

LEADING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By

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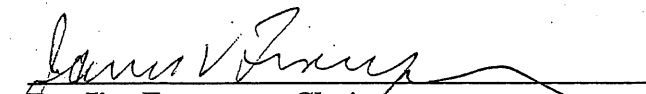
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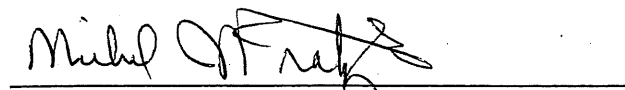
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LEADING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## Abstract

Leaders are frequently required to lead change due to mergers, expansions into new markets, and new initiatives to enter global markets compounding the need for change leadership. Frequent change is more the rule rather than the exception. Change is more needed today yet a poor result from leading change can adversely impact a leader's influence. How does a leader know when to lead a change initiative or when to take the easier route and simply stay with the status quo?

An in depth study of what appeared to be a very risky and highly successful organizational change initiative was thought to possibly shed light on answering these difficult leadership questions. This inductive qualitative case study discovered a university that achieved a successful, sustainable organizational change. The leader overcame the organizational change odds of one-third to two-thirds of the outcomes are often unsuccessful (Beer & Nohria; Bibler; as cited in Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008). "The rate of failure to deliver sustainable change at times reaches 80–90%" (Cope as cited in Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008, p. 153).

The leader in the private university organization in the Midwest that led the successful organizational change was inspired by his personal vision. He did not lead change using a theoretical framework. He was successful in persuading the board to authorize implementation of his vision. The president established goals to lead the way for workers to help achieve the organizational change. He effectively communicated his vision and goals and met resistance due to the status quo. The president overcame the challenges of status quo, and the successful organizational change resulted in an effervescent campus environment with record breaking-fundraising. Regardless of the

type or size of the major change, organizations that seek to make change may glean insights from this study of how leaders of one organization approached significant change.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my two children, Brent and Mallory, who are ten years apart in age. I believe with humility that God favored me to be their mother to lead them in His way. I pray my perseverance and commitment to the completion of this dissertation fuels their passion to achieve their personal goals in life.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my mother and father, Everlene and Jimmie Strickland; and it is also dedicated to my sister, Earlean Chambers. I believe that people do not get to choose their biological immediate family members. God knew best when he provided me their unconditional love and support that continues throughout my life.

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To Dr. Orville Blackman, my Committee Member who required knowing if the organizational change in my study impacted the culture. Ironically, an effervescent culture was the determination of success for the organizational change in my study.

To Dr. Michael Fratzke, my Committee Member who required knowing other higher education organizations that experienced similar change. The literature review



resulted in the discovery of the status quo as a resistance to change as compared to one of the common themes that actually emerged in my study.

To Dr. James Freemyer, my Dissertation Chair who provided guidance and support throughout my dissertation process to ensure I produced a quality, meaningful contribution to the field of organizational leadership. God also knew best when he provided Dr. Freemyer as my Dissertation Chair because of his patience for the sake of scholarship quality.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Organizational leadership is the ability to influence others towards an intended purpose. Organizational change was the intended purpose of this study. “By any objective measure, the amount of significant, often traumatic, change in organizations has grown tremendously over the past two decades” (Kotter, 1996. p. 2). Leading organizational change continues to be a significant leadership responsibility. This leadership study focused on key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change.

A case study in higher education was chosen due to technology and globalization increasingly driving change in an environment already difficult to depart from the status quo. “A case study investigates a leadership phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined” (Klenke, 2008, p. 59). It is challenging to lead organizational change in higher education where autonomy is supported by tenured professors whose individual values, beliefs, expectations, and assumptions are acceptable as the status quo. This study has implications for leaders who are constantly challenged with frequent change and/or in challenging environments.

Leaders are frequently required to lead change on a regular basis due to mergers, expansions into new markets, and new initiatives to enter global markets compounding the need for change leadership. Frequent change is more the rule rather than the

exception. This study examined how the organizational leadership achieved a successful outcome. Research indicates that when leadership introduces change, more often than not it is unsuccessful (Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008, p. 153). Yet there are some organizations that institute significant change and are apparently very successful. Regardless of the type or size of the major change, organizations that seek to make change will glean insights from this study of how leaders of one organization approached significant change.

### **The General Nature of the Problem**

The research problem of this study is that a significant leadership challenge facing many leaders is to decide whether or not to make a major organizational change. Leaders are frequently required to lead change due to mergers, expansions into new markets, and new initiatives to enter global markets compounding the need for change leadership. Frequent change is more the rule rather than the exception. Change is more needed today yet a poor result from leading change can adversely impact a leader's influence. How does a leader know when to lead a change initiative or when to take the easier route and simply stay with the status quo?

An in depth study of what appeared to be a very risky and highly successful organizational change initiative was thought to possibly shed light on answering these difficult leadership questions. This inductive qualitative case study discovered a university that achieved a successful, sustainable organizational change. The leader overcame the organizational change odds of "one-third to two-thirds of the outcomes are often unsuccessful...the rate of failure to deliver sustainable change at times reaches 80–90%" (Gilley et al., 2008).



The organization in this study instituted significant change to add a new football program to the athletic department, and the outcome was successful. The leaders in the organization are still positive about the decision and process of change after implementation. This study describes how the leaders executed the change process. It also discusses how leaders communicated the change that resulted in a successful outcome.

Resistance is a challenge leader's face during organizational change. People resist and create obstacles during change in different ways. Inandi, Tunc, & Gillic (2013) found the following:

Resistance to change can be very strict as well as soft. Hultman (1998) states that there are two types of resistance: active and passive. Active resistance involves being critic, finding mistakes, mobbing, expressing fear, accusing, choosing and utilizing some facts deliberately, sabotaging, threatening, manipulating, distorting truths, blocking, trivializing and discussion. Passive resistance occurs in the form of agreeing but not acting, failing to achieve change, behaving reluctantly, letting the change process fail and not sharing information, suggestion, help or support. (p. 197)

Leading organizational change that is inspired by vision can also be a challenge. Kotter (1996) argues, "New initiatives fail far too often when employees, even though they embrace a new vision, feel disempowered by huge obstacles in their path." This research study discusses how the organizational leadership overcame obstacles.

This study produced research through the lens of change theory regarding leadership decisions of organizational change, how they affected the change process, and

their contributions towards a successful outcome. Leaders are often required to make a decision that it is time to change by shifting from the status quo to benefit the overall organization. Their execution of the change process should include communicating a vision that will be embraced by followers that are willing to sustain support of the leader throughout the change process (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 31).

Leaders should build ongoing relationships with followers to gain the support especially needed during a change process. Hackman and Johnson (2009) asserted that “Recognizing that leaders and followers work together toward shared objectives should keep us from overemphasizing the importance of leaders or ignoring the contribution of followers” (p. 19). Change is able to occur by efforts of both leaders and followers that lead to a successful outcome. “Leading means influencing since leaders must shape the attitudes and behavior of others to help groups reach their goals.” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 166). When leaders influence followers towards a common goal, desired change is likely to occur, and everyone shares in the outcome.

There are a variety of organizations located throughout the United States that could have been selected for this research study, including public and private organizations both profit and nonprofit in structure. These include corporations, government, and academic organizations. This researcher chose a private university located in the Midwest of the United States that appeared to have a successful outcome of organizational change.

The academic climate of autonomy at a university was an excellent environment to study change. This research study discovered how leaders influenced professors who experience academic freedom as the status quo to support significant organizational

change that resulted in a successful outcome. This study also discovered how the university leadership accomplished the major organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department. Leaders in organizations of varying types and sizes may learn something from this study about key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change.

The literature is replete with leaders who have attempted major change, failed, and found themselves looking for new leadership positions. The literature is ripe with examples of organizations that failed to act and found themselves out of business. Gilley, et al., (2008) found that “one-third to two-thirds of major change initiatives are deemed failures” (p. 153). They also discovered that “It has been suggested that the rate of failure to deliver sustainable change at times reaches 80–90%” (p. 153).

This research study discovered that the university leadership overcame the odds of failure during their major organizational change of adding a new program to one of its departments. It had been over five years since the change was implemented and this presented an opportunity to delve into the success story. This case study discovered how leadership accomplished the organizational change that is sustainable after over five years.

“Although many organizations and their leaders desire lasting, meaningful change, few are capable of achieving it” (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 155). This research study discovered a president that ventured into the unknown by having a personal vision of organizational change for the university. This is how leadership knew it was the right time for major change. For the purpose of this study, leadership is defined as “an

intentional change process through which leaders and followers, joined by a shared purpose, initiate action to pursue a common vision” (Laub, 2004, p. 5).

### **The Problem Statement**

One leadership challenge is to decide whether or not to institute a major organizational change, because one-third to two-thirds of the outcomes is often unsuccessful (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 153). Kouzes & Posner (2002) asserted, “When we’re faced with new challenges—whether personal, organizational, economic, or technological—we live with a high degree of ambiguity” (p. 186). Once the decision was made to institute a significant organizational change from the status quo at the university in this study, the leadership challenge was to achieve a successful outcome.

The reality is that change shifts the comfort of the status quo, often causing individuals to resist and make it difficult for the organization to achieve a successful outcome. This study discovered key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change. “Change and the accompanying uncertainty throws off our equilibrium” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 186). However leadership at the university in this study led change that produced a successful outcome for the organization.

This dissertation is an inductive qualitative case study of university leadership located in the Midwest of the United States that made a decision to make a major organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department. “A case study entails the detailed exploration of a specific case which could be a community, organization, or person” (Bryman, 2008, p. 30). This case study discovered why leadership chose to make the specific organizational change to add the new football

program to the athletic department. The research discovered the reason for the leadership decision to change, the approach used to change, key initiatives used to gain acceptance to change, resistance to change, and that adding the new football program to the athletic department was successful.

The major change of adding a new football program to the athletic department implemented by the university included leadership who must have believed it was ready to make a major change. These leaders had to manage both positive and negative behaviors throughout the organization about the change. Successful leaders understand the change process and anticipate opportunities to lead organizations toward a positive outcome. “Organizational behavior recognizes that organizations are dynamic and always changing” (Greenberg & Baron, 2003, p. 8). This presents leaders with continual opportunities to lead in times of change.

This research study was a unique opportunity to interview a former cabinet member. It was also a unique opportunity to interview two other former leaders who were involved in the implementation of change at the university. Once the change was implemented, one leader accepted a leadership position at his alma mater at another university, and the other leader retired. Both leaders involved in the implementation were provided an opportunity to speak freely with no pressures about the organizational change at their former university. All three interviews produced responses that were enlightening about the challenges and strengths leadership faced while implementing organizational change.

Organizational change can be planned. “Planned change is the systematic attempt to redesign an organization in a way that will help it adapt to significant changes in the

environment and to achieve new goals” (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, Jr., 1995, p. 412). Song (2009) suggests “The effect of planned organizational change on organizational behaviors depends on the institutionalization of planned organizational change” (p. 209). An organization that anticipates and plans for change is even more prepared when the plans must be adjusted for the actual change.

There is never a guarantee that planned change will be successful. “Planned and predictable organizational changes do not always produce the expected results” (Song, 2009, p. 200). “Even well-designed changes fail in some organizations and succeed in others” (p. 200). Regardless, the benefit of most preparation outweighs the challenges of not planning for the imminent change.

It is up to the organization to determine how and at what level it plans for change to occur to minimize the potential for an unsuccessful outcome. This study did not discover a theoretical basis for the change experienced at the university. Regardless, the researcher was able to analyze the change process at the university through the lens of two frameworks for change with theorists Léon de Caluwé, Hans Vermaak and Kurt Lewin. John Kotter’s position on change introduces their theories.

Kotter (1996) argues “Major change is usually impossible unless most employees are willing to help, often to the point of making short-term sacrifices” (p. 9). The need for individual survival determines the desire and behavior to make sacrifices. Kotter further argues “people will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they think the potential benefits of change are attractive and unless they really believe that a transformation is possible” (p. 9).

Léon de Caluwé and Hans Vermaak (2003, p. 42) suggest five reasons, labeled with a color, to describe how individual behavior may shift towards change. Leadership approach to change requires thinking about how to influence followers to work towards and achieve a desired outcome. Leaders that understand their organization and its workers may select the appropriate approach to effect change. Leadership in the university organization of this study experienced some of the thinking processes developed by de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003) to achieve the change to add the new program to the athletic department.

“Yellow-print thinking assumes that people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account, or if you can compel them to accept certain ideas” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, p. 42). An example is an individual willing to change job locations in exchange for a promotion. Another example is an individual willing to accept decreased benefits due to budget cuts in exchange for not being laid off from the job.

“In blue-print thinking it is assumed that people or things will change if a clearly specified result is laid down beforehand” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). An example is an individual who changes the format of publishing the company newsletter from paper to electronic to results in decreased printing costs. Another example is an individual maintaining less spare parts in an automobile department, because overnight shipping is available in case of an emergency that prevents delays in the production schedule.

“Red-print thinking assumes that people and organizations will change if the right HRM (Human Resource Management) tools are employed and used correctly” (de

Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 43). An example is an individual that changes to use a new piece of equipment, because training is available prior to its use. Another example is an individual that changes job responsibilities that include working in an asbestos environment, because the company adheres to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

“In green-print thinking, the terms change and learning have very similar meanings” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 43). An example is university professors changing their curriculum based on new research. Another example is a physician changing a prescription for a condition based on new research.

“In white-print thinking, the dominant image is that everything is changing autonomously, of its own accord” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 44). An example is a researcher that develops enhanced software as part of ongoing job responsibilities that result in continuous upgrading of the computer operating system. Another example is employees at a bank continuously upgrading services based upon ongoing customer feedback.

Kurt Lewin developed a “triple-phase model in which actual changes are preceded by ‘unfreezing’ and followed by ‘re-freezing’” (as cited in de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 89.). Cummings and Worley (2001) assert that Lewin’s change model has a middle step of moving. The framework of the three-step process of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing is used to accomplish change. Unfreezing is a process of reducing or eliminating whatever is contributing to the present state (Cummings & Worley, 2001). Moving is shifting and intervening with changes designed to “develop



new behaviors, values, and attitudes” (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 23). Refreezing is stabilization at the new state (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

The first step of the change process in Lewin’s model (as cited in de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003) is a challenge for leaders. Robbins (1989) argues that in dealing with resistance to change, “the status quo can be considered an equilibrium state” (p. 530). “To move from this equilibrium – to overcome the pressures of both individual resistance and group conformity – unfreezing is necessary” (p. 530). Robbins suggests using “driving forces, which direct behavior away from the status quo, can be increased” (p. 530). In addition, “the restraining forces, which hinder movement from the existing equilibrium, can be decreased” (p. 530). Robbins argues that both forces can be effective in unfreezing the status quo that is considered resistance to change. Movement to shift and intervene with changes towards a new state can be accomplished that results in refreezing to stabilize at the new state.

An example of Lewin’s approach to change occurs in dependency rehabilitation facilities. An individual suffering from addiction is admitted to a rehabilitation facility with the intent of change. The unfreezing process increases the driving force to direct behavior away from the status quo which is whatever fed the addiction (Robbins, 1989, p. 530). Restraining forces to maintain the status quo are decreased by staying at the rehabilitation facility (p. 530).

Movement occurs through intervention of rehabilitation that shifts behavior. The individual is no longer provided whatever fed the dependency. After a period of time, the individual is believed to have been rehabilitated, a healthier person, and not likely to

return to the dependency condition. Re-freezing is considered to have occurred stabilizing the new state. The individual is released from the facility back into society.

Franz provides another view of Lewin's process:

Unfreezing can be understood as those processes designed to break up the status quo. Changing is the transition process from the old state to a new state.

Refreezing is cementing the new changes in place, creating a new state of equilibrium. (Frantz, 2004, p. 154)

Some organizations that desire change for intended growth experience this state. An example may be a startup company that experiences initial success during product launch. After the product has been on the market for some time, the growth period slows. Leadership may make the decision to unfreeze its present state by no longer offering some of its existing lower demand products. Movement may occur in researching and developing new branding and even products that are more likely to be purchased by customers. The final stage would be the launch (refreeze) of new branding and improved products that are the new focus of the company.

A final example would be an employee that that did not meet performance expectations. This individual's work performance may be unfrozen through a probationary period. Lewin asserted that change efforts fail because "people are unwilling (or unable) to alter long-established attitudes and behavior" (Stoner et al., 1995, p. 416). The employee may or may not be willing to accept the terms of the probationary period.

Movement described in an Individual Development Plan may be required to rehabilitate the employee's performance. At the point that the employee has successfully

achieved the elements of the individual development plan, he may be frozen back into the workforce as a meaningful contributor to the organization. Even after the employee accepted the terms of the probationary period with successful completion, it is possible to return to the previous work behavior that initially caused the lower performance expectations. Lewin also argued that change efforts fail because “after a brief period of trying to do things differently, individuals left on their own tend to return to their habitual patterns of behavior” (Lewin as cited in Stoner et. al., 1995, p. 416).

Some organizational changes are not successful. The university leadership in this study had the courage to make a decision to add a new football program to the athletic department. This case study discovered responses that the leadership decision to institute the organizational change at the university resulted in a successful outcome.

### **Research Questions**

This dissertation was an inductive qualitative case study of a university and its leadership of organizational change to add a new program to one of the departments. The following semi-structured, open-ended research questions were constructed to discover responses about the leadership decision, approach, key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change, and whether the change was considered a success.

1. Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?
2. What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?
3. What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?

4. What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?
5. How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

The first response discovered the reason university leadership believed it needed to make a major organizational change. The next three responses were analyzed to determine if it supported the organizational change theory of Léon de Caluwé and Hans Vermaak (2003, p. 42) who suggest the five reasons, labeled with a color, to describe how individual behavior may shift towards change. This research study discovered the leadership approach, initiatives, and resistance to organizational change did support the de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003) theory and will be presented in chapter 4 and discussed in chapter 5. The final research question discovered that the organizational change was a success.

A follow-up discussion was offered to each participant after their responses to the five semi-structured, open-ended research questions. All interviewees participated in the follow-up discussion. The discussion was offered as a semi-structured, open-ended question as follows:

6. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the organizational change that you have not discussed in the first five questions?

### **Definition of Terms**

- **Higher education** – Colleges and universities recognized by the congressional Higher Education Act whose accreditation provides eligibility in Title IV programs and Federal student financial aid (Rodenhouse, M. P. & Torregrosa, C. H., 2000, p. v).

- **Environment** – “The physical and social context within which any client system (a person, group, or organization) is functioning” (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 671).
- **Life Cycle** – “A company’s differentiating and positioning strategy must change as the product, market, and competitors change over time” (Kotler, 2000, p. 302).
- **Node** – An electronic container used for coding of words with NVivo 10 qualitative research software.
- **Non-profit organization** – “An organization whose purpose is to serve the public rather than to earn a profit for its shareholders” (Colley, Doyle, Logan, & Stettinius, 2003, p. 207).
- **Organization** – “An organization is a structured social system consisting of groups and individuals working together to meet some agreed-upon objectives” (Greenburg & Baron, 2003, p. 3).
- **Organizational change process** – “Planned or unplanned transformations in an organization’s structure, technology, and/or people” (Greenburg & Baron, 2003, p. 587).
- **Resistance to change** – “The tendency for employees to be unwilling to go along with organizational changes, either because of individual fears of the unknown, or organizational impediments” (Greenburg & Baron, 2003, p. 587).

### **Assumptions Guiding the Study**

This researcher considered a deductive approach for this study. “The deductive process appears very linear—one step follows the other in a clear, logical sequence”

(Bryman, 2008, p. 10). The deductive approach is typically associated with quantitative research (p. 10).

This researcher also considered an inductive approach for this study where “theory is the outcome of the research” (Bryman, 2008, p. 11). Non-structured or semi-structured, open-ended questions provide depth of responses in the inductive approach. Value is added to the research study because the “process of induction involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observations” (Bryman, 2008, p. 11) and is typically associated with qualitative research. “When the predominant research strategy is qualitative, a case study tends to take an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research” (Bryman, 2008, p. 55).

After considering both deductive and inductive approaches, this researcher decided upon a case study using the inductive approach and conducted qualitative research interviews. “Interviews are often applied in *case studies*, which focus on a specific person, situation, or institution” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 117). This case study focused on a university that made the decision to add a new football program to the athletic department that was a successful organizational change, and the following assumptions were made about the interview questionnaire that was used.

(1) A survey is a transaction between two people who are bound by special norms; (2) the interviewer offers no judgment of the respondents’ replies and must keep them in strict confidence; (3) respondents have an equivalent obligation to answer each question truthfully and thoughtfully; and (4) in the survey it is difficult to ignore an inconvenient question or give an irrelevant answer. (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004, p. 9)

It was assumed that credible and reliable responses would be provided by all participants in this case study. It was also assumed that the researcher would be provided access to any discovery resulting from the interviews that may benefit the case study such as documents and observations.

### **Delimitations**

There are a variety of organizations located throughout the United States that could have been selected for this research study, including public and private organizations that are profit and non-profit in structure. These include corporations, government, and academic organizations. This researcher chose a private university organization located in the Midwest of the United States that had a successful outcome of organizational change.

The academic climate of autonomy at a university is an excellent environment and location to study change. This study discovered how leaders at the university influenced professors who experience academic freedom as the status quo to support significant organizational change that resulted in a successful outcome? The research discovered how the university leadership accomplished the major organizational change to add a new program to its athletic department.

### **A Brief Review of Literature to Support the Study**

This study discovered how university leadership accomplished the major organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department. The organizational change was made in a higher education environment where it is typically difficult to gain support to shift from the status quo. Leaders in type or size of

organization may learn something from this study about key issues to be taken into consideration when deciding upon their major organizational change.

Successful leaders understand the change process and anticipate opportunities to lead organizations towards a positive outcome. “Organizational behavior recognizes that organizations are dynamic and always changing” (Greenberg & Baron, 2003, p. 8). This presents the leader with continual opportunities to lead in times of change. “Leadership is an intentional change process through which leaders and followers, joined by a shared purpose, initiate action to pursue a common vision” (Laub, 2004, p. 5).

Leadership embraces the reality that change will lead followers through innovation and entrepreneurship. The process of change does not always provide a clear direction towards an outcome. Innovative leaders and perhaps those with an entrepreneurial spirit view the journey of change as an opportunity to develop new processes along the way to achieve an overall benefit. These processes may pave way for new and improved business strategies and practices that may not have otherwise been considered.

People are essential to change. “To achieve coordination across functions of an organization, all that is necessary are people who have become experts in several functions, and can therefore tie them together into an integrated whole” (Banutu-Gomez, M. & Banutu-Gomez, S. M. T., 2007, p. 75). Leaders need people and especially in times of change. Understanding the many aspects of change will provide leaders the confidence to embrace it as a way of life as they succeed in making a positive, meaningful difference in this world.



Leading change requires the characteristic of communication to followers.

“Leadership is essentially a process of social influence in which individuals want to feel included, supported and reinforced, especially in change” (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006, p. S88). When leaders decide to make a change, followers who implement the process should be considered as significant contributors to the outcome.

Leaders that desire to achieve positive change recognize that “Communication is the cornerstone of successful change” (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007, p. 14).

Communicating messages of change to followers is the sole responsibility of the leader.

“Effective leadership is the product of the creation and delivery of inspiring and compelling messages” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 336). Leaders possess the ability to influence followers toward their desired outcome through effective communication that occurs throughout the change process.

Organizational change can be predictable. “The effect of planned organizational change on organizational behaviors depends on the institutionalization of planned organizational change” (Song, 2009, p. 209). An organization that anticipates and plans for change towards an outcome is even more prepared when the plans need to be adjusted according to the actual change.

There is never a guarantee that planned change will be positive. “Planned and predictable organizational changes do not always produce the expected results. Even well-designed changes fail in some organizations and succeed in others” (Song, 2009, p. 200). Regardless, the benefit of most preparation outweighs the challenges of not planning for the imminent change. It is up to the organization to determine how and at what level its plans for the change to minimize potential negative impact for individuals.

Leaders understand that people have options and that sometimes result in resisting change. “Change resistance is one of the most prevalent characteristics in an organization” (Banutu-Gomez, M. & Banutu-Gomez, S. M. T., 2007, p. 77). “In their efforts to effect change, leaders coming into new organizations are often thwarted by an unconscious conspiracy to preserve the status quo” (Bennis, 2004, p. 50).

People are resistant to change for a variety of reasons that include “habit, security, economic factors, fear of the unknown, and selective information processing” (Banutu-Gomez, M. & Banutu-Gomez, S. M. T., 2007, p. 74). Some people are satisfied with the status quo and do not desire change or embrace the opportunity of something different. The possibility of their security threatened in some manner with change creates resistance. Other people may not be in a financial state to accept change for fear it may be of harm. It is also common that the fear of the unknown is unappealing to many people. It infringes on their basic need to know that what they have worked for at a particular point in their life will not change unless it is for the better.

Followers view detailed background information about change as an option. Some followers choose not to receive detailed background information, because they have built relationships of trust with leaders and believe that decisions are made in the best interest of the overall organization. However, when followers do not receive detailed background information, this may result in depriving themselves of understanding the change.

Leaders are required to manage change and its opposition. “The difficulty in managing change resistance is when it is implicit and subtle...loss of loyalty to the organization, loss of motivation to attend organization rallies, and increased absenteeism

are more difficult to identify....make it tough for leaders to find the source of resistance and provide a remedy for it” (Banutu-Gomez, M. & Banutu-Gomez S. M. T., 2007, p. 74). People will communicate with the organization one way or another even if it means filing a formal complaint to ensure their message is delivered. This presents an opportunity for leadership innovation, because it is obvious that there is a breakdown in productivity fueled by emotional stress about change.

Workers that have in the past demonstrated loyalty to the organization may feel betrayed during times of change. Innovative leaders who have built relationships of trust with workers will discover unique ways to communicate to each individual the reason for the change and how it may be an overall benefit to the entire organization. For some people it may be stopping by their work area just to talk when otherwise this type of communication may not have occurred. For other people it may be more extensive time spent away from the work site during a lunch or break period. The important thing is for the leader to discover the most effective way to make a connection with the workers to ease their feelings and inspire hope for a way forward. This type of commitment may restore participation in organizational activities and absenteeism levels.

“The challenge is to select a set of actions that are achievable within the capacity of the organization to absorb change and resource constraints” (Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006, p. S81). The landscape for change is never perfect and often unpredictable. Therefore, a leader must realistically act through the challenges of change within existing authority. “Leaders must operate in conditions of uncertainty, and that reality implies the need for even more careful analysis and ultimately for some faith and courage” (Clawson, 2003, p. 6). The unknown should inspire the faith and courage

necessary to act appropriately while the organization is experiencing change. This is especially true when the unpredictable occurs through the change process.

“Leadership is never put to the test more strongly than when the unplanned for happens, or when those in leadership positions have to navigate the rough seas of organizational change” (Seijts, 2004, p. 2). People will form opinions of leaders and how they respond in challenging times. They will also depend on the same leader to lead them throughout change to the outcome. The leader in this particular case study risked his entire professional leadership reputation for the organizational change. He was directly challenged by administration and faculty throughout the organizational change. The ultimate goal is for the change process to have a result where people believe they were led with authenticity. The organizational change at the university in this case study was led with authenticity and resulted in a successful outcome.

### **Research Methods and Procedures**

This was a case study using the inductive approach to conduct research interviews. The case study used a single subject for the qualitative and descriptive research design. “Single cases are often critical, revelatory, uncovering unusual phenomena” (Klenke, 2008, p. 64). This case study was about organizational change in a university environment that is difficult to shift the status quo. “Case studies are also appropriate if they represent unique situations or extreme cases such as specific organizations which experienced unusual examples of leadership successes or failures” (p. 64). The study discovered that the university had a successful organizational change of adding a new football program to the athletic department.

The case study was non-experimental with no independent or dependent variables. Six common themes emerged from this research study that will be revealed in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

### **Description of the Population**

A total of 15 interviews were conducted at the university. The genders of the participants interviewed were 80% males and 20% females. Four participants have worked at the university for 0-5 years. Five other participants have either worked or served on the board at the university for 6-10 years. Two participants have worked at the university for 11-15 years. One participant has worked for the university for 16-20 years. Three other participants have worked for the university for more than 20 years.

The participants were placed in four participant categories for this research study. The categories are cabinet, athletics, faculty, and administration. There were five cabinet interviews, three athletics interviews, five faculty interviews, and two administration interviews. Of significant importance was the unique opportunity to interview a former cabinet member. Two former athletic department members who are no longer affiliated with the university also were interviewed. These three participants enriched the study, because the candid responses regarding their perceptions of the phenomenon of change was discussed using a reflective lens of their former positions.

### **Selection of Participants**

Interviewing participants within the four categories was relevant to this study of leading organizational change in higher education so the researcher could discover diversity of perceptions regarding the phenomenon of change. The cabinet participants were the decision makers of the change. The athletics participants implemented the

change and were responsible for managing the new football program. Faculty and administration were directly impacted by the decision to change that affected student enrollment. The participant categories approach enriched this study by providing a holistic discovery of how the change impacted the organization.

### **Data Collection Methods**

The case study was conducted at a private university in the Midwest and focused on leadership and key issues to be taken into consideration when deciding upon a major organizational change. This study included interviews, observations, and document mining that assisted in examining the facts about the organizational change. Kvale & Brinkman (2009) suggest, “Interviews are often applied in *case studies* which focus on a specific person, situation, or institution” (p. 117).

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

This researcher utilized a “semi-structured research interview focusing on the subject’s experience of a theme” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 25). The purpose of the interview was to understand the experience of organizational change at the university from the participants’ perspectives. “This kind of interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale & Brinkman, p. 27).

Formal interviews were conducted with a guided non-structured, open-ended questionnaire that makes it a semi-structured interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 27). The results of the interview constituted the next step of data analyses using NVivo 10 software. “The interview is usually transcribed, and the written text and sound recording together constitute the materials for the subsequent analysis of meaning”

(Brinkman, p. 27). Each participant interviewed was provided a \$10 Starbucks® Gift Certificate and a note of thanks.

### **Analysis of Data**

“Data collection and analysis are interrelated, iterative tasks that may involve re-reading the transcripts, revising the extant literatures, mining the data to arrive at a deeper understanding of the data and patterns and themes underlying them” (Klenke, 2008, p. 68). This researcher was committed to the detailed analysis of the data from this case study that included critical reflection of the results. “Data analysis also involves intentional periods of critical reflection—reviewing the research process, interactions with participants, seeking disconfirming evidence for tentative findings, changing the conceptual framework to incorporate accumulated knowledge and build theory” (p. 68). This researcher analyzed the data and explored all possible explanations for the phenomena in this case study. “Reflection also means searching for alternative explanations of the findings and approaching making meaning of the data from different perspectives” (p. 68).

### **Summary of Results**

This chapter discussed that organizational leadership is the ability to influence others towards an intended purpose of change. The general nature of the problem is the leadership challenge of deciding whether or not to institute a major organizational change, because one-third to two-thirds of the outcomes is often unsuccessful (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 153). Five research questions were constructed to discover leadership decision, approach to change, key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change, and whether change is considered a success.

This chapter provided a definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and brief literature to support this study. The researcher identified this was a qualitative case study in higher education. The data collection method described in this chapter included four categories of participants who were interviewed about the organizational change at the university. The interview responses were audio recorded and transcribed into manuscripts. The manuscripts were coded and analyzed using NVivo 10 software for qualitative research studies to reduce human error.

### **Contributions to the field of Organizational Leadership**

This was a research study that focused on leadership and key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change. Regardless of the type or size of the major change, organizations that seek to determine if they will be successful in making change may read this study to illuminate their path toward a successful outcome. The case study addressed how the leadership decision to add a new football program to the athletic department at a university changed the status quo. This research provided an opportunity for any type or size of organization to learn something about leadership and key issue outcomes that occurred during a major change from the status quo.



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter contains a literature review of theories specifically related to the problem. Theories of Kurt Lewin, Léon de Caluwé, and Hans Vermaak are discussed as it relates to organizational change. The decision to have used an inductive approach of a qualitative case study for this research and questionnaire for data collection is also discussed. Finally, there is a discussion on literature of research studies addressing similar problems. There are several qualitative case studies about change in higher education that illuminate organizational leadership. The discussion in this chapter is about leadership effectiveness and resistance to change.

This chapter is specific to a literature review related to the study of organizational change in higher education. It includes a discussion about literature relevant to theories specifically related to the problem. Literature relevant to operational terms and assumptions are discussed. Finally, Research studies that addressed similar problems are also a discussion in this chapter.

### **Review of Literature Relevant to Theories Specifically Related to the Problem**

After this researcher considered the work of theorist Kurt Lewin that was discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, the researcher decided to conduct this case study through the lens of change as it relates to the work of Léon de Caluwé and Hans Vermaak (2003, p. 42) which suggest there are five meanings of the word change that are each labeled with a color. For the purpose of chapter two of the study, the five meanings

examined will be considered color themes. Leadership and followers in the university of this study experienced three color themes during the change process of adding the new football program to the athletic department.

Leadership credibility, behavior, action, and collaboration are involved in the communication and execution of the change process (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 10-11). The manner in which the leader chooses to communicate and execute the change process contributes to the outcome. According to Paul Hersey (1984), “leadership is an “any attempt to influence the behavior of another individual or group” (p. 14). The influence results in a change of attitude and behavior. A leader “modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet shared group goals and needs” (p. 11). This case study determined that adding a new football program to the athletic department was a vision of the university president.

Leaders that have built ongoing relationships with followers may be able to determine if the theme of yellow-print thinking is required to influence needed change. “Yellow print thinking assumes that people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account or if you can compel them to accept certain ideas” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). This may be considered a form of transactional communication (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p.)

The leader has provided the followers a vision of the change that includes an incentive for the follower. The follower discusses the vision and incentive with the leader prior to acting towards change. Further discussion may result in some compromise of the incentive. Change may then occur once both leader and follower have mutually

agreed upon the discussion. Leaders often have to lead people only if certain conditions are met that benefit the follower.

Some people are willing to change if they have specific information about the change that includes the desired results. “In blue-print thinking it is assumed that people or things will change if a clearly specified result is laid down beforehand” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). Followers with this type of thinking may respond to an authoritative leader that communicates a vision and objectives for change. “The authoritarian leader maintains strict control over followers by directly regulating policy, procedures, and behavior (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 42).

Followers often understand that change is part of the job and are willing to participate as long as there is a transition process to assist the individual. “Red-print thinking assumes that people and organizations will change if the right HRM (Human Resource Management) tools are employed and used correctly” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 43). Similar thinking includes a follower’s desire for employee development. “In green-print thinking, the terms change and learning have very similar meanings” (p. 43). Training to assist in changing conditions demonstrates value and support of employees. “Employee-oriented leaders focus on relationships between people and are particularly interested in motivating and training followers” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 52).

Robert Kelley suggested that the “best followers are people who think for themselves and take initiative” (as cited in Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 56). “In white-print thinking, the dominant image is that everything is changing autonomously, of its own accord” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 44). Leaders that foster an environment

where employee understands change is a way of life and proactively engage in conditions of support may gain followers that desire intended results. This study discovered the theoretical relationship between leadership and followers as it relates to all five color themes during the change process of adding the new football program to the athletic department.

### **Review of Literature Relevant to Operational Terms**

Devising measures of concepts or operationalization is one of the steps in qualitative research, which is a “term that originally derives from physics to refer to the operations by which a concept is measured” (Bryman, 2008, p. 141). This case study researched the concept of organizational change and measures it using the theory of Léon de Caluwé and Hans Vermaak (2003). “Concepts are the building blocks of theory and represent the points around which social research is conducted” (p. 143). The measurement indicator in this case study was a series of questions that was part of the semi-structured interview (p. 144). This study utilized the semi-structured interview process. “The content of the interview is focused on issues that are central to the research question, but this type of questioning and discussion allows for greater flexibility than the structured interview” (Klenke, 2008, p. 127).

### **Review of Literature Relevant to Assumptions**

This researcher considered a deductive approach for this study. “The deductive process appears very linear—one step follows the other in a clear, logical sequence” (Bryman, 2008, p. 10). The deductive approach is typically associated with quantitative research (p. 10). This researcher also considered an inductive approach for this study where “theory is the outcome of the research” (p. 11). The “process of induction

involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observations” (p. 11) and is typically associated with qualitative research. Organizations of any types and sizes that seek to make change will glean insights from this study of how leaders of one organization approached significant change. “When the predominant research strategy is qualitative, a case study tends to take an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research” (p. 55).

After considering both deductive and inductive approaches, this researcher decided upon a case study approach to conduct qualitative research interviews. “Interviews are often applied in *case studies*, which focus on a specific person, situation, or institution” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 117). This case study focused on the university that made the decision to add a new program to the athletic department that was a successful organizational change, and the following assumptions were made about the interview questionnaire that was used.

(1) A survey is a transaction between two people who are bound by special norms; (2) the interviewer offers no judgment of the respondents’ replies and must keep them in strict confidence; (3) respondents have an equivalent obligation to answer each question truthfully and thoughtfully; and (4) in the survey it is difficult to ignore an inconvenient question or give an irrelevant answer. (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 9)

It was assumed that credible and reliable responses would be provided by all participants in this case study. It was also assumed that the researcher would be provided access to any discovery resulting from the interviews that may benefit the case study such as documents and observations.

### **Review of Literature of Research Studies Addressing Similar Problems**

This dissertation was a qualitative case study about organizational change in higher education and its leadership decision to add a new program to one of the departments. Organizational change in higher education is difficult due to an environment of autonomy. Resistance to change in higher education may be the norm, but the university in this qualitative case study overcame challenges during the organizational change.

In higher education, external or environmental variables may drive the need for change. An external variable may be a university that suddenly experiences a significant increase in applications but do not have the space to accommodate additional students. Implementing an infrastructure plan would be a significant change that would impact the day-to-day operations on the campus. A similar external variable may be an increase in international student applicants that would impact the existing culture on campus requiring diversity initiatives.

An internal or environmental variable driving change may be the need for additional funds to finance the construction of new space to enable the university to accept the additional number of student applicants. This may require an increased goal in annual fund raising or even establishing a new endowment. In 1993, Edward Zajac and Matthew S. Kraatz conducted a case study about organizational change in higher education. Their study “examined the environmental and organizational forces, counterforces, and performance consequences of strategic restructuring in the higher education industry” (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 83). It revealed, “changes were all difficult for an organization to make, in the sense that there were significant forces against change” (p.

99). Change often creates obstacles that must be overcome during the process to meet the intended goal.

Financial pressures may cause external variables that drive change. Zajac and Kraatz (1993) argued that liberal arts colleges were experiencing organizational change due to market-based pressures (p. 86). These pressures made the conditions ripe for change to compete with traditional colleges. “With the traditional student base for liberal arts colleges shrinking, it seems reasonable to assume (from a strategic adaptation perspective) that colleges would need to restructure in a way that would better satisfy their traditional consumers (i.e., by expanding their program offerings) and/or attract new consumers (i.e., by reaching new students for existing program offerings)” (p. 86).

The university in this case study is a liberal arts college that made an organizational change to add a new program to one of the departments. To remain relevant in higher education, leaders need to meet the demands of the student consumer. Colleges that were founded upon a narrow set of course curriculum may find the need to expand their offerings to meet the increasing needs of the student customer. Those universities that were founded upon limited extracurricular activities may also need to expand their offerings to meet the diverse interest of potential student applicants.

Faculty and staff that became employed at a college or university and have since become satisfied with the status quo may choose to ignore the changing climate outside of campus. Leaders are required to effectively communicate the need for change to faculty, staff, and students. “External market-based pressures suggest that private liberal arts colleges should move to meet changing market conditions, e.g., through expanding products offered and/or customers served” (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 86).

The new product offered in the organizational change of this case study was an additional program in the athletic department. “This part of the higher education industry is an appropriate context to examine how environmental pressures (broadly construed) may act as a diametric force on restructuring” (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 86). Potential resistance to change makes conditions ripe for either success or failure. Leaders are required to inspire a message that justifies the need for the change to gain follower commitment. Zajac & Kraatz argue that “The mode of restructuring examined would also ideally be a change that is driven by resource needs, yet requires resource commitments, and would be controversial, in the sense that different constituents could assess the merit of the change differently (these two conditions would make the issue of diametric forces more alien)” (p. 86).

Zajac & Kraatz (1993) discussed liberal arts colleges that were experiencing organizational change. In 1974, Bloomfield College experienced financial challenges due to “declining enrollments and revenues, a deteriorating physical plant and increased competition from the New Jersey state system of higher education, which had greatly expanded its 2-year and 4-year institutions during the previous decade (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 87). Bloomfield experienced resistance to change during the planning process. “Faculty determined to maintain the *status quo*, ‘condemned’ the plan and rejected the president’s pleas to cooperate in developing an alternative one” (p. 87). It took the legal system of bankruptcy to empower the “president and the board of trustees to manage the institution and make policy” (p. 87).

Leaders need to build relationships with employees who implement change. This may be easier for a leader that has established relationships and is asked to lead change.



However, a leader that is new to an organization that has change as an immediate agenda is faced with the challenge of quickly building credible relationships with employees that result in followers. Building relationships is essential to converting employees to followers.

A new leader at Salve Regina College, a Catholic college in Newport, Rhode Island faced organizational change challenges in the 1970's. They "faced serious problems created by its external environment and its internal resource needs" (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 88). A new president led an initiative to revitalize the college by adding several academic programs (p. 88). Resistance to change in higher education was no exception for this college president. "She too encountered significant resistance in her attempt at making these changes" (p. 88). She led with resolve by responding to obstacles to change "by overcoming obvious pressures for inertia and engaging in a major change designed to achieve coalignment with these forces" (p. 88).

Globalization is an external driver that causes leaders to examine their organization for potential changes. However, some environmental changes to consider may be domestic and related solely to gender. There are colleges that accept applications from either men or women. Either gender already enrolled at the college as well as the faculty and staff would be required to culturally adjust to admitting the opposite gender that may cause resistance to change.

Leaders at Mills College experienced this type of gender change in the Zajac and Kraatz study. At the time of the study, the "138-year old women's college in Oakland, California, announced that the college's trustees had made a decision to *accept men for the first time*" (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 88). Leadership effectively communicated the

purpose for the change as a means to “boost sagging enrollments and assist the college’s administrators in their increasingly difficult struggle to balance the college’s annual budgets” (p. 88). The change was met with extreme resistance. “For 2 weeks following the announcement, shocked students staged ‘strikes’ from class, held daily protests, occupied the administration building and brought campus operations to a total standstill” (p. 88). Change resistance can be contagious. “Compounding the alarming resistance offered by students was faculty support for their protests” (p. 88). The result of the organizational change was “the trustees reversed their decision and ended the 2-week siege” (p. 89).

Leaders are often required to make organizational changes such as a merger of two organizations that become a single company. Leaders are responsible for implementing successful organizational change. Research is then conducted to determine if the change is as successful as it appeared. Dickinson, Peck, & Davidson (2007) conducted a quality case study of organizational change at Stratham Mental Health NHS and Social Care Trust that included “semi-structured interviews with 23 individuals” (p. 508). They sought to determine if the merger was as successful as it appeared. In addition to interview, the research included “regular consultation and feedback” (p. 508) and “sought to evaluate the extent to which changes in the organizational arrangements had fulfilled. The outcome of this type of research may help leaders identify key issues to take into consideration when considering future change.

Higher education leaders have unique experiences that are common to leading change. The academic product and additional services may be similar but factors for implementing change, challenges, and outcomes may differ for each institution. In 2008,

James R. Malm (2008) of Colorado State conducted a qualitative case study about six Maryland community college presidents and their experiences with organizational change. The focus of the study was to identify why decisions were made to make changes, illuminate associated challenges, and discover methods used to overcome any problems. Malm's interview questions for data collection were formulated using the following:

Rubin and Rubin's (1995) 7-stage process of (a) creating natural involvement, (b) encouraging conversational competence, (c) showing understanding, (d) getting facts and basic descriptions, (e) asking difficult questions, (f) toning down the emotional level, and (g) closing while maintaining contact. (Malm, 2008, p. 617)

This process provided research structure for the leaders from the six different higher education institutions for themes to emerge. It is essential to maintain credibility of research methods when conducting a research study. "Seven challenges emerged" (Malm, 2008, p. 618) as a result of the Malm research study.

Additional results from the Malm study are in the following:

Twelve different change process steps were described by the presidents in their guided conversations: strategic planning, budgeting, human resources, decision-making, instilling urgency and disrupting, coalition building, information gathering, visioning and strategizing, communication, facilitating, collaborating and implementing, measuring and tracking progress, consolidating and continuing, and anchoring and institutionalizing." (Malm, 2008, p. 628)

Leaders make the decision to change. They conduct strategic planning to ensure the vision and mission of the organization meets the intended outcome. Leaders are also required to lead fiscal responsibility of the funds they are entrusted with on behalf of the university. An assessment of human capital is critical in any change process, because the workers are the ones who implement the change. This is why leaders need to have built relationships with workers that will implement the change. Leaders that have the ability to communicate messages of urgency, unity, and provide performance outcomes to the organization demonstrate their care for the overall organization.

The level of effectiveness demonstrated by a leader during times of change and innovation contribute to the desired outcome. A descriptive research study with both dependent and independent variables where a survey questionnaire was used for data collection was conducted by Gilley et al. (2008). They explored the effectiveness as it relates to the implementation process of change and innovation (p. 153). Their qualitative research study was conducted in two public institutions in the Midwest and Mountain West and a private institution in the south. The study was descriptive with both dependent and independent variables where a survey questionnaire was used for data collection (p. 162).

The Gilley et al. (2008) study suggests that “employees at all levels recognize their leaders’ abilities, or lack thereof, to drive change and innovation” (p. 166). This is one reason why effective leaders build relationships with employees that become followers. In times of change, the loyalty of followers who implement the process may result in successful change. A leader that has not built relationships with workers may find them resistant to change and unsuccessful in the outcome. Leaders should never

take for granted that workers will understand the need for change and implement the process.

In 2009, Yasar Kondakci and Herman Van den Broeck published a qualitative case study about continuous change in higher education. “Interviews, document reviews, and observations are instrumental in gathering both real time and retrospective data on content, context, and process aspects of change and interconnectedness of these aspects” (Kondakci & Broeck, 2009, p. 445). Qualitative case studies about change in higher education are contributions to the field of leadership.

The authors discussed planned change as “changing established ways of thinking and acting through implementing particular plans” (Tsoukas and Chia , 2002, p. 579). Planned change enables a leader to carefully think through the actual change and desired outcome before communicating it for a successful outcome. “Exact definition of a plan and procedure of change implementation by top management is perceived as a necessary precursor for successful change implementation” (Kondakci & Broeck, 2009, p. 441). Leaders must also personalize messaging of change to influence workers to become followers. If the leader does not believe in the intended change, why should the follower? “Successful change requires change in individual frames of reference which govern their beliefs and actions” (p. 443).

Michaelis, Stegmaier, & Sonntag (2009) conducted an on-line questionnaire-based study about charismatic leadership and trust in management (p. 399) during the implementation stages of organizational change. This dissertation study determined that the organizational change at the university was successful. Organizational change does not guarantee success and especially in times of failure. “The cause for an organization’s

failure to achieve the intended benefits of an innovation it has adopted may, therefore, result from either a failure of implementation or a failure of the innovation itself” (Michaelis et al., 2009, p. 400). The implementation of organizational change at the university in this study was successful.

In 2009, Paula A. Upright conducted a qualitative case study about organizational change in higher education for her dissertation about the reclassification of an existing football program at Western Kentucky University. She used research methods of interviews, observations, and document mining. The approaches of both qualitative case studies were similar and helped this researcher make the decision to conduct a qualitative case study at the university. The Upright study is similar to this proposed research in that an organizational change was made to the athletic department. The successful outcome of the Upright study demonstrates the effectiveness of qualitative case studies about organizational change in higher education.

Visionary leadership to create the change needed for an organization involves leading followers towards a purpose initially understood only by the leader. Harding (2010) asserts that while leading change “creativity is about more than imagining or making something that has not previously existed” (p. 51). The university studied in this dissertation added a new program to the athletic department. Harding’s research examined “the differences between imagining, thinking, and acting creatively” (p. 51).

The university president envisioned a new program in the athletic department and the value to the overall organization, identified objectives to make it happen, and then implemented the plan of action. Harding (2010) suggests that managing obstacles during change requires “approaching obstacles with a diverse set of possibilities for removing

them” (p. 52). The university faced obstacles during the visionary, planning, and implementation stages of adding the new program to the athletic department. “The greatest leaders are leaders who are excellent creative thinkers, developed either naturally or through history of focused work, or both” (p. 52). Leaders who are experienced at leading change use both their successes and challenges to improve upon their next experience for the intended outcome.

The unintended outcome of change often results in failure. Malcolm Higgs and Deborah Rowland (2010) conducted a qualitative and quantitative case study to discover reasons for change failure. They conducted interviews with leaders from 33 organizations identifying experiences with organizational change (p. 369). Data were analyzed from over 70 leaders that resulted in “change approaches which tended to be programmatic, and rooted in a viewpoint which saw change initiatives as linear, sequential, and predictable tended to fail in most contexts; and those approaches which recognized change as a complex responsive process, and embedded this recognition within the change process, tended to be successful across most contexts.” (p. 370).

The Higgs and Rowland (2010) study identifies that change that is systematic in nature that might even have a single leadership reason for its implementation will more likely fail. Leaders that desire successful change outcome should include as many stakeholders as possible in the planning and implementation process. This includes the workers who ultimately implement the change process. Higgs and Rowland (2010) argues that when other than just the leader is included in the overall change process and recognition takes place, a successful outcome may likely occur.

Glenn L. Silverstein (2011) conducted a qualitative case study specifically about leadership in 2011. His study was about performance measurements and accountability in the Delaware elementary schools through the lens of school leadership (Silverstein, 2011). Interviews and surveys were used to gather data from principals and teachers with other educational professionals being contacted to provide additional information that was discovered from the initial inquiries (Silverstein, 2011).

This significance of the Silverstein (2011) study is performance measurement and accountability. Planned change is not complete without a performance measurement plan that periodically identifies strengths and challenges along the way to the desired outcome. The leader is accountable for the performance measurement plan. In the event the change is unplanned, a similar performance measurement plan should be adopted to also measure strengths and challenges. A leader is ultimately responsible for any change outcome to an organization whether it be planned or unplanned.

Personal leadership characteristics and behaviors impact the outcome of change. Shaul Oreg and Yair Berson (2011) of the University of Haifa conducted a qualitative case study about the “role of leaders’ personal attributes and transformational leadership behaviors in explaining employees’ intentions to resist a large-scale organizational change” (p. 627). Survey questionnaires were the method of data collection (p. 639). The findings of the study were that “leaders’ traits, values, and behaviors are reflected in their followers’ reactions to organizational change” (p. 646).

The Oreg and Berson (2011) study illuminate the importance of leadership characteristics. This is especially true in times of change. “Recognizing that leaders and followers work together toward shared objectives should keep us from overemphasizing



the importance of leaders or ignoring the contributions of followers” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 19). Leaders must effectively communicate with followers in a manner where it is believed that they are valued. “A leader’s communication style may reflect a philosophical belief about human nature, or it may simply be a strategy designed to maximize outcomes in a given situation” (p. 40). Regardless of the communication style “a leader selects contributes to the success or failure of any attempt to exert influence” (p. 40). Successful change includes the leadership ability to positively influence followers to a desired outcome.

### **Summary and Relevance of the Literature to the Problem Being Studied**

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to theories about organizational change. There was also a review of literature devising measure of concepts or operationalization for this qualitative research study (Bryman, 2008, p. 141). The researcher discussed the inductive and deductive approaches related to this study. There was also a review of literature of research studies addressing similar problems of leading organizational change in higher education.

### **Chapter Three: Method**

This chapter contains the research method of the qualitative case study. Leaders are responsible for organizational change driven by internal and external pressures. The problem is that workers are not always willing to implement the change from their status quo. This presents a leadership challenge that was explored with research questions in this chapter. A private university in the Midwest was chosen for this study that added a new program to one of its departments. Leaders in the department responded to a questionnaire that resulted in insights into their successful organizational change.

The methodology used for this research study is discussed in this chapter. It includes the problem statement and research questions for this qualitative case study. There is a rationale and review of literature for proposed methodology and selection of the population of participants. The chapter lists the interview questions that were used in the study. It also discusses the procedures that were used for data collection and includes the research design and analysis.

#### **Problem Statement**

This research study contribution to organizational leadership is intended to reduce the percentage of change initiative failures and increase the percentage of sustainability (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 153). The qualitative case study method of this research study was important, because it provides organizational leaders with information about how to approach change to achieve a successful outcome from individual perspectives that

encounter this phenomenon. The university of this study where the status quo is the norm achieved a successful outcome that should inspire leaders to apply the research results to their own organizations.

This research study provided the unique opportunity to interview two former leaders who were involved with implementing the change of adding a new football program to the athletic department. They are no longer employed by the university and spoke freely about their reflection of the successful outcome of the organizational change. This study also provided the opportunity to interview another former leader who is still employed at the university. This participant was able to provide a perspective of the background, transition, and results of the organizational change.

The university in this research study overcame the odds of failure during major organizational change. Employees are not always willing to participate in change due to personal needs that may prevent them from making sacrifices (Kotter, 1996). This study discovered how the university was able to influence the employees to change the organization regardless of their environment or obstacles (Kotter, 1996). It also discovered how status quo attitudes and behaviors were shifted and the new state of equilibrium of organizational change sustained (Stoner et al., 1995, p. 416).

### **Research Questions**

The research questions designed for this case study were adopted in part from the James R. Malm (2008) qualitative case study of six community college presidents leading organizational change at their institution. The Malm (2008) research study discovered the “significant environmental challenges and uncertainties that force organizational change in their respective colleges....organizational change processes...implemented to

rally their colleges and overcome the challenges....[and] what leadership approaches are employed to lead their organizational changes” (pp. 617-618). This researcher chose to conduct a similar study about leading organizational change in higher education.

Similar to the Malm study, this research discovered the “significant environmental challenges and uncertainties that force organizational change” (Malm, 2008, p. 617) at the university in this study. This research also discovered what “organizational change processes are implemented to rally ... colleges and overcome the challenges” (p. 618). This study also discovered “what leadership approaches are employed to lead ... organizational changes” (p. 618). Guided by the Malm (2008) study, there were five research questions for this study in the following:

1. Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?
2. What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?
3. What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?
4. What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?
5. How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

A follow-up discussion was offered to each participant after their responses to the five semi-structured, open-ended research questions. All interviewees participated in the follow-up discussion. The discussion was offered as an open-ended question as follows:

6. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the organizational change that you have not discussed in the first five questions?

### **Rationale and Review of Literature for Proposed Methodology**

The rationale of this study included the fact that change is hard. “Change is an organizational reality” (Robbins & Coulter, 1999, p. 380). “Changes replace the known with ambiguity and uncertainty” (p. 386). Cummings and Worley (2001) suggest “organizational change involves moving from the known to the unknown” (p. 156). “Although organizations are beset by many forces for change, it is important to recognize that opposing forces act to keep an organization in a state of equilibrium” (Stoner et al., 1995, p. 414).

“At a personal level, change can arouse considerable anxiety about letting go of the known and moving to an uncertain future” (p. 157). “Just as change is inevitable, so is resistance to change” (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995, p. 483). Resistance can be viewed as a positive element of change. “Without resistance, the decision might be made before the pros and cons have been sufficiently explored” (p. 484). Embracing resistance through a managed approach may message to workers that leadership cares about their concerns and considers their input to the organizational change.

Another rationale for this study was that leadership was able to produce a real aspect of organizational change. Leadership principles and theories may be employed to make change successful. This case study will produce research through the lens of change theory. “Although individuals within organizations recognize the need for change, few are able to sustain successful change efforts” (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 155).

“Leadership must create an environment in which people accept the need for change and commit physical and psychological energy to it” (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 154).

Gilley et al. (2008) suggest leadership influences the outcome of organizational change. The authors discuss the following:

It has been suggested that a primary reason for an organization’s inability to change and innovate lies with its leaders—the individuals who are responsible for leading change efforts—and their lack of skill or will, impeding successful implementation. Although many organizations and their leaders desire lasting, meaningful change, few are capable of achieving it. (p. 155).

This case study discovered how university leadership was able to implement a major change and lead individuals through the phases of implementation to success after implementation.

The final rationale for this research was to conduct a case study that delved deep into discovering what appeared to be a successful organizational change initiative in adding a new football program to the athletic department at a university. Businesses are often faced with the challenge of organizational change and may gain insights from this case study to incorporate into their initiatives. “A case study investigates a leadership phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined” (Klenke, 2008, p.59).” One of the explicit purposes of a case study is to build theory” (p. 60). This study produced research through the lens of change theory regarding leadership decision of organizational change, how they affected the change process, and their contributions to what appeared to be a successful outcome. This research discovered that the leader did not lead with a

theoretical framework. The leadership approach will be revealed in chapter four and discussed in chapter five.

### **Rationale for Selection of the Population of Participants**

This was a leadership study of a university that implemented organizational change of adding a new football program to the athletic department that appeared to be successful. A total of 15 interviews were conducted in four participant categories of cabinet, athletics, faculty, and administration. Interviewing participants within the four categories was relevant to this study of leading organizational change in higher education so the researcher could discover diversity of perceptions regarding the phenomenon of change.

The cabinet participants were the decision makers of the change. The athletics participants implemented the change and were responsible for managing the new program. Faculty and administration were directly impacted by the decision to change that affected student enrollment. The participant categories approach enriched this study by providing a holistic discovery of how the change impacted the organization.

### **Interview Questions**

This dissertation was a qualitative case study of a university organization and the leadership decision to add a new program to the athletic department. A series of semi-structured, open-ended questions were guided by a 2008 leadership study in higher education conducted by James R. Malm. Participants in this study all agreed to have their responses to the research questions audio recorded. Following they interviews, each participant was provided a copy of their responses in a written manuscript format with the

option to also have a copy of the audio recording. None of the participants requested the audio recording.

The responses in the manuscripts were coded, sorted, and analyzed using NVivo 10 software for qualitative research studies. The intent of using this software was to reduce human error in analyzing the data. Coding, sorting, and analyzing the responses using NVivo 10 software provided a higher degree of accuracy when discovering the six common themes than if the researcher had depended solely on her human skills.

In 2008, James R. Malm conducted a study of six community college presidents leading organizational change. Malm's leadership study focused on organizational challenges; organizational change uncertainty; processes implemented to overcome challenges; and leadership approaches to lead change (2008, p. 614). This researcher chose to adopt a similar study in organizational change in higher education. "Most questionnaires consist of some questions that have been used before and some new questions, although even the new questions may be adapted from earlier ones" (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 23). The following interview questions are guided by the Malm and focused on the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university in the following:

1. Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?
2. What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?
3. What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?



4. What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?
5. How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

A follow-up discussion was offered to each participant after their responses to the five semi-structured, open-ended research questions. All interviewees participated in the follow-up discussion. The discussion was offered as an open-ended question as follows:

6. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the organizational change that you have not discussed in the first five questions?

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

This researcher utilized a “semi-structured research interview focusing on the subject’s experience of a theme” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 25). The purpose of the interview was to understand the experience of organizational change at the university from the individual’s perspective. “This kind of interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 27). Formal interviews were conducted with a guided open-ended questionnaire that makes it a semi-structured interview (p. 27). The results of the interview constituted the next step of data analysis. “The interview is usually transcribed, and the written text and sound recording together constitute the materials for the subsequent analysis of meaning” (p. 27). Each participant that completed the interview was provided a note of thanks and a \$10 Starbucks® Gift Certificate.

### **Research Design and Analysis**

This case study used the inductive approach to conduct qualitative research interviews. Semi-structured, open-ended questions enabled respondents to provide their

perspective of the phenomena of organizational change that occurred at their university. The case study used a single subject for the qualitative and descriptive research design. “Single cases are often critical, revelatory, uncovering unusual phenomena” (Klenke, 2008, p. 64). This case study was about organizational change in a university environment that is difficult to shift the status quo. “Case studies are also appropriate if they represent unique situations or extreme cases such as specific organizations which experienced unusual examples of leadership successes or failures” (p. 64). The university made a successful organizational change of adding a new football program to the athletic department.

The case study was non-experimental with no independent or dependent variables. No university or other subject was be studied. The semi-structured, open-ended questions were designed to provide an individual perspective about the organizational change. It was anticipated that research responses would delve into a need for additional interview questions to discover more about the organizational change. One of the outcomes that was anticipated by the case study was that themes would emerge around the organizational change that would provide a discussion.

“Data collection and analysis are interrelated, iterative tasks that may involve re-reading the transcripts, revising the extant literatures, mining the data to arrive at a deeper understanding of the data and patterns and themes underlying them” (Klenke, 2008, p. 68). This researcher was committed to the detailed analysis of the data from this case study that included critical reflection. “Data analysis also involves intentional periods of critical reflection—reviewing the research process, interactions with participants, seeking disconfirming evidence for tentative findings, changing the conceptual framework to

incorporate accumulated knowledge and build theory” (p. 68). This researcher analyzed the data to explore all possible explanations for the phenomena in this case study.

“Reflection also means searching for alternative explanations of the findings and approaching making meaning of the data from different perspectives” (p. 68).

## **Chapter Four: Results**

The purpose of this study was to discover key issues that should be considered by leaders when deciding upon a major organizational change. A higher education organization that made a major change to add a new football program to the athletic department was studied. Interviews were conducted to collect data about why leadership decided to make the organizational change, the leadership approach used to lead the organizational change, key initiatives used to gain acceptance to change, key resistance to change issues, and how the organizational change was determined to have been a success.

The study of change in higher education is a significant contribution to the field of organizational leadership due to the status quo of autonomy that exists in a campus environment and especially among faculty. Autonomy may cause problems of fragmentation, mediocrity, and non-commitment (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 14) making organizational change difficult. The interviews discovered the norm of autonomy in the higher education organization that was studied. Regardless of the autonomy in the organization, a decision to change was made and resulted in a successful outcome. Leaders in any industry seeking to make a major change, and especially in a challenging environment of autonomy, may learn key issues from this study that may contribute to helping them with decisions.

### **Demographic Description of Interview Participants**

A total of 15 interviews were conducted at the university. The genders of the participants interviewed were 80% males and 20% females. Four participants have worked at the university for 0-5 years. Five other participants have either worked or served on the board at the university for 6-10 years. Two participants have worked at the university for 11-15 years. One participant has worked for the university for 16-20 years. Three other participants have worked for the university for more than 20 years.

The participants were placed in four participant categories for this research study. The categories are cabinet, athletics, faculty, and administration. There were five cabinet interviews, three athletics interviews, five faculty interviews, and two administration interviews. Of significant importance was the unique opportunity to interview a former cabinet member. Two former athletic department members who are no longer affiliated with the university also were interviewed. These three participants enriched the study, because the candid responses regarding their perceptions of the phenomenon of change was discussed using a reflective lens of their former positions.

Interviewing participants within the four categories was relevant to this study of leading organizational change in higher education so the researcher could discover diversity of perceptions regarding the phenomenon of change. The cabinet participants were the decision makers of the change. The athletics participants implemented the change and were responsible for managing the new football program. Faculty and administration were directly impacted by the decision to change that affected student enrollment. The participant categories approach enriched this study by providing a holistic discovery of how the change impacted the organization.

### **Qualitative Interview Process**

This was a qualitative leadership study of a higher education organization that made a major change to add a new football program to the athletic department. The interview process included one-on-one interviews by the researcher with 15 participants. Prior to the interviews, the Informed Consent Form (Appendix I) and the Participant Confidentiality and Release Agreement (Appendix II) were read, signed, and returned to the researcher. Copies of these signed documents were immediately provided to each participant. The Primary Interview Script and Questionnaire (Appendix III) was then read to each participant prior to beginning the interview questions. This document provided information about the researcher, acknowledging the request to volunteer to participate in the study, an estimated interview time, a request for permission to audio record the interview, and an opportunity to ask questions before the interview began. Each interview concluded with a note of thanks and a \$10.00 Starbucks® gift card.

The following semi-structured, open-ended research questions were used to discover responses to key issues that should be considered by leaders when deciding upon a major organizational change.

1. Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?
2. What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?
3. What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?
4. What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?

5. How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

A follow-up discussion was offered to each participant after their responses to the five structured, open-ended research questions. All interviewees participated in the follow-up discussion. The discussion was offered as an open-ended question as follows:

6. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the organizational change that you have not discussed in the first five questions?

After the interview process was complete, the researcher listened to the audio recordings and reflected upon the responses. Next, the researcher personally transcribed the audio recordings into 192 total pages that were authentic match-to-speech in content. The transcribed pages were divided into 15 manuscripts representing one for each of the interview participants. The researcher believed it was important to personally transcribe the audio recordings to ensure the credibility of the confidentiality commitment outlined in the signed Participant Confidentiality and Release Agreements. The researcher provided each participant a confidential copy of his or her personal interview manuscript with an opportunity to receive a copy of the original audio recording.

The president is included as one of the 15 participants. After all interviews were conducted and transcribed into manuscripts, the researcher contacted the president to request he waive the confidentiality of his position title of “president” for this leadership study. The researcher assured the president that his name as an identity would not be disclosed. The request was made, because the results of the study included overwhelming responses from other participants about the president’s important role of leading the major organizational change at the university. The president granted the waiver request for this research study.

Table 1 includes the identity-concealing labels for the other 14 participants in this research study by category. The purpose of the labels is to maintain confidentiality of their responses in this chapter of results. The only exception is in the cabinet category where the president of the university is clearly identified after granting the waiver of confidentiality of his position title for this research study.

Table 1

*Identity-Concealing Labels for Study Participants*

Cabinet	Athletics	Faculty	Administration
President	ATH-1	FAC-1	ADM-1
CAB-1	ATH-2	FAC-2	ADM-2
CAB-2	ATH-3	FAC-3	
CAB-3		FAC-4	
CAB-4		FAC-5	

NVivo 10 qualitative software was used to discover the results from responses to research questions in this study. Responses in all 15 manuscripts were coded using NVivo 10 and placed into electronic containers called nodes. The researcher decided that any node containing ten or more total references was considered a significant outcome of this study.

Table 2 displays 11 nodes with ten or more total references. It also identifies the coding results of the number of references to a node for each question. The researcher decided that any of the 11 nodes that contain ten or more references within a single question was considered significant and emerged as a common theme. Six common themes emerged as a result of this research study and are discussed in Chapter 5.



Table 2

*Coding Results of the Number of References to a Node for Each Questions*

Nodes	Number of references to nodes for questions (Q)						
	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Vision	36	11	13	5	2	0	5
Status Quo	32	2	4	5	19	2	0
Communication	30	1	5	21	2	1	0
Financial	30	3	9	3	6	9	0
Leadership	28	0	9	4	4	7	4
Campus Environment	27	6	2	3	4	10	2
Research	17	3	9	3	0	2	0
Goals	15	14	0	0	1	0	0
Stereotypes	15	0	3	5	4	3	0
Diversity	12	9	0	0	1	2	0
Plan	10	3	5	1	1	0	0
Total References	252	52	59	50	44	36	11

The following sections of this chapter present the research questions in tabular results for each node that emerged as a common theme. The results are displayed by the four participant categories of interview participants of cabinet, athletics, faculty, and administration. A description of themes is presented by the interview participants' perceptions of the phenomenon that occurred at the university in its organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department.

### **Decision to Change**

The first interview question discovered the reason that leadership decided to make the organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department at the university. Question one had responses in 11 total nodes with 52 total references. Only two of the nodes emerged as a common theme, because it had 10 or more references for the first question. Vision emerged as a common theme because it had 11 references for the first question. Goals emerged as a common theme, because it had 14 references for the first question. As a result, there were two separate common themes that emerged from the first research question about the decision to change. The two separate common themes were vision and goals. The following sections identify the nodes that did not emerge and the two nodes that did emerge into common themes.

#### **Nodes That Did Not Emerge Into a Common Theme**

Question one discovered the decision to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The researcher decided that a minimum 10 or more reference to nodes for a question would emerge as a common theme. The following nodes had responses for question one with less than 10 references, so they did not emerge as a common theme.

- Status quo node had two references for the first question.
- Communication node had one reference for the first question.
- Financial node had three references for the first question.
- Leadership node had no references for the first question.
- Campus environment node had six references for the first question.

- Research node had three references for the first question.
- Stereotypes node had no references for the first question.
- Diversity node had nine references for the first question. This node was given additional consideration but did not emerge as a common theme. The references to diversity were related to the president's vision that is included as part of this research question.
- Plan node had three references for the first question.

### **Common Themes**

Two common themes emerged from responses to the first question about the decision to change. Vision and goals were the common themes that emerged. Table 3 and Figure 4.1 display the number of references to nodes by participant categories for the first question as it relates to the common themes of vision and goals.

Table 3

*Common Themes – Reason for Change*

Q1. Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?

Number of references to nodes by participant categories for question (Q1)

Nodes	Total	CAB	ATH	FAC	ADM
Vision					
Q1	11	8	0	1	2
Goals					
Q1	14	1	9	4	0

Note. Participant categories are CAB = cabinet; ATH = athletics; FAC = faculty; ADM = administration.

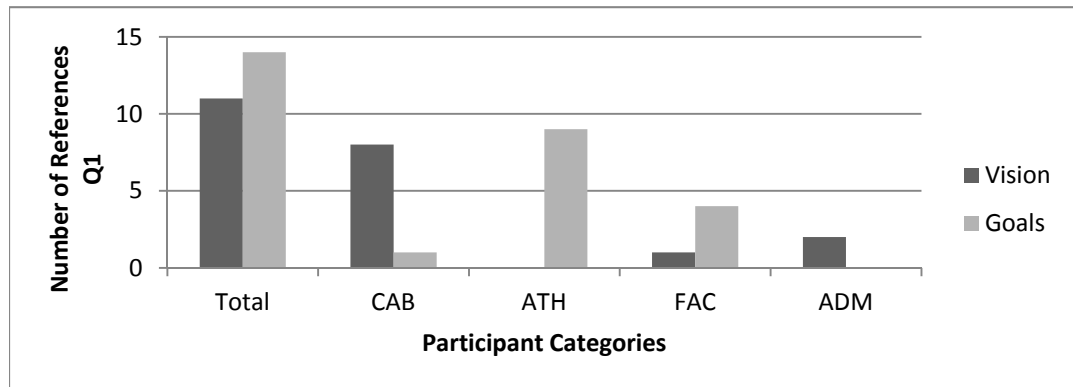


Figure 1. Number of references to nodes by participant categories for question (Q1)

**Theme 1: The president had a personal vision of organizational change for the university.**

The participants' responses to question one discovered that the reason leadership decided to make the organizational change was that the president had a personal vision for the university. The president explained that he believed that it was time for a major change to occur at the institution. He stated that "we needed a jolt...I had an intuitive sense we needed to do something that would be perceived as big and out of the norm and do it very, very well; and that would reintroduce this institution and the perception of it to the world."

The president's vision included support of the university mission. He explained, "So I thought when our mission includes character and community life and the faith dimensions, a strong male role model. I said this is how men act. [They} make commitments [and] keep them."

The president further explained his vision of organizational change at the university with the following.

Well luckily I didn't come here to be president. I came here to serve. If I had of been interested in holding onto my job, I probably would not have done it. I came here to help the institution...there were risks, but I also knew there were risks staying the same. When I described why I wanted to do it, I thought the institution needed to change. I thought that I could help young men. I thought I could build campus life.

Other participants in this study had different perceptions about what inspired the president's vision. Participant ADM-2 stated that "I believe it's always been the

president's dream to have a football program....I think it started with the president's dream to not only build a new program but to of course add to the student population."

Participant CAB-1 explained that "I think the reason is because the president himself had been very active when he was an undergraduate, and I want to say there was a great deal of enthusiasm." Another cabinet participant had a similar perception. Participant CAB-3 suggested that "Motivation for football probably came from the idea when the president started 10 years ago." Participant FAC-1 commented that "I think frankly our [president]...who is a main driver of change here on campus happened to play football in college....so I think he had an affinity for football."

The president met with the board about his vision. He stated that "it appeared to me that the biggest risk was not changing." The board authorized the president to implement his vision of organizational change for the university. The president explained his enthusiasm to help young men through his vision in the following:

I mean it just took off.... So there was a mission reason to do it. I wanted to help educate a diverse group of young men and get them into classrooms and businesses and ministry....med school, law school, [and] accounting firms.

**Theme 2: The president established goals for the university to achieve his vision of organizational change.**

The president led the way to help achieve his vision of organizational change at the university by establishing goals. Other responses to question one discovered that the participants had an understanding of additional goals beyond the ones that the president established. Four goals are described by the president in the following:

Goal one was to advance the academic reputation and output of this institution. Goal two was to have a vibrant and exciting campus life, culturally, religiously, spiritually, [and] the whole works. [The] third goal [was that] we would more deeply and thoroughly live our Catholic and Franciscan values, [and] bring the faith life more to...character development. [The] fourth goal was to make sure we had enough money to do the first three [goals] very well...so we got serious about fund raising.

Only one of the four goals described by the president emerged as a common theme in this study. Campus life was the goal that emerged as a common theme. Advancing the academic reputation and output of the institution did not emerge as a common theme. Catholic and Franciscan values did not emerge as a common theme. Finance did not emerge as a common theme.

The responses from the other participants about the organizational change goals were similar to the president's description but were not stated the same. Regardless, there was an understanding that goals were established by the president to help the university achieve his vision of organizational change. Participants explained their perception of the goals in response to question one.

Participant ATH-2 explained five reasons for change at the university. The participant stated the first reason for change was to "drive enrollment" to increase the number of students. The second reason was to "drive male enrollment" to increase the number of male students. The third reason for change was to "create more of a residential feel for the college" that would improve campus life. The fourth reason for change was to "have something...so that kids would stay on campus on the weekends."

The fifth reason for the change was to “create a wider scope for the college to get us positive publicity in the news outlets and have a greater sense of...in the... community.” Enhancing campus life was the only reason participant ATH-2 stated that was similar to the president’s four goals for the organizational change at the university.

Participant ATH-3 explained three reasons for change at the university. The participant stated the first reason for change was to “create a more vibrant atmosphere on campus.” The second reason for change was to “add more males to the student body.... student ratio was very, very high as far as women over men.” The third reason for change was to “generate more revenue far as tuition.” Enhancing campus life was the only reason participant ATH-3 stated that was similar to the president’s four goals for the organizational change at the university.

Participant FAC-5 explained two reasons for change at the university. The participant stated the first reason was the university wanted to “raise the profile of [university].” The second reason for change was that “it brings in lots of revenue.” Neither reason participant FAC-5 stated was similar to the president’s four goals for the organizational change at the university.

Participant FAC-4 explained two reasons for change at the university. The participant stated the first reason for change was to “increase relationships, contacts with...high schools.” The second reason for change was to “increase on-campus vibrancy.” Enhancing campus life was the only reason participant FAC-4 stated that was similar to the president’s four goals for the organizational change at the university.



### **Approach to Lead Change**

The second interview question discovered the approach to lead change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Question two had responses in 9 total nodes with 59 total references. Only one node emerged as a common theme, because it had 10 or more references for the second question. Vision emerged as the common theme, because it had 13 references for the second question. The following sections identify the nodes that did not emerge and the node that did emerge into a common theme.

#### **Nodes That Did Not Emerge Into a Common Theme**

Question two discovered the approach to lead change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The researcher decided that a minimum 10 or more reference to nodes for a question would emerge as a common theme. The following nodes had responses for question two with less than 10 references, so they did not emerge as a common theme.

- Status quo node had four references for the second question.
- Communication node had five references for the second question.
- Financial node had nine references for the second question. This node was given additional consideration, and the researcher discusses it in chapter five as a significant finding.
- Leadership node had nine references for the second question. This node was given additional consideration but still did not emerge as a common theme for the second research question. The references to leadership did not relate to this particular question of approach to change and were general leadership

statements referencing the first research question. The duplicate responses were already discovered and included as part of the first research question.

- Campus environment node had two references for the second question.
- Research node had nine references for the second question. This node was given additional consideration but still did not emerge as a common theme for the second research question. The references to research were related to the president's vision that was already discovered and included as part of the first research question.
- Goals node had no references for the second question.
- Stereotypes node had three references for the second question.
- Diversity node had no nine references for the second question.
- Plan node had five references for the second question.

### **Common Theme**

One common theme emerged from responses to the second question about the approach to lead change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Vision was the common theme that emerged. Table 4 and Figure 4.2 display the number of references to nodes by participant categories for the second question as it relates to the common theme of vision.

Table 4

*Common Theme – Approach to Change*

Q2. What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?

Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q2)					
Node	Total	CAB	ATH	FAC	ADM
Vision					
Q2	13	6	2	4	1

Note. Participant categories are CAB = cabinet; ATH = athletics; FAC = faculty; ADM = administration.

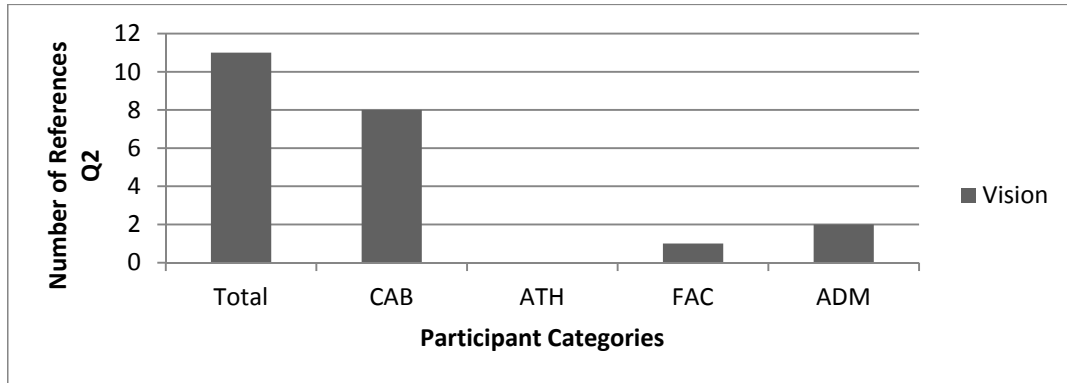


Figure 2. Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q2)

**Theme 3: The president used his personal vision as a leadership approach to lead the organizational change at the university.**

The responses to the second question discovered that participants associated the president's vision for the university with the leadership approach to lead the

organizational change. The president stated that he led the organizational change by communicating his vision to internal and external stakeholders that he wanted “character development....graduates....a spirit of community.” Internal stakeholders are students, faculty, administration, and cabinet participants. External stakeholders are board members, donors, and the community.

The approach used to lead the organizational change was not known by everyone. Participant ADM-1 stated that “I’m not really 100 percent [sure] what specific approach was used other than a strategic plan in place to see...where we wanted to go from that point with new programs.” Other participants responded that they knew the leadership approach used to lead the organizational change at the university. Participant ATH-3 remarked the following.

The president actually was the primary leader in starting the ball rolling in regards to adding football to the program....He was the motivator behind it....He was the person pushing it as far as starting a program at [university].

Participant CAB-1 explained that the approach used to lead the organizational change at the university came directly from the president. The participant stated that “Well I would have to admit that it was pretty much top down....[the president] made the decision.” Faculty also stated the same approach used to lead the organizational change. Participant FAC-1 explained the president communicating his vision to stakeholders with the following:

So I know the champion of it was the president.....It was his project, and he was the champion of it.... I believe it was driven from the president’s office. So it came from the top. It didn’t bubble up [from] people on the campus. It came

from the top, and he sold it to all the stakeholders involved with the board's support and obviously raised money for it as well as I'm sure you've seen the facility.

Participant FAC-2 also stated that the approach used to lead the organizational change was generated from the top of the organization when stating the following:

This idea of a football program was not generated as far as I know from the bottom up....there was not a great call for a football program from the students or among the majority of the employees, the faculty [or] the staff at the university. It was really an idea brought from the president's office.

The president was described communicating his vision of the organizational change for the university by participant CAB-1 with the following.

We have a president if he really believes in something, it's going to be what he wants....I don't mean that he's unkind [about it]....but he knows what he wants. I would have to say that when he first presented this, he said we're thinking about it; but I think everyone knew that he really wanted it.

The approach to lead the organizational change included the president communicating his vision for the university to the board to gain approval for implementation. The president met with the board about his vision. Participant ATH-3 explained that "In the long run I think the president was the one that really led the charge and kept the fire burning in regards to trying to accomplish[ing] a goal of getting approval to start a football program."

Participant CAB-2 explained that the president's vision was related to the board's vision. The participant explained that "The board goes back to [the president's] vision.

[The president] goes back to the board's vision." The participant stated that the board was convinced that the president's vision was in alignment with the board's vision by suggesting that "our basic charter is if [university] is going to be one of the top ...universities in this country, what do we have to do....how are we going to become one of the best?"

After the president's meeting with the board, it was decided that the organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department at the university would be implemented. The president's effective persuasion to the board about his vision of organizational change at the university was described by CAB-1 who stated that "The president really prevailed upon the board that this would be a good thing." The ability to persuade the board about his vision was so effective that CAB-2 remarked the following about the president. "It's just wonderful vision, wonderful planning, and a commitment to be the best."

### **Key Initiatives to Gain Acceptance to Change**

The third interview question discovered the key initiatives to gain acceptance to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Question three had responses in 9 total nodes with 50 total references. Only one node emerged as a common theme, because it had 10 or more references for the third question. Communication emerged as the common theme, because it had 21 references for the third question. The following sections identify the nodes that did not emerge and the node that did emerge into a common theme.

### **Nodes That Did Not Emerge Into a Common Theme**

Question three discovered the key initiatives to gain acceptance to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The researcher decided that a minimum 10 or more reference to nodes for a question would emerge as a common theme. The following nodes had responses for question three with less than 10 references, so they did not emerge as a common theme.

- Vision node had five references for the third question.
- Status quo node had five references for the third question.
- Financial node had three references for the third question.
- Leadership node had four references for the third question.
- Campus environment node had three references for the third question.
- Research node had three references for the third question.
- Goals node had no references for the third question.
- Stereotypes node had five references for the third question.
- Diversity node had no references for the third question.
- Plan node had one references for the third question.

### **Common Theme**

One common theme emerged from responses to the third question about the key initiatives to gain acceptance to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Communication was the common theme that emerged. Table 5 and Figure 4.3 display the number of references to nodes by participant categories for the third question as it relates to the common theme of communication.

Table 5

*Common Theme – Initiatives to Change*

Q3. What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?

Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q3)					
Node	Total	CAB	ATH	FAC	ADM
Communication					
Q3	21	13	5	2	1

Note. Participant categories are CAB = cabinet; ATH = athletics; FAC = faculty; ADM = administration.

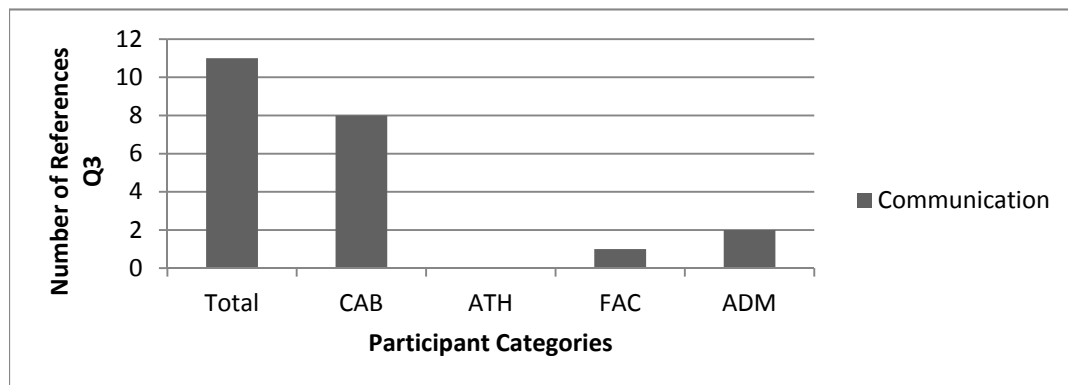


Figure 3. Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q3)

**Theme 4: The president communicated his personal vision and goals to internal and external stakeholders to gain acceptance to change at the university.**

This study discovered that one of the key initiatives to gain acceptance to change at the university was communication. The president took action to achieve his vision by personally communicating the organizational change for the university to stakeholders.



He remarked that it was important to know the target audience in his persuasive communications to gain acceptance to organizational change.

The president acknowledged that he knew everyone at the university would not embrace his vision for organizational change when he stated that “if you spend all [of] your time convincing people who will never be convinced, you are going to lose.” There were people at the university that could be convinced, and his method of gaining their acceptance to the organizational change included the ability to “talk to them, communicate [with them], assure them.... make sure they’re not in the dark.” The president cautioned that there are also people who you believe have embraced a vision. He suggested that you “don’t assume...you want to engage them [and] have them be part of leadership.”

The president set out to communicate his vision of organizational change for the university in diverse settings that included the board, athletics, faculty, administration, and students. One of his earlier persuasive communications was at a meeting with the board of trustees where he explained his vision of organizational change at the university and requested implementation approval. This study discovered that the board members were initially hesitant to approve the implementation of the organizational change until the president effectively reminded them of how the university had a tradition of achieving initiatives in the past.

Participant CAB-1 stated the following about the president’s persuasive communications to the board about the organizational change:

“[The president] went back to you know we didn’t say we could and we did....so we have a reputation [and] a heritage. [We have] a tradition of moving ahead on

something. [The president] was thoroughly convinced that this would be...best for the [the university because of]....those initiatives... [in] the past [and] showing what we had achieved.

I really think winning the good will of people...and acknowledging [we have achieved initiatives in the past]...was very important. I think it was really persuasion....[with others who] had leadership positions or who were considered leaders among the faculty and staff...working with them definitely helped. [The president also started] showing how [the change] could be good will among [people]...that helped...[show] we could carry out our mission [that is] responding to needs...and good will.

The president was successful in persuading the board to permit him to implement his vision of organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department. He began to expand the communication of his vision to other stakeholders. Participant ATH-2 who was involved in implementing the change remarked that transparency was the focus of the communications. The participant stated that "...once [the vision] was approved [for implementation by the board], we tried to be as open as possible...[and have a lot of informal] conversations throughout the campus. The participant explained the purpose of these conversations were to share information about "...how we see this [program] going [forward and to] reassure people]...[to calm] anxieties."

Remarks about communication that is open and transparent were also in the responses for participant CAB-3. The participant stated, "I think that's true across the board for anything you do is communication...you can't over communicate to people

being open [and] being transparent....making sure that everybody knows what you're doing, [and] what the investment is [about]." The participant acknowledged that there were levels to communicate information but with the focus of being as open and transparent as possible. The participant explained that the president communicated his vision of organizational change in diverse settings, and stated the amount of information disseminated was different depending on the target audience. Participant CAB-3 stated the following:

Certainly there's [a] different amount of communication [that] went to different levels..... [we had] open meetings, open forums, open sessions....the president would talk to all people from the custodial housekeeping, food service, secretarial. [He also would talk to] administrative assistant staff to faculty to mid-level [managers]. Now certainly the president's cabinet in some ways would get more detail about specifics with regard to finance and some of the details, but everybody would know this is the plan. We're going to [implement the program].

Participant CAB-3 also responded how important open and transparent communication was for the stakeholders in the following:

"People need to know what [it is that] you're investing. [The program] was an investment for us. It was an investment in weight rooms. It was an investment [in] facilities. It was an investment in personnel. It's investment in student financial aid that we didn't have to make...that investment...meant we couldn't invest in something else....what are you going to invest in, because you can't invest in all things. You don't have the money or the energy to do that...you're

making choices you have to communicate that to the people who are affected by those choices and who work here.

Why do you have to have [the program] now.... goes back to the communication thing [in the need to]....[explain the reason]. Why is it important to have [the program] now when we didn't have it before? [How does] it make us a different institution than we were before, and how is changing [the university] going forward?

The key thing is communication. Communication and planning.....[leader] was a prime mover on that.... let's have a plan. Let's work the plan. Let's not change the plan. We made a plan. We work the plan....I heard it so many times it's stuck in my head. We got a plan. We work the plan. Don't change the plan. [It is] not to [imply that] you didn't change the plan as things went on but [the plan] was the key. I think it's having a good plan, following the plan, and communicate [the plan]. You can't over communicate.

The president continued to communicate his vision of organizational change for the university in an open and transparent manner. Participant CAB-1 explained the following:

He also worked with some key faculty members and staff members who had the respect of other faculty and staff and got them enthused about [the organizational change]. [The president] willingly addressed the fact that we were starting with nothing....he went back to the initiatives of the history of our college that we start with nothing and we achieve.

The president inevitably met resistance to change while communicating his vision of organizational change for the university. This resistance began to come from the faculty. Participant ATH-1 remarked that the president was “not only [trying] to educate students but faculty [who] really didn’t want us to bring [the program] in the [university]. The participant acknowledged that “they thought that maybe it would lower the academic integrity of the university.” Participant ATH-1 stated that the president had to communicate in diverse settings to “...talk to the student body that’s already here but [also talk to] faculty and administration....to show them how this would benefit the whole school.” The participant reinforced his statement with “we had to do a real good job of just educating[ing] [them and providing] ...information [about] how this would make this school better...so education was the key.”

Communication of his vision of organizational change did not seem to be enough for the president to gain acceptance from some people on campus. Participant ATH-3 discussed the president’s communication of his vision as follows.

There [were] a lot of negative concerns on our campus and that had to be addressed by our upper administration as far as selling the campus community that football was [going] to be a viable [program] for us and was [going] to be [implemented] the right way. I think probably my emphasis in all the meetings was that I was very, very strong in wanting to add [the program] but I also made the statement many, many times that if we’re [going] do it, we need[ed] to do it the right way....if you [didn’t] do it the right way, then it [could] be a very negative program on [the] campus, and it could be a disaster for us starting the program.... starting it and doing it the right way, whatever the right way is, was

something we discussed a lot in our committee [meetings] in order to accomplish a good solid program.

The faculty only had a couple of comments about communication as it is related to gaining acceptance to organizational change. Participant FAC-2 stated that there were “these sort of information sessions.” Participant FAC-5 stated there were these “little town meetings and stuff that gaged people’s interests.”

### **Key Resistance Issues to Change**

The fourth interview question discovered the key resistance issues to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Question four had responses in 10 total nodes with 44 total references. Only one node emerged as a common theme, because it had 10 or more references for the third question. Status quo emerged as the common theme, because it had 19 references for the fourth question. The following sections identify the nodes that did not emerge and the node that did emerge into a common theme.

### **Nodes That Did Not Emerge Into a Common Theme**

Question four discovered the key resistance to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The researcher decided that a minimum 10 or more reference to nodes for a question would emerge as a common theme. The following nodes had responses for question four with less than 10 references, so they did not emerge as a common theme.

- Vision node had two references for the fourth question.
- Communication node had two references for the fourth question.
- Financial node had six references for the fourth question.

- Leadership node had four references for the fourth question.
- Campus environment node had four references for the fourth question.
- Research node had no references for the fourth question.
- Goals node had one references for the fourth question.
- Stereotypes node had four references for the fourth question.
- Diversity node had one references for the fourth question.
- Plan node had one references for the fourth question.

### **Common Theme**

One common theme emerged from responses to the fourth question about the key resistance to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Status quo was the common theme that emerged. Table 6 and Figure 4.4 display the number of references to nodes by participant categories for the fourth question as it relates to the common theme of status quo.

Table 6

*Common Theme – Resistance to Change*

Q4. What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?

Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q4)

Node	Total	CAB	ATH	FAC	ADM
Status Quo Q4	19	6	1	10	2

Note. Participant categories are CAB = cabinet; ATH = athletics; FAC = faculty; ADM = administration.

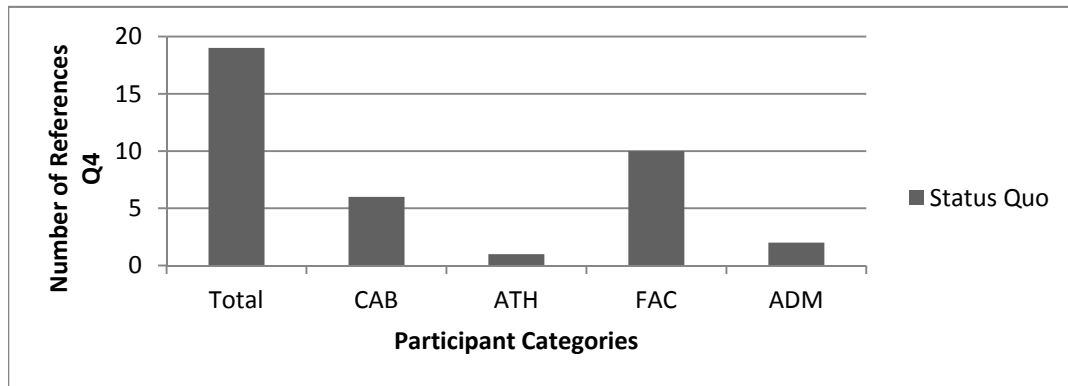


Figure 4. Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q4)



**Theme 5: The status quo of the campus environment that would be different after the organizational change was a key resistant issue at the university.**

People were asked to support a new football program in the athletic department that had never been part of the university. They had individual perceptions about the outcome of this phenomenon of change. Their responses about changing from the status quo were about decision making, academics, finances, and stereotypes.

Participant CAB-1 explained the resistance to change as it related to decision making to add the new football program to the athletic department in the following:

Some of them thought [the program] was forced on them....It wasn't a vote of the faculty...you'll get to know faculty....they feel they know everything about everything and many things they do. They feel they are important. They feel they should have the right to make decisions about everything. Some things are really under them and others are not under them. They felt they should have been able to vote on [the new program] and they didn't [get the opportunity].... they felt it was forced on them initially.

Participant ADM-2 was confident about the academic resistance to organizational change at the university and explained the following:

I believe that more than anything academia without a doubt [were resistant], because they were very nervous about the type of student [the program] would bring in. I mean it's no secret that when you have a big football program of 150 male students that there are students that are very, very good football that may not meet the academic standards that [university] is [accustomed] to [enrolling].

Not that they're bad...but there's no doubt that academia was so nervous about it [and] fought against it pretty heavily.

Participant ADM-1 described the resistance to change as it related to academics by stating that "I think resistance to change was probably just in general such a large program and the influence of the students in how they're going to impact the classroom environment." Participant FAC-4 remarked that "I think there were some justifiable concerns that admission standards would be lessened in certain cases to make the program competitive on the field."

Participant FAC-2 also responded with the academic concern for the increase of new students when the new football program was implemented. The participant stated the following.

We all wondered when you bring in 100 new students, what is the make-up of the students? I mean are we going to have a hundred students that are going to be outstanding in every way? Are we going to have problems getting students here that may not be completely ready for college, and we don't have enough right now to take care of the students we already have...that are having problems with college.

So we didn't know if we'd have a support staff to take care of any remedial help we needed...I think that was one concern...was the university prepared to take on the housing issues, the academic issues, all of the general campus living issues that a hundred new guys, at least, would bring with them.

Participant CAB-1 describes more resistance to change related to academics in the following:

The resistance continued though academically for several years... and they setup study groups for [the students].... I thought that maybe some of the teachers were more...resistant and maybe a little bit harder on the [students in the new program] [be]cause they weren't going to give an inch.... those were the two things, the fact that we were getting in students that normally we wouldn't have taken had we known the schools we were getting [them] from. And secondly, and that was extra work then for faculty and staff.

Participant FAC-3 responded to the resistance to change with academic concerns about the new students that came into the new football program in the following:

There was a little bit of grumping at the faculty level about fears that bringing in 150 students at the very bottom of the academic ladder would degrade the general academics of the institution, use up precious resources for learning and counseling and so forth. All of those concerns from the faculty were legitimate, and they were all ignored.

The average SAT score of the incoming students were lower...the freshman to sophomore retention is lower....all of the things you would expect....if you just took 150 marginal students and admitted them, and then told them that they couldn't spend any time in the fall studying because they were going to be busy doing something else, what would you think was going to happen? And that's what happened from an academic perspective.

We've admitted all these students that don't belong in college or are marginal, and now we have to have study tables in the athletic department to force them to study. It's just that they put 150 people here that most of them don't belong here academically.

Participant FAC-2 responded with concerns about the financial implications of the new football program as it related to academics in the following:

By [the president] doing this, it was clear that he was raising money for something that was not going to go towards faculty decompression of salaries. It wasn't going to go towards a new building, a new dorm... renovation of the dorm or...renovation of the library....we all knew that even though this money was not simply there for the taking that [the president] had to go out and raise it. [The money] was going to be for a very specific reason, and it was not going to be for the academic side of the house.

Participant CAB-4 describes the new football program was resisted as a financial investment outside of academics in the following.

There was some resistance to change, and I think that was about finances....we're [going to] invest in this [program] thing, but we're not investing appropriately in academic things was the sense of many faculty.... once the [program was implemented and new] students were here, I think that the faculty felt like... these people aren't serious about being in school, and these people are roughens kind of things.

Participant ATH-1 responded with resistance to change about the stereotyping of students in the new football program in the athletic department. The participant stated

that “we encountered a lot of resistance along the way and still do now.” This resistance was related to the participant’s perception of how some professors view students in the new football program. “The resistance was that the professors don’t think that...are going to be good students...and I’m just telling you that was the truth...that was the biggest resistance I thought from the faculty.”

The president became displeased with the lack of “community” environment during the organizational change at the university. He described a communication meeting where he expressed his concerns to the faculty in the following.

Then the next faculty meeting [where] they always leave a place for me to speak. I said I know the kind [of] people you are. Think about what you’re doing. I’ve heard some faculty say things about our [students]. In our...tradition [and] as academic [professionals], [we are] intelligent people that would not project prejudice...and malice against anybody [be]cause of something they do or how they look....In terms of mission and in terms of big professional educators, we can’t do this.... I want to tell you today, I will not tolerate it....you can disagree with me and even question my intelligence, but don’t mess with my students...I walked out, and we never had another peep.

### **Organizational Change Success Determination**

The fifth interview question discovered the determination of organizational change success at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Question five had responses in 8 total nodes with 36 total references. Only one node emerged as a common theme, because it had 10 or more references for the fifth question. Community environment emerged as the common theme, because it had 10 references for

the fifth question. The following sections identify the nodes that did not emerge and the node that did emerge into a common theme.

### **Nodes That Did Not Emerge Into a Common Theme**

Question five discovered the determination of organizational change success at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The researcher decided that a minimum 10 or more reference to nodes for a question would emerge as a common theme. The following nodes had responses for question five with less than 10 references, so they did not emerge as a common theme.

- Vision node had no references for the fifth question.
- Status quo had no references for the fifth question.
- Communication node had one reference for the fifth question.
- Financial node had nine references for the fifth question.
- Leadership node had seven references for the fifth question.
- Research node had two references for the fifth question.
- Goals node had no references for the fifth question.
- Stereotypes node had three references for the fifth question.
- Diversity node had two references for the fifth question.
- Plan node had no references for the fifth question.

### **Common Theme**

One common theme emerged from responses to the fifth question about the key resistance to change at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department. Campus environment was the common theme that emerged. Table 7 and

Figure 4.5 display the number of references to nodes by participant categories for the fifth question as it relates to the common theme of campus environment.

Table 7

*Common Theme – Success of Change*

Q5. How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

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Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q5)

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Node	Total	CAB	ATH	FAC	ADM
Campus Environment Q5	10	8	0	1	1

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Note. Participant categories are CAB = cabinet; ATH = athletics; FAC = faculty; ADM = administration.

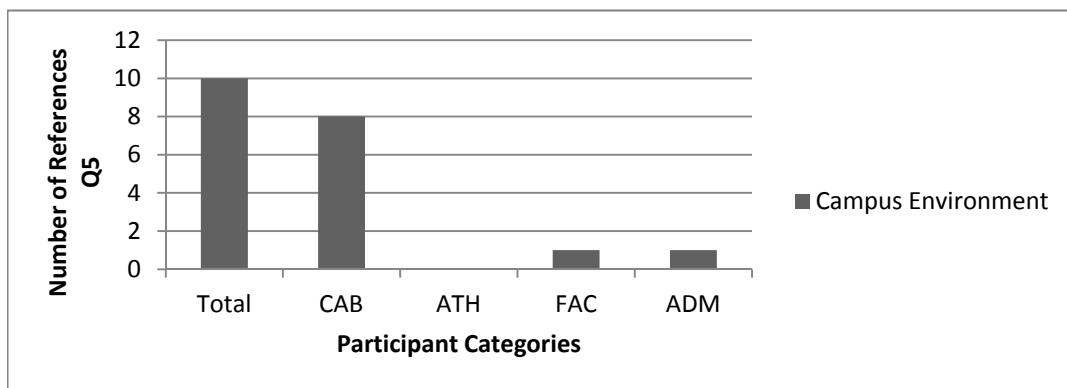


Figure 5. Number of references to node by participant categories for question (Q5)

**Theme 6: The organizational change was determined to be a success because of the effervescent campus environment that transpired after the new program was added to the athletic department.**

This study discovered one common theme for the determination of organizational change success. The theme was an effervescent campus environment for internal and external stakeholders. Participant CAB-1 describes the success as it relates to the community in the following.

First of all, it is true [that] we have been able to help other high schools and schools who want to use our [facilities]... the alumni have been extraordinarily happy...but [the program has] really brought thousands of people on campus that we wouldn't have had before....[and] there's good will that's been achieved.

Participant CAB-4 explained the organizational change success as "the gradual integration of the members of the [new program] into the university community...the enthusiasm that the entire community now has for [the new program]." Participant CAB-3 described the effervescent campus environment as one where "we have seen an increase in students living on campus and wanting to live on campus."

Participant ADM-1 describes the effervescent campus environment in the following:

I think it our campus is more vibrant...there is more energy around...[and] you've got people staying on the weekends, especially during the fall semester because there's things going on....there is more excitement on campus....people feel the energy, and I think overall [university] is at a better place because I hate to say



specifically for football but I really think that changed the culture of our entire environment.

### **Participants' Follow-up Discussion**

After responding to the five research questions, the participants were given an opportunity to discuss anything about the organizational change that was not included in the earlier questions. Everyone participated in this opportunity that was offered as the sixth question and described in the earlier qualitative interview process section of this chapter. Table 2 displays any references to nodes for this discussion in the sixth question. There were responses in 3 total nodes with 11 total references. None of the nodes emerged as a common theme, because it had 10 or more references for the sixth question. The following sections identify the nodes that did not emerge into a common theme.

#### **Nodes That Did Not Emerge Into a Common Theme**

Question six was a follow-up discussion opportunity that intended to discover anything about the organizational change success at the university to add a new football program to the athletic department that had not already been discussed in the five research questions. The researcher decided that a minimum 10 or more reference to nodes for a question would emerge as a common theme. All nodes had responses for question six with less than 10 references, so no common theme emerged.

- Vision node had five references for the sixth question.
- Status quo had no references for the sixth question.
- Communication node had no references for the sixth question.
- Financial node had no references for the sixth question.

- Leadership node had four references for the sixth question.
- Campus environment had two references for the sixth question.
- Research node had no references for the sixth question.
- Goals node had no references for the sixth question.
- Stereotypes node had no references for the sixth question.
- Diversity node had no references for the sixth question.
- Plan node had no references for the sixth question.

### **Summary**

This research study provided an opportunity for participants to express their perception of the phenomenon of the organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department at the university. The five semi-structured, open-ended questions provided cabinet, athletics, faculty, and administration participant categories to reflect upon their personal experiences with the organizational change. The sixth semi-structured, open-ended question provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss anything about the organizational change they had not discussed in the five research question.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

Leaders are frequently required to lead change which is more the rule than the exception. Decisions about mergers, expansions into new markets, and new initiatives to enter global markets compound the need for change leadership. The need to lead organizational change in higher education where academic freedom is supported by tenured professors whose individual values, beliefs, expectations, and assumptions are acceptable as the norm is a challenge for leaders.

Some leaders may find this type of climate overwhelming or intimidating. Other leaders may find they need to lead with courage in this climate towards a firm purpose that benefits the organization. If a university president can successfully lead change in such a climate then there could quite possibly be a great deal to learn about the process taken to lead change. For that reason this university was chosen for this research study.

The purpose of this study was to discover key issues that should be considered by leaders when deciding upon a major organizational change. A higher education organization that made a major change to add a new program to the athletic department was studied. Interviews were conducted to collect data about why leadership decided to make the organizational change, the leadership approach used to lead the organizational change, key initiatives used to gain acceptance to change, key resistance to change issues, and how the organizational change was determined to have been a success.

This study used a single subject in a qualitative and descriptive research design. An inductive approach was used to conduct a case study of research interviews that discovered key issues that should be considered by leaders when deciding upon a major organizational change. The case study was non-experimental with no independent or dependent variables. Five structured, open-ended questions enabled participants to provide their perspectives of the phenomenon of organizational change that occurred. Participants were also afforded the opportunity at the end of the structured interview questions to share additional information about the study.

The following are the five structured, open-ended questions that were used to guide this study: (1) why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university; (2) what leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university; (3) what key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university; (4) what key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university and (5) how is it determined if the organizational change was a success? A follow-up discussion was offered to each participant after their responses to the five structured, open-ended questions. The discussion was offered as the following open-ended question: (6) is there anything you would like to discuss about the organizational change that you have not discussed in the first five questions?

The interview participants were categorized as cabinet, athletics, faculty, and administration. NVivo 10 qualitative software was used to sort and analyze the interview responses. The responses revealed the participants' perception of the phenomenon of organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university.

The analyses of the responses emerged into common themes. This chapter summarizes the purpose of the study, research questions, and research method. This chapter also provides the relationship of present results to theory and previous research; conclusion of findings; implications for practice; limitations; and suggestions for future research.

### **Summary Overview of Results**

The inductive approach to this qualitative case study resulted in six common themes that emerged from the five structured research questions. No themes emerged from the sixth follow-up discussion question. The themes from this study discovered more about the organizational change and key issues that should be considered by leadership when deciding upon a major organizational change. Regardless of the type or size of the major change, organizations that seek to make change will glean insights from this study of how leaders of one organization approached significant change. The following are common themes that emerged in the research for this study.

#### **Research Question 1**

Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?

- Theme 1: The president had a personal vision of organizational change for the university.
- Theme 2: The president established goals for the university to achieve his vision of organizational change.

#### **Research Question 2**

What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?

- Theme 3: The president used his personal vision as a leadership approach to lead the organizational change at the university.

### **Research Question 3**

What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?

- Theme 4: The president communicated his personal vision and goals to internal and external stakeholders to gain acceptance to change at the university.

### **Research Question 4**

What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?

- Theme 5: The status quo of the campus environment that would be different after the organizational change was a key resistant issue at the university.

### **Research Question 5**

How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

- Theme 6: The organizational change was determined to be a success because of the effervescent campus environment that transpired after the new program was added to the athletic department.

### **Relationship of Present Results to Theory and Previous Research**

This study did not discover an intended theoretical basis for the change at the university. Regardless, the researcher was able to analyze the change process at the university through the literature review and theoretical framework of Léon de Caluwé and Hans Vermaak (2003) who suggest five reasons, labeled with a color, to describe how individual behavior may shift towards change (p. 42). The leadership approach to

change requires thinking about how to influence followers to work towards and achieve a desired outcome. Leaders that understand their organization and its workers will select the appropriate approach to effect change. Leadership in the university organization of this study experienced three of the thinking processes developed by de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003) to achieve the change to add the new program to the athletic department that is discussed in the following sections.

### **Theme 1**

This research study discovered that the first common theme was the president had a personal vision of organizational change for the university. The president explained that he believed that it was time for a major change to occur at the institution. He stated that “we needed a jolt....I had an intuitive sense we needed to do something that would be perceived as big and out of the norm and do it very, very well; and that would reintroduce this institution and the perception of it to the world.” He believed that the university needed a change that would be successfully implemented and that the institution would be recognized for its accomplishments. The president acted upon his vision by convincing internal and external stakeholders that the university needed to change.

The president understood that there would be risks associated with change but believed there would be greater risks for the university if it did not change. Leading organizational change that is inspired by vision can be a challenge. Kotter (1996) argues, “New initiatives fail far too often when employees, even though they embrace a new vision, feel disempowered by huge obstacles in their path” (p. 10).

This president firmly believed in his vision of change for the university and acted upon his belief by meeting with the board. He stated that “it appeared to me that the biggest risk was not changing.” The board authorized the president to implement his vision of organizational change for the university. This research study discovered the university leadership overcame obstacles that resulted in successful organizational change. Sometimes when leaders are fully convinced in the necessity for change, their zeal can help drive the change.

Personal courage and a desire to serve the university fueled the president’s passion for organizational change. He was not concerned about his positional leadership of president, because his focus was on advancing the university through organizational change. The president explained his courage to act upon his vision of organizational change at the university with the following.

Well luckily I didn’t come here to be president. I came here to serve. If I had of been interested in holding onto my job, I probably would not have done it. I came here to help the institution....there were risks, but I also knew there were risks staying the same. When I described why I wanted to do it, I thought the institution needed to change. I thought that I could help young men. I thought I could build campus life.

The president’s focus to help young men included them receiving an opportunity to get a college education and enhancing the campus life at the university. The president explained his enthusiasm to help young men through his vision in the following:



I mean it just took off.... So there was a mission reason to do it. I wanted to help educate a diverse group of young men and get them into classrooms and businesses and ministry....med school, law school, [and] accounting firms.

The first common theme was examined through the theoretical framework of de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003). The fact that the president believed in his personal vision and acted to have it implemented implies “yellow-print thinking” on the part of this leader. “Yellow-print thinking assumes that people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account, or if you can compel them to accept certain ideas” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). The president believed he could convince internal and external stakeholders to support his vision. He was successful in his persuasion, because his personal vision of organizational change was accepted and implemented.

**Lessons learned for organizational leaders of any type or size of business.**

Leaders envision sustainability and success of their organizations. They “influence people to change by providing an inspiring vision of the future” (Daft, 2005, p. 24). A key takeaway from the first theme in this research study is that leaders must have vision and believe in it to benefit the organization’s core purpose. “The organization’s core purpose is its reason for being, the idealistic motivation that brings people to work each day” (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 161).

Leaders must also have the courage to act upon influencing their vision. Purpose, belief, and courage all fuel the passion necessary to withstand risks associated with organizational change. If leaders do not believe in their vision, have a purpose for organizational change, nor have the courage to withstand risks, they may not have the

ability to influence people to accept their ideas for the sustainability and success of the organization.

## **Theme 2**

This research study discovered a second common theme was that the president established goals for the university to achieve his vision of organizational change. . Visionary leadership to create needed change for an organization involves leading followers towards a purpose initially understood only by the leader. The president established four goals for his vision of helping young men receive an opportunity to get a college education and enhancing campus life at the university.

Establishing goals to help workers achieve the intended change was an important part of gaining the support of the workers who would help implement the organizational change. Leaders should build ongoing relationships with followers to gain the support especially needed during a change process. Hackman and Johnson (2009) asserted that “Recognizing that leaders and followers work together toward shared objectives should keep us from overemphasizing the importance of leaders or ignoring the contribution of followers” (p. 19). Change occurred by the efforts of leaders and followers at the university that lead to a successful outcome. “Leading means influencing since leaders must shape the attitudes and behavior of others to help groups reach their goals.” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 166). The president influenced workers and led them towards his goals where everyone at the university shared in the outcome.

The second common theme was examined through the theoretical framework of de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003). Some people are willing to change if they have specific information about the change that includes the desired results. The president shared his

personal vision and goals for the organizational change at the university. “In blue-print thinking it is assumed that people or things will change if a clearly specified result is laid down beforehand” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). He was successful in communicating his vision and goals, because the organizational change was implemented with a successful outcome.

**Lessons learned for organizational leaders of any type or size of business.**

This research study discovered that the president led the way to help achieve his vision of organizational change at the university by establishing goals. A key takeaway from the second theme in this study is that when leaders have vision of change, they may have to establish goals for people to achieve a sustainable and successful organization. “Goals energize behavior, motivating people to put forth the effort to reach difficult goals that are accepted, and when goals are difficult but achievable, goal setting prompts persistence over time” (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 382).

Leaders that do establish goals for their vision may discover that people do not change, because they do not have “a clearly specified result...laid down beforehand.” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). Leading change in overwhelming or intimidating environments like the university in this research study requires goals that are established by the leader. The goals will be the motivation behind the efforts to achieve the organizational change.

**Theme 3**

This research study discovered a third common theme was that participants in the survey described the president having used his personal vision as the approach to leading organizational change. “Major change is often said to be impossible unless the head of

the organization is an active supporter” (Kotter, 1996, p. 6). Participant CAB-1 explained that the approach used to lead the organizational change at the university came directly from the president. The participant stated that “Well I would have to admit that it was pretty much top down....[the president] made the decision.”

Participant FAC-2 also stated that the approach used to lead the organizational change was generated from the top of the organization when stating the following:

This idea of a football program was not generated as far as I know from the bottom up....there was not a great call for a football program from the students or among the majority of the employees, the faculty [or] the staff at the university. It was really an idea brought from the president’s office.

Leaders’ execution of the change process should include communicating a vision that will be embraced by followers that are willing to sustain support of the leader throughout the change process (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 31). The president met with the board about his vision. Participant ATH-3 explained that “In the long run I think the president was the one that really led the charge and kept the fire burning in regards to trying to accomplish[ing] a goal of getting approval to start a football program.”

Although there was some initial resistance to the president’s vision, it was embraced, implemented, and resulted in a successful outcome.

Leaders are often required to make a decision that it is time to change by shifting from the status quo to benefit the overall organization. “Although many organizations and their leaders desire lasting, meaningful change, few are capable of achieving it” (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 155). This research study discovered a president that ventured into the unknown by having a personal vision of organizational change for the university.

This is how leadership knew it was the right time for major change, and it resulted in a successful outcome.

The third common theme was examined through the theoretical framework of de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003). The fact that the president used his personal vision as an approach to lead the organizational change at the university implies “yellow-print thinking” on the part of this leader. “Yellow-print thinking assumes that people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account, or if you can compel them to accept certain ideas” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). The president approached organizational change by believing he could convince internal and external stakeholders to support his vision. He was successful in his persuasion, because his personal vision of organizational change was accepted and implemented.

**Lessons learned for organizational leaders of any type or size of business.**

This research study discovered that the leader’s vision was used as the approach to lead the organizational change at the university. “Vision plays a key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people” (Kotter, 1996, p. 7). A key takeaway from the third theme is that when the vision for change comes from the leader of the organization, the top-down approach or change-management structure may be required to achieve sustainability and success of the organization. Cummings & Worley (2001) explain this change approach in the following.

Because organizational transitions tend to be ambiguous and tend to need direction, special structures for managing the change process need to be created. These management structures should include people who have the power to

mobilize resources to promote change, the respect of the existing leadership and change advocates, and the interpersonal and political skills to guide the change process. (p. 168)

Leaders' visions may be perceived as ambiguous by workers in the organization. Respected leaders' authority and power to communicate their vision of change may lead to the sustainability and success of their organizations. Their ability to change perceptions and willingness to consider people may benefit the overall organization during the organizational change process.

#### **Theme 4**

This research study discovered a fourth common theme was that the president communicated his personal vision and goals to internal and external stakeholders to gain acceptance to change at the university. Leading change required the ability to communicate with followers. "Leadership is essentially a process of social influence in which individuals want to feel included, supported and reinforced, especially in change" (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006, p. S88). When leaders decide to make a change, followers who implement the process should be considered as significant contributors to the outcome.

The president acknowledged that he knew everyone at the university would not embrace his vision for organizational change when he stated that "if you spend all [of] your time convincing people who will never be convinced, you are going to lose." There were people at the university that could be convinced, and his method of gaining their acceptance to the organizational change included the ability to "talk to them, communicate [with them], assure them.... make sure they're not in the dark." The

president cautioned that there are also people who you believe have embraced a vision. He suggested that you “don’t assume...you want to engage them [and] have them be part of leadership.”

Sometimes when leading organizational change, people need to be reminding of how successful they were in the past so they have the courage to change. The president set out to communicate his vision of organizational change for the university in diverse settings that included the board, athletics, faculty, administration, and students. One of his earlier persuasive communications was at a meeting with the board of trustees where he explained his vision of organizational change at the university and requested implementation approval. This study discovered that the board members were initially hesitant to approve the implementation of the organizational change until the president effectively reminded them of how the university had a tradition of achieving initiatives in the past.

Participant CAB-1 stated the following about the president’s persuasive communications to the board about the organizational change:

“[The president] went back to you know we didn’t say we could and we did....so we have a reputation [and] a heritage. [We have] a tradition of moving ahead on something. [The president] was thoroughly convinced that this would be...best for the [the university because of]....those initiatives... [in] the past [and] showing what we had achieved.

I really think winning the good will of people...and acknowledging [we have achieved initiatives in the past]...was very important. I think it was really persuasion....[with others who] had leadership positions or who were considered

leaders among the faculty and staff...working with them definitely helped. [The president also started] showing how [the change] could be good will among [people]...that helped...[show] we could carry out our mission [that is] responding to needs...and good will.

The president was successful in persuading the board to permit him to implement his vision of organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department. He continued to communicate his vision of organizational change for the university in an open and transparent manner. Participant CAB-1 explained the following:

He also worked with some key faculty members and staff members who had the respect of other faculty and staff and got them enthused about [the organizational change]. [The president] willingly addressed the fact that we were starting with nothing...he went back to the initiatives of the history of our college that we start with nothing and we achieve.

The president's vision of change included the desire for positive results to help young men receive an opportunity to get a college education and enhance campus life at the university. Leaders that desire to achieve positive change recognize that "Communication is the cornerstone of successful change" (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007, p. 14). The president personally communicated his vision or message of change to followers at the university. "Effective leadership is the product of the creation and delivery of inspiring and compelling messages" (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 336). Leaders possess the ability to influence followers toward their desired outcome through effective communication that occurs throughout the change process.



One of the compelling reasons for organizational change at the university was the president's desire to help young men receive an opportunity to get a college education. The president valued the workers at the university by communicating they could help achieve his goals towards the vision of intended change. He knew that he could not accomplish organizational change alone and needed their help.

The president communicated to internal and external stakeholders that he needed help to achieve his vision and goals for the university. Leaders must effectively communicate with followers in a manner where it is believed that they are valued. "A leader's communication style may reflect a philosophical belief about human nature, or it may simply be a strategy designed to maximize outcomes in a given situation" (p. 40). Regardless of the communication style "a leader selects contributes to the success or failure of any attempt to exert influence" (p. 40). Successful change includes the leadership ability to positively influence followers to a desired outcome.

A plan was developed and communicated for the organizational change to add a new football program to the athletic department at the university in this research study. The plan identified a proposal for additional personnel, infrastructure improvements, enrollment requirements, finances, and a timeline. This plan was used as a communication tool for the organizational change. Participant CAB-3 stated the following:

The key thing is communication. Communication and planning....[leader] was a prime mover on that.... let's have a plan. Let's work the plan. Let's not change the plan. We made a plan. We work the plan....I heard it so many times it's stuck in my head. We got a plan. We work the plan. Don't change the plan. [It

is] not to [imply that] you didn't change the plan as things went on but [the plan] was the key. I think it's having a good plan, following the plan, and communicate [the plan]. You can't over communicate.

This research study discovered faculty resisted the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department. They believed they demonstrated loyalty to the university in the past but felt betrayed by not being given input to the decision making for the organizational change. Innovative leaders who have built relationships of trust with workers will discover unique ways to communicate to each individual the reason for the change and how it may be an overall benefit to the entire organization.

The president was available for communication with internal and external stakeholders throughout the organizational change. He participated in one-on-one conversations and formal meetings. The president discovered the most effective way to make a connection with the workers at the university to ease their feelings and inspire hope for a way forward.

The fourth common theme was examined through the theoretical framework of de Caluwé and Vermaak, (2003). The fact that the president used communication of his personal vision and goals to gain acceptance to change implies "yellow-print thinking" on the part of this leader. "Yellow-print thinking assumes that people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account, or if you can compel them to accept certain ideas" (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42). The president believed he could convince internal and external stakeholders to support his vision and goals. He was successful in his persuasion, because his personal vision of organizational change was accepted and the goals were achieved for a successful outcome.

**Lessons learned for organizational leaders of any type or size of business.**

One key takeaway for the fourth theme in this research study is that communication is essential to leadership. It is the common skill required of all leaders to achieve results in any organization. The ability to communicate is one of our greatest human gifts and a remarkable ability that allows leaders to realize their human potential to connect with other people.

Leaders are required to communicate with internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis such things as normal business, reorganizations, mergers, expansions into new markets, or even new initiatives to enter global markets compounding the need for effective leadership communication. Without the ability to effectively communicate, many leaders may find it difficult to contribute to their company's bottom line while at the same time valuing the hard work of each employee that contributes to that end. The president in this research study was aware that everyone at the university would not embrace his vision for, and so he used effective communication to gain acceptance to the organizational change. Cummings & Worley (2001) explain overcoming resistance to change with communication in the following.

People resist change when they are uncertain about its consequences. Lack of adequate information fuels rumors and gossip and adds to the anxiety generally associated with change. Effective communication about changes and their likely results can reduce this speculation and allay unfounded fears. It can help members realistically prepare for change. (p. 158)

Effective communication is a critical ability needed when leading organizational change. It can make the difference between people in the organization resisting or

accepting the change. Communication is the method of gaining acceptance to leaders' visions for the sustainability and success of their organization.

Another key takeaway from this research study is that leading change requires the need to collaborate with other key members of the organization who have previously earned the respect of people "because major change is so difficult to accomplish, a powerful force is required to sustain the process" (Kotter, 1996, p. 51). The president of the university in this study recognized the organizational change would require a collaboration of key members. Kotter (1996) explains the following:

No one individual, even a monarch-like CEO, is ever able to develop the right vision, communicate it to large numbers of people, eliminate all the key obstacles, generate short-term wins, lead and manage dozens of change projects, and anchor new approaches deep in the organization's culture. (pp. 51-52).

The final key takeaway from this research study is that a plan needs to be developed for major organizational change so that people have a common understanding of what is to be accomplished. The plan in this research study identified a proposal for additional personnel, infrastructure improvements, enrollment requirements, finances, and a timeline. This plan was used as a communication tool for the organizational change.

### **Theme 5**

This research study discovered a fifth common theme was that the status quo of the campus environment that would be different after the organizational change was a key resistant issue at the university. The academic climate of autonomy at the university was an excellent environment to study change. This research study discovered how the

president influenced professors who experience academic freedom as the status quo to support significant organizational change that resulted in a successful outcome.

Faculty was hesitant to accept change when asked to support a new program in the athletic department that had never been part of the university. They had individual perceptions about the outcome of this phenomenon of change. Their concerns about changing from the status quo were about decision making, academics, finances, and stereotypes. Participant ADM-2 was confident about the academic resistance to organizational change at the university and explained the following:

I believe that more than anything academia without a doubt [were resistant], because they were very nervous about the type of student [the program] would bring in. I mean it's no secret that when you have a big football program of 150 male students that there are students that are very, very good football that may not meet the academic standards that [university] is [accustomed] to [enrolling].

Not that they're bad...but there's no doubt that academia was so nervous about it [and] fought against it pretty heavily.

Some of the faculty were not pleased that they were not given input to the decision of organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department.

Participant CAB-1 explained the resistance to change as it related to decision making to add the new football program to the athletic department in the following:

Some of them thought [the program] was forced on them....It wasn't a vote of the faculty...you'll get to know faculty....they feel they know everything about everything and many things they do. They feel they are important. They feel they should have the right to make decisions about everything. Some things are

really under them and others are not under them. They felt they should have been able to vote on [the new program] and they didn't [get the opportunity].... they felt it was forced on them initially.

Other faculty was concerned about how the organizational change would be financed. There were concerns about whether or not there would be a reduction in the academic budget. A few of the faculty communicated stereotypes about the new students that would be involved in the program at the athletic department. Stereotypes were about low academic performance.

One leadership challenge is to decide whether or not to institute a major organizational change, because one-third to two-thirds of the outcomes is often unsuccessful (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 153). Kouzes & Posner (2002) asserted, "When we're faced with new challenges—whether personal, organizational, economic, or technological—we live with a high degree of ambiguity" (p. 186). Once the decision was made to institute a significant organizational change from the status quo at the university, the leadership overcame the challenges and achieved a successful outcome.

The reality is that change shifts the comfort of the status quo, often causing individuals to resist and make it difficult for the organization to achieve a successful outcome. "Change and the accompanying uncertainty throws off our equilibrium" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 186). However leadership at the university in this study led effective change that produced a successful to benefit the organization.

These leaders at the university managed both positive and negative behaviors throughout the organizational change at the university. It was communicated to faculty that there would be initial fundraising to implement the new program in the athletic

department, but the academic initiatives at the university would eventually receive more financial support. This study did not discover any decrease in financial support for academics during the organizational change.

Kotter (1996) argues “Major change is usually impossible unless most employees are willing to help, often to the point of making short-term sacrifices” (p. 9). The need for individual survival determines the desire and behavior to make sacrifices. Kotter further argues “people will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they think the potential benefits of change are attractive and unless they really believe that a transformation is possible” (p. 9).

The status quo challenges at the university in this study were not as elaborate as compared to another university. In 1974, Bloomfield College experienced financial challenges due to “declining enrollments and revenues, a deteriorating physical plant and increased competition from the New Jersey state system of higher education, which had greatly expanded its 2-year and 4-year institutions during the previous decade (Zajac & Kraatz, 1993, p. 87). Bloomfield experienced resistance to change during the planning process. “Faculty determined to maintain the *status quo*, ‘condemned’ the plan and rejected the president’s plea to cooperate in developing an alternative one” (p. 87). It took the legal system of bankruptcy to empower the “president and the board of trustees to manage the institution and make policy” (p. 87).

Another comparison of status quo challenges is that leaders at Mills College experienced a similar situation of change in the Zajac and Kraatz study. At the time of the study, the “138-year old women’s college in Oakland, California, announced that the college’s trustees had made a decision to *accept men for the first time*” (Zajac & Kraatz,

1993, p. 88). Leadership effectively communicated the purpose for the change as a means to “boost sagging enrollments and assist the college’s administrators in their increasingly difficult struggle to balance the college’s annual budgets” (p. 88).

The change was met with extreme resistance. “For [two] weeks following the announcement, shocked students staged ‘strikes’ from class, held daily protests, occupied the administration building and brought campus operations to a total standstill” (p. 88). Change resistance can be contagious. “Compounding the alarming resistance offered by students was faculty support for their protests” (p. 88). The result of the organizational change was “the trustees reversed their decision and ended the 2-week siege” (p. 89).

Regardless of the comparison of status quo challenges, leaders should expect people to resist change for a variety of reasons that include “habit, security, economic factors, fear of the unknown, and selective information processing” (Banutu-Gomez & Banutu-Gomez, 2007, p. 74). Some people are satisfied with the status quo and do not desire change or embrace the opportunity of something different. The possibility of their security threatened in some manner with change creates resistance. Other people may not be in a financial state to accept change for fear it may be of harm. It is also common that the fear of the unknown is unappealing to many people. It infringes on their basic need to know that what they have worked for at a particular point in their life will not change unless it is for the better.

The fifth common theme was examined through the theoretical framework of de Caluwé and Vermaak (2003). The president had to influence the faculty that organizational change was needed and they would receive additional academic support in the long term implies “yellow-print thinking.” The theory of “yellow-print thinking



assumes that people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account or if you can compel them to accept certain ideas” (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, p. 42).

“Red-print thinking” is another theoretical analysis of the faculty’s need for increased academic support of the increased number of new students that used the new program in the athletic department. “Red-print thinking assumes that people and organizations will change if the right HRM (Human Resource Management) tools are employed and used correctly” (p. 43). Followers understand that change is part of the job and are willing to participate as long as there is a transition process to assist the worker. Faculty at the university in this study needed to be reassured that they would receive increased support to perform their academic responsibilities resulting from the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department.

**Lessons learned for organizational leaders of any type or size of business.**

The first key takeaway for theme five is that leaders should automatically accept that status quo issues will occur during organizational change. The reality is that change shifts the comfort of the status quo, often causing individuals to resist and make it difficult for the organization to achieve a successful outcome. “Change and the accompanying uncertainty throws off our equilibrium” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 186).

When making a major organizational change, leaders need to have the courage to manage the status quo. The president in this research study managed the status quo especially when the effects of the organizational change were impact students. He became displeased with the lack of “community” environment during the organizational

change at the university. He described a communication meeting where he expressed his concerns to the faculty in the following.

Then the next faculty meeting [where] they always leave a place for me to speak. I said I know the kind [of] people you are. Think about what you're doing. I've heard some faculty say things about our [students]. In our...tradition [and] as academic [professionals], [we are] intelligent people that would not project prejudice...and malice against anybody [be]cause of something they do or how they look....In terms of mission and in terms of big professional educators, we can't do this.... I want to tell you today, I will not tolerate it....you can disagree with me and even question my intelligence, but don't mess with my students...I walked out, and we never had another peep.

People behave the way they do because they can. If leaders allow status quo issues to continue without being addressed, even more significant problems will surface during the organizational change. Leading organizational change means managing the status quo. Addressing the status quo requires leadership courage.

The second key takeaway for the fifth theme is that sometimes workers will be unhappy that they were not included in the decision making process for organizational change. Leaders understand that there are times when input from the people in the organization augments decision making. There are other times when leaders have a broad view core purpose of the organization and must make decisions without input from the workers to ensure the sustainability and success of the organization. Leaders are hired to make decisions and any input from the workers for decision making is helpful but not required.

## Theme 6

This research study discovered the sixth common theme was that the organizational change at the university was determined to be a success because of the effervescent campus environment that transpired after the new program was added to the athletic department. Participants stated that more students were living on campus and staying on campus to participate in activities. They described the increase of alumni and visitors to the university as a result of the organizational change. They also explained their new ability to help community high schools.

### **Lessons learned for organizational leaders of any type or size of business.**

The key takeaway from the sixth theme is that the outcome of successful change may not result in achieving the established goals for the organization. There may be another successful outcome. The president in this research study established four goals for the organizational change of adding a new football program to the athletic department at the university in the following:

Goal one was to advance the academic reputation and output of this institution.

Goal two was to have a vibrant and exciting campus life, culturally, religiously, spiritually, [and] the whole works. [The] third goal [was that] we would more deeply and thoroughly live our Catholic and Franciscan values, [and] bring the faith life more to...character development. [The] fourth goal was to make sure we had enough money to do the first three [goals] very well....so we got serious about fundraising.

None of the four goals above was an indicator of success for their organizational change based upon the interview responses in this research study. Only one of the

president's goals came close to emerging as a common theme with responses in the financial node. However, the financial node had less than 10 references so it did not meet the criteria to emerge as a common theme for determining the organizational change success. Although financial did not emerge as a common theme in this study, the researcher determined the outcome of responses to be significant to this research study and discussed it in the following conclusion of findings section.

The only node for this research question that had 10 references and emerged into a common theme was campus environment. Participant ADM-1 describes the effervescent campus environment in the following:

I think it our campus is more vibrant...there is more energy around...[and] you've got people staying on the weekends, especially during the fall semester because there's things going on....there is more excitement on campus....people feel the energy, and I think overall [university] is at a better place because I hate to say specifically for football but I really think that changed the culture of our entire environment.

Leaders should be more than satisfied with an effervescent work environment that develops as a result of a major organizational change like in this research study. The environment is essential to the productivity of workers in any organization. It is defined as "the physical and social context within which any client system (a person, group, or organization) is functioning" (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 671). Organizational change that is able to occur and does not disrupt the work environment sustains the existing climate.

### **Conclusion of Findings**

The researcher decided that finance was a significant conclusion of findings in this study even though the responses in the financial node did not meet the criteria of 10 or more references to emerge as a common theme. Table 2 displays the financial node as the only node with 9 references in 2 separate questions. There were 9 references in the second question about the approach to lead organizational change at the university. There also were 9 references in the fifth question about determining the organizational change success. Most importantly, the president's fourth goal for the organization was "to make sure we had enough money."

Leaders understand there are financial implications with any organizational change. The president communicated the financial implications of the organizational change at the university. CAB-1 stated the financial concerns at the university in the following:

We've always been a small college. We've always financially been strapped....our athletic department budget was the lowest of anyone in our conference, and we were half of the one right above us. So we didn't have much money at all....so I thought, my concern was, where are we going to get the money.

One of the ways the president was able to gain confidence of the people was with financial short-term wins. He demonstrated belief in his vision to others by personally raising money. The president explains that he initially talked to a "powerful guy...who has given us over a million." Kotter (1996) states the following about short-term wins:

Major change takes time, sometimes lots of time. Zealous believers will often stay the course no matter what happens. Most of the rest of us expect to see convincing evidence that all the effort is paying off. Nonbelievers have even higher standards of proof. They want to see clear data indicating that the changes are working and that the change process isn't absorbing so many resources in the short term as to endanger the organization.

CAB-1 stated that "the president's ability to raise money was really the way that we really got it started." The participant also explained that people gained confidence in the president's vision in the following:

Well we hired a new director of athletics whose only job was being director of athletics who had the expertise to be able to go out and raise some monies and so forth. And the president apparently made contact with people who said, "If you start it, we'll give you the money."

A significant outcome of the organizational change has been a substantial increase in fundraising for the university. The president remarked that "we use to raise about a million, million and a half a year, now we average 15 million a year. Leaders that make decisions to change their organizations need to ensure financial requirements will be accomplished. The president in this research study used fundraising as the method of meeting financial requirements and achieved record breaking contributions.

The overall conclusion of findings for this research study discovered that the president had a personal vision of organizational change to advance the university. He was successful in persuading the board to authorize implementation of his vision. The president established goals to lead the way for workers to help achieve the organizational

change. He effectively communicated his vision and goals and met resistance due to the status quo. The president overcame the challenges of status quo, and the organizational change resulted in a successful effervescent campus environment with record breaking fundraising.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study has implications for leaders who are constantly challenged with frequent change and/or in challenging environments. Leaders are frequently required to lead change on a regular basis due to mergers, expansions into new markets, and new initiatives to enter global markets compounding the need for change leadership. Frequent change is more the rule rather than the exception. This study examined how the organizational leadership achieved a successful outcome. Research indicates that when leadership introduces change, more often than not it is unsuccessful (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 153). Yet there are some organizations that institute significant change and are apparently very successful.

Regardless of the type or size of the major change, organizations that seek to make change will glean insights from this study of how leaders of one organization approached significant change. Leaders that have vision of change for their organization should have the courage to persuade their decision makers to implement the change. Leaders cannot implement the change alone, so they should establish goals for the workers to help achieve their vision of organizational change. The ability to effectively communicate vision and goals is essential in achieving successful organizational change. Managing the status quo should be expected when introducing change to an organization.

An effervescent work environment should be an unintended benefit that results from organizational change in any type of business or size.

### **Limitations**

This study was conducted at a small, Midwest university. Leaders in small universities and businesses may want to read this study to consider key issues to be taken into consideration when deciding upon a major organizational change. The outcome of this study presents limitations for larger universities and big businesses. However, leaders in larger universities and big businesses will want to read this study as an example to help them make decisions of change for their organizations.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The six common themes discovered in this study present an opportunity for further research in organizational leadership. It was discovered that the themes were significant factors in the successful organizational change. The following are suggestions for future research.

- Leadership and vision
- Leadership and goals
- Leadership and communication
- Leadership and managing the status quo
- Leadership and the work environment
- Leadership and financial responsibility

It is also suggested that future research be conducted about organizational change and adding programs to departments other than athletics. An example is leading campus-wide organizational change of diversity at a university. Businesses other than



higher education that have experienced successful organizational change in adding a new program to one of its departments is another suggestion for future research.

### **Summary**

Gilley et al. (2008) found that “one-third to two-thirds of major change initiatives are deemed failures” (p. 153). They also discovered that “It has been suggested that the rate of failure to deliver sustainable change at times reaches 80–90%” (p. 153). This study discovered a leader in a university organization in the Midwest that led a successful organizational change. The leader is commended for the courage and abilities to have a vision, communicate goals, manage the status quo, improve the work environment, and having achieved record breaking fundraising throughout the organizational change. Courage and these set of abilities are why this researcher determined that the organizational change at the university did not fail and has sustained.

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Appendix A:  
Informed Consent Form

INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent: Participants 18 Years of Age and Older

Dear Participant:

I am a candidate at Indiana Wesleyan University working towards a Doctor of Organizational Leadership degree. My research topic is leading organizational change in higher education. This leadership study will focus on key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change.

I am requesting that you volunteer to participate in this research study by answering questions regarding the organizational change that occurred at your university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The open-ended questions focus on your perception of this phenomenon and your responses will remain confidential.

Your participation will involve an interview and a possible request to recommend another participant for this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published but your name will not be used and your results will be maintained in confidence.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation may result in identifying practices, tools, and techniques that can benefit leaders in their decisions of whether or not to make organizational change.

The interview time may take 15-30 minutes. If you agree to volunteer and participate in the research process, please sign this informed consent page.

Will you give me permission to tape the interview?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                      \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (317) 258-9590.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eileen Taylor      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant (print name)      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant (signature)      Date

## Appendix B:

### Participant Confidentiality and Release Statement

I agree to participate in a research study of *Leading Organizational Change in Higher Education*.

I understand the purpose and nature of this study, and I am participating voluntarily.

I grant permission for the research to be used in the process of completing a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership degree and a dissertation by Eileen Taylor.

I further understand that the research from this study will be used to document claims, concerns, and issues for leading organizational change in higher education.

Eileen Taylor has informed me that no personal data or identification of myself shall be accomplished.

I have also agreed to receipt of a synopsis of the research at the end of the dissertation process.

In consideration of the aforementioned research, I grant permission for the information to be conducted and used for research related activities.

I also grant permission to tape-recording of the interview (s) and understand that the interview will be transcribed at a later time by the researcher.

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Participant (print name) Date

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Participant (signature) Date



## Appendix C:

### Primary Interview Script and Questionnaire

Greetings,

My name is Eileen Taylor, and I am a candidate at Indiana Wesleyan University working towards a Doctor of Organizational Leadership degree. My research topic is leading organizational change in higher education. This leadership study will focus on key issues that should be considered when deciding upon a major organizational change.

I am requesting that you volunteer to participate in this research study by answering questions regarding the organizational change that occurred at your university to add a new football program to the athletic department. The open-ended questions focus on your perception of this phenomenon and your responses will remain confidential.

The interview time may take less than fifteen minutes. If you agree to volunteer and participate in the research process, please sign the informed consent page and confidentiality agreement.

Will you give me permission to tape the interview? Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Why did leadership decide to make the organizational change to add a new program to the athletic department at the university?
2. What leadership approach was used to lead the organizational change at the university?
3. What key initiatives were used to gain acceptance to change at the university?
4. What key resistance to change issues occurred during the change process at the university?
5. How is it determined if the organizational change was a success?

Thank you.

## Vita

Eileen Taylor attended Heidelberg High School, Heidelberg, Germany and Kecoughtan High School, Hampton, Virginia. In 1978 she entered Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, Virginia where she earned an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Secretarial Science in June 1980. Subsequently, she was employed as a full-time secretary (stenographer) at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Langley Research Center, where she began her federal government civil service career. In January 1998, she entered the Graduate School at Indiana Wesleyan University where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Management in 1999, Master of Business Administration in 2002, and a Master of Arts in Advanced Leadership Studies in 2009. In February 2006, she retired from the Federal Aviation Administration, Indianapolis, Indiana with over 27 years of federal civil service. In January 2014, she successfully defended her dissertation for a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership.