (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Similarly, experiences within an organization or group might be more influential if one's membership occurred during a pivotal time in life (e.g., during college, pursuing a first career job, being socialized into a profession, having a strong mentor, or meeting one's eventual spouse) or if the person's image is closely associated with a particular group (e.g., a military branch or a specific religion). Indeed, although our focus was on legacy identification with an organization, we see theoretical promise in extending the concept to other forms of identification, such as occupations, teams, and roles. Some past research hints at the high potential of this line of inquiry, including work that shows the lingering impact of former professions and roles (e.g., Ashforth, 2001; Maitlis, 2009) and geographic communities (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013).

Our focus on university alumni—as an example of former organizational members—has enabled us to better discern how past, present, and future work together. A scandal is but one example of a possible "trigger" that may cue an identification threat among organizational members, however. Mergers, acquisitions, crises, organizational change initiatives, or CEO changes could also be triggers. Further, reassessments of identification might be spurred by nonthreatening events and processes as well, such as self-reflection and purposive identity change or growth (Ibarra, 1999; Kreiner & Sheep, 2009). We believe the concept of legacy identification has broad

transferability, as it can alter the way we conceptualize both the content and process of organizational identification. Contemporary realities of rapid organizational change and frequent job changes all suggest that temporality is likely to play an increasingly important role as individuals interact with organizations in complex ways in coming years. The vast majority of workers in the contemporary workforce are likely to work in multiple organizations over the course of their careers and yet, despite this recognition, organizational scholars have tended to focus primarily on identification as it relates only to one's current organization or job.

Legacy Identification

Exploring legacy identification is a partial remedy to this shortcoming because it acknowledges that one's current identity has been shaped by past organizational affiliations that often continue into the present and look prospectively to the future. Similar to the juxtaposition experienced in "alternative selves" (Obodaru, 2012), which contrasts one's perceived present to possible paths one could have taken, legacy identification prompts a comparison over time. Indeed, the notion of legacy identification echoes Faulkner's (1950) sentiment with which we opened the article—"The past is never dead. In fact, it's not even past." It lives in us, in our identities, and in our identifications. And, based on our data in which individuals even invoked future-oriented affect, behavior, and cognition, we would add that the past not only influences the present, but is prologue to the future. Future research, then, should investigate further how temporal conceptualizations of identification affect employees. For example, in terms of *content,* future work could identify what the most important identification anchors are for a strong legacy identification to develop. In terms of *process,* future work could explore how people handle discrepancies among the past, present, and anticipated future.

Legacy identification seems to be particularly important to one's self-concept, given that former organizations can inculcate a strong sense of values and priorities. In many ways, organizations function as "identification anchors" (Tom & Elmer, 1994: 58), so we should not be surprised that many alumni identification relationships are intensely experienced, even long after leaving. For example, many military veterans still carry with them the values of duty, honor, and country, long after

serving their nation. Despite this trend, the management literature has not fully considered the power of legacy identification. For these reasons, we believe that this concept has potential to inform our thinking beyond the context of this study, and that our model has implications for organization members beyond organizational alumni. Indeed, the notion of "alumni" now extends well beyond association with universities, as more and more organizations are explicitly referring to their former employees as alumni. Further, given the reality of the contemporary protean career, most people will carry with them some element of a legacy identification based on their former workplaces (and other membership associations). Relatedly, legacy identification is important to people who experience career transitions, enabling them to consider who they were/used to be—for example, individuals who re-enter the workforce or a particular industry after a long period away, or individuals who have lost their jobs or changed roles but identify with past jobs and roles and have to negotiate that with current and future jobs or roles.

Legacy identification consists not only of personal experiences and memories, but includes continuing identification with the organization itself and/or its values. We suspect that legacy identification might fulfill needs associated with social identities, namely, self-esteem, self-enhancement, distinctiveness, and a sense of belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tyler, Kramer, & John, 1999). We should also note that an individual might well be identifying with an organization that no longer exists in its previous form (or exists at all, as with the now-defunct Arthur Andersen accounting firm, whose former members maintain active alumni groups across the globe), as an organization's leaders, members, structures, and values can change over time. Therefore, a former member's memories of a given organization may vary considerably from the experiences of current members. Indeed, in our data, much of the struggle for alumni stems from incongruence between their fond memories of the past and the present "reality" of seeing their organization tarnished in the headlines. Given the burgeoning role of alumni for many business, military, government, and academic institutions, the concept of legacy identification is likely to become increasingly important, suggesting that studying both the connections and disconnections between past and present holds great theoretical promise.

Ambivalent Identification

Ambivalence has been linked to outcomes that are both positive (e.g., better decision making, heightened creativity; Fong, 2006; Plambeck & Weber, 2009) and negative (e.g., resistance to change, wrongdoing; Piderit, 2000; Vadera & Pratt, 2013). Prior conceptual and empirical work has noted how ambivalence can be experienced with regard to identification (e.g., Dukerich et al., 1998; Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), and our findings contribute to that important literature by adding a more temporal perspective. Ambivalence is felt in the moment, but it results when individuals wrestle with past identification in light of current identification threats and arrive at an orientation toward their future identification with the organization. We view the three new forms of ambivalent identification (reconciled, selective, and conditional) as theoretically informative, with implications not just for alumni, but organizational members more generally.

Via reconciled identification, alumni acknowledge the current negative events and their implications for affecting their loyalty, but nonetheless maintain a positive identification and supportive behavioral intentions (e.g., contributing financially) with the organization, despite misgivings. Petriglieri's (2015) work demonstrated that current members can "re-identify" with their scandalized organization if they are personally involved in efforts (clean-up efforts in the BP case) aimed at reducing the felt stigma. Yet, with reconciled identification, no such behavior is required. Rather, with reconciled identification, individuals wrestle internally with current negative thoughts and feelings. But, these are ultimately overwhelmed by drawing upon deeply held positive thoughts and emotions from the past, allowing these individuals to maintain their positive identification with the organization into the future.

Via selective identification, individuals seek to maintain association with some part(s) of the organization and/or its ideals, compartmentalizing their allegiances in a way that maintains strong identification with some facets of the organization with which they had long identified (e.g., philanthropy) and which were far removed from a scandal, while divorcing their identification from others. Gutierrez et al.'s (2010) work showed similarly that, in light of scandal, members of an organization devoted to organizational change in the Catholic Church collectively split their identification, maintaining identification with the normative aspects of the church, while disidentifying with other aspects of

it. This was seen as a coping mechanism that would be used until sought changes in the church could be achieved. The split identification would continue if those changes did not come to pass. The emphasis, however, was on repair of the split. By contrast, selective identification appears to be, at least potentially, a more permanent solution for the individuals who choose it. Selective identification refers to an individual-level process, whereas split identification involves a coordinated effort and collective-level process. Furthermore, selective identification can involve notably more parsing (and targeting), as evidenced by the multiple targets that individuals referenced as they named parts of the organization with which they identified and parts with which they disidentified (e.g., Penn State as a whole, the Board of Trustees, the academic mission, the football program, the alumni organization, and even specific individuals representing the organization, such as the president and Joe Paterno). Selective identification draws attention to how individuals who are wrestling with threatened identification draw upon past positive identification with some aspect(s) of the organization to maintain some form of identification with the organization now and in the future. We also found that both supportive (for the selected part of the organization) and non-supportive intended actions were apparent when individuals expressed selective identification.

Via conditional identification, individuals seek to maintain contingent associations—promising (re) identification only if the organization's leaders take actions desired by alumni. Again, in contrast to Petriglieri's work where employees engaged in a type of cleansing behavior that allowed them to re-identify with their current organization, in our case alumni instead demanded actions *organizational leaders* would have to take to earn back the identification these alumni had in the past. Conditional behavioral intentions were also associated with conditional identification.

Ambivalence is acknowledged as an understudied phenomenon in organizations (Ashforth et al., 2014; Pratt, 2000) and these findings call attention to the role of ambivalence among alumni—and not only when the former organization is cast in an undesirable light. The findings also show significant forms of ambivalent identification that are likely to be evoked when individuals work to re-evaluate past thoughts, feelings, and intended actions that lead them to "simultaneously identify and disidentify with one's organization (or aspects of it)" (Kreiner & Ashforth,

2004: 4). This, of course, happens on a more regular basis than simply when an organization endures a scandal, given the volatile nature of the contemporary workforce and the frequency of occupational changes.

Emotion and Identification

The findings also emphasize the affective underpinnings of a legacy identification struggle and reassessment, with strong expressions of love and hate, depending on whether alumni continued to identify unconditionally or to disidentify. The ambivalent groups, however, simultaneously held positive and negative emotions (and identification states). Their responses to the scandal and its fallout were complex and their resolutions of their legacy identification struggles were commensurately complex, as all three types displayed ambivalence in one form or another: reconciled (saying, in essence, "I am upset by what has happened, but I still love and identify with my university"), selective ("I now identify with parts of the university, but not others") and conditional ("I will re-identify with the university, if certain conditions are met"). Contradictory emotions, like simultaneous pride and shame, appeared to trigger the most intensive legacy identification struggles. These findings imply the need to account for additional forms of identification and the role of affect in producing them. We are wary of construct proliferation, but these new categories are informative in providing a more nuanced understanding of identification, especially in understanding how individuals respond to conflicting thoughts and feelings. Studying a number of discrete emotions in this study has allowed us not only to see the important role that discrete emotions can play in identification, but also to show how positive emotions from the past, along with hopeful emotions for the future, can serve as a bulwark against current challenges. In our data, we saw how alumni drew on positive emotions such as pride and hopefulness to help them work through powerful negative emotions such as shame and embarrassment, and to achieve a resolution to their legacy identification struggles. Indeed, past positive emotions stemming from legacy identification served as a deep reservoir upon which to draw when forced to juxtapose fond nostalgia with disgust and anger. Of course, conflicting feelings need not be triggered solely when a valued organization is under identity threat from scandal, but in other situations as well, such as mergers, acquisitions, or major leadership changes.

Targets

Our findings further indicate that choosing "targets" is important for resolving a legacy identification struggle. The targeting process provided alumni with a means for "blaming" someone or some group, rather than the institution itself, for an egregious event and the organization's responses to it, thus enabling them to reassess the emotions they experienced, while holding the idealized organization above the fray. In contrast to Kessler and Hollbach's (2005) findings showing differential identification as a result of differing thoughts and feelings about in- and out-groups, our findings show that negative thoughts and feelings were directed at *both* insiders and outsiders, which seemed to enable continued identification with the organization itself. Surprisingly, our findings also showed that the targeting process provided alumni with a means to reimagine the "ingroup" and "outgroup" categories. Specifically, alumni targeted parts of the ingroup (e.g., expressing negative emotions toward an individual or group and positive emotions toward another individual or group), creating "inside enemies," which enabled them to still maintain identification with the broader organization. Interestingly, many of these "inside enemies" were individuals or groups responsible for leading the university. Future research can further explore the role of this targeting process, investigating how and why targets are created or chosen.

Limitations and Additional Future Research

One limitation of our data is that we mainly have expressions of intentions about future behavior and self-reports of actions taken (e.g., withholding donations), rather than behavioral measures. Future research could investigate the linkages to explicit behavior, such as financial contributions, participation in organizational events, and other supportive actions. Future research could also examine antecedent factors that are associated with these varying identification states for alumni (e.g., by considering level of "investment" in the organization, current social networks, and critical incidents while at the organization). Investigating both sides of the equation—antecedents to and consequences of these forms of legacy identification—would offer valuable insights that would deepen our understanding of alumni responses to legacy identification struggles.

In addition, although we have fleshed out the concept of legacy identification, our sample was, of course, based on alumni of a university. But as noted, the term "alumni" is now widely used in both the popular press and academic research to refer to individuals who previously worked for a given organization. Some alumni will have idiosyncratic or isolated legacy identifications with former employers (e.g., those who no longer associate with fellow alumni), whereas others will be ardent supporters through organized groups (e.g., Arthur Andersen alumni groups). Exploring how alumni from a wide range of organizations maintain a legacy identification can be a fruitful path for future research, as we seek to understand how past affiliations can still help to shape a person's current work identity and identification. We also ask, what might these new forms of ambivalent identification look like for *current* employees? Examining these types of ambivalence beyond a university alumni population could prove useful. Alumni identification is, on its face, more detached than the typical employee identification. Unlike current employees, who have daily reasons and reminders to maintain identification with the organization, alumni are more loosely coupled to the organization. Studying how these new forms of ambivalent identification play out for current employees would seem to be a promising next step.

Another possible constraint on our data is that we focused on communications during a fixed, although lengthy, period of time (the one-year period following the breaking of a scandal). Future research on legacy identification and on the various forms of ambivalent identification that we uncovered could examine the effects over a longer period of time. As noted by Ashforth et al. (2014), a wide variety of positive *and* negative outcomes have been associated with ambivalence. We see promise in future research examining the longer-term effects of ambivalent and other forms of legacy identification. For example, at the individual level, how might having resolved ambivalence increase one's identification with the organization? Figure 1 is based mostly on one-time communications from alumni; future research could consider within-person changes during an identity threat's aftermath. Or, research could ask how aggregated legacy identifications might affect organization-level changes, especially the actions called for as part of conditional identification. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Sandusky scandal, several changes "demanded" by the alumni were made, including replacing the president and many members of the Board of Trustees.

Finally, we note that our study took place in the revelatory context of a scandal that prompted alumni

to reassess their identification with the organization. Such a scandal lays bare the strong emotions and effortful cognitions associated with the identification process. As such, our study mirrors what Albert and Whetten (1985) noted—that identity is often best studied when it is invoked or evoked by being challenged, questioned, or threatened, for it then rises to the level of conscious consideration. The same could be said for studying identification. Despite the advantage, then, of studying legacy identification in the context of a scandal, we also urge future research to study the phenomenon during more tranquil times. How, for instance, does a legacy identification with a former employer affect the day-to-day workings of an employee? One's sense of past identity could somehow be brought to bear, but a finer-grained study of how those processes play out could be quite valuable in underscoring the daily implications of legacy identification.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to a greater understanding of identification by showing how former (and even current) members often seek to maintain their organizational identification even when the organization is under a strong identity threat. In the wake of such a threat, members experience a wide range of thoughts and feelings, draw on their legacy identification, engage in a legacy identification struggle, target inside agents of the organization and outside enemies, and reassess their identification with an organization and their future intentions. The processes uncovered in this study help to illuminate (especially) the role of temporality in identification processes—how past identification becomes prologue for current and future organizational experiences.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A1
Additional Representative Data for Second-Order Themes

Negative Media Coverage
- "...a lynch mob feeding frenzy by the media."
- "...the blood-thirsty media wolves..."
- "The current situation is very serious, but it has been turned into a media circus, and is reminiscent of sharks getting frenzied over blood."

Questionable Organizational Responses
- "This scandal has completely desecrated our beloved Alma Mater..."
- "The cover-up went beyond athletics right to the top of the university..."
- "Their actions only served to magnify the lens on PSU. It went from 'The Sandusky Scandal', to the Penn State Scandal."

Past
- "As I reflect on my time at Penn State—as an undergraduate, graduate student, and residence hall staff member—I've been reminded of the fondness I have developed for that most instructive and developmental time in my life."
- "Up to this moment I had been able to look back upon my years at Penn State with a type of fond remembrance that I'm sure many alumni also feel."
- "I have worn the Penn State ring my Grandmother, now deceased, bought me when I graduated...My Grandfather graduated from Penn State...My Father graduated from Penn State...My Mother graduated from Penn State..."

Present
- "The events of this week have deeply shaken every Penn Stater that I know. It's as though we've lost what has grounded us for all these years as alumni."
- "But in the midst of it all, I still believe in and am proud to be affiliated with Penn State..."
- "I am finished 'mourning'...I am finished feeling as if I have lost my best friend; I am finished thinking that a large and significant and important part of my life has been tarnished, if not destroyed..."

Future
- "We will re-emerge stronger than ever."
- "I do believe that our University can, and will, bounce back from this. We will become stronger. We have LEARNED from our mistakes. I will forever support Penn State and have not lost faith in what our University stands for."
- "I will do everything in my power to make sure everyone I come into contact with knows that none of this is what Penn State is all about..."

Positive Emotions
- "Just to let you know, we continue to be Penn State proud!"
- "I am a proud PSU alum..."
- "I want to express my love for the University and make it known that football is such a small part of what Penn State means to me."

Negative Emotions
- "I have never been ashamed to be a Penn State Alumni until today."
- "I am shocked, embarrassed, appalled and angry about the events that have been uncovered over the past week."
- "I am thoroughly ashamed to be associated with Penn State right now."

Contradictory Emotions
- "To start, I am an extremely proud Penn State graduate...That having been said, I, like you, am appalled by the recent allegations made against Jerry Sandusky."
- "I have always been extremely proud of my Penn State degree. This morning, I only feel sadness and disgust at the University leadership."
- "I am totally embarrassed, humiliated and saddened beyond words at what has happened. I have asked my husband to hide my diploma so that I don't burn it in a fit of anger at the irresponsibility of the University that I dearly love."

General Targeting
- "I love Penn State. I'd not be where I am but for Penn State."
- "I am still PENN STATE PROUD and believe in PSU as a great institution."
- "I love my University..."

Specific Targeting
- "I am disgusted by the leadership of the BOT [Board of Trustees], including you [chair of the BOT]."
- "I love Penn State. I despise the Board of Trustees."
- "I still love Penn State, but I am not happy with the leadership..."

Unconditional Identification
- "...I am Penn State; I along with my alumni brothers and sisters and current students..."
- "My faith in Penn State does not have to be restored...it never left."
- "We stand firm that we will be Nittany Lions [the university mascot] until the day we die."

Disidentification
- "I can no longer be associated with or respect an institution that does not have the fortitude or loyalty that I value."
- "The university no longer exists to me."
- "Too little too late. I look with disdain on my diploma..."

TABLE A1
(Continued)

Reconciled Identification
- "As an Alum, I feel betrayed by administration who failed to fight for what we know was always the right way...The Penn State Way...I am Penn State Proud..."
- "As a PSU graduate, I cannot justify your [Board of Trustees'] rush to judgement in this matter and give zero credibility to you all, AD NAUSEOUS. I am still PENN STATE PROUD and believe in PSU as a great institution."
- "After learning of the horrific allegations against Mr. Sandusky, I knew in my heart that if anything positive could come out of the scandal, the Penn State community could bring it forth. I remain a very proud Penn Stater!"

Selective Identification
- "Penn State is MY school, not the Board of Trustees' school."
- "You [President Erickson] do not represent what is good for all who are associated with PSU and you should resign."
- "I feel insulted when PSU is identified as its athletic program....I attended the football games as a diversion during the fall but nothing more. Why must the athletic program be the central focus and not the diversion it should be...the primary role academics has and the very secondary role of athletics has in the life of Penn State."

Conditional Identification
- "When the Board of Trustees finds the courage to replace cowardice with honor, and publicly apologizes to Coach Paterno, I will resume my Penn State pride."
- "The University as a whole is a fine institution, and the things they are trying to do are worthy of praise. But the BOT [Board of Trustees] has to take action to restore my faith in this university."
- "I will no longer be giving to Penn State again until the Board of Trustees is removed for their premature firing of Joe Paterno."

Support Intentions
- "First, I am typically not one to sport the PSU garb...Well, in the past 48 hours or so, I have felt compelled to not only wear 'Penn State' proudly, I also plan to buy even more clothing...Second, I have not given much to Penn State over the past few years...but given the events of the past few days I am ready to get the checkbook back out."
- "The flag is flying outside our front door, and we are glad to be recognized as Penn State graduates."
- "I will continue to donate money to student organizations (such as THON) and student scholarships through my local alumni club."

Withdrawal Intentions
- "I have packed my Penn State memorabilia in boxes. My diploma is no longer on my wall."
- "In a few days, you will be receiving a box from me which will contain all of my Penn State gear."
- "...we will never donate to our alma mater again."

Support and Withdrawal Intentions
- "I will continue to support the mission of the Penn State Board of Trustees. I do not support and trust the current administration..."
- "I will continue to support the University emotionally, but as for financial support...I need to see that the Board of Trustees and the Administration has learned from this poor management of a crisis."
- "...I have kept wearing my [Penn State] ring, but for a while put all of my Penn State clothes away. We also chose not to put out our Penn State Christmas ornaments this year...I had recently gotten my clothes back out, but after the Freeh report they all went back in the closet."

APPENDIX B

TABLE B1
Co-occurrences of Legacy Identification Struggle, Reassessed Identification, and Intended Actions

Co-occurrences of Past, Present, and Future (Legacy Identification Struggle)

- "The recently announced. . .revelations regarding gaping lapses in professional, legal, and ethical judgment on the part of Penn State's top administration are deeply disturbing and embarrassing. As a life member of the Alumni Association I have always been proud to be a Penn Stater. Now I wonder–is the apparent ongoing and unshakable cover-up philosophy of the university's administrative team believed by civilized society to represent the philosophy of the entire university community."
- "I have always been extremely proud of my Penn State degree. This morning, I only feel sadness and disgust at the University leadership. I think the Alumni Association leadership owes it to the University and its members to stand up for what is right and what should have been done immediately after the incident was reported. Every official involved must resign so the University can attempt to heal the damage to its reputation. Regrettably, it is too late for us to make it right for Mr. Sandusky's victims. The official lack of action goes against everything that Penn State stood for."

Co-occurrences of Legacy Identification Struggle and Reassessed Identification

- ". . .We are very sad about the whole situation surrounding the charges against Jerry Sandusky and the other two University officials. We also regret that for a long time, no matter what everyone else at Penn State does, the University's reputation will be tarnished by these events. Despite the current circumstances, we want you to know that we among many thousands of loyal alums continue to have faith in the University and appreciate all that it has done for us and our families."
- "While we are shocked and troubled, and cannot now predict all of the consequences of these events, we must not allow them to tear apart the Penn State community or destroy what Penn State has been for 156 years. We have every reason to look proudly to the future as we are justifiably proud of the past. Despite the immediate harm and damage to our University and all that it represents, we must retain our well-deserved Penn State Pride in the institution that has and continues to mean so much to so many. As bad as this is, and as disappointed as we may be in the manner in which this was handled at different levels and at various times, it does not and cannot define us. We are. . . more and better than this (as everyone really knows)!"

Co-occurrences of Legacy Identification Struggle, Reassessed Identification, and Intended Actions

- ". . .I wish I could tell you that you have my full support in the days ahead. However, I can't do that because I am ashamed, saddened and angry beyond words over the despicable way that Joe Paterno, who has spent his life giving to this university, was dumped and left with not a shred of dignity by the university that I had loved for almost 40 years. But, that is in the past now. I cannot support this school anymore, not with my presence at football games, which has been a constant for my 34 years as a season ticket holder, and not with my financial contributions. Good luck in the days ahead, but PSU will never have my support again."
- "This is not an email I particularly want to send, or send lightly, as I am a proud alum. . .Nonetheless, given the information that has emerged surrounding . . . the Jerry Sandusky scandal, I find myself unable to support Penn State as an institution while these two men continue in their current positions. . .Furthermore, I do not intend to donate money to Penn State while Spanier and Paterno hold their current positions. I will not join Penn State's Alumni Association, nor will I attend Penn State athletic events or wear Penn State apparel. In short, while I remain proud of my time at Penn State, I will not acknowledge that relationship until Penn State has acknowledged the severity of the Sandusky scandal and made full measure to address any and all perceived involvement in it."