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PAPER 2: ANALYSIS OF ATTEMPTED EDUCATIONAL REFORM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE–KNOXVILLE

Universities or parts thereof periodically must respond to demands for program reform. Review one institution's attempts to implement academic reform, discussing the goals, organizational dynamics, tensions, key events, and outcomes. Analyze the interactions that occurred within the organization and between it and its external environment. Recommend ways that other institutions might increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Introduction

This paper explores one institution's (University of Tennessee-Knoxville [UTK], School of Education) attempt to institute all of the reforms recommended by the Holmes Group (1986). This paper draws largely on *Reforming a college: The University of Tennessee story*, a collection of 14 papers edited by Richard Wisniewski (2000d), former dean of UTK's School of Education. Eleven of the papers (Benner, 2000; Cagle, 2000; Coleman, 2000; Cudahy, 2000; French, 2000; Ginn, 2000; Greenberg, 2000; Hatch, 2000; Morgan, 2000; Paul, 2000; Whitaker, 2000) describe the reform from individual perspectives of the participants. Wisniewski (2000a, 2000b, and 2000c) describes the events leading up to, during, and following the attempted reforms. These papers are supplemented by information from Wisniewski (1995, 1996) and Oaks (2000), as well a review of pertinent literature on organizational management.

The first section reviews organizational management literature pertinent to the UTK reform efforts. The second section describes the events that changed the tasking environment for schools of education and led to UTK's reform attempt. The third section examines the goals of the UTK reform efforts, organizational dynamics, tensions, key events, outcomes described by the participants in the process, and interactions that occurred within UTK's School of Education and between it and its external environment. The fourth section discusses how the UTK experiences illustrate and relate to the organizational management literature. The final section

summarizes lessons learned and recommends ways that other institutions might increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Review of Pertinent Organizational Management Literature

What is an Organization? Rational, Natural, and Open Systems

Scott (2003) believes that organizations are a prominent characteristic of modern societies and "enable one to achieve goals beyond the reach of the individual" (after Parsons, 1960, p. 41). Organizations are a means for creating rational systems for collaborative action.

Although organizations are tools that aid achievement, they also may alienate, stunt, and force over-conformity of normal personality development, damaging participants in the process. Large organizations may be "rule bound, cumbersome, and inefficient" or "exploit others" (Scott, p. 6) though cheap labor, despoliation of the environment, or disruption of stable communities. Organizations may limit options (e.g., to those foreseen, already analyzed/planned) or result in disconnects between what is sought (e.g., health) and what is delivered (e.g., medical care, actions that actually result in lower health).

As social structures, organizations created to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals must

1. Define (and redefine) objectives;
2. Induce participants to contribute services;
3. Coordinate and control such contributions;
4. Select, train, and replace participants; and,
5. Develop a working accommodation with neighbors (Scott, p. 11).

All organizations must expend some resources to maintain themselves. "Although organizations are viewed as means to accomplish ends, the means themselves absorb much

energy and, in the extreme (but perhaps not rare) case, become ends in themselves" (Scott, p. 11). All organizations exhibit common elements: they each have (a) social structure, (b) goals, (c) technology, and (d) participants (Figure 1).

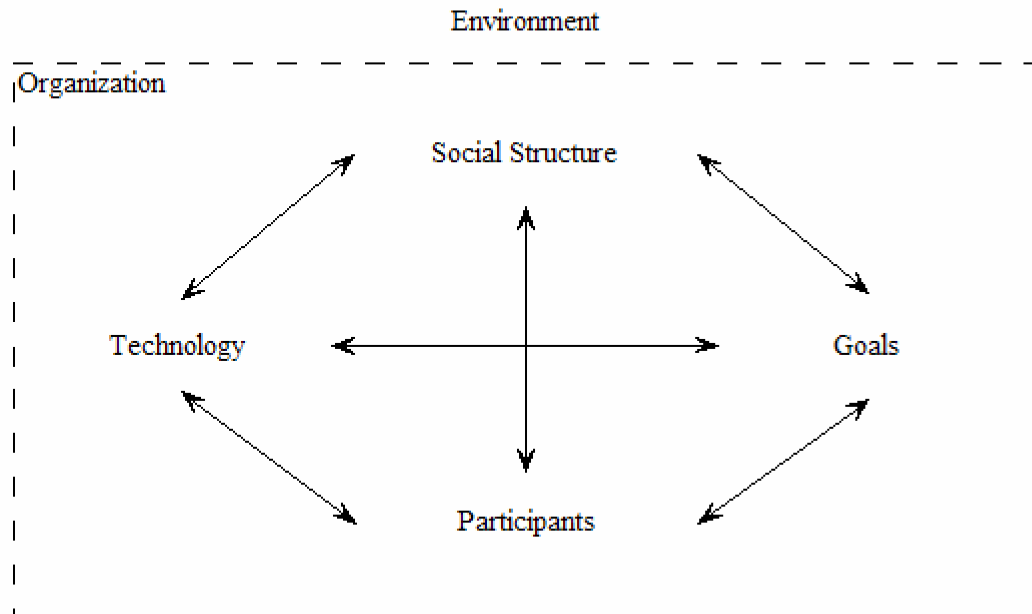

Figure 1. Leavitt's (1965, p. 1145) diamond model of organization, as modified by Scott (p. 18).

Social structures of individual organizations vary. Social structures involve norms ("generalized rules governing behavior that specify . . . appropriate means for pursuing goals", Scott, pp. 18-19), values ("criteria employed in selecting goals of behavior", p. 18), and roles ("expectations for or evaluative standards employed in assessing the behavior of occupants of specific social positions", p. 19). Formalization works to legitimate inequalities in hierarchies, eliminate impacts of private attitudes, and provide for orderly succession (pp. 36-37).

Goals are conceptions of desired ends (p. 22). Well-defined, constrained goals usually provide organizations with a solid basis for determining specific activities or courses of action. Organizations may exist with vague goals but usually "carve out limited goals around which to mobilize activities and resources" (p. 35).

Technology involves processing of people and information. It includes machines, technical skills and knowledge, and tactics (Scott, 2003; Wilson, 1989).

The three primary conceptualizations (as rational, natural, and open systems) are more thoroughly described in Paper 1 (*Role of mission statements in determining institutional scope, selecting performance criteria, and achieving successful learning outcomes*). The following aspects of these conceptualizations pertain to this discussion:

1. Organizations exhibit a relatively high degree of formalization.
2. Organizational structure is formalized via precise rules governing behavior and prescribed roles and role relations.
3. Organizations are collectives wherein participants pursue multiple interests, both disparate and common, while recognizing the value of perpetuating the organization as a resource.
4. Some organizations may operate via social consensus, while others operate with social conflicts (e.g., involving coercion, dominance of more powerful groups, suppression of interests of some individuals).
5. Organizations are masses "of independent flows and activities linking shifting coalitions of participants embedded in wider material-resource and institutional environments" (Scott, 2003, pp. 26-27, 29).

Also pertinent is the fact that organizational structures may involve elements of:

6. Scientific management—pragmatic, "bottom up" evaluations of tasks and resources in an attempt to develop logical production processes, as documented by Taylor (1911).
7. Administrative theory—prescriptive, "top down" coordination, hierarchical forms of control, and specialization of tasks and groups, as described by Fayol (1949/1984).

8. Theory of bureaucracy—the increasing subdivision of daily functions (supervision, personnel selection, accounting, record keeping, job design, planning) once performed by owner-managers of early enterprises, as documented by Max Weber (1968 trans.).
9. Theory of administrative behavior—recognition that by adopting goals and making choices, organizations restrict the ends thereby simplifying participants' decisions, as described by Simon (1997). "A scientifically relevant description of an organization . . . details what decisions individuals make as organizational participants and the influences to which they are subject in making these decisions" (Scott, 2003, p. 50).

All four theories of recognize that (a) normative structure, (b) specificity of goals, and (c) formalization of rules and roles are important in organizations.

Underlying Weber's theory of bureaucracy is the concept of authority. According to Scott (2003, p. 44), Weber distinguishes three types of authority:

1. Traditional authority—based on sanctity of traditions/existing lines of authority (Weber, p. 956).
2. Rational-legal authority—based on laws, legal patterns of normative rules, and rights granted to persons elevated to authority under those rules to issue commands (p. 956).
3. Charismatic authority—based on specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person and of normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him or her (p. 1112).

Weber determined that only traditional and rational-legal authority relations provide a stable foundation for permanent administrative structures. Charismatic forms, according to Weber,

arise during periods of instability and crisis "when extraordinary measures are called for and seemingly offered by individuals perceived as possessing uncommon gifts of mind and spirit" (Scott, p. 44).

Organizations are more than instruments for attaining defined goals. They are also social groups attempting to adapt, survive, or maintain equilibrium, perhaps even after goals are attained (Scott, 2003, p. 57). Goals may be altered to seek alternate funding. Some individuals may want organization to survive to for personal reasons: personal power, resources, prestige, or pleasure. Thus, for several reasons, an organization may shift from being a means to being an end.

Scott (2003) notes that the rational system decision-making model is rational only if focused on the decision itself. If the focus shifts to implementation, a less rational decision process yields better results (p. 58). Scott asserts that one should remove alternative possibilities so as to eliminate conflicts and mold commitment.

Informal structures can exist in lower and upper strata of organizations, may impede implementation of rational formal design, or may ease communication, facilitate trust, and correct inadequacy of formal systems. Formal arrangements sometimes "curtail individual problem solving and the use of discretion to undermine participants initiative and self-confidence, causing them to become alienated and apathetic. Such restrictive arrangements not only damage participants' self esteem and mental health, but also prevent them from effectively contributing their talents to the larger enterprise (Scott, 2003, p. 60).

Conceptions of Environments and Boundaries

Environment is defined as "The set of all objects a change in whose attributes affect the system and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behavior of the system" (Scott,

2003, p.125, after Hall & Fagen, 1956). Given that definition, when does an object along to the system versus the environment? It is clear that systems and their environments comprise an organization's universe, but the division of the two usually depends on the intention of the person studying that particular universe. For example, one might examine Tennessee State government as a whole; in that case, the system is comprised of all subdivisions of state government (schools, universities, agencies, executive, judicial, and legislative branches). However, from the perspective of someone studying a single state agency, the branches of State government that lie outside of that agency generally are regarded as part of its environment.

Each organization has a set of role obligations and has relations with partners and competitors. The obligations may be imposed from within (e.g., as a corporation deciding to offer a product or service) or without (e.g., as imposed by legislation, regulation, agreement with partners, or norm). The organization's domain includes the range of products and services provided, types of clients served, and that affect its behavior and outcomes. Scott notes,

> A crucial defining characteristic of the concept of organizations is that it views the environment from the standpoint of a specific (focal) organization. Relations or connections between other (counter) members of the set are of no concern unless they affect the activities or interests of the focal organization . . . . Decisions about whether to perform activities within the organization or contract out to other players involve an examination of the number of suppliers and specific assets in the form of skills or equipment. It is from this level that the interests, the resources, the dependencies of a given organization are best examined and its survival tactics probed. Is also at this level that most discussions of strategic decision making occur." (Scott, 2003, p. 126-127)

All organizations contain "elements of dominant competence"— technical core activities that transform "inputs into those outputs critical to a population's survival" (McKelvey, 1982, p. 174). Organizations are not just technical systems involving resource-based features, inputs, outputs and culture)—they also involve human systems (human relations), political systems, social systems, and cultural systems.

Dill (1958) notes that an organization's "tasking environment" (a) is comprised of stimuli that the organization might respond to and (b) includes all aspects of environments that are "potentially relevant to goal setting and goal attainment" (p. 410). Scott (2003) states that task environments typically are narrowed to refer to "the nature and sources of inputs, competitors and markets for outputs" (p.133). Such definitions stress that (a) no organization is self-sufficient and (b) managers are expected to ensure adequate supplies of resources and suitable markets. "Organizational structure is viewed as being influenced by external technical requirements that shaped internal work systems" (Scott, p.133).

All environments include elements of uncertainty. The higher the level of variability, threat, heterogeneity, interconnection coming and independence, the greater is all level of complexity or uncertainty of environmental conditions confronted (p.134).

Organizations are shaped by political and legal frameworks, rules governing market behavior, and general belief systems (Scott, 2003, p.134)—parts of their environments. A regulatory view of organizations holds that (a) compliance is effected mostly by coercion—either to garner rewards or avoid sanctions—and (b) behavior is legitimate if the organization conforms to existing rules and laws (p.136). However, organizations may also be viewed as products of normative structures that exist in their individual environments. Such normative structures include moral frameworks that guide social life; norms internalized by participants; and

behaviors guided by a sense of what is appropriate, social obligations to others, and commitments to common values. Such frameworks help give each organization a distinctively unique character.

Cultural rules and patterns that preside in wider institutional environments—products of professional groups, government and non-government associations—provide a framework for creation and elaboration of formal organizations. These often take the form of rationalized myths—widely held beliefs whose effects "inhere, not in the fact that individuals believe them, but in the fact that they 'know' everyone else does, and thus that 'for all practical purposes' the myths are true" (Meyer, 1977, p. 75). They are rationalized because they take the formal rules specifying procedures necessary to accomplish a given end. Meyer and Rowan (1977) indicate that such elements are deeply ingrained in and reflect widely understood social reality:

> Many of the positions, policies, programs, and procedures of modern organizations are enforced by public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts. Such elements of formal structure are manifestations of powerful institutional rules which function as highly rationalize myths that are binding on particular organizations (p. 343).

Regarding Leadership Challenges and Tools

Baldridge (1983) notes that when teachers, professors, social workers, and doctors were asked to recommend changes in their work situations, their lists were “remarkably similar” in that most would benefit the professionals, not the clients (p. 211). The professionals wanted more money, had an urge to control the organization, and wanted to decrease the amount of performance evaluations and make working conditions easier. However, while making life easier

for the professional might make the professional happier, it does not guarantee that the client will also benefit (p. 212). Baldridge asserts that to serve clients better one has to accommodate political realities such as the structure of the organization and the attitudes of the people involved. “Altering structures without a corresponding change in attitudes will affect behavior only minimally; attitudes that change without accompanying structural change are quickly squelched by the system” (p. 212). Furthermore, "Entrenched professionals are more interested in serving themselves than in serving their clients. The vision is compelling: the organization has to be changed so that the clients needs are in the forefront" (p. 214) Baldridge also believes that changes must be politically feasible—organized and implemented in ways that marshal political support and actively involve the organization’s leadership in promoting the desired changes (p. 212).

"From a human relations perspective, leadership is conceived primarily as a mechanism for influencing the behavior of individual subordinates" (Scott, p. 63). Stogdill, Scott, and Jaynes (1957) identified three basic dimensions of leadership:

1. Effective interpersonal relations: "the extent to which trust, friendship, and respect mark the relationship between" supervisor and workers.
2. Initiating structure: "the degree to which the supervisor is a good organizer who can 'get the work out.'”
3. Public relations or representation skills: important among high-level administrators in structured organizations (p. 148).

Stahl (1998) discusses the differences between managing and leading, noting that the latter involves influencing, guiding, action, and opinion. She believes that managers traditionally focus on internal operations and basic functions of management, while leaders focus on external

forces that affect the organization's future (p. 18). According to Stahl, transformative leadership is the key to success. She asserts that a transformative leader measures progress against competitors, notices small market changes, acts as a change agent, creates and communicates visions and values, commits to leading change, understands and motivates people, delegates responsibility and authority, seeks new ideas, and views education and training as investments (p. 18).

Couto (1997) believes that transformative leadership entails "change *within the group* and *of* and/or *by* the group" (paragraph 5, emphasis in the original). Gardner (1974) provides support for this concept. He believes that individuals develop a personal frame of reference and a concept of self. Furthermore, individuals usually behave in a very consistent way with this self. As an individual encounters increasingly inconsistent experiences and needs, as s/he attempts to maintain self his or her personal structure becomes more rigid. Gardner believes that only when threats to self are nonexistent will individuals examine inconsistent experiences and grow out of self. This process usually requires personal involvement and development of ownership of the product of the activity when the individual perceives the activity as enhancing self (p. 107). A group is comprized of multiple individuals, each having a unique self. Gardner believes that group conduct depends on equilibrium of conflicting forces—an equilibrium of all of the selfs that comprise the group—and suggests that successful change includes three aspects: “unfreezing (if neccessary) the present level, moving to the new level, and freezing group life at the new level" (p. 106, after Lewin, 1951).

Stahl states that if an institution lacks transformative leaders, it needs to (a) assess its strength and weaknesses based on the above characteristics and (b) foster the development of transformative leaders. If she and Gardner are correct, then the act of developing transformative

leaders would require development of leaders who can motivate individuals to examine self and help them (a) identify inconsistent needs and experiences and (b) ways to effect meaningful change. Zaner (1968) describes how a training program used action research to change each individual's attitude toward specific problems and his/her interaction within the group. The action training and research involved doing what needed to be done actively and affirmatively, with freedom to adjust the action pattern based on a growing experience. Zaner found that as the training progressed, staff conducting the training had to shift their responsibilities in response to new and changing needs within the group. He also found that the usefulness of the training staff depended upon their personal ability to energize and enrich the group's experience. In essence, the training staff focused on improving and expanding group experiences, creating knowledge, and cataloging experiences.

Zaner (1968) notes that the immediate and long range goals of any action training and research program should be carefully planned. He urges caution in the early stages, noting that the pace of the training "can be accelerated only upon the basis of accumulated experience" (p. 30). New training should be designed and tested on a pilot group, then improved or abandoned based on the results. Trainees should record and report their own experiences and findings in a structured manner. The results should compared with the goals and objectives of the curriculum. In essence, the trainer is more of a catalyst and resource person—perhaps a facilitator—rather than a teacher. Those in authority within the organization must be involved in setting the objectives of the training, cooperatively planning and implementing the training, reviewing collected data, analyzing results, and refining the training plans. Doing so allows emergent concepts to be developed and framed in terms of broad policy and procedure (p. 31).

No clear relationship between supervisor's behavior or leadership style have been demonstrated for the following:

1. Worker satisfaction and productivity
2. Job enlargement and worker satisfaction or productivity
3. Participation in decision making and satisfaction or productivity (Scott, 2003, p.65).

Managers have to decide how the organization will perform its critical task—"those behaviors which, if successfully performed by key organizational members, would enable the organization to manage its critical environmental problem" (Wilson, 1989, p. 25). Organizational culture also plays a role:

> Every organization has a culture, that is, a persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks and human relationships within an organization (Wilson, p. 91).

Wilson also notes that executives may use clearly defined goals to provide a basis for “a strong organizational culture” (p. 48). However, if the agency lacks political freedom, it is more difficult to transform goals into a suitable culture. Vague goals make tasks difficult to define and tend to undermine leadership because operators too often use their own values to define tasks. In government, executives often spend so much time garnering external support that they have little time available to oversee staff activities. Government executives also have little control over incentives, further undermining their abilities to influence what operators actually do.

> Thus in a public bureaucracy the tasks of its key operators are likely to be defined by naturally occurring rather than agency-supplied incentives. Among these naturally occurring incentives are imperatives of the situation (especially important when clients are subjected to unwanted controls in low-visibility circumstances . . .) and the expectations of peers . . . (Wilson, 1989, pp. 48-49).

Wilson (2003) describes instances where leaders have successfully shaped institutional culture, most often by replacing reluctant operators, providing comprehensive training programs that instill desired institutional values (e.g., forest management practices and processes of the U. S. Forest Service), hired professionals from specific occupations and fused their standards of practice to the agency culture, and/or fostered an *espirit de corps.* "Culture is to an organization what personality is to an individual. Like human culture generally, it is passed on from one generation to the next. It changes slowly, if at all" (p. 91). Wilson notes that organizations may contain several cultures, each typically isolated within one or more organizational subunits. Some cultures prize specialists and regard generalists and administrators with contempt; these values may be reinforced through assignment rotation and promotional practices (p. 94). Cultures can create blind spots: "Since every organization has a culture, every organization will be poorly adapted to define tasks that are not defined as part of that culture" (p. 95). For example, some agencies undervalue environmental protection; universities typically value research more than teaching.

> When an organization has a culture that is widely shared and warmly endorsed by operators and managers alike, we say the organization has a sense of mission. A sense of mission confers a feeling of special worth on the members, provides a basis for recruiting and socializing new members, and enables the administrators to economize on the use of other incentives . . . . [Having] a sense of mission is the chief way by which managers overcome the problem of shirking in organizations that (like most government bureaus) cannot make the money wages of operators directly dependent on the operators' observed contribution to attaining the goals of the organization. (Wilson, p. 95).

Harris (2000) found that research on small groups suggests those that have stable tenure are more productive:

> At the organization level, the "Companies No One Leaves" provide a model of productive, stable companies that offer secure employment (membership). This principle provides a setting in which the exercise of true inquiry can flourish and where members are assured of their part of collectively created values. (p. 176)

Changes in governmental agencies often are brought about via external pressures or by adding to existing tasks without changing core tasks or altering organizational structure (other than adding new units to perform the new tasks). "Real innovations are those that alter core tasks; most changes add to or alter peripheral tasks," usually in response to an environmental change (Wilson, p. 225). However, sometimes entrepreneurs within an agency bring about peripheral changes. "In many cases, their success depends on their ability to persuade others that the changes *are* peripheral and threaten no core interests" (p. 225-226, emphasis in the original). Executives are key to such innovation. "[It] is they who must decide whether to protect or to ignore managers who wish to promote changes" (p. 227). Hage and Dewar (1973) found that the beliefs of the top executives and their diversity of occupational perspectives were better predictors of change than any structural features of the organizations (p. 287). Wilson notes that

> An agency that wants its managers and operators to suggest new ways of doing their tasks will be open, collegial, and supportive; an agency that wishes to implement an innovation over the opposition of some of its members often needs to concentrate power in the hands of the boss sufficient to permit him or her to ignore (or even dismiss) opponents (p. 230).

Obviously, the agency executive is key to allocating such authority. The executive also has to create incentives for subordinates to think about, propose, and help refine such changes. This usually means convincing them that if they join the innovative efforts, their careers will not be blighted if the innovation fails or the executive departs before it is implemented (Wilson, p. 231). Furthermore, operators will react based on how well incentives align with their own preferences. If agencies have little control over financial incentives, the way that tasks are defined becomes a powerful tool. Wilson notes,

> Tasks are familiar, easy, professionally rewarded, or well adapted to the circumstances in which operators find themselves will be preferred because performing them is less costly than undertaking tasks that are new, difficult, or professionally unrewarded or that place the operator in conflict with his or her environment. (p. 231)

Cyert (1994) states that a chief executive officer (CEO) must:

1. Structure the organization so that it can deal with the problems it faces;
2. Be deeply involved in . . . strategic planning;
3. Become aware of the problems the organization may face in the future;
4. Recognize that changes in one part of the organization may affect other parts of the system (p. 101).

He asserts that most troubled organizations result from lack of foresight or inability to quickly restructure themselves in time to meet challenges.

Cyert suggests that CEO's frequently become involved in day-to-day operations and ignore external roles and strategic positions. "It is satisfying to solve internal problems . . ." (p. 101), and "It is difficult to deal with the uncertainty of the future, as one must relate an organization to others in the industry and to events in the economy that may affect it" (p. 102).

Such activities are more ambiguous and less structured than concrete day-to-day problems. "One tends to avoid uncertainty and to concentrate on structured problems for which one can correctly predict the solutions and implications" (p. 102). However, one must force the issue and regularly engage in strategic thinking. Strategic thinking is critical for detecting problems and positioning the organization to deal with environmental changes. Positioning "the organization properly requires a continual effort to analyze the internal efficiency and the external uncertainties of the future. The poor manager solves problems only after they arrive. A great manager solves the problems of the future by positioning the organization today" (p. 103). Thus, foresight and positioning are key leadership factors for proper management of organizations.

Miles, Snow, and Pfeffer (1974) believe that the key to understanding organizational adaptation to environmental demands is identification of "decision points":

1. The decisions by which the organization selects a portion of the total environment as its particular arena of activity (i.e., its domain) and chooses a basic strategy for managing the domain;
2. The decisions by which the organization establishes an appropriate technology for implementing its basic operating strategy;
3. The decisions by which the organization creates a structure of roles and relationships to control and coordinate technology and strategy; and,
4. The decisions made to assure organizational continuity—the capacity to survive, adjust, and grow. (pp. 246-247).

They also believe that managerial perceptions are a key variable in the process of domain definition, choice of operating strategy, and development of a core technology and that longitudinal studies may be required to evaluate the total adjustment process.

Thus leaders of governmental agencies have to be expert at identifying and balancing the internal needs of their organizations and the external needs and influences of their environments. They must (a) identify appropriate incentives to motivate operators; (b) infuse them with a sense of mission; (c) provide subordinates with sufficient authority to implement critical tasks; (d) court special interest groups that either support, are indifferent to, attempt to capture (or, failing capture, subvert) undesired programs; and (e) satisfy the demands of legislators and governors who control the resources and autonomy available to the agency. Isaacs (1993) believes that a collaborative approach offers substantial advantage:

> Given the nature of global and institutional problems, thinking alone at whatever level of leadership is no longer adequate. The problems are too complex, the interdependencies too intricate, and the consequences of isolation and fragmentation too devastating. Human beings everywhere are being forced to develop their capacity to think together—to develop collaborative thought and coordinated action. (p. 24)

Wilson (2003) suggests that there is a large measure of chance—being in the right place at the right time—involved in the success of governmental agencies:

> From time to time a gifted executive appears at a politically propitious time and makes things happen differently. He or she creates a new institution that achieves a distinctive competence, a strong sense of mission, and an ability to achieve socially valued goals. (p. 367)

Through such efforts, agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers, Marine Corps, Forest Service, and Federal Bureau of Investigation managed to achieve elite corps status for many years.

Educational Reform Efforts that Altered UTK's Tasking Environment

America's efforts to improve education were energized with the publication of *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The Commission charged that "Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them" (p. risk.html, ¶ 4). It asserted that "the average graduate of our schools and colleges today is not as well-educated as the average graduate of 25 or 35 years ago" (p. risk.html, ¶ 16). The Commission believed that the educational decline was evidenced in (a) steadily declining SAT and other scores; (b) increased percentages of students who must take remedial math or English either in college, the military, or when hired by business; and (c) the growing percentage of students who cannot demonstrate higher order reasoning, draw inferences, or complete multi-step math problems.

The Commission cited problems with curriculum and teachers, noting that "not enough of the academically able students are being attracted to teaching" and "teacher preparation programs need *substantial* improvement" (p. findings.html, emphasis added). To address these problems, the Commission recommended raising college entrance standards, upgrading textbooks, adopting standardized testing, and requiring future teachers to demonstrate both an aptitude for teaching and subject-matter competency.

Nation at Risk prompted creation of the Holmes Group—comprised of several higher-education deans and vice-presidents—who began to explore ways to improve teacher education. They acknowledged that the problems faced by the nation were not new—noting that the dean Henry W. Holmes of Harvard's School of Education had pleaded for reforms in the 1920s but found few supporters. Holmes set about constructing a strong program at Harvard, but it was

short-lived. This new “Holmes Group” hoped to learn from the failures of Holmes and others, an improved understanding of obstacles to reform, and the then-current social circumstances that made education a critical issue.

The Holmes Group efforts did not go unnoticed:

> The response to their early meetings was unanticipated. A flurry of concern swirled about their discussions, as if the assembled leaders were plotting revolution. Serious thinking about the problems of teacher education and teaching in their own institutions, quite apart from the structures and strictures of established education groups, was not well received. Apparently, the business of teacher education in America has been a thriving one for higher education, and to even talk about initiatives that might disrupt its continuance, or increase its costs, threatened those profiting from the status quo (Holmes Group, 1986, p. v).

Initially the deans intended to accomplish their study in 15 months. They quickly became convinced that their time frame was unrealistic and extended their work. They eventually suggested that it would take three to five years to develop (a) examinations for improved initial screening of teacher candidates and (b) strong standards “to better screen the institutions that prepare teachers” (Holmes Group, 1986, p. vi).

The Holmes Group (1986) produced a common agenda, shared understandings, and a broad outline for action. The group described their efforts as “often painful,” noting

> Pursuing the shortcomings of one's own profession, and one's own institutions, is difficult at best.
>
> It has been fruitful, nonetheless. In our nearly two years of work together we have found much to criticize in teacher education. But we have also found ourselves willing to

> argue for radical improvements that most of us would have dismissed as impractical just a few years ago. We have decided that we must work for the changes that we believe' to be right, rather than those that we know can succeed. Much is at stake, for American students' performance will not improve much if the quality of teaching is not much improved. And teaching will not improve much without dramatic improvements in teacher education (p. 3).

The report cited five goals:

1. To make the education of teachers intellectually more solid.
2. To recognize differences in teachers' knowledge, skill, and commitment, in their education, certification, and work.
3. To create standards of entry to the profession—via examinations and educational requirements—that are professionally relevant and intellectually defensible.
4. To connect universities to public and private schools.
5. To make schools better places for teachers to work and to learn (p. 4).

To accomplish these goals, among other things, Holmes Group (1986) called for abolishing education as an undergraduate major, noting:

> For elementary teachers, this degree has too often become a substitute for learning any academic subject deeply enough to teach it well. These teachers are certified to teach all things to all children. But few of them know much about anything, because they are required to know a little of everything. No wonder so many pupils arrive in high school so weak in so many subjects. (pp. 14-15)

Holmes Group recommended that all teacher candidates (a) major in a subject field and (b) be instructed by model teachers. The Group believed that too many university courses are taught by

researchers—few of whom know how to teach and many of whom seem not to care—rather than model teachers—those who understand the pedagogy of their material within their field. Holmes Group also recommended (a) replacing scattered education courses with coherent programs of advanced pedagogical study (pp. 16-17) and (b) establishing new connections between universities and public schools. They proposed that expert teachers be enticed to become instructors of potential teachers in university programs and that university faculty become more familiar with the problems such teachers experience in K-12 schools.

> Such work could help to improve our understanding of instruction, and to sharpen teachers' knowledge and skills. It also would help to turn schools into places in which teachers' learning, and research on teaching and learning, are more common. (p. 19).

Finally, Holmes Group (1986) called for integrating the above changes with reform of reward systems, the teaching profession, credentialing systems, working conditions, and institutional frameworks. (p. 23).

Although Holmes Group (1986) formulated goals and analyzed obstacles, the Group did not adopt any specific model for an adequate teacher training program or professional development school. [Those topics were addressed in two later reports, *Tomorrow's schools: Principles for the design of professional development schools* (Holmes Group, 1990) and *Tomorrow's schools of education* (Holmes Group, 1995).] Instead:

> Members of the Holmes Group recognized that there would be many mistakes, false starts, and unanticipated problems with their proposed agenda. They also recognized that solutions that work in one setting inevitably require adaptation to work in another setting, and for this reason, each member's plan for achieving the group's goals would be

> different. They foresaw that in the years ahead they would learn much from each other about the strengths and limits of the proposed agenda. (Holmes Group, 1995, p. iii)

The UTK New College Experience

Moving Towards Reform—Wisniewski's Views and Initial Experiences

The University of Tennessee–Knoxville (UTK) reform effort was led by Richard Wisniewski, Dean of UTK's College of Education. Wisniewski (2000b) descriptions of existing conditions and challenges are informative. He asserts that UTK was like any other typical college:

> Faculty in the several departments of the college worked hard to deliver and improve their programs. On occasion, accreditation reviews would accelerate the program modifications. A year would not pass without new course materials of an idea to improve student services. Grants and contracts were pursued. Groups of faculty engaged in planning activities at the departmental and college levels. These activities were steps toward the refinement of practices. College and university traditions and approval procedures ensured that programs could be altered, but only a bit at a time . . . (p. 1).

In effect, he warns of the dangers that such settings present:

> Normal changes improve or modify programs. They are not, however, serious efforts at reform. Even so, faculty discourse suggests that any change, however small, is viewed as a major event. Be it a new course, prerequisite, admissions standards, or calendar change—these are viewed as major accomplishments. The truth of the matter is that most academic changes are superficial and modest in scope. Professors are well known for laboring over words and phrases, getting a meaning precisely correct. This is all well and good within the traditions of scholarship, but this same search for precision is a poor

> substitute for innovation in curricular and organizational matters. These efforts seldom overturn or seriously challenge the tacit understandings that maintain the status quo. However hoary, the phrase 'new bottles for old wine' remains an apt characterization of academic activities. This does not mean the process is useless. Programs or services are improved as institutions modify their practices slowly, if not surely (p. 2).

Wisniewski raised the issue of educational reforms with the Chancellor's office. The latter also noted that enrollment in the College of Education was steadily declining and agreed that radical changes were warranted because the departments in the college had become set in their ways, seldom collaborated with one another, and made "interdisciplinary efforts next to impossible" (p. 2).

> The College of Education was trapped within a host of college and university expectations and traditions . . . The baronial fiefdoms generated by the departmental structure were not open to collaboration on what the college needed to do—or could become—in response to criticism or state mandates. The only fundamental agreement across the departments was that more money and new positions were needed for each program to achieve nirvana (pp. 3-4).

Most faculty had more than 20 years experience at UTK; few new faculty were hired, and "curricula and programs were basically repeated year after year with little variation, [leading to] a professional and college-wide 'hardening of the arteries'" (p. 4).

Wisniewski believed that UTK needed "need to find a way to revitalize a large group of faculty" (p. 4) while avoiding the "painstaking bit-by-bit approaches common in academe" (p. 5):

> Would faculty members take the opportunity to define how they would spend the rest of their professional lives? Could a way be devised to move the college into a position of

> leadership in the harried and threatening milieu in which colleges of education exist? The goal was nothing less than to see what could be created by a faculty long conditioned to—and limited by—the severe restrictions of the academic establishment. (p. 5)

The selected transformation process included dissolution of the seven entrenched departments and creation of new working units within New College. Rather than simply creating the new units via a top-down driven process, faculty had to talk to each other to forge relationships and discuss how they might collaborate to create new courses and programs. These units needed to address student needs and consider whether the new courses and programs would appeal to students. Colleagues from other UT campuses were invited to share ideas. Some faculty also visited innovative colleges (e.g., Evergreen State College).

> The Faculty Council, the governing body of the college, addressed a host of changes as they worked their way through the process. There were many high and low periods as ideas, rumors, fears, and hopes emerged. Faculty retreats and forums served to advance a comprehensive sense of what was occurring. Newsletters and memos were circulated. Each faculty member was invited to small-group breakfast meetings to discuss the process. Fledging units wrote "principles of association," outlining what each faculty member promised to do in their new unit setting. Naysayers worked to unravel what others thought had been settled.
>
> Four of the seven department heads made clear that they were not concerned about their future roles. They demonstrated their excitement about helping to create something innovative. The other three department heads fought the proposed changes at every turn. Two of the departments eventually moved lock, stock, and barrel to another college. New faculty leaders and voices began to emerge. The rumors never stopped.

Nerves were frayed, including fears that central administration would listen to the naysayers and halt the process.

Comparison of Early UTK Experience with Organizational Management Theory

Wisniewski (2000b) describes a situation that involves an entrenched bureaucracy with complacent employees. In essence, the existing internal environment included a social structure or culture wherein significant change was seldom considered—an organization that was "rule bound, cumbersome, and inefficient" (as described by Scott, 2003, p. 6) and where considered options were often limited by prior experiences of faculty.

Wisniewski (2000b) also describes a setting wherein boundaries between departments inhibits collaboration. Leaders determined that radical change might be fostered by eliminating the existing organizational structures. Some department chairs supported the proposed changes while others clearly did not, choosing to resist by removing their units to other UTK colleges.

Wisniewski (2000c) indicates that the he told the authors of *Reforming a College* that they need not document their views with references to the literature but should instead focus on describing what they did, why they did it, and what happened as a result (p. 27). Wisniewski himself fails to point to any literature that would explain why he opted to institute radical organizational reforms, but perhaps he based his decision on Baldridge (1983) or other similar works. In any event, immediate changes were ordered, replacing the rigid organizational structure with freeform restructuring.

Wisniewski's Later Experiences and those of Other Participants

Wisniewski's (2000b) general description of the early stages of the reform effort make it clear that (a) success was not assured and (b) the chosen change process produced a stressful, perhaps chaotic environment. Wisniewski (2000c) indicates that there were clashes between

faculty who wanted deep reforms and those who endorsed the status quo. Some professors who were disinterested in the process hung back and created another set of tensions. He acknowledges that some faculty will oppose almost any change while others will be invigorated by the change process.

Wisniewski (2000b) notes that faculty who had long been at UTK typically responded in one of three ways:

1. Some made major changes in how they work with colleagues, students, and staff.
2. Some "responded on a partial basis" (p. 31), making selective changes.
3. Some did not change behaviors.

Recently appointed faculty

1. Usually were "wedded to organizational structures and practices that were in place when they were appointed" (p. 31).
2. Carried the baggage of prior experience and training.

Wisniewski's (2000b, 2000c) frustrations often are apparent in his contributions. The other papers (Benner, 2000; Cagle, 2000; Coleman, 2000; Cudahy, 2000; French, 2000; Ginn, 2000; Greenberg, 2000; Hatch, 2000; Morgan, 2000; Paul, 2000; Whitaker, 2000) contained in Wisniewski (2000d) echo the feelings of stress, uncertainty, frustration, and (at times) chaos experienced by faculty and students. And yet a more detailed analysis suggests that the papers emphasize some positives of the attempted reform.

To illustrate this fact, as part of this research, the entire volume was digitized and analyzed using TextStat 2.2a (Hüning, 2000/2004) to compare and contrast key themes (Table 1). Change is mentioned 527 times as opposed to tradition, status quo, and sameness which appear an aggregate of 272 times. Innovation is mentioned 44 times; resistance 31 times.

Opportunities and possibilities are referred to 131 times, versus the impossible (12 times). Thus, the ratio of change-related to resistance-related terms is greater than 2:1. This suggests that, overall, the authors were focused on change and related techniques.

Table 1

Key words and phrases used in Wisniewski (2000c)—Change-related terms versus resistance-related terms

Key Words and Phrases	Times Used in Text	
	Change Terms	Resistance Terms
Change, changes, changed	527	
Different, difference, differences, differently		108
Tradition, traditions, traditional, status quo		102
Same, sameness		62
Innovate, innovation, innovations, innovative	44	
Resist, resisting, resistance, resistance		31
Opportunity, opportunities	73	
Possible, possibility, possibilities	58	
Impossible, not possible		12
Totals	702	315

Table 2 lists generally positive and negative terms used in the volume. Positive terms (e.g., positive, encouragement, easy, simple, and related terms) are noted 88 times; negative terms (e.g., negative, discouragement, difficult, hard, and related terms) 137. The fact that negatives are mentioned more often than positives correlates well with Wilson's (1989) view that major changes are difficult to implement within a large and mature bureaucracy.

Communication-related terms appear 216 times within the volume (Table 3). Of these, generic terms (such as communication, conversation, and related words) appear 53 times. Speaking-related terms appear twice as often as listening-related terms. Most interestingly,

Table 2

Key words and phrases used in Wisniewski (2000c)—Positive terms versus negative terms

Key Words and Phrases	Times Used in Text	
	Positive Terms	Negative Terms
Positive, positively	30	
Negative, negatively		26
Difficult, difficulty, difficulties, not easy, uneasy, not easily, hard		105
Easy, easily, not hard, not difficult, simple	26	
Encourage, encouraged, encourages, encouragement, encouraging	32	
Discouraged, discouraging		6
	88	137

Table 3

Key words and phrases used in Wisniewski (2000c)—Communication-related terms

Key Words and Phrases	Times Used in Text
Communicate, communication, communicative	7
Conversation, conversations, conversational	46
Discuss, discussion, discussions, discussed, discussing	90
Debate, debated, debates, debating	23
Listen, listened, listening, listener, hear, heard	36
Speak, speaker, speakers, speaking, talk, talks, talked, talking	81

discussion was referred to about four times as often as debate, which suggests that the authors were attuned to the desirability of discussion rather than debate. Isaacs (1993) notes:

> Unfortunately, most forms of organizational conversation, particularly around tough, complex, or challenging issues lapse into debate (the root of which means "to beat down"). In debate, one side wins and another loses; both parties maintain their certainties, and both suppress deeper inquiry. Such exchanges do not activate the capacity for

> collective intelligence. Dialogue is a discipline of collective thinking and inquiry, a process for transforming the quality of conversation and, in particular, the thinking that lies beneath it" (pp. 24-25).

Collaboration and related terms appear 123 times; cooperation-related terms appear only 4 times (Table 4). This suggests that collaboration was perceived as a key to success at UTK. However, Greenberg (2000) reports that some scholarly tendencies inhibit true collaboration. She recounts a meeting wherein there were two co-facilitators, Greenberg—who wanted to stimulate collaboration—and another individual—who desired a traditional, highly controlled meeting:

> I suggested . . . that we rearrange the room, placing the desks in a circle where everyone could see and interact with everyone else . . . . The co-chair disagreed and suggested that we leave the desks the way they were so everyone could focus their attention primarily on the transparencies. I shared how experience had shown me that if we did this people would mostly interact with the person in charge rather than each other, cutting off a collaborative approach to decision making. Reluctantly, my colleague agreed to a semicircular arrangement of the desks. I placed my desk within the semicircle where I could easily see everyone participating in the meeting—and yet be viewed as a more

Table 4

Key words and phrases used in Wisniewski (2000c)—Team- and individual-related terms

Key Words and Phrases	Times Used in Text
Collaborate, collaboration, collaborative	123
Cooperate, cooperative, cooperation	4
Individual, individuals, individually	56
Team, teamed, teams, teammates	32

> nearly "equal" member of the group . . . . My colleague sat at the edge of the group awaiting the opportunity to move to a podium when it was time to present a report. (pp. 145-146)

Eventually the co-facilitator who favored a highly structured meeting took charge. Greenberg notes:

> As the meeting progressed, I began to reflect on the impact of the differences between a collaborative and traditional approach to decision making. Because [during the traditionally structured portion of the meeting] members of the group were told the order in which they could speak, we often skipped from one issue to another without reaching any decisions. I wondered if others were engaging in strategic planning as I was, making decisions about how to use one's turn to speak. "Hmm, if I use my turn to ask the last speaker to further clarify her view, I might not get a chance to voice my own issue. Since my issue is so important to me, I guess I just won't get to know if her perspective is important to me or not."
>
> I learned an important lesson about collaboration from this experience. It is easy to fall back into the more traditional approach and purpose. Every member of the college has many years of experience with the traditional approach. We operate at an automatic level in this environment. *Although the members of the group had agreed that we would share in decision making, the purpose of this meeting was easily turned without any evidence of cognitive dissonance.* The same group of people had come together for a similar purpose less than four weeks prior to this meeting and engaged in collaborative decision making beautifully. When someone took charge of the meeting using the traditional approach, however, almost no one noticed. Several times during the meeting I

> tried to refocus our attention on shared decision making. But I did not realize until long after the meeting had ended that we were using an approach that would keep us from reaching this goal. (p. 147, emphasis added).

The above excerpt illustrates the thick descriptions contained throughout the Wisniewski volume. Each paper adds insights that detail the reform process, related issues, successes, and failures.

Paul (2000) observes that sports enthusiasts "learn how old movement patterns can sometimes cause negative inhibitions and interfere with learning new skills. Traditional and known patterns of organization can also blind one to new ways of thinking" (p. 39). Furthermore, unconscious obstacles may cause one to reject change. Some see change as "a challenge or affront to the way they have done things for most of a lifetime" (p. 39). She suggests the following as possible causes of resistance to change at UTK:

1. Years spent in the professorate;
2. Lack of security;
3. Lack of self esteem;
4. A "tired spirit" that leads one to choose not to exert the energy necessary for a change;
5. Egotism that leaves little room for improvement;
6. Mistrust of the college administration;
7. The scary nature of the change process;
8. Reluctance to entertain a notion that the college could be made better or more effective (p. 40).

She observes that the most vocal resistors were those who refused to attend meetings and retreats or refused to listen to outsiders who related their own ideas and experiences with change. Departments took a provincial view, tending to look only at their own activities and failing to consider the broader framework. Paul states that she encouraged faculty in her own department to be proactive, but that their "vision of how radical the change would be was inconceivable to us at the time" (p. 42). While some faculty did not want to "give away" any program areas to other departments, they also recognized that "we should not continue to think of keeping ourselves just as we are now" (p. 43). Paul notes that the faculty in her department had never engaged in scholarly activity with those in any other departments. Gradually a mindset of change developed--they began to explore ideas with faculty in other departments, and some suggested "the radical idea of making academic alliances beyond our walls" (p. 43). Faculty were reluctant to eliminate programs with low enrollments fearing that doing so would make their department more vulnerable to future budget cuts. Eventually, however, faculty decided that department should disband.

A transition team was formed to cover the overlap between the old and new entities. Tentative drafts of proposals were written and ideas for new units were tested. Some faculty expressed fear that if they wrote proposals too early, they would be viewed as models to follow. "The problem with such reasoning was that if some groups did not take the initiative, there would be no proposals for discussion" (p. 45).

Paul personally felt a loyalty to the old department. It took her a year to fully conclude that a new unit would be a better personal fit. She indicates that the dilemma she experienced resulted from a lifetime of devotion to a traditional academic area, a feeling that she was

abandoning her colleagues and her academic heritage, and a natural uncertainty that accompanies radical change.

She describes a number of challenges, such as bringing unity to diversity and a tendency to embark on new endeavors while still clinging to the old. As simple a task as finding a name for a new unit caused one group to leave. The process of co-locating staff made those who would up without windows “quite unhappy” (p. 47). Some faculty who refused to discuss areas of disagreement or to even mention that there was an issue left without informing others, quietly folding its tent and slipping away.

Governance planning tended to retread staid, conventional, old governance provisions. “Our ideas were so feeble and the responses so scant that we made little progress toward developing a new structure” (p. 50). Eventually the new unit abandoned the false start and created a new committee composed of the most willing and creative representatives. The new governance structure was democratic and included all involved (students, faculty, administrators, and staff):

> We knew that unless we made the needed internal changes for ways in which faculty and staff worked with each other and the students, the outward organizational changes would mean nothing. We felt it imperative that the governing body we created should serve as a guide in helping the college to be ever evolving and progressive (p. 50).

The result was a flattened organizational structure wherein committee representatives were selected based on interest and expertise rather than by at-large elections. Students and staff were allowed to serve on committees when they had a vested interest. Overlapping functions were eliminated. The unit also created a separate “think tank” to develop and explore progressive ideas. Throughout this process, trust was key to helping foster a sense of community.

Benner (2000) found it difficult to separate herself from the ideas that she championed and was bothered by the fact that the process of learning new software took time away from scholarly production. She observed that faculty wasted hours struggling over semantics. She believes that that too much administrative control and hierarchical thinking inhibited cross-program collaboration and proved divisive. The flattened administrative structure which resulted in unit leaders serving as coordinators and facilitators raised questions of how to provide quality control. Greenwood (2000) further describes on this problem, noting that although the governance structure within New College had changed, the University administration still required that someone within her unit (in lieu of a department chair) sign administrative papers, attend administrative meetings, oversee student appeals and personnel problems, maintain records, assure that university policies and procedures are followed. She also notes that someone had to serve as spokesperson for the unit, facilitate unit meetings, and serve as a keeper of the unit vision (p. 142). This workload was substantial. Success depended upon the willingness of the group leader to put common good above personal gain. Unfortunately the model used did not compensate the unit leader, lessen the teaching workload, or relieve the unit leader of the obligation to “publish or perish.” Burnout is a real risk.

Cagle (2000) observed that simple-minded strategies failed to yield real and substantive change—meaningful changes resulted only from faculty *and* administrative leadership. Overcoming resistance to change was a challenge. Resistors questioned the lack of research data to support recommended changes (e.g., addition of a fifth year) to the education major, while ignoring the fact that research data were lacking to support the status quo. Some resistors raised fears that enrollments would diminish if the recommended changes were implemented. And

some simply protested top-down management, even though 75 percent of the faculty eventually voted for the changes. Cagle notes:

> Anyone who has been engaged in real and substantive change realizes that the use of single and simple-minded strategies, such as top down and bottom up, are doomed to failure. Each can have visible but short-lived and deceptive success. In every example of meaningful change during our initial reform period, the successes we had were the result of faculty and administrative leadership. It often took a lot of time and counterpunching, but the so-called top and bottom advocates for change really worked as middle-ground colleagues during many critical times.
>
> In retrospect, it is interesting to note that the loud, early charges of top-down at its worst (meaning, I suppose, that some top-down is all right) turned over time into a belief by many that the changes wrought were really a product of long-suppressed faculty desires. Moreover, a few of those most opposed to making any change have since declared themselves responsible for the successes achieved! (p. 77).

Morgan (2000) theorizes that most academics lack “the metaphorical capacity to view the natural and social world in new, surprising ways” (pp. 110-111). Academics are taught discourse and to think critically and innovatively within their chosen specialties:

> This means, in effect, that they are socialized to believe that all the logical space needed to rationally arbitrate whatever issues or disputes arise in their fields is already at hand. In other words, all the important truths about their academic subjects can be plausibly and convincingly stated in the current language games that are played in their respective disciplinary communities (p. 111).

Furthermore, once they are hired at a college or university, academics are socialized into the profession. They begin to speak of faculty loads, peer review, faculty governance, qualitative and quantitative research, and semantic and normative rules.

> Because this language is common to most if not all members of the professoriate, it is more or less impervious to the intellectual clashes [that Morgan describes]. It acts not merely as a buffer against faculty discord but also as a bulwark against perceived threats to the faculty from the outside.
>
> If I have got this right, then we can locate here yet another reason, to my mind a more enduring and pervasive one, for why university faculties are resistant to fundamental change. In stating such, I am not just claiming that the double socialization most professors receive makes them ill equipped to deal with change, either in envisaging it or enacting it, but more strongly that in many cases it turns them into staunch opponents of change. (pp. 111-112).

Hatch (2000) also focuses on the resistance to reform, describing how individuals used parliamentary procedures and wordsmithing to ambush change. But he also believes that some faculty simply acted in bad faith:

> At one of a series of open sessions to discuss revisions to the Planning Document, a department head who fought tooth and nail against restructuring the college made a statement that in a funny way captures an essential shift in authority and responsibility at the base of our college's reform efforts. In the course of a discussion about the Faculty Council's role in deciding the fate of the college, this department head argued that the council did not really represent the faculty. After a lengthy speech, she concluded, "If we

> had known they were going to be making important decisions, we would have voted for different people" (p. 117).

Hatch indicates that although several department heads worked unselfishly to redesign New College, the person who made that statement “did everything in her power to subvert the reform effort” (p. 117).

> Ironically, the department head's concluding statement says something about how New College [flattened] governance provides a way to counter assumptions that administrative positions are inherently superior to faculty roles. In the New College described in the planning document, decisions are evaluated according to their quality, not their source. Faculty and administration *share* responsibility for the hard work of developing policy, making decisions, and taking action. We have all had to become different people to make this new model work (p. 117).

Hatch also describes a paradox that illustrates what he deems to be bad faith:

> *The dean forced the faculty to be free.* The dean did everything in his power to make the faculty aware of the need for change, to encourage the development of a change agenda, and to propel the reform of the college as quickly as possible. The dean's power and influence were considerable, and we all felt it. But the shape of the reform, the substance of the reform, and the responsibility for what the reform would actually be and how it would happen came not from the dean, but from the faculty. We were pressured into reform (although few of us needed convincing), but we were also given complete autonomy to reshape what we do and how we do it. We were forced to be free (p. 120).

Hatch (2000) indicates that some faculty never grasped the second part of the paradox; they justified their attitudes and behaviors by never acknowledging, accepting, or acting on the

freedom that was the basis the reform effort. Instead of collaborating to improve the situation, faculty tended to focus their efforts on trying to subvert or slow the reforms. Hatch deemed such acts as evidence that some faculty were guilty of operating in bad faith:

> They were so caught up in their negative feelings toward the dean, or so afraid of serious change, or so protective of their own self-interests that they saw the choices offered by the restructuring plan as illusions. They never got past the "forced to reform" part to see the freedom created by this paradoxical situation. I accept that there are other ways to read the circumstances I have described. I know the colleagues I have portrayed in these stories are not bad people. All I am arguing here is that to the extent that they failed to acknowledge and exercise their freedom, they acted in bad faith (p. 120-121).

Cagle (2000) describes the difficulties encountered while attempting change, especially in the face of such resistance:

> I am still staggered by how long it takes to recast even seemingly the most simple components of a program. Since we were tackling multiple areas all at once, there was a sense that we were taking one step forward and two steps back, with the target far off in the distance. Because the elements of the program were interlaced, a gain made in one area might mean regression for something else . . . . [Also,] operational deadlines mean little to the opponents of change. Further, university structures are unyielding relative to making new things "legal" in a timely manner. Moreover, some colleagues supporting a specific change will wilt at the first sign of resistance. Backpedaling is a tempting path and many convenient excuses will be manifested in the face of a challenge. Thus, unforeseen events and heretofore unknown opponents will wreck even the best-planned sequence of implementation (p. 78).

Cagle believes that change requires a serious tough-mindedness and a willingness to abandon excuses for determination to improve the situation (p. 79). But, in the end, Cagle concludes that the pressures and hostility that he endured as the Wisniewski's assistant took a toll:

> The multiple years of unrest and confrontation left me feeling even today that I lost something during that time. I cannot describe very clearly what that means, except to say that my emotional and motivational processes have been altered in some way relative to taking on large-scale causes. Hence my title, "I Couldn't Do It Again." Perhaps I have lost my courage, or perhaps I am simply jaded. Perhaps I am just tired. In any event, I do not think I could charge up the hill again with the same fire and single-mindedness necessary to achieve what we did more than a decade ago. (p. 81)
>
> It is important to note that I am not saying the effort was not worth the results. Indeed, the changes we wrought clearly improved our teacher education programs, as evidenced by our high-performance graduates and national visibility. We demonstrated that the reasons most often given for not changing were really just excuses to preserve the status quo. (p. 81)

Cagle (2000) asserts that most of the resistance to improving teacher education "reflects a simple unwillingness to take seriously the fundamental problems associated with our work" (p. 81). While change is difficult, it can be accomplished if particpants assume ownership and take price in their accomplishments.

French (2000) recounts a 1970s effort to implement educational reform at UTK. That effort was doomed when the dean departed. While the new dean was supportive, the reforms were not his highest priority and the pilot reform program quietly faded away.

French observes that:

> *Change, whether we call it reform, restructuring, or reorganization, is essential for the health of the institution or organization.* Without the threat of or opportunity for change (it depends on how one sees it), there is little incentive for reflection or improvement . . . . *Bringing about change in education, especially higher education, is very difficult.* After working in government and school settings, I am convinced that we in higher education spend much more time and effort trying to maintain the status quo than it would take us to respond positively to those who have long urged change in what we do and how we do it.
>
> *Educational reform will never start from the bottom up, that is, those who are implementing the current programs and processes will not demand change. Therefore, true reform results from (a) external pressures, (b) external incentives, or (c) new formal leadership in the organization that demands change.* Many, if not most, faculty in the trenches tend to be oblivious to the rest of the universe . . . . Faculty rewards and incentives are rooted in the culture and climate of a university that puts a premium on scholarship, credit hours produced, and the civilities of academic life. In other words, faculty usually have too much at stake to instigate change, and they are already doing what they know how to do . . . (p. 99, emphasis in the original).

French believes that any successful reform effort requires four types of leaders: a champion, designers, early adopters, and followers (Table 5). French theorizes that:

> For true reform to take place, it is necessary to change all aspects of the organization and programs simultaneously, if at all possible . . . . The [1970s] Pilot Program did not require organizational change, and faculty did not have to work to make the reforms

Table 5

Four types of leaders required for successful educational reform

Champion:	A visionary activist in a position of authority who can use authority and the power of position to initiate and support change
Designers:	Persons who have or can catch the vision and who have the ability and willingness to create the means of implementation
Early adopters:	Persons who are eager to step out, to travel into unknown territory to implement the design
Followers:	Persons who are willing to follow the trail blazed by designers and early adopters; persons willing to change if they can see the value of change

Source: French (2000, p. 87).

> succeed. The program failed. New College focused on organizational change, but many units operate the same old programs in the same old ways four years later. If New College does not finally succeed as a systemic reform venture, I believe this may be a major cause. A glimmer of hope is offered by the fact that certain programmatic changes preceded the move to New College and that faculty forming a few of the new units founded their' affiliations on desired programmatic changes (p. 100).

But French also observes that the New College effort did not consciously revisit, study, and corporately reflect on the earlier failed reform effort, and that led to inefficiencies—repeating actions that did not work and only accidentally repeating actions that worked during the prior attempt.

Whitaker (2000) offers the unique perspective of a newly hired assistant professor. As a graduate student she had observed the hiring process at University of Washington where, after the interviewees delivered formal lectures, “two or three faculty members . . . seemed intent on eviscerating the applicants” (p. 154). The UTK experience was quite different:

> The day of the interview began with an informal breakfast with a faculty member. I was later impressed that my first formal interview was with a large group of students from the unit. These eager individuals were candid about what they were looking for in a new faculty member. I was equally candid about what I thought I could contribute. The large-group discussion also went well from my perspective. I had been warned that one faculty member would state his belief that school psychologists were useless. He did; I told him why I thought he was mistaken. This type of conversational give-and-take with members of the unit went on throughout the day. As I flew back to Seattle, I reflected on my visit and what it would mean to be part of a new college of education (p. 154-155).

She arrived on her new job in Fall 1994—the first semester of the reorganized New College:

> An analogy comes to mind. Imagine 11 families on the same street all moving at the same time. Further, imagine that these are not 11 intact families but rather ones in which there have been multiple simultaneous marriages and divorces. That was the College of Education that year. Eleven units had been formed from seven departments. Two departments had packed their bags and left the college. There were marriages—faculty from different departments came together. There were divorces—faculty and programs that had been in the same department split up. In the process, there had been periods of courting and controversy, not to mention custody disputes.

Whitaker notes that in a traditional college the administration decides which programs will be nourished and which will be starved. In New College, those tasks fell to each unit. She notes that two faculty members had been discussing a potential new program but had not succeeded in convincing their old department to launch it. Their thoughts were dusted off and became the seed for a series of lively debates that eventually led to a new program.

> From the beginning, faculty members were encouraged to be associated with more than one program area and told that program boundaries were to be permeable rather than rigid. Not everyone agrees, or feels comfortable, with this philosophy. Some faculty members have chosen to stay within the borders of familiarity. Some have ventured out far enough to put a toe in the water-then drawn it back and retreated. For some of us, this fluidity has allowed change and growth that would have been impossible under a traditional structure (p. 156).

Whitaker describes how she was invited to help teach a course in organizational learning. Although several students knew more about the subject than she did, she contributed by helping students hone their writing skills:

> The belief that my unconventional contribution of helping students with their writing was important to the program is an example of another strength of the new college. When boundaries are permeable, faculty and students alike can develop. Lifelong learning, the theme of our unit, becomes not just a possibility, but frequently a reality (p. 157).

She also focused on helping students become researchers.

> An affiliation with students is important to me. One of the reasons I was attracted to the unit and the new college was the emphasis on students. I was delighted that students were invited to participate in unit discussions. When I went for my interview and after I

> arrived, I heard the pleas for connection from students who were feeling disenfranchised in the breakup of the units. One of my objectives has been to reach out to those students and, for the most part, I believe that I have been successful. My joy in teaching comes from seeing students progress toward their goals and knowing I have been part of that progression. My reinforcement comes not so much from my colleagues as from the students' smiles, their words of thanks, and the dialogue that results in my learning as well as theirs. Because I consider myself a practitioner, rather than purely an academic, I believe that any significant contribution I make will be through these students. In other institutions and colleges, a student-focused perspective is often frowned on. A sense of "we and they" is often the norm. The New College has elevated the importance of the student. If this were not the case, I would not be at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, long.

To a limited extent, the reforms succeeded. A fifth year was added to the UTK teacher education program. For a time, portions of New College became student-oriented and innovations were encouraged. But in 1996, while the college was still transitioning from the old to the new model, Dean Wisniewski decided to retire. The interim dean did his best to foster continued change, but the other colleges within the university did not understand New College's flat structure and questioned whether it could succeed. The interim dean did his best to allay these fears while the naysayers within the College of Education increased their volume. None of the candidates for dean knew of or understood the reforms that Wisniewski had initiated. Thus when a new dean was hired, the staid old organizational structure was reinstituted.

Whitaker's paper concludes with a postscript in which she announces her decision to resign her post:

> One of the major reasons I came here rather than going to a more traditional institution, was to be a part of the New College. It is clear that many, if not most, of the New College innovations will end. Tradition has won over innovation. Units are being reformulated into departments. There will be department chairs rather than unit leaders. Our unit's name will be changed from Psychoeducational Studies to Educational Psychology. Our unit has been left intact, but other units have been forced into "marriages" of convenience. One small unit has chosen to remain "single" and will be directly administered by the dean of the college. Some of the faculty, the old guard, are happy to be going back to the traditional structure. Among those who worked hard to make the New College successful, there are feelings of sadness and sometimes anger. There is a dispirited atmosphere in college-wide meetings. Energy and excitement have drained out of the college. This is not a happy place to be right now . . . .
>
> I have always been student oriented—that is why I chose to be a school psychologist. It therefore disturbs me when I believe students are not being dealt with fairly. One aspect of the New College that especially appealed to me was the emphasis on students. However, I frequently see a concern for students taking a back seat to other concerns, such as increasing graduate enrollment or getting authorship on a publication (pp. 161-162).

After release of *Reforming a College*, Oaks (2000) described the text and interviewed Wisniewski. Wisniewski indicated that as far as he could tell, New College no longer exists. Wisniewski’s replacement, Dean Rowell, responded:

> That is absolutely not right . . . . We moved back to a departmental structure but kept the program structure intact. We kept the five goals of new college intact.

> We simply moved back to a departmental structure because the 11 units that had existed as a result of new college with their unit leaders were not understood by the rest of the university or by those people in the public served by our faculty (¶¶ 16, 18).

Does New College exist? Are the innovators and supporters still at UTK, or did they, like Whitaker all leave? A search of the UTK web site reveals that of the 10 faculty who contributed to *Reforming a College* five—Benner, Cagle, French, Hatch, and Paul—still teach at UTK. But the name New College is nowhere evident.

How the UTK Experience Illustrates Organizational Management Literature

Clearly the recurring theme in *Reforming a College* is that change is a stressful process. At least two authors (Wisniewski and French) believe that existing organizational frameworks and power structures inhibit change. This seems corroborated by anecdotal evidence of previously suppressed innovation (described by Whitaker) and the observation that faculty tended to collaborate only with others within their own department. The fact that change was openly resisted and that this resistance eventually succeeded in undoing organizational reforms attests to the difficulty of instituting and sustaining change.

The volume also illustrates several organizational tendencies noted by Wilson (1989) and Scott (2003). First, it appears many faculty desired to hold on to old programs and only explore additional responsibilities. They also feared that giving up programs would jeopardize their security.

Second, several boundaries are evident both within the old School of Education and between the school and the university at large. These are evident in disclosures that (a) there was little or no collaboration between departments within the School prior to the reorganization and

(b) few outside the School appeared to understand the relationship of New College's organizational structure to its underlying goals (increased collaboration and innovation).

Third, the existing organizational framework and the lack of willingness by some to yield power and authority may reflect the facts that (a) opponents knew they could not be unwillingly removed from their posts and (b) Wisniewski could offer few or no incentives that would entice them to do so. Although Scott indicates that one method of dealing with opposition is to empower managers to ignore or dismiss opponents (p. 230), faculty tenure clearly limited or precluded the latter option. The result was local active resistance on the part of entrenched systems, including self-removal of two departments to other schools.

It is clear that some of the stress experienced by individual faculty resulted from the abandonment of widely recognized (certain) processes and procedures that for those that were fluid (or uncertain). The decision to abandon the existing organizational structure caused disruption of the normative framework and a breakdown of collegiality.

Wisniewski attempted to overcome many of these difficulties by influencing and guiding the process—leadership methods—rather than direct management. He paid attention to both internal and external forces, in effect facilitating transformative leadership among those faculty members who became willing participants in the reform process. However, neither Wisniewski nor any of the other authors of *Transforming a College* mention that any training was provided; this fact suggests that there was no training—that faculty were simply left to find their own way in creating new relationships and organizational structure.

In contrast to the UTK reform failure, Martin (2004) describes a successful reform that began with a full year of training. She notes that her institution—Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC)—was losing enrollment to competitors, lacked a strong sense of direction, had

a bureaucratic structure that was not aligned, was not focused on student or organizational learning, and did not monitor progress on strategic goals and objectives. Instead of opting to immediately institute radical reform, MATC surveyed staff perceptions about the academic environment. MATC management used the resulting report (Baker and Edwards, 2000) to identify communication, supervision, and other problems and promote collaborative efforts to plan and implement change. Some of the results of involving the faculty and staff, providing training about effective communication and collaboration techniques, and openly and honestly discussing the problems that MATC faced are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of MATC training and collaborative planning effort

1. Increased trust between union leaders and the college administration;
2. Improved Board involvement in and understanding of the strategic plan;
3. Linking of the budgeting to performance appraisal;
4. A shift in focus to student learning outcomes;
5. A balanced budget (including a surplus in 2004);
6. A new shared decision making committee structure;
7. Increased enrollments;
8. Improved structures and processes

Although Martin does not describe the training program that led to these improvements, it appears that the combined training and collaborative planning efforts accomplished many of the goals that Wisniewski desired. Martin does list lessons learned that may aid institutions in achieving similar results (Table 7).

Table 7

Lessons learned during the MATC reform effort

1. Increase involvement of and dialogue with key decision makers, especially senior leaders and Board members;
2. Get everyone focused on specific strategies and outcomes and their role in accomplishing the goals through daily work;
3. Create a structure and process to implement the changes needed.
4. Have leaders share information and collaboratively develop any assumptions;
5. Train the key stakeholders on changes;
6. Follow up to review and reward progress.
7. Hold public reviews with senior leaders and key stakeholders.
8. Post results on Internet sites; and
9. Move as rapidly as possible while keeping track of improvements needed and lessons learned.

Wisniewski's decision to retire ultimately doomed the organizational reform. Clearly he more able to defend or ward off his external critics and maintain external alliances with powerful administrators than was his temporary successor. The ephemeral nature of his successor's appointment may have encouraged naysayers to increase their lobbying to overturn the organizational reforms. The truly innovative nature of the reforms predetermined that few qualified applicants from outside New College would have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and willingness necessary to continue the reform in the face of both internal and external opposition. Even 75 percent of New College faculty voted to support the change, the remaining internal naysayers combined with external doubts of success probably forced a return to old structures

and practices. In essence, it was easier to retract the organization reforms than to continue the disruption and dissent.

Finally, Wisniewski attempted to recruit new faculty (e.g., Whitaker) who shared his values and vision increased the likelihood for successful reforms. The fact that Whitaker left UTK when the organizational reform failed supports Dee's (2004) finding that faculty have structural expectations that when unsatisfied increase turnover.

Summary and Recommendations to Increase Likelihood of Positive Outcomes

The UTK case study makes it clear that leaders who attempt radical reform have to use a variety of techniques to increase the likelihood for success. These techniques include persuasion of individuals who will participate (internal) or externally support reforms; removal (ideally) of naysayers and those who would inhibit reforms; development, clarification, and communication of goals and vision; empowerment of key individuals; and hiring or solicitation of new participants (faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders) to share and implement the vision.

Comparison of the unsuccessful UTK reform with that of the successful MATC reform, coupled with the works of Zaner (1968) and Gardner (1974) suggests that the UTK effort suffered from two apparent conceptual gaps:

1. There was little or no training provided to help faculty and staff transition to a program of participatory governance or personally cope with new stresses.
2. Significant numbers of faculty were not involved in a self-evaluation process that might have led them to accept ownership of UTK's problems and become willing participants in the reform.

The second point warrants clarification. Although many faculty accepted the reform challenge, the fact that three entire departments left the school and 25% of the remaining faculty voted against the reform effort attests to substantial resistance. First, if the university administration had presented the school with an ultimatum—e.g., increase enrollments within five years or be eliminated—it might have galvanized faculty into a group that was capable of self-led reform. Such a threat might have led to a resistance movement wherein *all* faculty would willingly educate themselves about the declining enrollments, budget implications, and reforms recommended by Holmes and others. Second, had these education efforts been part of an action training and research program such as Zaner (1968) and Gardner (1974) decribe, faculty might have been more willing to take ownership of the problems and collaborate to design and implement change rather than see their school quickly disappear. Such a process might have taken longer to collaboratively design, but might have better withstood any late-stage challenge. Third, had the UTK administration remained actively and visibly involved in the reform effort—perhaps via periodic briefings about progress and discussions about problems—the reform might have been sustained and might even have become a vital factor in recruiting Wisniewski's replacement.

Departments that left New College effectively prevented their individual faculty and students from contributing to successful reform and may have contributed to failure of the effort. However, if these departments truly were comprised mostly of naysayers, their self-removal may actually have removed significant roadblocks to reform. Given that tenure prevented firing of the unwilling, wholesale self-removal may have been the only viable option available to Wisniewski. Perhaps self-removal of remaining individual naysayers in New College might have increased the potential for success.

It appears that the sudden and final failure of the 1990's reform, like that of the 1970's reform, was triggered by the loss of the visionary leader. Thus the principal recommendation must be to stay the course—persistence is key to success. Ideally, radical reforms should not be undertaken unless organizations have reasonable assurance that those leading the reforms will stay until processes are stable and replacements have been adequately trained. Furthermore, those empowered to hire replacements must (1) recognize that the number of potential applicants capable of continuing the reforms after the innovative leader's departure may be very limited and (2) recruit leaders who commit to and are capable of continuing the reform effort.

The UTK reforms attest to the fact that changing organizations with entrenched processes and values is extremely difficult—so difficult that perhaps the unnamed legislator described by French (2000) was correct when he stated, "Sometimes, I think the only way to change higher education is to blow it up and start all over" (p. 97). Perhaps the easiest approach to instituting such reforms is to begin a new institution wherein one can hire the willing—people who come knowing that they will experience change-associated stress—and shape new processes and procedures. Of course, other institutional desires (e.g., accreditation) and needs (funding, students) may be sources for additional stress.

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