

A Collaborative-Directive Consulting Model for Organizational Change in a Private Institution
of Higher Education: A Case Study

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Abstract

This article presents a synthesis of the literature on consultation, collaboration, organizational consultation, and change that contributed to a model of collaborative-directive consultation. It also reports a case study based on the application of the model to a private university in the Western United States with over 30 campuses and 6,000 students that chose to develop a new training and development system and process design as part of an overall organizational change plan. It reports on findings that indicate that this model of consultation was successful in developing systems of training and accountability in the midst of both external and internal organizational change demands.

Keywords: organizational change, higher education, consulting, learning culture, training

Introduction

Those in higher education understand that the ability to compete effectively hinges upon an institution's ability and capacity to adapt and respond to change. To remain competitive institutions of higher education are continually faced with the challenge of adapting to new external market demands as well as improving processes and developing human capital through internal growth and development. Although many institutions of higher education have not been designed to respond to rapid demands nor develop channels for effective knowledge sharing and collaborative learning, a private university in the Western United States serving the needs of non-traditional students on 30-plus campuses (the University) recognized the need for consultation on how to transform into a high performance knowledge sharing and collaborative learning institution through the development and implementation of new training and development system and process design as part of its overall organizational change plan (the Plan). This consultative process required a model that would unify across the University to align with its strategic goals, develop a common purpose, build buy-in at all levels (Daniel, 2003; Khan, 2001), and foster collaboration. To effectuate meaningful and robust change, elements of collaborative consultation were combined with directive methods to develop a model of collaborative-directive consultation used by the consultant in guiding the University change team. The view of collaborative-directive consultation is somewhat controversial since scholars, such as Noell & Witt (1996), have noted that collaboration is often viewed as antithetical to directive approaches of consultation whereas Graham (1998) and Wickstrom, Jones, LaFleur, and Witt (1998) in studying collaborative juxtaposed to expert and prescriptive consultation, respectively, noted the absence of a definitive difference. However, investigations have revealed that directiveness can positively contribute to and combine with collaborative models of

consulting (Gutkin, 1999). Gutkin defined the collaborative-directive approach as one in which the consultant is prescriptive and influential while maintaining respect and openness to participatory input.

Historically, the term collaborative consultation in an educational or school psychology context has been used to describe the method and practice used between school psychologists, teachers, and student; a school-based behavioral enterprise (Gutkin & Curtis, 1982; Meyers, 1973). According to Williams (1979) school psychology consultants, through the consultation process, were to facilitate teachers' learning of techniques and processes to assist them in working with students. Although some scholars (Fuchs, Fuchs, Bahr, Fernstrom, & Stecker, 1990) found that some teachers prefer a directive approach other scholars (Babcock & Pryzwansky, 1983) found that teachers favored collaborative consultation to expert models during the consultation process. Tyler, Pargament, and Gatz, (1983) found in research extended to non-traditional school-based environments, that teachers favored collaborative models. Given the varied findings among researchers, the consultant chose to adapt a form of consultation that combined collaboration and directive models integrating four main factors, identified by various researchers, in the consultative process: (a) positive interactive (Erchul, Hughes, Meyers, Hickman & Braden, 1992), (b) agreement to respective roles, (c) voluntary and motivated participation (Conoley & Conoley, 1992), and (d) collaboration (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999). Buysse, Schulte, Pierce and Terry (1994) defined a collaborative model as joint efforts to identify and implement based on specific goals and objectives of the consultative process.

Extending the discoveries of Tyler, Pargament, and Gatz (1983), Dunst and Trivette (1988) proposed that for the consultant, empowerment should be a primary goal. This methodology is supported in self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1993) where scholars such as Hagen,

Gutkin, Wilson, and Oats, (1998) have shown that teaching self-efficacy results in an exertion of greater levels of effort and creativity by teachers. In addition, the development of a sense of community through a collaborative, self-discovery and inquiry approach is very important in promoting management and structural change. When the members of an organization are provided with the opportunity, through a collaborative consultation process that integrates necessary guidance through directive models, there is greater likelihood for acceptance and buy-in at the member level. According to Amey and Brown (2004) collaboration functions as an intervention support that promotes participants' efforts to understand how they function and how to execute responsive strategies. To demonstrate this hypothesis they developed a collaboration model on a series of progressive steps demonstrating how members of a cross-organizational initiative transition from individual to group to collaborative. The Amey and Brown collaboration model demonstrates a shift from directive to facilitative to inclusive to servant orientations. This progressive, integrated type of model provides support for a collaborative-directive model that facilitates participant transformation through the well-known stages of organizational change. Scholars agree that the collaborative-directive model is well-matched with creative solutions in school-based consultation (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; Ehrhardt, Barnett, Lentz, Stollar, & Reifin, 1996; Hiralall & Martens, 1998; Watson & Robinson, 1996). In addition, according to Strong and Claiborn (1982) the collaborative-directive model complements social influence approaches that promote change. Although a collaborative-directive approach can be prescriptive a consultant utilizing this approach can often develop institution receptivity to participatory input during the consultation process (Conoley, Conoley, Ivey, & Scheel, 1991). Although many methods can accomplish similar results, it is from this

framework that collaborative consultation combined with directive approaches was applied in the context of organizational change to the University.

In this context, negotiated order theory (Strauss, 1978), sense-making theory (Weick, 1995) and framing (Eddy, 2003) were used by the consultant for purposes of constructing a comprehensive approach for the University to understand the importance of relationships and alliances in developing a methodology for garnering support for the strategic aspects of its organizational change as well as its goal of initiating a training and development system and process design. According to Strauss (1978) negotiated order theory can be conceived of as the “sum total of the organization's rules and policies, along with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts, contracts, and other working arrangements currently obtained” (5-6). Negotiated order theory is a meaningful method for cooperative planning within an institution and provides a systematic approach for addressing shared problems across a distributed structure. This combined with Weick’s theory that an institution must have the capacity to make sense of itself because the capacity to make sense impacts its ability to manage change. If an institution can view itself outside of its current structure and culture and use cognitive dissonance to permeate its perceptions it can better equip it to navigate the expected alterations as they manifest during the change process. Framing then equips the institution to perceive contextual changes in a relational view to the overall purpose of the change and its connection to the strategic vision of the institution. It is noteworthy that Kotter and Cohen (2002) suggested that in order to institutionalize change efforts, consultants need to promote understanding in the need for a link between actions and outcomes implying a necessity for sense-making and framing in the process. As a result the work for the University evolved from an interdisciplinary collaborative frame (Creamer, 2003), directive prescriptions, and an emphasis on collaborative community.

The consulting process emphasized an institutional understanding of self framed in the context of the training mandate promoted by the change initiative negotiated through the participatory and collaborative efforts of the process stakeholders.

The Process of Community: Movement towards Organizational Change

According to many scholars, (Borg, 2002; Diamond, 1993; Miller, 1993), the process of community analysis requires that change and growth develop from within the organization as an outgrowth of successful collaborative efforts. In this regard, collaboration provides a supportive underpinning for participants to develop a sense of community. Rappaport and Seidman, (2000) viewed community as a form of empowerment that encouraged solutions that are community controlled and not regulated organizationally. In such, community coalitions are representative of social models (Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 1996) and reflect a systems approach. As Holder (2002) noted a systems approach is multi-dimensional and emphasizes contextualizing the organizational environment as well as the interdependence of the individual entities that comprise the organizational system. A systems methodology that highlights community expounds synergy between constituencies, promotes resource-sharing, develops trust, and produces a variety of solutions (Mandell, 1999). As a result an emphasis on community within the University was established within the methodology of a systems approach as defined by Holder and used as a focal point throughout the consultation process.

According to Roussos and Fawcett (2000) community collaboration results in systems change impacting multiple components that can be used to impact organizational practices. The collaborative structure facilitates shared information with input from a variety of stakeholders and opportunities to participate in shared decision-making. A well-functioning collaborative process requires multiple inputs, including: participation, communication, goal setting,

collaboration, evaluation, and coordination towards outcomes. As a result the end-product of community collaboratives in the context of organizational change fosters innovation and creativity where participants self-manage through a process that is “informal, emergent, and dynamic” (Belasen, 2000, p. 262). Therefore, a primary goal in for the University was to develop collaborative advantage (Kanter, 1994) within the demands of the ever-changing organizational environment while developing a training and development system and process design.

According to Cummings and Worley (1995) a successful organizational change plan requires: (a) motivating change, (b) creating vision, (c) developing political support, (d) managing transition, and (e) sustaining momentum. Many authors and scholars agree (Connell, 2004; Pelletier, 2006) that the greatest risk to the successful implementation of organizational change on an enterprise-wide basis is the failure to take into consideration major aspects of organizational change management. Effective change management enables the transformation of strategy, processes, technology, and people to enhance performance and ensure continuous improvement in an ever-changing environment. Therefore, not only is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational change management critical to the success of any project that will bring about significant change but it is about moving; transforming people and processes, through people and processes. Managing knowledge provides a crucial opportunity for achieving significant improvements in employee performance and competitive advantage. In the increasingly competitive higher education adult-learner market, it is imperative to streamline processes, provide exceptional customer service, and provide a means for dealing with increasingly complex work and work problems. In much of the literature on organizational change and change management it is immediately apparent that the change process has numerous phases and those phases can require extended periods of time (Kotter, 2000). Although change

can be radical and impact an organization dramatically and drastically in a short period of time, for change to be successful it must have change agents who can manage change, and leaders who can lead change and embrace participation on many levels (Higgs & Rowland, 2000).

There are many approaches to change management and Kerber and Buono (2005) identify three: (a) directed change, (b) planned change, and (c) guided change. Directed change is often referred to as top-down change where the emphasis is on the use of authority and an appropriate response. This type of change approach is not effective for long-term transformative change and although the Plan recognized that the executive leadership must drive the change decision and participate in the roll-out and implementation, it did not rely on traditional top-down change techniques to implement nor manage the change process. Planned change arises at the top but provides a roadmap for the change and encourages participation in the change process. Guided change allows for facilitation and collaboration and is closely aligned with a collaborative-directive model of consultation. The consultant relied on guided change as its primary approach in its work with the University.

Training and Professional Development

Slotte and Herbert (2006) in a research study explained that in the context of professional development, training, learning and working are not separate activities. The integration of learning and working at all levels of activity within an organization is a way of improving the effectiveness in terms of practice as well as the intellectual capacity of individuals, teams and the company's business needs (Bryans et al., 1998). In developing standardized start-up training processes, it is necessary to recognize that participation often occurs in an expert culture, with the participant on the periphery, and as expertise develops, the participant moves closer to the center of the expert culture. Learning, qualification, and ongoing training should be recognized

as essential components of culture and development in institutions. In such, collaboration and interaction between co-workers are essential for successful learning (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). As learning is an integrated and essential part of an expert culture (Scardamalia, 2004), learned content should be customized to meet identified training needs in the context of the culture of the institution. Participants in training must be motivated to utilize authentic experiences to develop relevant knowledge and applied skills (Eraut, 2004) to effectively accomplish specified tasks and responsibilities as defined by their role and job descriptions.

A Case Study

Background

The University is a private institution serving the higher educational needs of working adults and other non-traditional undergraduate and graduate students who require alternatives to traditional main campus-based programs for over 50 years. The University provides academic opportunities through its 30-plus campus locations in two States requiring multiple staff positions in each location to support student, faculty, operational, and administrative demands. The University enrolls over 6,000 students and has 45 undergraduate majors and 30 graduate programs. The University emphasis individualized attention, convenient class times and locations and an atmosphere that encourages balancing career and education in a real-world learning environment. There is a strenuous emphasis on customer service to the student. In such, the University operates in a distributed environment with limited process documentation and inconsistent training practices across the institution. In its multi-dimensional environment, the University recognized that knowledge is a higher educational institution's stock in trade and that it must have the ability to apply knowledge assets that can differentiate the University in the marketplace. This required the University to reassess its organizational culture, improve

productivity, and establish consistency across the institution's training and development of its human capital resources to improve efficiency in operations. The University's ability to maximize its efficiency and capitalize on the knowledge of its human capital was integral not only to its continued growth but to its ability to attract and retain human resources. To effectuate change at the organizational level and transition the University into a high performing knowledge-sharing and learning institution, it was necessary to address issues of institutional restructuring as well the establishment of a collaborative culture.

As a result, the University realized that it must implement appropriate change management strategies to minimize the productivity dip consistent with the predictable resistance and reluctance to change. As part of a larger organizational change initiative designed to standardize and share best practices, increase employee collaboration, and formalize employee training and development the University recognized that knowledge management techniques had the potential to empower staff to take an active role in the development of the institution and contribute to achieving the objectives of the change in meaningful and effective ways. A collaborative learning environment was determined to provide the best way to learn with and from others in an informal setting. Such an environment would provide a vehicle for connecting staff to each other's stories, experiences, and mentoring - all of which could result in accelerated learning and the transfer of tacit knowledge among co-workers. Improving staff training, collaboration, and overall work experience through the application of a collaborative-directive consultation methodology would, when applied in the context of the organizational change reduce frustration while improving morale and productivity.

Most institutions recognize the need for and the importance of employee training and professional development, but few are able to adequately demonstrate their return on investment

(ROI) from a productivity vantage point and many neglect to evaluate the integration of knowledge management as a tool which can be used to build a foundation towards a collaborative learning and knowledge sharing institution. The purpose and recommended strategies of developing a new training and development system and process design as part of the organizational change were derived from the perspective that recognition of need for change, seeing, and “identifying where it needs to be in the future” (By, 2005, p. 369) are first steps in a successful change process. In order to accomplish this, the University had previously introduced an overall organizational change plan that provided the various stakeholder groups information about the nature of organizational change and re-structuring, factors and priorities unique to the University during these change efforts, and recommended action plans necessary to better understand how to participate in and contribute to the successful implementation of the University’s Plan. However, to effectuate such change and accomplish its human resource development goals, the University had to boldly commit human and financial resources to transforming itself into a living, breathing, adapting culture of collaborative learning and knowledge sharing while concurrently undertaking a significant organizational re-structuring.

In order to accomplish this transformation, the University first recognized the external changes that were driving the internal change process, such as, increased competition in the adult-learner market, rising costs associated with numerous campuses, and redundancies and inefficiencies in operations and positions across the University. Second, the University also identified that some of the assumptions, systems, and structures currently in place work and even work-well and that these success contributors could effectively contribute to the change process. Third, the drivers for the University’s Plan and processes were primarily a result of its recognition that a collaborative learning and knowledge sharing institution would not just work-

well but would cause a transformation that would allow the University to excel in accomplishing its strategic objectives. This key perspective was a primary factor creating the vision, driving the vision, and formulating the strategies and action items that derived the goals and objectives of this change process.

The Goals and Objectives

The goal of this consultation was to develop and implement a new training and development system and process design as part of the University's overall organizational change plan. The primary objectives derived from this goal were identified, by the consultant, as requiring five primary steps: (a) foundation building, (b) developing standardized start-up training processes, (c) developing standardized ongoing training processes, (d) developing specified training and development programs, and (e) developing succession transitioning. The foundation building stage required analysis of the new staffing model and associated job responsibilities and functions for each position, conducting sampling telephone and in-person interviews, collecting data through surveys, correlating job responsibilities and functions, and producing a working document for training objectives based on the qualitative data gathered from the surveys and interviews in this stage for further use in developing the standardized start-up training processes.

Developing the standardized start-up training processes required the design of a standardized training process model using appropriately identified and cross-correlated training modalities, the design of assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of established training-based outcomes embedded in the start-up training process, and design and delivery implementation guidelines that would ensure valid replication and scalability. The development of the standardized ongoing training processes involved the identification of key skills associated

with each staff position, the identification of discrete training units to reinforce skill sets and develop consistency and uniformity across the institution, the design of assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of established training based outcomes embedded in the ongoing training process, and design and delivery implementation guidelines that would ensure valid replication and scalability.

The specified training and development phase focused on selected staff positions that were identified by the University as integral to the strategic training goals and objectives of the University. The selected staff positions were primarily managerial in purpose and function. The requirements included identifying and defining professional development priorities based on available University information, random sampling responses to surveys, and selected telephone and in-person interviews based on identified success criteria. In addition, this stage required the identification of skill and training objects necessary for successful professional development based on the results of the qualitative data as well as appropriate content, sequencing, and personal development plans tied to stated goals and objectives. The succession transitioning stage built on the data gathered from the standardized ongoing training process and required the design of a succession plan for each staff position so as to facilitate the uniform and consistent transition of human resources across the University.

Method

The data for this study were collected using a qualitative case study methodology. This method of inquiry allowed for an exploration of the inner-workings of the University in a real-world context while providing a means to capture the perspectives and impressions of those participating daily in particular job functions. Semi-structured telephone and in-person interviews, surveys, on-site campus visits, meetings with randomly selected personnel, input

from campus administration and executive leadership, and factual data gathered from University publications and human resource documentation were used to collect the data. Job descriptions were reviewed to develop a more complete understanding of each position's task requirements and expectations, and consistencies and inconsistencies between job descriptions and reality were identified by position. Based on University job descriptions and self-reported descriptions of responsibilities and daily activities a training needs analysis was assembled and used for purposes of determining needs for training competencies. A SWOT questionnaire was also provided to the participants as part of the data-gathering packet that was e-mailed across campuses. It was explained that the purpose of the SWOT analysis was to correlate the consultant's recommendations on training, development and organizational change to strategic and tactical objectives, to more thoroughly understand strengths and opportunities for growth, and to recommend practical, realistic solutions to address weaknesses and threats. The data collected touched all levels of the University from influential decision-makers to entry-level staff positions. The data collection period extended over six months.

Participants were selected either randomly based on position and accessibility or volunteered in response to surveys and questionnaires that were e-mailed to all identified staff positions in the 30-plus distributed campuses of the University. One hundred and seventeen surveys were e-mailed to identified personnel and 95 were completed and returned to the consultant, for a 79.49% completion rate. The surveys required the participants to answer open-ended questions, such as "What are the primary contributions you/your position make to the organization?" "Do you have written policies and procedures that you follow, or are the primary source of direction/information for your job provided by word of mouth?" and "What knowledge and skills are important to success in your current position?" (Appendix A). Some of the

questions posed in the interviews on training in the context of the University's organizational change included: (a) From an ideal training perspective, what would better empower and equip you? Facilitate your job? (b) What do you see as resources, training, organizational types of issues that would bring improvement from your perspective? (c) If you were coming into this job, what would you want at your disposal to equip you for success in this position?

Telephone interviews were conducted with selected members of the staff who were in managerial positions and had either been with the University for more than Five years or who had been through previous distributed local campus reorganizations with the University. In-person interviews were also conducted by the consultant and team members with selected staff members on-site at campuses selected both for well-known successes throughout the University as well as clearly identified concerns with effective operation. Interviews were based on a pre-established list of questions that were presented in a discussion format in the privacy of the interviewee's office, encouraging the free exchange of information or by phone at a scheduled time. An opportunity was also provided during the interview for input that was not derived from the guided list of questions. The interviews were approximately 45-60 minutes in length and copious notes were taken during the interview on a laptop with the consent of the interviewee.

Data Analysis

The results from the surveys were collected from the participants by a completed survey document e-mailed to the consultant. Members of the consultant's team reviewed the data for trends, themes, and commonalities. A categorized master report by position was developed based on responses with a miscellaneous section for non-categorized responses. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data this process was conducted independently by two separate members of the consultant's team. The responses to the guided interview questions were then

also reviewed independently by members of the consultant's team to produce a categorized master report. All information collected from informal meetings with administration, University publications, demographic data, and human resource input was also compiled into appropriately categorized master reports and independently reviewed by separate members of the consulting team. The data was then interpreted in the context of the mandated organizational change to identify connections between reactions and responses to the organizational change plan, the primary strategic objective of the University, and the relationship to the tactical mandate to implement a new training and development system and process design as part of the University's overall organizational change plan.

Results

Overall responses were realistic and objective, and interviewees demonstrated a positive disposition in their word choices and descriptions. Based on the findings the results were organized into four major topical areas for a better understanding of the data and its interpretation and application by the University.

Organizational Training Objectives

The data gathered in the needs analysis phase was used to identify the competencies and skills necessary for all positions to successfully achieve their objectives and effectively perform their daily role and perform their responsibilities. The competency models for each position provided the foundation for building and recommending a comprehensive training program, individual development plans, performance measurements, and assessments and management systems. Each competency was delineated into specific skills, and the skills and competencies were correlated to develop and recommend actual training courses. At the request of the University, an emphasis was placed on manager training. Managers of de-centralized campuses

face a unique challenge in managing both their own campuses and interacting and collaborating with the main campus while reporting to upper levels of leadership. Managers face interpersonal and business operations responsibilities not faced by other positions and, therefore, benefit from a specialized training and development program focused on the comprehensive skills and competencies required in their positions. As generalists, the subject matter, competencies, and skills that require development are broad for many managers.

A thorough review of job descriptions, questionnaires completed by members of the staff in each position, on-site and phone interviews with selected participants, the University's mission statement and information session reviews at two separate campuses revealed common themes in the vision and mission of delivery of training across the University. These common themes centered in a need for start-up and continued development in management, planning and organization, problem analysis and resolution, conflict resolution, leadership, team-building, and strategic and tactical planning. These competencies correlated to organizational training objectives as described in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1]

Impact and Participation

The findings of the study revealed that all participants at the University were impacted by the Plan. The University's staff were subject to enormous pressures to increase enrollment, retain students, and meet tight deadlines, all while providing exceptional customer service and personalization in student services. Many of these participants had opinions and beliefs about the overall need for the change and its inevitable success or failure. In addition, many of these participants had conflicting views due to the direct impact of the organizational change plan on their way of doing business and the newly created expectations that the Plan conferred during the

change process. Many of the participants also found parts of the Plan burdensome, requiring additional work and were skeptical towards its impact on their career opportunities within the University. This required executive leadership to make a concerted effort to understand the meaning and impact of participation. It was revealed that the University recognized that the change recipients perceived the organizational change plan as creating a conflict between immediate expectations and demands when in fact a key anchor in the organizational change plan required a challenge to some of these basic assumptions.

Currently, there is little standardization and many campuses are using their own methods and processes to support the organizational change. Responses revealed that work is structured differently from one location to another and staff cannot rely on each other across locations because there is a lack of uniformity. In addition, there was not a person/place/department that had the authority to determine how processes were handled system-wide. Lack of consistency in handling tasks and issues across campuses was a major threat because everyone was used to individuality and autonomy and participants had a sense that they were entitled to their own methods. According to the responses the sense was that teamwork across staff at the same campus was critical and that there should not be a 'this is my job, this is your job' mentality in order to meet the needs of students and complete work requirements efficiently and effectively. According to the responses, programs or processes that could improve teamwork among all staff at a campus would be beneficial. Since policies were often changed or implemented without taking into account the impact of the change on the distributed campuses there was often conflict and confusion for both staff and students. It was believed that processes and rules could be implemented (and documented) that would relieve some of the ambiguity and subjectivity in the administration of various staff roles and minimize conflict. Since there was not a clear

understanding of what staff or students should expect from the organizational changes rumors and anxiety were rampant. However, participants understood that their participation was integral to the success of the organizational change and its related training and professional development efforts. This aided in the alleviation of concerns regarding disruption and loss of familiarity and control in the change process. Findings also showed that the University's use of a combination of planned change and a modified guided change processes, which focused on involving all of the expertise and creativity of the organizational members, was discernable by the participants. There was evidence to suggest that as organic change emerged and evolved; participants were cognizant of the reconfiguring of existing practices and models and the testing of new ideas and perspectives.

Communication

Data on communication showed that the University recognized the need to provide sophisticated and streamlined ways for people to communicate with each other in order to instill greater teamwork within the University both during and after the change process. While the University currently provided some informal bulletin boards and portals to access and share information, the use of these tools tended to be sporadic and was not an essential focus of the organizational culture. The University also recognized and affirmed the importance of seeking knowledge so that newer employees were not penalized nor regarded in less esteem for engaging in the exchange of ideas and asking questions with those who may evaluate them and make decisions as to their future role within the University. The current culture, however, inhibited asking questions by fostering an environment of knowledge-known rather than promoting one of knowledge-to-know, and by the lack of access to peers and subject matter experts inherent in the de-centralized environment. Participants shared that regular staff meetings with all staff at the

main campus would be helpful in improving communication and information sharing. In addition, standard templates could be provided for topic discussion and used to gather information for potential training. It was also identified that there is a lack of community among some which manifests in a lack of collaboration, information-sharing or periodic meetings to maintain currency on important issues, make staff aware of changes or even best practices. The responsiveness or willingness of main campus contacts was not always consistent so data indicated that it would be helpful to identify points of contact for specific issues and questions to facilitate more efficient follow-up.

Knowledge-sharing

Staff reported consistently, across positions and locations and regardless of the length of employment, that they desired more interaction with same-position peers but rarely had this opportunity. The distribution of campuses currently limited such interaction to the annual or semi-annual conferences where face to face meeting time was limited. Changes in such practices including formalized training and document processes and procedures that facilitated the availability of institutional knowledge and wisdom that can require years for successful development. Despite current challenges, most staff had been employed by the University for many years and had a wealth of knowledge and experience in one or more positions. Staff also demonstrated a willingness to help and train others, and newer staff consistently reported the need to initiate contact with peers at other campuses in order to learn how to handle their jobs and tasks. It was reported that such contact has been challenging without a database of information on the expertise of the University's staff.

Findings revealed that currently information sharing, access to information, and ongoing training is highly dependent on the inquisitive nature of the incumbent in the position and their

initiative in seeking out and tracking down information. Rules, policies, and procedures are not currently documented and accessible without this independent quest for information. In addition, e-mails and updates were often sent from people who had never been formally introduced to others within the University and therefore, it was unclear who had the authority to make or communicate changes which caused confusion among members of the staff. Findings also indicated that more collaboration among staff serving in the same role at various campuses was important to staff success. Although there were regional meetings there was usually not enough time for knowledge-sharing and this concept was not facilitated among group members so there was little, if any, supportive collaboration. Data also revealed that participants believed there was an opportunity to tap into knowledge resources if this could be facilitated and supported by the main campus. In addition, cross-training across the positions would be helpful in ensuring that work was completed in a timely manner particularly when there were absences or insufficient staff at many campuses.

In addition, data suggested that the University's recognition of the importance of technology as a tool for knowledge sharing and collaboration in the context of promoting professional competencies had not materialized in the workplace. Further, the current culture only partially supported shared access to knowledge resources and participants showed some reluctance to forgo intellectual autonomy. The ability to capture this tacit knowledge was clearly impaired not only by technological resources but also by limited buy-in at critical levels.

Discussion

The primary strategic objective was to transform the University into a collaborative learning and knowledge sharing institution, while addressing the organizational restructure focusing on developing a new training and development system and process design as part of the

overall organizational change plan. In such, the University shifted from an autonomy-driven system to a collaborative, cross-aligned institution. This organizational change process had the prime elements of shifting the University to a learning-focused, shared-knowledge entity that applied principles of knowledge management beyond traditional confines and normative uses. The change team, through facilitation derived from the collaborative-directive consultation process, grasped the importance of facilitating the change “through vision casting and the creation of cultural maps that link different change efforts and initiatives so that there can be reassessed re-shifting, rebalancing, or re-sequencing to eliminate obstacles and blockages” (Kerber & Buono 2005, p. 28). The consultant aided the change team in understanding that trace elements of change would always exist in a changing culture, and that for success the change project needed an identifiable end so that participants could clearly identify successes and make adjustments for future efforts. This focus on participation was derived from the logic of attraction as described by Kerber and Buono and reinforced by many scholars and practitioners (Lines, 2004; Lines, Selart, & Espedal, 2005) who believe that participation has numerous positive effects on change strategy, reduces resistance, and perpetuates commitment.

Organizational Training Objectives

Senge (1990) has argued that to develop competitive advantage that enduring changes stirred by external factors, an institution must develop and promote continuous deep learning. This required the University to examine various technologies that function to not only exchange knowledge but provide access to relevant knowledge, and develop abilities to collect and construct new knowledge (Appelbaum and Reichart, 1998). Higher education is a labor-intensive enterprise. People shape the culture of the institution and training and development facilitates staff keeping pace with change, enhancing their skills and competencies, and contributing to the

achievement of the institution's objectives. The larger and more decentralized an institution is, the more important ongoing training programs, particularly manager training, are in order to develop the skills and competencies necessary to ensure successful performance. Start-up training helps individuals to better understand their day-to-day responsibilities, ongoing training expands on this understanding and reinforces the big picture of how specific responsibilities support the institution's mission, and manager training connects the institution's strategic objectives and executive leadership's vision with individual responsibility for successful implementation with managed staff. In addition, ongoing training has several critical benefits to the institution, including developing (a) proactive, strategic, and tactical thinking that translates into better customer service and public relations to the student-customer, (b) increased engagement and contribution in the workplace, (c) better attitudes and higher morale; and (d) reduced absenteeism, complaints, and turnover.

Therefore, to accomplish the stated objectives of developing and implementing a new training and development system and process design, the University recognized that its transformation into a collaborative learning and knowledge sharing professional services culture was a necessity. The University, therefore, encouraged admission of errors while promoting the seeking of know-how, intellectual capital, and answers to questions by all stakeholders. The results from the surveys, interviews, and on-campus visits provided the consultant with the data to develop comprehensive and detailed pre and post training assessments, training objectives, and proposed measurements by position. As an integral part of the training and development system, each position included a position overview, identified skills and competencies, training to support maintenance and improvement in the position, training objectives, and proposed means of measuring performance and learning in the context of the position. Collective training

plans were then compiled for each position and personal professional development plans were recommended for human resource attraction and retention.

An emphasis was placed on training managers since they faced a unique set of challenges in managing up, down, and across the University; all while dealing with rapid change. Developing managers is a widely accepted means of developing a strong, sustainable organizational culture while improving organizational performance. Such challenges highlight the need for competencies and skills, such as, communication via multiple media and methods, delegating effectively and managing performance, motivating increasing levels of performance, and fostering team development and accountability. Every successful institution requires effective leadership, with a distinct set of management skills, to fully utilize the skills of the staff.

Based on the data it was also recommended that upon selection for training, pre-instruction assessments for courses/competencies indicated by the position would be administered. In those courses/competencies where the participant achieved 85% or better on the pre-instruction assessment, the participant's training transcript would be updated to indicate mastery in that course/competency. Participants demonstrating mastery on the pre-instruction assessment would be exempted from enrolling in those courses/competencies. Upon completion of instruction, a post-instruction assessment would be administered. If the participant achieved 85% or better on the post-instruction assessment, the training transcript would be updated to indicate mastery on the post-instruction assessment. If the participant did not achieve mastery, the manager would be assigned to a local mentor who had demonstrated mastery in the course/competency for ongoing development in the competency. The training manager would evaluate the post-instruction assessment to identify the knowledge, skills and abilities where the

manager had not achieved mastery and provide this information to the assigned mentor and manager to focus the development activities on the areas of greatest need and potential impact. A post-development assessment would be administered approximately 30 days following the mentor assignment. Finally, additional training support may be required to identify appropriate training and development opportunities for participants who were not able to achieve mastery on the post-development assessment.

Input and Participation

It is also important to note that within this organizational change process the University and the participants needed to unlearn common beliefs and behaviors (Akgun, Lynn, & Byrne, 2003). This required a deliberate cognitive effort on the part of the University and its members. The University needed to deliberately integrate social cognition principles (Weiner, Graham, Taylor & Meyer, 1983) as it engaged the steps to transform itself into a high performance learning institution with an articulable training and development system in the change process. A successful restructuring initiative usually begins with champions of change. Champions at the executive leadership level must be accompanied by a cross-functional, multi-level change team. This collaborative effort ensured that the change strategies were cultivated with a comprehensive perspective so that the change messaging permeated the entire institution as quickly and effectively as possible, while providing an opportunity to gather qualitative feedback from all levels within the University. The consultant continually worked to monitor levels of commitment and participation by executive leadership during the change process through e-mails, face-to-face meetings, and conference calls so as to maintain momentum as change progressed throughout the University. As part of the communications effort and to continually refresh the purpose for, need for, and correlation of the change objectives to the overall strategic objectives; as well as

individual interests of various groups and segments within the University, there were: (a) interactive workshops to provide frequent opportunities for change recipients to understand how the ongoing change impacted them in their performance objectives, (b) focus groups and surveys to gain feedback on issues and concerns as well as gauge, quantitatively, the change recipients progress in understanding, acceptance, and application of the change initiatives, (c) periodic briefing sessions/road-shows (for important issues and announcements) by executive leadership for face-time and to illustrate continued commitment to the change initiatives and change process, (d) human resource and training staff one-on-one meetings where appropriate to alleviate concerns regarding changes in performance expectations, compensation and role requirements, and (e) updated presentations to gain commitment and ensure crispness and freshness in the dissemination of information so as to prevent stale news and minimize rumor mills and gossip.

The University established the following values to shape the future culture and create a culture of commitment and enhanced performance: (a) real-time relevant and applied knowledge to propel efficiency and excellence in operations, (b) knowledge sharing through communication across campuses, (c) collaboration – driving success through concerted group efforts, (d) tangible recognition of value for contributions to knowledge sharing and collaboration, (e) value and respect for a collaborative learning and knowledge sharing environment, (f) trust and integrity in the collaborative process, (g) acceptance of responsibility and commitment for participation in the collaborative process, and (h) acknowledgement of knowledge sharing and collaborative contributions.

It is well-accepted that restructuring and change cause disruption. Disruption occurred for staff members at all levels within the University because it impacted: (a) the organizational

structure, culture, and climate; (b) the way the University operated, and (c) processes and procedures across departments. Disruption also occurred in the events that contributed to the University's prior successes, and therefore, impacted its ability to maintain those successes without implementing temporary sustainability measures. For example, providing access to programs at convenient times (i.e., evening and Saturday classes) which was an integral part of the University's marketing campaigns were impacted by changes in policy and process occurring during the organizational change. To manage disruption, the University identified and clarified its strategic objectives and goals of the change plan within the context of the transformation. The University established several objectives from an internal operations perspective that were intended to achieve the organizational outcome objectives. These overarching organizational outcome objectives and internal operational practices provided the University with a starting point and direction for a proactive change management plan. With these objectives clear, the University was able to plan for contingencies to minimize and manage disruption. Disruption, like change, is inevitable so planning for disruption allowed the University to minimize the severity and impact of it.

As disruption affects people, it is critical to identify which groups will and/or should play a role in decision-making and which groups will be impacted by decisions. In such, the University was able to evaluate each group's perspective, expectations, and requirements, while also measuring the impact of decisions on these groups. Additionally, identifying how short- and long-term success would be measured and defined provided a means for assessing the success of implementation efforts and feedback that allowed for modification of the Plan, as necessary. The final tenet in planning for and managing disruption was to implement the Plan swiftly. In addition, measuring the success or failure of initiatives frequently allowed for expedient

corrections during the process. At the tactical level, the University specifically identified and implemented the practices that flowed from the University's primary strategic objectives related to the Plan. In all areas it was important that there was a sense of purpose (Higgins & McAllister, 2004) and a concerted effort to generate buy-in. Achieving buy-in required common threads of understanding and meaning that was derived from a shared and accepted logistical language.

Further, some resistance was overcome by involving employees in the change process through communication, participation, and feedback. Additional means of overcoming resistance included providing advance notice of upcoming changes, maintaining sensitivity to employee concerns, and providing a viable means of communicating and responding to those concerns. Another method that proved successful was the application of Lewin's force-field analysis as applied in an academic environment (Jenkins, 1949), which encouraged groups of people to tackle organizational issues that previously seemed too complex or too deeply rooted to approach. In this model, the change process is depicted as the impetus for overcoming the organization's status quo; the balance between forces for change and forces that resist change. Lewin believed that change driving forces needed to overcome resistant change forces in a type of tug-of-war in order to accomplish change. In order to overcome challenging forces when a change was introduced the driving and resisting forces were identified, analyzed, and where necessary were selectively removed to promote change efforts.

Knowledge-sharing

One of the key anchors in the development and deployment of a comprehensive employee development and training program was grounded in real-time access to knowledge capital and tools. Implicit in this development process was the need to capture tacit knowledge and transform tacit, implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge. This required that the

University provide “spaces for generative conversations and concerted actions” (Albert, 2006, p. 20). This anchor was directly connected to re-structuring access to best practices through cross-alignment across campuses and functions. Once again this required the development of knowledge sharing best practices for utilization in the development and deployment of the employee development and training programs. To overcome the barriers of traditional decentralized, autonomous locations focusing in their own interests, systems thinking was employed grounded in the context within which this organizational change initiative was introduced. Systems thinking prompted boundary crossing in an objective way. A collaborative learning environment cultivated with a systems-thinking focus provided greater potential to establish and successfully implement best practices by breaking down cultural barriers not only between campuses but also between campus administrative staff and faculty, as well as between the centralized departments and the groups they supported.

The transformation to collaborative knowledge sharing within the University was approached with caution. “Knowledge sharing often causes employees concerns. One [of the most] common concerns is that the sharer may lose his/her privileges after sharing know-how to peers” (Hsu, 2006, p. 327). Within the University, knowledge is a highly valued asset and the keeper of the knowledge is often highly-esteemed and well-regarded. The sharing of knowledge may create a fear of loss of power and position that must be addressed within the change process. One method employed to avoid this loss was to foster recognition through contributions to mentorship and the contribution to collaborated know-how. The approach is similar to the scholar who shares knowledge but still receives high recognition for his/her contributions. This focus is also supported by the introduction of systems thinking that eliminates the, us and them, mentality which is common in a de-centralized environment. The use of a systems thinking

approach re-formulated the conversation and context of critical analysis and knowledge sharing as participants viewed everyone a part of a larger system, rather than as individual units with individual interests. The systems thinking approach promoted recognition and cultivation of interdependencies.

The imperative to introduce technology to promote a culture that codified and shared tacit knowledge was at the heart of the strategic mission and vision that was the core of the University's Plan. In such, the University used some of the traditional knowledge management techniques while also leaning on important elements in creating an organizational learning environment. This required that the University identify potential benefits, deploy planning, modeling and tracking, as well as assign responsibilities with authority to allow for actual realization. The University recognized that benefits are not easy to realize in practice. It was often difficult to translate business change objectives at a macro level into identifiable measures that were traceable systematically. Since, institutions often fail to deliver the anticipated benefits because of poor transition management from project delivery to operational reality, the University used: (a) an holistic approach to achieving benefits, (b) measured progress against the Plan through multiple methods of metrics and analysis, and (c) gained buy-in to achieve optimum results.

Communication

In the University's traditional environment the standard protocol was communication in a top-down fashion by not providing an atmosphere that encouraged input and participation by all participants. The consultant, therefore, served as an integrator by developing an atmosphere of open communication that encouraged thoughtful preparation and dissemination of ideas. One strategy used by the consultant and executive leadership was to portray, in his/her actions, a

knowledge-to-know environment and to empower the change team by encouraging and fostering questions. A knowledge-to-know environment is one in which there is an emphasis on empowerment through a mutual exchange of information. In this context staff may proactively and assertively seek information through open communication channels that encourages bridges between leadership and lower levels within an institution. It affords members of the institution an ability to contextually interpret their environment and to apply knowledge obtained through trustworthy and open channels to their own understanding of events surrounding them. The creation of a knowledge-to-know environment was accomplished through a variety of different forums, including informal discussion groups, peer group access, roundtables with University subject matter experts and executive leadership, and consistent University-wide distributions through typical communication channels, such as e-mail. Hsu (2006) reported that “high-performing companies offer incentives for making contributions to the collectivity and held special activities to promote employee knowledge sharing” (p. 332).

In addition to formal methods of communication a change agent should use informal networks as well, such as peer groups, and natural coalitions within the University. This required that the consultant establish and demonstrate trust, credibility, and integrity throughout the change process (Lines, et al., 2005). The consultant recognized that any organizational change process would have side effects – unintended consequences (Gilmore, Shea, & Useem, 1997) and in such legitimacy would be an issue throughout the change process. Transparency and honesty were important character traits for the consultant, as well as the University’s executive leadership, in producing powerful role models.

Communication also needed to include clear articulation of the mission, objectives, and need for change as well as celebration of successes and reporting on obstacles/challenges and

contingency plans for dealing with such. Goldberg (2005), in describing several illustrations of leading through change, pointed out that one of the leading traps is a lack of precision and timeliness in communication. Communications specialists and educators understand that words – what they mean and how they are used, are critical for successful and effective communication. While the communication plan and strategy emphasized specific ways in which information regarding the Plan flowed through the University; a communication plan in itself would be insufficient if communication was not clear, concise, and meaningful within its proper context. Building on this concept, Bayerlein and Gailey's (2005) six principles of performance communication were applied for establishing a solid communication platform as a part of the University's Plan. These principles are: (a) build communication as an integrated system connected to the business strategy, (b) provide clarity, information and inspiration to connect heads, hands, hearts and minds, (c) use communication as a leadership alignment tool, (d) establish strategic communication competencies, (e) analyze information flow to provide neutral, objective perspectives on critical issues, and (f) move faster than the speed of change. Since change primarily impacts people, whether in implementing new procedures or instituting new technologies, ignoring the crucial human side is a guaranteed path to failure. As a result, the communication plan addressed and capitalized on this critical aspect of change management by anticipating the impact of change.

The change team, including not only the consultant and key leadership participants, but also the cross-functional, multi-level team members, was the cornerstone for the communication aspects of the Plan. The team focused on the various aspects of the change initiative, providing broad highlights of the goals of the change effort. A critical component to the Plan and its communication aspect was to provide employees with input on the changes affecting them. The

Plan incorporated the opportunity, within specific guidelines and expectations, for staff to generate ideas and detailed action plans to support the change objectives. This increased commitment and buy-in for the change, and provided staff with a sense of control in the process. A considerable part of the culture change and shift to a collaborative learning environment resulted from participation in all aspects of the change initiative.

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

The study was limited to subjective responses of the participants as interpreted by the consultant and members of its team. In addition, the scope of the participants responses may have been formulated for purposes of the consultation, although participants were reminded that their answers would not be shared on an individual basis but summarized for purposes of presentation to executive leadership. It is also possible that the findings may be subject to other interpretations. Research was also limited to observations of selected meetings and access was to personnel who were available, volunteered, or who were selected based on specified criteria.

The implications of this initiative are relevant to all organizations, whether in higher education or in other fields since the findings clearly reveal that change initiatives are multifaceted, complex organisms that require well developed and delineated methods and models to navigate through the process. The findings from the study may facilitate a better understanding of individual and group processes in an organizational change mandated process across a distributed institution. These findings may be used by other researchers to provide guidance on identifying expectations, formulating strategies, and overcoming barriers regardless of the specific purpose of the organizational change. In addition, qualitative researchers may find the responses valuable for formulating interview questions and surveys when consulting in areas of training development and organizational change.

Conclusion

At the operational level the consultant measured the successes and the failures of the change within the University by: (a) defining perceived barriers to change, (b) developing actions to deal with barriers to cultural change, (c) ensuring policy alignment with required cultural outcomes, (d) establishing and benchmarking cultural change indicators, (e) setting objectives of where the University hoped to be, supported by actions and review whether expected changes have been realized, (f) establishing methodologies to reviewed progress, and (g) reassessing strategy in light of feedback. The consultant used both macro and micro indicator measures. The indicators included overall results of qualitative measurement instruments and benchmarking tools. The consultant also defined the critical success factors as they were related to the strategic objectives of the University and the key anchors that were integral to the change process. In summary, the consultant and the University were able to identify and implement strategic, tactical, and operational goals through the use of a collaborative-directive consultation in a systems-oriented process of organizational change. This proved an effective methodology in light of the constraints and contextual environment of the University. In such, the implications of this initiative are relevant to all organizations, whether in higher education or in other fields since the findings revealed that change initiatives are multifaceted, complex organisms that require well-developed and delineated methods of consultation models and methods to successfully navigate through the change process and implement designated initiatives.

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Table 1

Management	Regularly applies effective management skills to achieve organizational objectives; ability to operate within local, state and federal legal guidelines, utilizes management best practices in hiring and selection, coaching and motivating, discipline and separations; uses systems, policies, processes and procedures to measure performance and adjust approaches.
Planning & Organizing	Establishing a course of action for self and/or others to accomplish a specific goal; planning proper assignments of personnel and appropriate allocation of resources.
Problem Analysis & Resolution	Applying critical analysis techniques to identify causes and symptoms of problems quickly; identify alternative courses of action and select most appropriate option to achieve objectives or correct performance.
Conflict Resolution	Identifying differences and commonalities, assist others in recognizing common goals and mediating resolution to conflict; demonstrating and supporting an environment of constructive conflict.
Leadership	Creating and achieving desired future states through influence on organizational values, individual and group goals, reinforcements and systems.
Team Building	Identify common dysfunctions of teams, implement team building initiatives to generate a strong team environment with constructive conflict
Strategic & Tactical Planning	Creating and achieving a desired future state through influence on organizational or employee values, individual and group goals, reinforcement and systems. Ability to translate strategy into actionable plans quickly/ efficiently