UCI | Paul Merage
School of Business

Leadership for a Digitally Driven World™

Organizational Change

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Change is difficult, for people, organizations and vending machines.

– Anonymous

Outline

- Introduction to Organizational Change (brief!)

- Strategies and tactics for making change happen in organizations

- Inclusive excellence as organizational change (brief!)

- Managing the self (brief!)

Why am I here?

- Organization science expertise

- Learned a lot in two roles
  - Associate Dean for Masters Programs

  - Senior Associate Dean

- Always
  - Concern with Inclusive Excellence

Why is change hard in organizations?

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Issue	"Perfect world"
Goals	Common, agreed upon objectives
Organizing Assumption	Authority/Control
Source of Power	Formal authority
Key players in the work	Subordinates (people under our authority)
Key issues at work	Technical
Performance concerns	Task
Desired outcomes for others	Control/compliance

Why is change hard in organizations?

Issue	"Perfect world"	"Real world"
Goals	Common, agreed upon objectives	Multiple preferences, differences of opinion
Organizing Assumption	Authority/Control	Interdependence
Source of Power	Formal authority	"Everything but…"
Key players in the work	Subordinates (people under our authority)	Everyone (people outside our authority)
Key issues at work	Technical	Technical and Human
Performance concerns	Task	Task and contextual
Desired outcomes for others	Control/compliance	Commitment/compliance

Organizational change

- Different types of change
  - Adding
  - Changing
  - Eliminating

- Classic frameworks provide formal models
  - "Unfreeze, change, refreeze"
  - Focus is on changing people's minds

- But change in organizations also happens through practices, goals, procedures, personnel, and so on

- Today, an emergent and resource-based perspective

What are resources?

- Everything
    - Processes, routines, retreats, meetings, hallway conversations, guests, money, problems, solutions, faculty, staff, students
    - Everything we have in the organization is a potential resource

- Key question:
    - How do you take the things that are around you and use them as *resources* in your change effort?

While we talk

- You've been assigned to groups based on a common interest
  - Might not be most pressing initiative
  - Using as an example to work through as we talk

Gerardo's hard-learned lessons

- Understand your initiatives
  - Prioritize initiatives
  - Create narratives
  - Find examples

- Link to context
  - Identify supporters and detractors
  - Redefine timing
  - Piggyback on other's concerns
  - Piggyback on bad times and good times

- Push
  - Design attention
  - Create visibility
  - Be opportunistic

- Manage yourself
  - Be patient
  - Take a risk

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Prioritize change initiatives

- Cannot pay attention to everything all at once

- What issue do you consider to be on your front burner? The rest are on the back burner
  - Consider importance, urgency, "doability"
  - Consider when it makes sense to have a problem on the front burner

- I have 4-5 front burner issues
  - One is changing faculty hiring
  - Five faculty lines in 22-23, biggest opportunity/risk to culture of the school, largest financial investment

- Many back burner issues
  - Raising PoT status, reducing emphasis on external rankings, updating teaching load model, enhancing efficiency of operations, aligning Tenure and Promotion to campus, shutting down/fixing underperforming programs, enhancing flexibility in facilities usage, aligning activities to school strategic plan, and on and on

Create your new narrative

- What is the current narrative?

- Questions to build a new narrative
    - What is an alternative perspective? Why is the current narrative wrong?
    - Who does the problem affect? How does it affect them?
    - What is the need? How does the need help people?

- Tips:
    - Be specific (i.e., not "UCI will be better" but "staff will not be as stressed during admissions")

Create a narrative for initiative

- My example: modifying MBA curriculum across four programs (Full time, evening, weekend, health care)

  - Old narrative:
    - All our MBA programs should be the same

  - New Narrative:
    - Programs have not been the same
      - Different electives for different populations with different needs
    - They have the same core (8 classes)
      - Need to make different changes to reflect needs of each population

Find examples

- Who has solved the same problem (or a similar one)?

- My example: Reporting days worked
  - Old Merage narrative was that detailed Summer timecards were UC requirement
  - Reached out to UC Davis GSM, UCLA Anderson, neither do it
  - Come back and clarify it is our own policy, we can change it

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Identify supporters and detractors

- My example: add a new instruction modality
  - Wanted to develop hybrid courses (i.e., 60% online, 40% in person)
    - Opposition from more senior faculty

  - Asked for volunteers, providing generous support
    - Associates signed up first, benefited the most
    - As number of volunteers increased, reduced individual support and increased institutional support
    - New expectation is that all faculty participate in all modalities, as needed

Redefine timing

- My example: faculty sign up for senate and in-school service
  - Old approach: Dean's office asks for school service each summer, CoC member asks for senate service each Fall
  - New approach I want to try: Coordinate with CoC rep, send out survey with open positions each Spring

- My example: Faculty hiring
  - Move it to the front burner September-March, ignore otherwise

Piggyback on bad times

- My example: close admissions to a program that is underperforming
  - Central administration announced potential budget cut
    - Used the crisis, explained the suspension of admissions as a fiscally prudent move
    - When program performance did not improve, finalized closing

- My example: change hiring practice to align with campus priorities
  - Campus announces there will be less hiring
    - Requests are evaluated internally, more favorably if aligned with campus priorities

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Design attention

- How do you bring attention to your change issue?
  - Consider how much time you need each time you discuss it
    - 5 minutes? 15 minutes? 50 minutes?
  - Consider how long you will need to focus attention for
    - 6 months? 2 years?
  - Consider how often you need to bring attention to it
    - Once a month? Once a year?
  - Consider natural processes/events you already do
    - Faculty retreat? Department meetings? Program reviews? Personnel processes?

Design attention

- My example: Faculty hiring
  - Implement 30-minute meeting every other week with each hiring committee
    - Answer questions, get updates, insist on following process
    - Started in November, three searches done
      - Discontinued meetings for those

- My example: "Digital Transformation"
  - Regular meeting leading steering committee
    - Every week initially now every other week
    - Review initiatives, filter initiatives, identify opportunities
      - Hand off responsibility as soon as possible
    - Keep energy flowing through attention

- Note: This means not paying ongoing attention to backburner problems

Create visibility

- My example: faculty sign up for senate and in-school service
  - Old approach: Print out and distribute list of service assignments for the year
  - New approach: Permanent Google sheet, shared with all faculty, one tab by assignment and another by person, adding years, always up-to-date

- My example: improving teaching quality
  - Old approach: teaching reviewed during personnel meetings
  - New approach: create automatic quarterly and summary yearly reports, distributed to senate faculty by area, faculty reports go to individuals to include in review file
    - Don't report on response rates less than 50%

Be opportunistic

- My example: All backburner issues are in my mind
  - When someone else states the same or similar problem, I agree and add my problem
  - When resources become available, I match them to my problems
  - When new jobs/roles/positions are created, I attach problems
  - When someone proposes a new process, I link my problems to it
  - When someone has a solution to a problem, I see if it can solve one of mine

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Be patient

- My example, reducing the emphasis on external rankings
  - "Tail wagging the dog"
    - For instance, giving fellowships for high test scores instead of other priorities (i.e., need, inclusive excellence)
  - Current status
    - Have not eliminated rankings
    - More and more people recognize the problem

  - Challenge
    - Not clear if/when it might crystallize into action

Take a risk

- My example: close admissions to a program that is underperforming
  - After making the administrative decision we announced it over email
    - Went to department meeting and explained to faculty
    - Asked for a vote in favor of suspending admissions, received it
    - Two years later asked for vote to discontinue program, received it

  - Don't do this one too often!

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Inclusive Excellence as Organizational Change

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- Challenge
  - Not a single practice, goal, procedure, position
  - Instead, all of those AND changing people's minds

- This is why it is difficult
  - This also means it is SLOW
  - We need many small wins to show progress

- What to do?
  - Split the larger question of inclusive excellence into smaller bites
  - Practices, goals, procedures, personnel

Managing the self

- Ethics

- Personal resources

Is it ok to operate this way? Is it ethical?

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- Managing change can be done ethically

- Avoid "the end justifies the means"

- "the end" tells us our direction
    - We judge the ethicality of "the means"

Ethics of Influence and Persuasion

	Influence and persuasion	Manipulation
Choice	More, given options	Fewer, not given options
Coercion	None	More
Transparency	More	Less
Benefit	Mutual	Self
Information	Shared	Hidden
Arguments and principles	Consistent	Shifting
Confidentiality	Respected	Disregard
Relationships	Nurtured, ongoing	Instrumental, temporary

Personal resources

- Need to find ways to be optimistic
  - Break the big project into small wins

- Need to budget effort, frustration, annoyance
  - Can't spend too much of any of them!

- Also need the right level of patience and impatience
  - "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now."
  - But can't wait forever to make progress

Questions