Using qualitative methodology and a case study format, this study examines from the inside-out the organizational impact of significant change in leadership at a mature community college during the initial period of that change. The study describes and characterizes the nature of change in the organization during the periods of significant leadership transition, and examines the conceptual links between the new leadership team and the external and internal forces of change impacting the college during that time.

The researcher has endeavored to pull significant events, actions, and circumstances of the new top leadership team in the college selected for study through a specific theoretical framework to find links of relationship and connection. That framework defines organizational change as a coalition of interests and a network of activities within a moving structure impacted by a combination of past events, pushes arising from the environment, and pulls from dominant coalitions.
A Descriptive Analysis of Organizational Transition Related to Extensive Administrative Change and Its Impact: A Case Study of One Community College

by

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Cheryl J. Reed, Author
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A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION RELATED TO EXTENSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT: A CASE STUDY OF ONE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One cannot expect to know what is going to happen. One can only consider himself fortunate if he can discover what has happened.

-Pierre de Pont

Most organizations are in a time of rapid change, both in the public and in the private sectors, and public community colleges are no exception. Private sector organizations can now survive and thrive only by quick adaptation to market realities. That adaptation occurs in many ways, some of which are innovative and transformational in nature, such as the use of new technologies and new manufacturing methods. Adaptation can also occur through new management strategies, such as reengineering or reversing market direction. Public community colleges are no less sensitive to environmental realities because of funding and political considerations and must also develop ways to adapt and transform from traditional higher education institutions with high degrees of consistency and stability to ones of flexibility and responsiveness.

A community college is a distinctly American 2-year publicly funded institution which stands between secondary education and universities, between
developmental education and higher education, and between job exploration and a trained technical position in local industry. It has a comprehensive curriculum aimed at a comprehensive mission. Its most marked characteristic is its "open door" policy; access to community colleges is not limited by scores of admissions examinations or high school grades. Community colleges serve their local communities with curriculum geared to local and regional needs and are intended to be financially feasible.

Community colleges which have been founded in the past few years may easily shift from one paradigm to another like their fast-moving private sector counterparts. But what about the community colleges that were birthed during another era, those that have a history and traditions that are steeped with significance related to their junior college roots? Those colleges, despite their comprehensive missions and diverse student bodies, have self-images that reflect themselves as primarily university models of preparation for transfer to a 4-year college, in which well-prepared students engage in challenging work with elite academicians (Baker, 1992; Bryant, 1988). How do those colleges manage transformation to also survive and thrive?

Preparing for and dealing with the impact of change is a fundamental leadership task for the community college leaders of today. Dale Parnell (1990) stated:

The decade of the 1990s will present colleges and universities with rich new possibilities and opportunities as well as some challenges. Higher education leaders who can recognize and take advantage of external windows of
opportunity and solve some of the internal operating problems will be the leaders for Dateline 2000. (p. 32)

Complex issues of diversity, quality, accountability, competition, and new technologies require community college leaders to address the challenges of external adaptation and internal integration by paying attention to not only mission and direction, but also to the change process itself. The interrelationships between leadership and organizational transformation are fundamental to understanding the complexities and dynamics of organizational change at a community college.

The purpose of this study was to explore the organizational impact of significant changes in leadership at a specific community college during the initial period of that change. It was the primary purpose of this research project to broaden the research on organizational change by describing and analyzing the forces both externally and internally that impacted the first change efforts of a new senior leadership team at a public community college, and to describe the impact of the new team on the organizational change that was occurring around them (Bess, 1984; Cooper & Kempner, 1993; Kotter, 1995).

Using qualitative methodology and a case study format, the study examined from the “inside-out” a community college in the northwest United States that had been stable for almost 30 years before undergoing a massive change in senior leadership in a short time period. How were this new team’s decisions impacted by the history and environment of the institution? And in turn, how did the new team affect the organizational change within the institution?
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that guided this study are grounded in the literature of organizational change and transformation and are listed as follows:

1. What did the research literature reveal about the impacts of change, especially when new leadership is installed in an organization?

2. What were the external and internal forces that influenced significant organizational change in this institution?

3. What was the impact on the organization of a shift from organizational stability to one of change?

4. To what extent did the new senior leadership team influence or manage organizational change?

5. How was organizational change implemented by a new senior leadership team in one community college?

6. What can be learned from this case study about the impact on a large and stable community college resulting from a significant change in executive leadership?

The college in this case study is an organization in a highly unusual state of flux and transition in which many forms of change were occurring at one time. The complexities of this transition provided particularly valuable insights into organizational change from a community college perspective.
BACKGROUND

Seaview Community College is an established community college nestled in an elite suburb right outside of a large metropolitan city. Seaview has been a very stable institution. The immediate past president began his teaching career there over 30 years ago, and apprenticed under his mentor, who was the president before him. These two people, with similar values and temperaments, led the college and hired most of the staff through several decades. Over half of the faculty had been at Seaview for their entire careers and have received their 25-year pins. The policy and procedures manual has not been significantly updated in 20 years. Buildings were old; the trees and shrubs around the campus are mature and beautiful.

The college has prided itself for many years on its academic reputation, and faculty have been very proud of the excellence of Seaview's many students who transferred successfully to a 4-year college or university. Seaview was highly funded by the state for many years, and though no radical internal change was possible because of not having any extra money, expectations to continue the status quo were regularly fulfilled because there was usually enough money. There were few hires, and no terminations of any kind. The leadership was paternal and autocratic, and tensions between the faculty union and the administration were normal. While incremental improvements occurred over time, there were few major innovations, new program development, or growth. There were also few crises. Things stayed in one place for a very long time.
Two years ago, the winds of change began to blow at Seaview, and soon picked up momentum and force. Enrollment had dipped precariously. The college was in danger of not meeting its minimum enrollment target, which had dire future financial consequences. The neighboring community colleges began to get much attention for their growing enrollments and aggressive market stances. The long-time president retired amidst much fanfare, and a new president was hired by the campus with an outcry of "it is time for a change." The new president, who came from a very successful, growing, fast-moving neighboring college, was given clear expectations by the Board and his campus constituents that Seaview needed to "get off its duff," move into the twentieth century, and "go be competitive."

This meant, to the new president, moving the college from the narrow junior college mission to a broader comprehensive mission involving not only college transfer, but also substantial growth and innovation in technical education, developmental education, community service, and economic development.

Because of several twists of fate, several key positions were vacated soon after the new president was hired, and he found himself in his first year in the unusual position of hiring four of five new vice-presidents, forming an entirely new senior leadership team. Additionally, he hired several replacement mid-management directors and deans.

During the time of this case study, this new leadership team at Seaview had just begun working together. Enrollment had continued to spiral on a dangerous downward trend.
The tornado had hit. The magnitude and force of the change winds were shaking the college’s foundation. What lessons could be learned from a community college engaged in such dramatic transformation?

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY

Organizational change is defined by Schein (1970) as the "induction of new patterns of action, belief, and attitudes among substantial segments of a population" (p. 4). Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1983) believes that change is defined by the crystallization of new action possibilities, which include new policies, new behaviors, new patterns, new methodologies, new products, or new market ideas, all based on reconceptualized patterns in the workplace. Changes may be brought about by internal changes, external pressures, or a combination of both. Decision-makers, via their patterns of leadership, influence both positively and negatively an organization’s internal and external environments, and because of that, are integrally related to the process and cycles of organizational change (Kilmann, Covin, Bennis, Mason, & Mitroff, 1988; Kissler, 1991).

Noel Tichy (1983) argues that all organizations have three interrelated cycles of transformation, which are ongoing dilemmas and constantly evolving. The first is in technical design, in which the organization faces a production problem in which social and technical resources must be arranged so that the organization produces a specific desired output. The second is in political allocation, in which the organization deals with the problem of allocating power and resources. The third is
the ideological problem, in which the organization must determine what values need to be held by what people. At different points of time, any one of them may be in need of adjustment, and each cycle has associated with it a different set of problem solving. Organizations vary over time in the amount of energy invested in making adjustments in each of these cycles, all of which contribute to organizational transformation.

The studies of Masland (1985) and Tierney (1988) suggest that a better understanding of the interaction between diverse and changing internal and external environments is essential to effective functioning of organizations, especially those working through change processes. Schein (1980) asserts that the magnitude of organizational change is dependent on two factors: the degree to which the organization is ready to change as the result of internal or external forces, and whether the organization is in a developmental stage of growth, organizational mid-life, or maturity. For the mature organization, the values of the organization preserve the glories of the past, providing a valued source of defense and self-esteem, and frame-breaking is much more difficult. Schein (1980) indicates in all of those developmental stages, there are two options for change: transformation or decline. In transformation, change can be managed or can evolve; in destruction, change occurs at paradigm levels and through replacement of many key people.

Dyer (1985, 1986) examined change mechanisms in several organizations and found that they follow several patterns: (a) the organization develops a sense of crisis and concludes it needs new leadership; (b) there is a weakening of pattern
maintenance in the sense that procedures, beliefs, and systems that support the old ways break down; (c) a new leader and leadership team with new assumptions is brought in from the outside to deal with the crisis; (d) conflict develops between the proponents of the old assumptions and the new leadership; and (e) if the crisis is eased, new assumptions begin to be embedded and reinforced by a new set of pattern maintenance activities.

Although new leaders might be empowered to initiate change, they are often not in a position to dictate commitment, especially in academic settings (Austin, 1990; Baldridge & Deal, 1983). In an ideal organization, people understand the necessity for change and support it accordingly. In real organizations, change can appear chaotic because outcomes are not predictable (Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Dent, 1991). Individuals or groups who perceive themselves or their membership as autonomous are not likely to view coercive power or the power to legislate change and compliance as friendly (Kotter, 1988).

Organizations are social structures reflecting the characteristics of people who make up their membership. Change can be perceived as exciting and unthreatening or intrusive and frightening. The organization's response to change is governed by individuals who shape or define its context. That context is worth exploring, since it can influence the ultimate institutionalization of organizational change (Feldman, 1988; Goodman, 1982).

A growing body of empirical evidence points out that the top management team may be a more important determinant of an organization’s ability to change
and adapt than the chief executive officer alone (e.g., Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990; Hambrick, 1981; Hurst, Rush, & White, 1989). These and other researchers have noted that it is the top management team through which critical information is filtered and by which strategic decisions are made (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Norburn & Birley, 1988; O’Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989).

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

A particularly important part of this research study was the element of participant-observation. As one of the new vice-presidents hired on the new senior leadership team, the researcher’s voice in the decisions of that team became necessarily part of the context of the study.

Participant observation is a legitimate way to collect data, particularly in case study methodology (Jorgenson, 1989). It allows a view of the research variables from a particularly unique perspective, from the inside-out. In this case study, unrestricted access to relevant documents, people, and situations would have been impossible without being a participant-observer. Another distinct advantage for this type of single case-study that is not usually referenced is the opportunity of the participant-observer to observe in many more situations than that of an outside researcher who must only view the organization on specific days, times, or in specific meetings or interactions. The ability of the participant-observer to be flexible and adaptive in working with key respondents to gain information and perspective is another benefit. It was much easier to be at the right place at the right
time as a participant observer, and thus the picture gained through the research was much richer, less artificial, and more contextually holistic than it might have been if the research had been confined to more restrictive parameters. This was especially important because of the interwoven variables of organizational change; there is no distinct start or stop that cleanly divides more traditional quantitative research.

Being a new administrator at the college also allowed the researcher a natural opportunity to ask open-ended questions about the campus, its history, the research subjects' roles at the college, their perspective about the changes, and their predictions for the future.

A potential problem for research involving participant-observation is the risk of biased results (Becker, 1958). Being new to the campus, this risk was mitigated somewhat, since the researcher was observing with fresh eyes. A bigger risk was the possibility that respondents would be influenced by a hierarchical position in the institution and their responses might therefore be screened. The possibility of this occurring was considered in the design study, and alleviated by two decisions. First, respondents in the interviews were purposefully selected who had no reporting relationship to the researcher. Second, while the researcher did participate as a member of the senior leadership team, the specific events and decisions studied in the research were not within the researcher's specific area of responsibility at the institution.

For the purposes of this study, field notes were kept as a critical component of the data collection and analysis process. Analysis occurred concurrently with the
data collection, allowing a continuous refinement of focus. As a participant observer, the researcher was able to be included in many discussions and meetings that provided rich information. During these meetings, detailed field notes were developed including verbatim comments that were related to the impacts of change. Changes were noted in perspective, decision-making, verbal and nonverbal behaviors from all participants. It was important to engage in persistent observation, or keeping oneself open to multiple influences throughout the period of study, in order to obtain the most objective information.

The practical significance of this study is that by analyzing the experience of one established community college undergoing substantive administrative change while also experiencing changed external variables, insights could be gained about the interrelationships between leadership transitions and organizational change.

Chapter II of this case study reviews the existing research related to organizational change and changes in senior leadership. Chapter III describes the design of the study and the methodology employed. This case study used a combination of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and selected document review to gather empirical data. Chapter IV of the study reports the findings, and chapter five analyzes the findings in the case and presents overall patterns related to the research that may be reflective of the link between organizational change and senior leadership transition.

The theoretical concept of organizational change is still in its infancy. The findings from this exploratory study provide direction for future research in higher
education and contribute to the growing hypotheses about the connection between senior leadership transitions and organizational change.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Schein (1970) defines organizational change as the "induction of new patterns of action, belief, and attitudes among substantial segments of a population" (p. 4). Tichy (1983) defines it as the nonroutine, nonincremental, and discontinuous change which alters the overall orientation of the organization.

All definitions of organizational change are problematic. Most assume that we can differentiate between states of change and stability. In fact, organizations are always changing, often in subtle or incremental ways.

Each conceptual or theoretical approach to organizational change highlights an important aspect or variable of change in an organization. Change affects and is affected by individual skills and attitudes. Change alters formal patterns of roles and relationships. Change attracts and stimulates issues of power and conflict. Change alters and is influenced by culture, and serves both operational and symbolic purposes. There is a dynamic interplay among all of the various elements of any organization in transition.

MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Intellectual themes interweave as they form frameworks for organizational change. Many models of organizational change are based on the original thinking of Kurt Lewin (1958). According to Lewin (1958), a pioneer in the field of social
psychology of organizations, the first part of any change process is to unfreeze the present pattern of behavior. The second step, movement, is to take action that will change the social system from its original level of behavior or operation to a new model. The third refreezing step involves establishing a process that will make the new level of behavior relatively secure against change (Lewin, 1958).

Edward Schein (1987) elaborated on Lewin's (1958) model by defining the first step, unfreezing, as that of creating motivation and readiness. Organizational members are not likely to embrace change unless they experience some need for it. Unfreezing involves employees experiencing dissatisfaction with the status quo, induction of guilt or anxiety about the future, and the creation of psychological safety. The second stage Schein (1987) labels as "cognitive restructuring," that is, helping people to see things differently and to react differently in the future. He identified two main processes for accomplishing this task: identification with a new role model, mentor, or boss in order to begin to see things from another point of view, and scanning the environment for new and relevant information. The final stage entails both taking the new, changed way of doing things and making it fit comfortably into a personal self-concept, as well as engaging with others about the new way of doing things to help them see why the change is better than the old way.

Noel Tichy (1983) is a strong voice in organizational change research, primarily because of his contention that there have been three dominant yet fairly distinct traditions guiding the practice of organizational change. The technical view
is rational, based on empiricism and the scientific method. The political view is based on the belief that organizations have dominant groups, and bargaining is the primary mode of change. The cultural view is the belief that shared symbols, values, and "cognitive schemes," as Tichy (1983) labels them, are what tie people together. Change occurs by altering norms and the cognitive schemes of organizational members. According to Tichy (1983), all three of these modes must be adjusted and realigned for successful organizational change.

Burke and Litwin (1992) provide a model that includes cause (organizational conditions) and effect (resultant performance). In their view, the variables of conscious strategy, leadership, and culture have more weight than the variables of structure, management practices, and systems in predicting the success of organizational change.

An important consideration in reviewing the literature of organizational change is that most models assume change strategies that are explicit, purposefully developed, and planned in advance. But in "real life," change has both intentional (explicitly planned for) and unintentional (emerged out of the situation) aspects. Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992) posit that organizations are always in motion. Organizations do have some central thrust or direction reflecting a combination of past events, pushes arising from the environment, and pulls arising from the strategies embraced by the organization's dominant coalitions. However, the activity clusters, such as task units, divisions, projects, interest groups, and
alliances, are also in motion, and their movements at any time may or may not be in step with each other or with the overall direction.

Kanter et al. (1992) broaden their change model to include three kinds of motion, three forms of change, and three primary roles in the change process. Of the three kinds of movement, the first is described as the motion of the whole organization as it relates to movement in its environment; the second is the motion of the parts of the organization in relation to one another as the organization grows, ages, and progresses through its life cycle; and the third is the movement that focuses on the political dimensions.

These three kinds of movement help to distinguish three basic forms of organizational change: identity, coordination, and control. Identity changes are caused through reformulation of an organization’s relationship to its environment as environmental movement presents pressures and opportunities for change. Coordination changes relate to the problems of shape and structure of the internal array of parts in the organization that emerge as it grows and ages. Changes in control stress the political dimension, such as which set of interests predominates in the organization.

These three kinds of organizational changes are tied to three basic roles inherent in the change process. The change strategy role often occurs at the beginning of a change sequence, and is usually the responsibility of top leaders. That role is one of concern with the connection between the organization and its environment and with the organization’s overall direction. The change implementor
role is often associated with mid-managers, who often have the responsibility for the development of the change effort and its internal coordination. The change recipient role includes those who are strongly affected by the change and its implementation, but who do not have much opportunity to influence those effects.

The three kinds of organizational motion can lead in very different directions, and the three action roles may not just reflect different responsibilities, but also different perspectives and interests that can interfere in any one group's ability to realize its intention perfectly. The multiple possibility theory of Kanter et al. (1992) is not as simple or linear as other research models, and because it assumes much that is unpredictable, could therefore be seen as less useful. Operationally, however, understanding the multiple forces and variables involved in organizational change can help leaders be more effective in a world of complex motion and real multiple possibilities. "Ultimately, despite the limits upon what people can control, it is still up to people to act, and in acting, they do more than predict the future, they invent it" (Kanter et al., 1992, p. 18).

Kanter et al.'s (1992) model also provides a framework to understand and apply other research related to organizational change. The rest of this chapter is organized into headings using Kanter et al.'s (1992) model as a frame: three kinds of organizational forces that set change events in motion, three forms of organizational change, and three roles in the change process.
Organizational Movement Related to Environment

Beckhard and Pritchard (1992) define five forces that serve as the focus to fundamental change: change in the mission, change in the identity or outside image, change in relationships to key stakeholders, change in the way of work, and change in the culture. Although one focus of change may be the primary driver of the organizational change, the others will inevitably be affected as well. For instance, when leadership decides that the mission or purpose of the organization must be changed, subsequent decisions about changes in the way of work, outside image, and organizational design and structure will also have to be considered (Haveman, 1992).

Transformational organizational change implies a change of systems, not just a change in systems (Cameron & Ulrich, 1986). This fundamental change results in a new way of interpreting reality, in a different set of motives, in a higher vision of possibilities, not merely the implementation of alternative actions or plans (King, 1974). Goodstein and Burke (1991) indicate that organizational transformation occurs when an organization faces the need to survive and must do things differently to continue to exist. Tushman, Newman, and Romanelli (1985) define frame-breaking organizational change as involving simultaneous and sharp shifts in strategy, power, structure, and controls due to dramatic shifts in the organization’s environment.
Burke and Litwin (1992) explain in a causal model that transformational organizational change occurs as a response to the external environment and directly affects organizational mission and strategy, the organization’s leadership, and the culture. In turn, the transactional factors of structure, systems, management practices, and climate are affected. These transformational and transactional factors together affect motivation, which in turn, affects performance.

A key aspect in the definition of organizational change is the paradigm shift—a dramatic rejection of old beliefs and acceptance of new ones (Burke, 1993, 1994). Paradigms have three main characteristics. First, there is a social matrix consisting of everyone who accepts a certain way of looking at the world and practices a way of doing things consistent with that world. Second, the paradigm includes a way of looking at the world. For members of an organization, this would include images of the organization, beliefs about how things work in the organization, and values about organizations and how things work in them. The third aspect of a paradigm is a way of doing things—methods that indicate ways of action (Ledford, Mohrman, Mohrman, & Lawler, 1989).

According to Kuhn (1970), there are three stages to a paradigm shift: a period of normalcy under the present paradigm, a period in which changes begin to accumulate that put the paradigm at risk and create a growing sense of crisis, and finally a period in which the old paradigm is replaced by a new one. A new paradigm might emerge if the organization’s ways of looking at the world and ways
of doing things no longer address the problems and realities of the organization and its environment.

David Nadler and Michael Tushman (1989) state that organizational change initiated in anticipation of future events is called reorientation, and change introduced in response to immediate demands is called re-creation. Research on patterns of organizational life and death in several industries has provided insight into the patterns of strategic organizational change (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985) and include three major points:

1. Strategic organizational changes are necessary when various factors, including technology, competition, and market demands drive the organization either reactively or in anticipation to make changes. Organizations that do not change under these circumstances do not survive.

2. Re-creations are risky. Fewer than 1 in 10 re-creations succeed, and those that do, usually entail changes in the senior leadership of the organization, frequently involving replacement from the outside.

3. Re-orientations are associated with success. When reorientations are initiated in advance of external events, continued organizational growth is more likely. Again, many of the successful reorientations also involve change in the CEO and executive team.

Organizational Movement Related to Life Cycle

Kimberly and Quinn (1984) state that there are essentially three types of organizational transitions. Emergence transition defines the transition from when an
organization is implying a possibility to its identifiable creation. Transformational transitions are those that punctuate the stages of mid-life of organizations. The termination transition signals the beginning of decline. Transformational transitions are only possible when certain external enabling and internal permitting conditions exist.

Larger organizations that are also older organizations have often developed a consistent set of responses, standard operating procedures, and habits that have been reinforced by success in their environment (Leford et al., 1989). Significant change in that kind of setting requires interventions powerful enough to cause organizational members to question what they think they know and to engage in learning processes that may come as a shock. These changes are made even more difficult because the assumptions underlying existing organizational practices will have, over time, become almost completely forgotten from the consciousness of organizational members.

Tushman, Newman, and Romanelli (1986) also indicate that as organizations grow and become more successful, they develop internal forces for stability. Organizational structures and systems become so interlinked that they allow only compatible changes. Further, over time, employees develop a sense of competence in knowing how to get work done within the system. These self-reinforcing patterns of behavior, norms, and values contribute to increased organizational complacency, and over time, to a sense of organizational history. This organizational complacency is functional as long as the organization is stable. If the organization must change,
this momentum cuts the other way. Organizational history is a source of precedent and pride which are, in turn, anchors to the past. "A paradoxical result of long periods of success may be heightened organizational complacency, decreased organizational flexibility, and a stunted ability to learn" (Tushman, Newman, & Romanelli, 1986, p. 37).

Thus older organizations that are in an ultra-stable state may be unable to adapt quickly to new circumstances (Kimberly & Miles, 1981; Sheldon, 1980). Because changing any dimension is threatening, they change none. These organizations function as closed systems, rejecting any information they receive that implies their failure, in whole or in part, because acceptance would destroy their stability (Neumann, 1989). In this state, keeping constant who they are and what they do is more important than any other consideration. Members of the organization collude to avoid any questioning of their ideology, and an illusion of unanimity is created, in which any deviation from the norm is regarded as betrayal or desertion (O’Toole, 1995; Riley & Baldridge, 1977).

Organizational Movement Related to Political Dimensions

Even though leaders may have created a readiness to change, changes of the magnitude of transformations are resisted in organizations because they destroy things. The magnitude of this kind of change requires giving up certainty for ambiguity, security for risk, stability for instability, and predictability for opportunity. Resistance of many kinds tends to emerge (Cameron & Ulrich, 1986).
"Paradigmatic change requires a radical change in world view — often accompanied by mourning because the old world is felt to be dying" (Sheldon, 1980, p. 64). Tichy (1983) categorized resistance forces into three different types: technical, political, and cultural. Technical resistance emerges from the structure and interaction patterns that exist in organizations. Change is often resisted, for example, because it threatens habitual social interaction patterns and interpersonal relationships (Argyris, 1993). Political resistance emerges from a disruption in critical organizational resources, such as power, money, and recognition. When a loss of rewards is threatened, resistance forces will be strong. Cultural resistance emerges from the values, norms, biases, and underlying assumptions that develop in organizations. These underlying dynamics in organizations create a special identity and sense of uniqueness for the organization. Cultural resistance is especially difficult to overcome because it is often unarticulated and unrecognized even by those who are resisting. It is the taken-for-granted nature of culture that makes it both powerful and difficult to change (Parilla, 1993).

FORMS OF CHANGE

Identity Change

Large-scale organizational change is described by Ledford et al. (1989) as a lasting change in the character of an organization that significantly alters its performance. This definition comprises two constructs: change in character and change in performance. Organizational character includes changes in patterns by
which the organization relates to its environment, including behavior and energy and information flows, such as communication, decision-making, participation and politics. Changes in character are qualitative changes, like damming a river or altering its course, and require changes in the organization’s designs and processes, such as formal structures, information and decision-making systems, and human resource systems. Organizational performance relates to the system’s effectiveness as measured on a number of dimensions, such as economic performance, customer relationships, or product orientation.

At the most basic level, organization changes can be thought of as a move from a current state to a preferred future state, moving through a transition state. Larger-scale changes, according to David Nadler (1988) have four characteristics: (a) they have multiple transitions, in which changes occur with many transitions, some of them explicitly related to each other, others that seemingly are unrelated; (b) they have incomplete transitions, in which many of the transitions that are initiated are not completed because events or other changes overtake them; (c) they have uncertain future states, in which there are so many unknowns that organizations have limited ability to predict or describe the future; and (d) they have transitions over a long period of time, which is often necessary with large and complex structures.

**Coordination Change: Culture and Structure**

Another interpretation of change comes from ideas about the role of culture in organizations. Each organization has its own character, identity, and climate; it
also has its own unique patterns, organization, and system of attributes that make it stand out in some way from other organizations of its type.

Most research is similar in defining organizational culture as a phenomenon that involves beliefs and behavior; that it exists at a variety of different levels in organizations; and that it manifests itself in a wide range of features of organizational life such as structures, control and reward systems, symbols, stories, and organizational practices (Pettigrew, 1990).

Attempts to purposefully manipulate culture point to one of the paradoxical qualities of culture. While difficult to change, culture is constantly evolving because of ongoing interactions and the infusion of new people and new ideas. Thus, culture does change. Over time, however, the substantive changes in an institution’s culture are not necessarily predictable or controllable (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Cultural change often happens because of external influences or influx of newcomers, often a new leader (Deal, 1986). But individuals become attached to values, heroes and heroines, rituals and ceremonies, and key cultural players. When change breaks the attachment, individuals experience loss akin to that if a close friend or relative dies. This loss triggers two impulses: one to cling to the past, the other to rush “pell mell to embrace the present or future” (Deal, 1986, p. 120).

The past is important in organizational change. Warren Bennis (1989) asserts that there can be no change without history, without continuity.

What I think most of us in institutions really want — and what status, money, and power serve as currency for — is acceptance, affection, and esteem. Institutions are more amenable to change when they preserve the esteem of all members. . . . [Organizational members]
are much freer to identify with the adaptive process and much better equipped to tolerate the high level of ambiguity that accompanies change when these needs are heeded. (p. 115)

A successful organization creates strongly held shared assumptions and therefore also a strong culture (Schein, 1992). If the internal and external environments remain stable, this is an advantage. However, if there is a change in that environment, some of those shared assumptions can become a liability precisely because of their strength. Members of the organization are likely to want to hold onto them at all costs because they justify the past and are the source of pride and self-esteem. The assumptions operate as filters that make it difficult for people to understand alternative strategies for organizational renewal.

**Coordination Change: Colleges**

In relation to colleges, Tierney (1988) suggests that culture is a complex set of context-bound, continually evolving properties that potentially include anything influencing events and actions in a college or university. The core of culture is comprised of assumptions and beliefs shared by members of the institution that guide decision-making and shape major events and activities.

A college culture is particularly unique, and colleges are proud of that image (Kuh, 1993). They are often extraordinarily resistant to abandoning or modifying the programs that have historically defined their distinctiveness (Heath, 1985). Change can become very difficult for colleges that have become prisoners of the success of what Burton Clark (1971) calls their saga, their collective understanding of unique accomplishment that provides a unified sense of history. Simsek and
Louis (1994) report that college organizations are defined by their paradigms, the prevalent view of reality shared by members of the organization, and that radical change in organizations is construed as a discontinuous shift in this socially constructed reality. They found that revolutionary changes do not occur rapidly in colleges, and may incorporate elements of the old paradigm rather than fully rejecting them as change occurs.

Smart and Hamm (1993) in a study of 2-year colleges, found four dominant types of organizational culture. Clan cultures emphasize shared values, goals, and the development of human resources. Their interactions with the external environment are characterized by reactive, implementor-type strategies. Internal transactions are guided by congruence of beliefs, trust, and tradition. The leader is generally considered to be a mentor, sage, or father figure. Adhocracy cultures in 2-year colleges emphasize entrepreneurship, growth, and adaptability. Their interactions with the external environment are characterized by proactive, innovative, strategies and boundary spanning activities. Internal transactions are guided by a commitment to innovation and the importance of the task being undertaken. The leader is generally considered to be an entrepreneur, an innovator, or a risk taker. Hierarchy cultures emphasize the norms and values associated with bureaucracy, such as order and uniformity. Their interactions with the external environment are characterized by reactive, defender-type strategies. Internal transactions are governed by formally stated roles and enforced through rules and regulations; the leader is considered to be a coordinator or administrator. Finally,
market cultures emphasize competitiveness, environmental interaction, and
customer orientation. Their interactions with the external environment are
characterized by proactive, market-centered initiatives. Internal transactions are
governed by beliefs that competent performance directed toward desired
organizational outcomes will be rewarded, and the leader is considered to be a
producer, a technician, or a hard-driver.

**Control Change: Politics and Coalitions**

Most organizations do not have just a single culture, but at any point in time
may have a variety of different sets of beliefs and assumptions that make up
subcultures (Schneider, 1990; Tierney, 1990). Tension about the future
development of the organization is often expressed in terms of the language and
political positioning of these different subcultures.

From a political perspective, change always will have its winners and losers,
its contests and conflicts, its exchanges of power (Deal, 1986). It assumes that
interests can be identified, that power can directly influence outcomes, and that
conflicts will decide winners and losers. People enjoy their stature and power in
organizations, and have self-interests they want to protect. When those interests are
threatened, they form coalitions whose struggles determine whose interests will
prevail in an area of conflict (Beer, 1980; Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Schein (1992) posits that changing the composition of the organization’s
dominant groups or coalitions can change shared assumptions. The most potent
version of this change is a new CEO and a new management team
The new CEO usually brings in some of his or her own people and gets rid of people who are perceived to represent the old and increasingly ineffective way of doing things. In effect this destroys the group or hierarchical subculture that was the originator of the total culture and initiates a process of new culture formation. (Schein, 1992, p. 323)

Dyer (1985) describes this phenomenon in a series of patterns. First, the organization develops a sense of crisis because of some kind of environmental change and decides it needs new leadership. At the same time, procedures, beliefs, and symbols that support the old culture break down. A new leader with new assumptions joins the organization, and conflict develops between the proponents of the old assumptions and the leadership. If the sense of crisis is eventually eased, the new assumptions begin to be embedded and reinforced by the new sets of patterns in the organization. Members who continue to cling to the old ways are either forced out or leave voluntarily because they no longer feel comfortable with the direction the organization is taking and how it does things (Nadler, Shaw, & Walton, 1995).

**LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE CHANGE PROCESS**

**Change Strategists**

Nadler and Tushman (1989) assert that successful change efforts are dependent on the availability of a broad range of individuals who can perform critical leadership functions during periods of significant organizational change. They state that there are three leverage points for the extension of leadership: building the senior leadership team, broadening the senior management, and developing leadership throughout the organization. There are at least five actions
important to building the senior leadership team as an effective element of leadership in reorientation of organizations.

According to Nadler and Tushman (1989), first there must be visible empowerment of the team, in which the team functions as an extension of the individual leader. There are two different aspects to this empowerment: objective and symbolic. Objective empowerment involves providing team members with the autonomy and resources to serve effectively as leaders of elements of the reorientation. Symbolic empowerment involves the creating and communicating of messages telling the organization that these executives are indeed extensions of the leader and key components of the leadership as an institution. Symbolic empowerment can be done through the use of titles, organizational structures, or ceremonial roles (Huber & Glick, 1993; Mohrman, Mohrman, Ledford, Cummings, & Lawler, 1989). Second, there must be individual empowerment of team members. A big problem in many organizational reorientations is getting senior team members to deal effectively with increased ambiguity and uncertainty. One role of the CEO is to coach, guide, and support executives in developing their own personal capacities for credible leadership during times of change. Third, attention must be given to composition of the senior team. Successful orientations involved significant changes in the makeup of the senior team, and this may involve importing different people with different skills, capacities, styles, and value orientations from outside the organization. Fourth, there must be some sort of inducement for strategic anticipation. A reorientation is a strategic organizational
change that is initiated in anticipation of external events which may demand strategic change later on. Reorientation occurs because the organization’s leadership thinks it can gain competitive advantage from initiating the changes earlier rather than later. The senior team can be helpful in scanning the environment and in successful organizations, has a major role in initiating, sponsoring, and leveraging the process of anticipation (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). Fifth, and finally, the senior team must operate as a learning organization (Chawla & Renesch, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). For a senior team to benefit from the involvement in the leadership of change, it must become an effective system for learning about the business, the nature of change, and the task of managing the change. The challenge is to bond the team together while also preventing insularity and conformity. People on the team must believe that the team’s success will, in the long run, be more salient to them than their individual short-run success (Wagner, Pfeffer, & O’Reily, 1984).

From a college perspective, when a new president of a college takes office, it is certainly conceivable that an administrative structure may be unsuitable to the president’s style or needs (Leslie & Fretwell, 1996). Changing the executive team structure may achieve particular operational goals. At the same time, by changing that structure the president also signals to the college community that life as it previously existed will change (Reyes & Twombly, 1987). From this perspective, the president’s action accounts not only for structural change, but also for the perception of change (Tierney, 1989).
A growing body of empirical evidence indicates that the top management team may be a more important determinant of an organization's ability to change and adapt than the chief executive officer alone. It is the top management team through which critical information is filtered and by which strategic decisions are made (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990; Virany, Tushman, & Romanelli, 1992). Recognition of the importance of the top management team should not be a surprise since the ability of an organization to anticipate and respond to changes in the environment rests on the decisions not just of the CEO, but of the entire executive group. Tushman, Newman, and Romanelli (1986) capture the critical role of the senior team's impact when they note:

The data are consistent across diverse industries and companies, an executive team’s ability to proactively initiate and implement frame-breaking change and to manage divergent change seem to be important factors which discriminate between organizational renewal and greatness versus complacency and eventual decline. (p. 15)

One role of the senior management team is to ensure that the organization adapts to changing circumstances (Priem, 1990). As shifts occur in environmental conditions or strategies, new competencies and perspectives are often required. If executive teams persist in old modes of conduct in fundamentally altered contexts, failure is likely (O'Reilly, Snyder, & Boothe, 1993). During stable periods, executive teams must be able to continually and incrementally improve by getting better at those things that offer them a competitive advantage. During change, teams should recognize when to reorient themselves and shift to new processes and competencies. Hambrick (1987) suggests that “the amounts of open-mindedness,
perseverance, communication skills, vision, and other key characteristics that exist with the team clearly set the limits for how well the team — and in turn, the firm — can operate" (p. 2). Tushman, Newman, and Romanelli (1986) affirm that frame-breaking change requires direct executive involvement in all aspects of the change, including motivating constructive behavior, shaping political dynamics, managing control during the transition period, and managing external constituencies.

Virany, Tushman, and Romanelli (1992) explore CEO succession and executive-team changes as important mechanisms for organizational adaptation in turbulent environments. They found that, while CEO succession or executive-team change by themselves can be resisted by recalcitrant and conservative organizations, the combination of CEO succession and executive team change alters team demographics enough to enable the senior team to take substantive action in turbulent environments. Further, they indicate that the effects of executive-team change on organizational outcomes are accentuated when these revised teams simultaneously initiate system-wide organization change. Executive succession coupled with reorientation signals the end of the old order and tends to legitimize sweeping organization change and system-wide learning (Bartunek & Ringuest, 1989).

Research indicates that the integration and functioning of the top management team is at least partly affected by the demographic composition of the team. Hambrick and Mason (1984) offer a series of propositions linking the demography of the senior team to organizational outcomes. They propose that
homogeneous teams in terms of length of service will make strategic decisions more quickly than heterogeneous teams. O'Reilly and Flatt (1989) argue that homogeneity in the executive team may be a critical way to achieve the high levels of interdependence necessary for organizational innovation. Homogeneity based on length of service can promote identification with the large goals of the organization and reduce resistance to change by diminishing misunderstandings and political dynamics within the team. They find that homogeneity is positively associated with organizational innovation. In a 1993 study, O'Reilly, Snyder, and Boothe found that homogeneity in terms of length of service is associated with positive organizational outcomes during times of change. Homogeneity fosters cooperation, mutual trust, and an effective blend of personalities. These positive team dynamics contribute to increased adaptive change, reduced turnover among team members, and decreased frequency of political changes.

Individuals who entered the organization during approximately the same time interval may have two additional significant impacts. First, the existence of well-defined cohorts may lead to conflict among groups over issues such as resource allocation and control. Second, the existence of groups of individuals who identify with each other and who perceive themselves to be distinct from other organizational members may affect the way individuals interact and perform within organizations (McCain, O'Reilly, & Pfeffer, 1983). To the extent that the cohorts become associated with ideologies prevalent at the time of their entry into the
organization, it can be argued that organizational change is a process much affected by the organization's management demographic structure.

**Change Implementers**

Nadler and Tushman (1989) believe that moving beyond the executive and the senior team to include the senior management of the organization is also an important step to successful organizational reorientation. This group would include people one or two levels down from the executive team, and is usually regarded as the operating management in most organizations. This group may be particularly problematic during times of change since they may be more embedded in the current system of organizing and managing than some of the senior team, and may be less prepared to change. They have often modeled themselves to fit the current organizational style, and can easily feel disenfranchised by the strong executive team set above them, particularly if that team has been assembled by bringing in people from outside the organization. Nadler and Tushman (1989) assert that the answer is to help this group feel part of the change, such as creating structures such as councils and committees to signify their participation as members of senior management, and to involve them in the early diagnosing of the need to change and the planning of change strategies associated with the organization's reorientation. Maintaining a constant stream of open communication to and from this group is important, since the lack of information and perspective disenfranchises the members psychologically and makes them feel excluded.
In an empirical study of large-scale change from the perspective of stakeholder groups, Covin and Kilmann (1989) found that middle-level managers play an extremely important role in change efforts, and that lack of support and commitment of middle-managers has an extremely negative impact on the success of large-scale change efforts. Other responses indicated that the role of mid-managers should be one of skilled leadership, not passive commitment.

**Change Recipients**

Change recipients often feel differently about the changes occurring within their organization than their managers would predict. This may be especially true in a college environment (Corbett, Firestone, & Rossman, 1987). A few recent studies underscore the differences in faculty and administrator beliefs and perceptions about their organizations. In a study of individual perceptions of organizational goals in higher education, Birnbaum (1987) did an analysis of the responses of senior administrators and faculty leaders on 32 campuses. He concluded that there is great inconsistency toward goals among institutional participants, with respondents in universities and community colleges expressing the least consistency in articulations of the goals of their institutions. Blackburn and Lawrence (1990), in a representative national survey of faculty and administrators, found consistent differences between faculty and administrator views of the organization on several dimensions, including views of the organizational climate, academic workplace, and administrative supportiveness. Administrators appear to place more stress on values as the primary educational purpose, view the nature of the organization as slightly
more entrepreneurial, see a more supportive organizational and administrative climate, and have a more favorable view of faculty motivation (Peterson & White, 1992). "Incremental change is compatible with the existing structure of an organization and is reinforced over a period of years. In contrast, frame-breaking change is abrupt, painful to participants, and often resisted by the old guard" (Tushman, Newman, & Romanelli, 1986, p. 32).

In another survey of nearly 4,000 college faculty and 500 college administrators from around the country, data showed that administrators believe they can be trusted to act in good faith for the betterment of their institutions. Faculty, however, indicate they lack the same level of faith in their administrators (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1990; Cameron, 1981). Curry (1992) explained the important relationship of change recipients to the overall organizational change:

Although leaders might be empowered to initiate change, they are not often in a position to dictate commitment. In an ideal organization, people understand the necessity for change and support it accordingly. In real organizations, commitment follows discussion and often follows debates that help create the setting for change by facilitating reconciliation of differences and helping to further development of innovation. The exchange of ideas, often accompanied by much enthusiasm, conviction, and frequently acrimony, makes it more difficult for organizations to return to business as usual. This part of the process of change has been described as chaotic, in part because it is uncomfortable for some people and because it often leads to unpredictable outcomes. It could be, however, that the catharsis that also takes place during debate permits movement forward. (p. 42)
SUMMARY

It is apparent that large-scale organization changes are risky, hard, complex, unpredictable, and emotionally intense. All of these characteristics become more severe as the change becomes more pervasive, and as the depth of change increases, the risk, difficulty, and intensity of the change also become greater.

Chapter III will describe the methodology utilized in this case study, which was based on a single-case descriptive design, its limitations, and the form of the analysis used. The data are "pulled through" a specific theoretical framework in Chapters IV and V to explore the conceptual linkages between the new senior leadership team at Seaview Community College and organizational change. The study analyzed specific events to determine how the forces of change impacted the college and the new leadership team and the extent to which the team was able to consciously affect organizational change through their leadership actions and decisions.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the organizational impact of significant change in leadership at a mature community college during the initial period of that change. The case study describes and characterizes the nature of change in the organization during the periods of significant leadership transition, and examines the conceptual links between the new leadership team and the external and internal forces of change impacting the college during that time.

This study does not purport to test theory. Rather, through a detailed and rich descriptive analysis of several key events and decisions, it describes and characterizes the nature of change in the organization during the period of significant leadership transition. As in all qualitative research, there are no recommendations or applications to this data other than what is contained in this study, but there are patterns that might suggest hypotheses that merit further discussion or research. Those patterns are discussed in Chapter V.

While outside forces of change are important to consider in organizational change, it is also a fact of life that organizations also have power to shape behavior. This is not the work of just culture, but rather the formal aspects of the organization, such as its distribution of roles and responsibilities, authority to commit resources, existing procedures and processes, information access, and
reward and recognition systems. These elements, when shifted, can change the behavior of an organization.

This study endeavored to pull significant events, actions, and circumstances of the new top leadership team in the selected college through a specific theoretical framework to find links of relationship and connection. That framework defines organizational change as a coalition of interests and a network of activities within a moving structure impacted by a combination of past events, pushes arising from the environment, and pulls from dominant coalitions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rosabeth Moss Kanter asserts that three clusters of forces create motion in and around organizations that triggers change (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992). The first is the relationships between organizations and their environments. The second is organic, growth through the life cycle of an organization. The third is political, the constant struggle for power. All three occur outside of strategic intention. They represent the forces that keep the organization in constant motion and require a response if the organization is going to proactively attain its official organizational goals.

Thus while the organizational leaders are trying to act, the organization is a moving target. It is blown around by environmental winds, it grows and ages as players move in and out of the organization, and it is shaped by internal power
struggles. Sometimes the forces are long-term and slow; sometimes they are acute and cause crises.

But organizations can also change their relationship to their environments by restructuring or redefining their identity and boundaries. They can change the ways in which they operate, the ways people and units relate to each other, through changes in internal coordination. They can change the nature of their control structures that govern the organization and determine how benefits are distributed among them. These are shifts in organizational form that change strategists and leaders within an institution can productively act on to effect change.

In viewing the specific events at Seaview Community College through the lens of Kanter's framework (Kanter et al., 1992), this study analyzed how the forces of change impacted the college and the new leadership team, and how the team was able to consciously affect organizational change through their leadership actions and decisions.

THE CASE STUDY APPROACH

The case study methodology has come under increasing acceptance as a research strategy that complements other scientific approaches and contributes to theory development (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Robert Yin (1994) says that a "case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). According to Yin (1994), the case study
method is a comprehensive research strategy that is most appropriate for the situation that has many more variables of interest than data points. The case study approach is particularly relevant for this study because of the complex and overlapping issues, forces, and events inherent in large-scale organizational change.

The single-case design of this study was utilized because the case represented a particularly unique set of circumstances. Seaview Community College experienced the turnover of a president, four of five vice-presidents, and multiple mid-level managers all within a 12-month time period. Seaview had been relatively stable internally and externally for over 30 years, making the changes all the more significant. It would be difficult to find another 2-year college in the country in which those circumstances could be replicated for study.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection procedures in case study methodology are not routinized (Yin, 1994), but specific protocol was designed to increase the reliability of the research. Planning and conducting the fieldwork was especially crucial given the global nature of the research questions and the need to use multiple sources of evidence (Fiedler, 1987).

Research included the review of documents, archival records, direct observations, participant observation, and interviews (see Appendix). Document review included the examination of letters, memos, agendas and minutes of meetings, newsletters, media reports, and selected college-wide documents that
provided background or insight. These documents also promoted an understanding of the atmosphere and perceptions that surrounded the administrative changes. Because the institution involved in the research had a 30-year history, it was useful also to study some archival records that described past administrative structures and budgets. The college also produced a monthly or quarterly internal magazine for virtually that entire time period, and past archived issues were searched for cultural and historical patterns of organizational behavior.

Two types of interviews were used in the research design. The first was open-ended and situation-based, in which information was gathered in natural settings through notation and analysis of spontaneous actions and reactions regarding events or decisions as they occurred. These subjects were randomly selected based on their connection and proximity to the change process. Careful field notes were kept noting responses.

Focused interviews also were used, in which six employees of the institution at varying levels from different departments were separately interviewed. The six respondents were selected because they were known to have specific and important historical roles in the institution and represented diverse jobs, perspectives, and classifications within the institution.

As a qualitative case study research project, no formal query instruments were utilized. To attain a rich description of a culture and campus that was being clearly impacted by change unusual in its history, a structure that allowed the research subjects to tell their stories without judgement or restraint, was employed.
The following questions were used to guide the subject into talking about the issues related to the study:

1. Tell me about your history with the college.
2. There have been a lot of changes in the past year here. Could you talk about that? What are your perceptions of those changes?
3. Can you tell me a story or example of how the college is impacted by these changes?
4. How do you think these changes affect you?
5. How do you feel about the changes?
6. How do you think the changes are impacting the college as a whole?
7. How have the changes made you feel?
8. What do you think is going to happen at the college now?

The majority of interviews were not tape-recorded, as it was quickly discovered that participants were much more willing to be candid, and were able to be more fluid in their thinking, without the recorder. However, careful field notes were developed. Each interview lasted 1 to 2 hours, and what was surprising was the extent to which the researcher was thanked for allowing them to talk frankly about their feelings in a both exciting as well as challenging time in the college's history. The interviews were semi-structured, and while the conversation was guided the conversation generally in the direction of their perceptions of change at the college, there were no limits or parameters imposed on their feedback. This was
primarily because it was important to gain information on the informal, as well as formal, impacts of change, and that is often measured from an emotional standpoint.

By triangulating document research with observation and interviews, it was possible analyze not only the formal ways the college was changing, but more importantly, the vital informal, and often unwritten, parts of any large change process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any research design possesses inherent limitations and shortcomings. The methodology employed in this study is not exempted from this risk. As a qualitative study, it is open to bias from researcher interpretation, especially as a participant observer, as described above. It is the researcher's belief that because of the variation of data-gathering techniques as well as having some objectivity as a new player in the institution, some of this bias was mitigated.

The case study methodology was chosen because of its suitability to the research of organizational change. The in-depth look at the variables studied provided the needed context to assess the applicability of the general models in organizational change. The nature of qualitative research, however, implies reliance on subjectivity. Assumptions and values are difficult to quantify. Informant memories pose the obstacle of becoming dimmed or blurred over time. Triangulation by using multiple sources of data helped to combat these problems, but such challenges are inherent in thick and descriptive research studies.
Chapter IV contains the full case study description of organization change at Seaview Community College using the theoretical construct of Kanter et al.'s (1992) three organizational forces of change and three forms of change. Chapter V seeks to answer the research questions and analyze and interpret the findings as well as suggest further research.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION AND FINDINGS

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MOTION

Kanter focuses on three kinds of movement, both internal and external, that influence organizational change (Kanter et al., 1992). The first movement is the motion of the organization as a whole as it relates to motion in its environment, change that is macroevolutionary, historical, and frame-breaking in its influence. The second movement is the motion of the parts of the organization in relation to one another as the organization grows, ages, and progresses through its life cycle, change that is microevolutionary, developmental, and typically related to shape and process. The third kind of motion is the struggle for control among individuals and groups with a stake in the organization to make decisions to enjoy benefits as an expression of their own interest, change that focuses on political dimensions.

Kanter's three forces (Kanter et al., 1992) are used to frame, reflect, and describe some of the circumstances that influenced organizational change at Seaview Community College before and during the time of the research study.

Motion of Environment: The New Seaview

In Kanter's model (Kanter et al., 1992), the motion of the whole organization as it relates to movement in its environment is the first force of change. Seaview Community College's environment was changing significantly.
For almost 30 years, students with the goal of transfer to a 4-year college or university had poured through its doors. Enrollment concerns had never been an issue, and faculty often touted Seaview’s reputation for excellence as the reason their classes had always been full. In fact, Seaview’s reputation for academic education in the local school districts and neighborhoods had indeed been strong, and many families had chosen to send their children bound for baccalaureate degree programs to Seaview for 2 years prior to transferring. In any case, Seaview had never had any reason to institute a marketing budget, nor do any special programming based on community needs. The traditional junior college reputation and operational expectations to match had resulted in a stable student population. There were not even any professional-technical programs at Seaview until the decade of the 1980s, and there was much faculty discussion about the need and appropriateness of technical education programs becoming a part of Seaview’s offerings. There were few evening offerings, and almost no afternoon classes. Which classes were offered, and at what times and days, were chosen by the faculty who were teaching them. If there was a conflict because of space, seniority prevailed.

But in the first 5 years of the 1990s, many things had begun to look different for Seaview. Unexpected competition for students was the first. Seaview is a suburban college in a large metropolitan area, and most students can drive to at least six community or technical colleges within an hour’s commute from their homes. These other colleges who did not have the luxury of resting on a reputation
like Seaview’s had begun to proactively solicit input and partnerships from their communities, and had been rapidly developing new programs and services in response to those efforts. They were paying more attention to customer service, while students at Seaview continued to wait in long lines for registration along with similar other frustrations. Other colleges had marketing budgets and used them. They also were forming relationships with their local business and industry bases and with their local school districts. Based on population demographics, there were simply fewer students of traditional college-age alive at that time, which would have impacted Seaview’s enrollment even without any other variables. But other colleges were also beginning to attract the students that Seaview had traditionally expected.

At the same time, state funding for community colleges was becoming a significant problem. There was more competition for fewer dollars, and the standard allocation model on which community colleges had depended for many years was restructured to give colleges more money for technology, professional technical programs, and serving basic skills students. There had been several recent political wins in which some large sums of money were allocated to community colleges, but their use was limited for use with specific constituent groups, such as laid-off workers, and colleges received the money primarily through an RFP process for new programs. Partnerships with external groups of labor and business were a strong criteria for receiving the funding, so colleges that had already built those relationships scooped up most of the available dollars.
Seaview Community College had always taken pride in their faculty who were highly recognized in their academic fields, and technology had largely been viewed as impersonal and artificial compared to the high-touch advantage of student-centered faculty. There were few computer labs, no Internet access, and few faculty either had an up-to-date computer on their desk or knew how to use the one that did. However, the K-12 system in the state had been focusing on technology as both a vehicle for student learning as well as a tool needed to prepare students for the workplace. The suburban school districts were especially well funded via local levies, and the school district in Seaview’s area became a technology model and center. Suddenly, 17-year-old students were showing up in Seaview’s first-year courses demanding computer access and knowledge to which faculty were unable to respond.

The geographical area itself was also changing. Seaview had several affluent bedroom communities that still sent many of their students to the college, students that Seaview was familiar with serving who were well-prepared academically and emotionally for traditional higher education. But these students no longer were the largest population at the college. Instead, large populations of non-native refugees were taking advantage of housing that was much cheaper than in the city, and they and their families were showing up in the front of the college registration line. Laid-off older workers needing rapid retraining were asking about programs. And finally, more and more students who were not baccalaureate degree-bound but who expected to enter the workplace upon finishing a 2-year degree were coming to
campus. Faculty were perplexed that they seemed to be unable to serve these new populations well through traditional classes and services. The mission of Seaview was changing, even though no formal decree had been issued.

The city of Seaview also incorporated, lending definition for the first time to a real sense of community for the college. As the incorporation progressed, the college was recognized as the area's highest employer, and its presence and voice began to be noticed. Many questions from the community began to float over the campus walls that reflected some intellectual curiosity about what the college was doing inside its classrooms, and why.

In the midst of these environmental changes, the previous president of Seaview Community College retired amongst many accolades. A new president was hired who had a reputation for collaboration, vision, and forward-thinking. During his first year at Seaview, he spent most of his time doing two things: pulling together his administrative team and scanning the external environment. Because of retirements and some restructuring, 14 of the 24 total administrators at the college changed during a short time period. More significantly, he hired in that first year four of five new vice-presidents, all from the outside, thereby creating an entirely new top leadership unit. The hires were not without controversy, and there was a clear rumbling heard in many hallways reflecting fear of the unknown.

During his first few months, the new president also formed strong relationships with all of the new city government officials, business and industry leaders, school district personnel, and local legislators. On campus, he formed a
strategic planning committee comprised of key leaders on campus from every
constituent group and asked them to develop a strategic plan for the college in a 9-
month period. He hired a recently retired vice-president of student services to
facilitate the effort, and while the president did not sit on the committee, he did
offer input into each part of the process, including a section in the plan on
environment, which he suggested might drive the direction of the plan. Though the
president had been explicit in the need for Seaview to move out of its traditional
box, he wanted the impetus for change to come from the internal constituency.

The Strategic Planning Council, as it was now called, was given a budget
and high visibility, and soon they were taking their job very seriously. Their first
task was to describe the future environment in which Seaview would operate, and
then to define Seaview’s core values that were important to consider in developing a
strategic plan. The first line of the document was written to say, “The environment
in which Seaview Community College operates is changing and will continue to
change significantly in the future.” Many realities of the changing environment were
listed, along with their implications.

Blending the core values with the realities of the changing environment was
the beginning of new organizational movement. Faculty and staff at Seaview saw
themselves as being the “premier community college in the region,” and in fact,
those words comprise the new vision statement. But what did that mean?

In the interviews conducted for this research, participants were asked to
describe the changes taking place at the college. Every participant spoke proudly
about the historical reputation of Seaview's high-quality programs, departments, and teaching. Past students of Seaview were cited who, after graduating from the local university, said their classes or teachers at Seaview were more challenging or difficult than at the university, and they had thus learned more at Seaview. The participants used anecdotal examples illustrating the pride of faculty commitment to students, including a story about a science instructor who was teaching in an old classroom with no equipment who was still rated best teacher by a student speaker at commencement.

Most of the participants did see the environment influencing changes at Seaview, but many were concerned about it. The following quote from a faculty member reflects this feeling:

The reason many students have come here is because of its reputation. I think we still have high-quality programs, but we are being pressured, I think, to be a different sort of college. The students we now have are just not ready for what we can give them, so we have to alter the way we teach, and sometimes even what we teach. Maybe it's good to think differently, but I'd hate to see Seaview's identity of the best college in the area diminish because we are trying to be too many things to too many people.

**Motion of Life Cycle: The Pulse of Seaview**

The change in the motion of the parts of the organization in relation to one another as the organization grows, ages, and progresses through its life cycle is the second type of organizational movement in Kanter's model (Kanter et al., 1992).

Early in September 1996, the new leadership team had been fully formed at Seaview. The president believed that in order to accomplish the goals that were
driven by funding and external variables, he and his top leadership team would need to understand the internal wiring of the culture of the institution.

They began by hiring a consultant team to facilitate a workshop to which all administrators were required to attend. Prior to the first session, participants were asked to interview five people — students, faculty, and staff — to obtain their perceptions about several items. The five questions they were to ask were:

1. After the changes of this past year, what are the three most significant challenges facing Seaview community College during the upcoming year?

2. What three institutional processes/procedures are most in need of change at Seaview Community College and should be changed during the upcoming year?

3. What are the three most important strengths of Seaview Community College?

4. In order to find solutions to the issues that require change at Seaview Community College, should the institution (a) move more slowly, (b) pick up the pace, (c) move much faster, or (d) continue at the current pace?

5. As Seaview Community College continues to deal with change, what are your three most important concerns or fears as we begin this next academic year?

Most managers came prepared with extensive notes from their interviews. The group was broken into small groups of mixed managerial styles to share their
findings about each of the five questions, and agree on five significant issues facing Seaview, five opportunities for Seaview, and suggested solutions or actions to each.

The results of this kaleidoscope exercise are summarized below by theme uniformity.

**Question 1.** After the changes of this past year, what are the three most significant challenges facing Seaview community College during the upcoming year?

1. Improve enrollment. If we don’t get more students in the door, our status quo will be threatened.

2. Improve morale, trust, campus communications, and develop a governance model that reflects our values.

3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Vice-Presidents and the reporting structure.

4. Develop an organization that can understand and deal with change in a trusting and positive manner.

5. Successfully complete a good faculty contract negotiations process.

**Question 2.** What three institutional processes/procedures are most in need of change at Seaview Community College and should be changed during the upcoming year?

1. Establish a new governance structure for the college.
2. Develop clear college budgeting procedures, including time lines and how funds are allocated.

3. Develop clear personnel hiring procedures including time lines and involvement of college constituents.

4. Develop better college communications procedures, including how college information is disseminated.

5. Develop better processes for class schedule development and use of facilities.

6. Clarify campus-wide planning and decision-making procedures.

Question 3. What are the three most important strengths of Seaview Community College?

1. The college has a dedicated faculty, staff, and administration.

2. The college has a positive reputation and strong educational programs.

3. The college values diversity, has a beautiful campus physical environment, and rich student involvement.

4. There is a genuine concern for student success at the college.

Question 4. In order to find solutions to the issues that require change at Seaview Community College, should the institution (a) move more slowly, (b) pick up the pace, (c) move much faster, or (d) continue at the current pace?

1. The college must pick up the pace of change, but think first.
2. Somewhere between current practice and pick up the pace of change with more time for analysis must be provided.

3. The college must move much faster, but with regard to specific issues only.

**Question 5.** As Seaview Community College continues to deal with change, what are your three most important concerns or fears as we begin this next academic year?

1. What are the consequences of change: change just for change sake, job insecurity, lack of direction, lip service versus follow-through.

2. There is a sense of loss of a feeling of family community, history, and trust, including a possible lack of inclusion in decision-making.

3. Some long-time college programs might be dropped; established policies and procedures and usual links of communications feel weak.

4. In the midst of all of this change, it is not clear that there is a master plan and a sense of direction for the college that honors our reputation for excellence. Are we trading quality for dollars?

5. We may lose knowledgeable staff, experience faculty burnout, and have to deal with ambiguity about the meld of past and present practices, all of which lessens trust in the workplace.
Motion of Political Dimensions: Night Classes

Kanter’s third kind of organizational movement is reflected in the struggle for power and control among individuals and groups with a stake in the organization to make decisions to enjoy benefits as an expression of their own interests (Kanter et al., 1992).

As Seaview’s enrollment continued to dip, the president and the top leadership team began to focus on more aggressive actions to combat the downward spiral. One strategy was to increase the number of night classes and services offered. This was relayed to the division chairs, who were asked to discuss it in greater detail in their monthly division meetings. (These division meetings had not occurred before the new president mandated them. Heretofore, communication had occurred informally in the hallways during the afternoons when there were no classes or students.) After the division meeting had taken place, the senior leadership team received a memo signed by all division chairs articulating the desperate need for better lighting on campus at night. Faculty had universally expressed a strong sense of being unsafe at Seaview at night; there were too few lights on campus, and the mature trees on the beautiful Seaview campus blocked the lights that were there. Both students and faculty were at risk of hurting themselves by not being able to see clearly, and students described the atmosphere as “creepy.” Night classes would clearly not be successful until there was a remedy for the security issue.
The president's team considered the options. The logical first choice was to trim or cut down the trees that were blocking the existing lights. The president asked the facilities director to do an analysis and bring back the findings. The subsequent analysis showed that while most of the trees could be significantly trimmed, several trees had simply grown beyond the capacity of the space they were in to support them, and by removing them, it would provide not only more light, but more room for the trees beside them to thrive. The team agreed to give the facilities director the approval to implement that plan.

The landscape contractor arrived with a truck on the following Monday morning, which is the regularly scheduled time for the president's team to meet. Midway through the meeting, a secretary interrupted the group to report that there was a group of faculty and staff standing outside blocking the work of the contractor. The president went outside to investigate, and was told by the group that no trees would be cut that day on that campus. The group indicated that they were angry that they had not been a part of this decision that clearly impacted the entire campus, especially since the president had said that he was committed to inclusive decision-making. They also described their personal investment in these trees.

More than 30 years ago, when the fledgling Seaview campus was nothing more than dirt and rocks, the president at that time issued a heartfelt plea to the faculty and staff to donate a weekend to help plant tiny tree seedlings on the multi-acre campus. In a burst of cooperative team spirit, most of the campus personnel accepted the invitation and planted trees together all day in the sun while the
campus band played and the president’s wife served Kool-Aid. The people standing in front of the contractor’s truck had carefully set those seedlings in the earth 30 years before.

The current president thanked them for their care and concern, and went back to his president’s team meeting. They considered options again. If trees were not cut down, then perhaps a few additional lights could simply be installed adjacent to the trees.

The following Monday, the facilities director reported that more large lights could indeed be installed, but in doing so, it would violate the energy conservation agreement that had been implemented a decade ago. This energy agreement had been a part of a faculty environmental committee recommendation, which had gone to cabinet for approval, and ultimately to the board of trustees. The president’s team recommended that members of that committee be contacted to give input into the decision to change the agreement so that the lights could be installed and evening classes could commence.

The members of the committee were contacted, met separately as a group, and the following week, the item appeared on the cabinet agenda. The discussion was heated and centered around not only the lights and the energy agreement, but also around the decision-making process. Since a sub-unit of cabinet had originally had the responsibility for the campus environment, shouldn’t that unit, and cabinet, be the decision-makers for this problem? Moreover, if the board of trustees had once approved the policy, they would need to approve any changes — and all policy
changes traditionally were sent through cabinet prior to approval. Questions about governance appeared in that week’s faculty union newsletter, along with a thinly veiled editorial comment about a question of trust in the new administration.

On Monday, the president’s team met again. While the president was untangling the issue in cabinet, the vice-presidents agreed to ask their respective staffs for input and suggestions regarding the lighting problem. By this time, a short and a long-term solution was needed if night classes were going to be implemented the next quarter. One of the suggestions brought to the table was stringing small twinkle Christmas lights around the darkest edges of campus, thereby creating at least an illusion of light and safety while a permanent solution was explored. The lights were priced reasonably and could even be used afterwards for special events. The president’s team gave the go-ahead.

The following Monday, the president’s team opened the student newspaper to find an editorial sharply criticizing the administration for not considering the cultural impact of using lights manufactured in support of the Christian religion. The local community media regularly receives copies of the student newspaper, and later that day, a reporter called the president asking him to comment on the situation.

MANAGING CHANGE

Kanter’s three kinds of movement help distinguish three basic forms of organizational change (Kanter et al., 1992). Identity changes are the changes in the
relationships between the organization as an entity and its environment.

Coordination changes involve the internal array of parts and processes constituting the organization. Control changes stress the political coalitions, or set of interests that drive the organization.

The new leadership team at Seaview implemented many decisions during their first few months. This case study uses Kanter's three forms of organizational change (Kanter et al., 1992) to describe the context and results of three separate actions intended by the team to influence or manage organizational change at Seaview.

Identity: New Letterhead

In Kanter's model (Kanter et al., 1992), organizational movement related to environment usually leads to organizational change in identity. Identity changes are caused through reformulation of an organization's relationship to its environment as environmental movement presents pressures and opportunities for change.

Letterhead supplies for the college were running short during this first year of change at Seaview, and the president heaved a secret sigh of relief. The logo for the college had been in existence for many years, and although it was originally designed to be a symbol incorporating Native American beliefs, it resembled a nuclear reactor in design. The paper color of the letterhead was a pale avocado green, with matching accompanying envelopes.

The president asked the public information office to come up with some alternate designs for a new logo and stationary, and after looking at several, the
leadership team selected one. They asked the public information office to send a memo to about 30 selected faculty and staff inviting them to a short meeting at which the new stationary design would be presented for feedback and input. The letter was sent, and only two people came to the meeting, neither having any strong feelings about the change. The clean new logo design and white stationary was then officially approved, although the president asked that all existing supplies of paper for the college be used up before ordering the new. The new logo began to appear gradually and quietly on business cards for new employees, on new signs, and on invitations to special events, and no comments about it were heard.

Three months later, the supply of existing letterhead ran out, and new letterhead was finally ordered for the entire campus. A cheery memo was sent from the public information office to all campus departments informing them that they would be receiving new paper soon, and gave instructions on what should be done with any unused green envelopes or paper.

Within 2 hours of the memo being received, the phone lines of the entire top leadership team, including the president, lit up. The head of the faculty union called enraged that the president’s campaign promises of collaboration were obviously a lie. The art department faculty called the vice-president for instruction to ask why they had not been consulted. The registration staff were frantic that the new letterhead and their existing informational brochures, which they still had many of, did not match. The vice-president for business was asked repeatedly how money had been allocated for this expense. The student newspaper called, politely
inquiring why the new administration was no longer honoring the cultural diversity reflected in the former logo. The former president of the college, whose wife was still a tenured faculty member at Seaview, called to suggest some design improvements.

**Coordination: Budget Process I**

Organizational movement related to life cycle often is reflected through organizational change in coordination. Coordination relates to the problems of shape and structure of the internal array of parts in the organization that emerges as it grows and changes — in other words, how the units of the organization work together to execute their tasks. The need to change the organization’s internal configuration, rather than simply let it evolve, may ultimately result in deliberate reshaping or revitalizing.

Seaview had long had a budget process that was controlled exclusively by the president and budget officer, was unrelated to any program assessment, and had a reputation of being arbitrary based on who the president’s favorite people or causes were. After thoughtful consideration and much feedback from many campus constituents, the president and senior leadership team decided to implement a new budget planning process that was tied to program review and assessment.

The leadership team carefully formulated a plan that would change the budget process to one that would be driven from the bottom-up, allowing for maximum input. Each department in the college would first receive a copy of its base budget. Many had never seen their own budgets since expenses had only been
tracked at the macro division or area level. They would receive instructions on how
to begin to assess their own department effectiveness, which could include
measuring such things as number of students served, student-teacher ratios,
employment statistics, and other data. Then they would meet as a department to
prioritize their next year’s budget requests together, and that single list would then
go to the division level. The department heads in each division would meet as a
group to prioritize their division budget request into a single list. The division
directors or deans in that area would then meet to meld their area’s priorities into a
single list that would be submitted to their vice-president. The vice-presidents
would then work together to formulate the single campus budget priority list that the
president and board of trustees could approve.

This process took 6 months to complete. The top leadership team made
themselves available to talk through the process many times with important
constituent groups. More than any other administrative change thus far, this new
process felt unsettling to many on campus. The following comments, the first from
a faculty member and the second from a classified staff member, represent the
concerns and misperceptions that were shared by many at the college:

As a faculty member, I think it’s great that we finally get some input
into the budget process. I mean, who knows better what the science
instructors need than science teachers? Still, I am nervous about this
program review stuff. My second year biology course historically has
a low count. Are they going to cancel classes now unless they are
packed to the gills? Also, I’ve heard a rumor that some programs
could even be totally thrown away through this process because their
student count is so low, or because graduates aren’t getting jobs in
that field. I can’t believe that would actually happen, though, given
the quality faculty we have here — doing away with a total program would be such a waste of talent.

Coming from financial aid, I think this new change is super. We will finally have an opportunity to get what we need! And we will be able to decide that, NOT the president who doesn’t know me from Adam. I don’t know about the program assessment pieces, though. Maybe that’s a better fit for instruction. I just hope they don’t measure us on those stupid customer service surveys or whatever. You know, most people who fill those out are just mad that they didn’t get their way. At any rate, we’ve needed new furniture in our area for literally decades, and it will be a breath of fresh air to finally get some.

As the process unfolded, the senior leadership team began to get calls from departments. Though everyone had conceptually understood the process, actually operationalizing it was now turning up some unexpected surprises, and not a little consternation. It appeared that coming up with one prioritized list in each department required decision-making techniques that were unfamiliar. In years past, the president had simply made the budget decisions, and department personnel would share much common dissatisfaction with the way their department was treated in that process. Strong collegiality within the department grew with shared commiseration.

Now, however, the new process required the department to come up with one single list together. Putting one person’s priority over another’s was uncomfortable and felt like competition with colleagues. They were disconcerted by the inherent value implications: how can a microscope be more or less important than a new computer? The struggle continued at the next level of the process in which department heads painfully developed one single list for their division. The department head of dental hygiene complained that she had to give up on several
other priority items because her department had one very large cost item that she had to lobby to put at the top of the list. She was concerned about the equity of this, given that her department had higher cost equipment and needs than most of the others in her division. The department head of physical education wondered if, even though they were in the same division, it was fair to put his department in competition with health-related departments, since their focus was so different. He wondered if physical education could be considered separately.

The division directors and deans felt the hardest emotional hit, because merging their lists into one meant that they would need to figure out how to balance the politics of the decisions with the reality of the process. The academic division chairs met from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on one day to come to closure on the list that they would submit as a unit. The following quote from a division chair describes the process.

I can’t believe how hard that was to do. I know every single item on my division’s list was so carefully thought about by the department and faculty involved — for a long time that day, I couldn’t accept that ANY of my division’s priorities shouldn’t be totally funded. But ultimately I realized that that is the process, and I had to buckle down. However, I am not looking forward to going back to the English department and telling them that tools for the Automotive program ended up higher on the Instruction list than their developmental English software, which they’ve only wanted for about 20 years or so. They’d make good use of it, too, I know, and it would be great for students. They’ll all probably think I was a total mouse. But the automotive program has gotten such high press lately because of being chosen best vocational program in the whole country and all that, and my English friends are such notorious poops about doing any little extra thing, it was hard in that environment to argue anything other than the way it came out. Still, I’m not sure it’s right. And I sure as hell can’t tell them all that.
Control: Budget Process II

An organization consists of many actors with divergent interests, preferences, and criteria for organizational goals and performance. As the organization experiences movement in its political dimensions, emerging changes in control follow. Control determines which sets of interests predominate in the organization.

The decision about the number of new faculty to hire or replace had been extrapolated earlier in the process so that the recruitment process could begin on time, and division chairs had come to agreement using the same process. Through that process, the science division had not gotten a much-desired math lab faculty position. When the department heads from science met later to come up with their prioritized list for the division, the division director suggested putting the math lab position at the top of the division list, since surely each division would at least get their first one or two priorities funded. Others pointed out that the faculty decisions had already been decided earlier, and it might not be in their best interest to put something at the very top of their list that might be ignored. The division director assured them that he, "knew how to play this game — just trust me on this one." But when the division lists were ultimately merged, that item was not considered.

The budget process continued at Seaview. When the overall college priority list was finally distributed, the top leadership team was requested to attend the next science division meeting. The division director stood in the corner with his arms folded. Faculty got up one by one to present cases for outdated equipment,
classified support positions, technology necessary for programs to stay current in their fields, and finally, the math lab faculty position. A faculty member of 30 years stood up with great ceremony to express his feelings:

I am hard pressed to understand how a new college lawnmower got put on the list as a higher priority than a faculty position, especially one that is so needed! I mean, with all that the strategic plan has to say about our environment changing and our student population changing — and you folks have clearly said that the strategic plan is your recipe for decision-making, you know — it seems ludicrous that a position that would help serve these students would get put behind all of this other stuff. I would just like to ask you where your priorities are.

The vice-presidents listened and quietly reiterated the bottom-up process and philosophy. There was a flutter of whispering in one section of the room, and a hand shot up from a female chemistry instructor:

I’d like to say one more thing about this new and wonderful process. I am a dedicated faculty member of this college who, in addition to teaching, also has to advise, keep up in my field, and be on a host of committees, along with a jillion other things. This process took a lot of time out of my schedule, time that I should have been spending with students. We are a small department, and it took literally hours for us to come up with a list, which was sort of stupid anyway because there are so many things that are broken and that we need around this place. And then we had to do it all over again for the division. And I wasn’t even very happy with the list that we ended up with. This is bureaucracy at its best, I think, and I think you better decide if you want this institution’s faculty to be serving students in the classroom, or doing this kind of stuff.

As much of the research in Chapter II suggested, organizational change occurs both via strategic intervention by leadership as well as outside of their control. It is clear through this chapter’s descriptions that while organization leaders are trying to act, the organization is also a moving target. It is blown about by
environmental winds, it grows and ages, and it is shaped by internal power
struggles. This chapter describes case snapshots of organizational change at Seaview
Community College using the theoretical construct of Kanter’s three organizational
forces of change and three forms of change viewed through the lens of specific
events (Kanter et al., 1992). Chapter V will address the research questions as well
as analyze and interpret the findings of the case study.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study attempted to analyze the organizational impact of significant changes in leadership at a specific public community college during the initial period of that change. The research findings, results, and conclusions of the study are described through the following discussion of the events discussed in Chapter IV tied with analyses related to the specific research questions described in Chapter I. To remain consistent with the rest of this study, the framework of Kanter's change theory is used as a backdrop for the analysis (Kanter et al., 1992). It is important to note that, just as organizational change does not occur with distinct starts and stops, the questions and answers related to this study are interwoven and linked together by their connection to the whole organizational change process, both in the literature and at Seaview.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND ANALYSES

Research Question #1

What did the research literature reveal about the impacts of change, especially when new leadership is installed in an organization?
Chapter II provided a comprehensive review of the literature related to organizational change and leadership roles within that change. Certainly for Seaview, one of the most significant concepts in the organizational change research literature is that of the mature organization that is faced with change. Kanter defines the last life cycle stage as maturity, which often presages decline because the organization fails to adapt to changing external conditions (Kanter et al., 1992).

Organizational age involves accumulated experience: how much needs to be invented versus how much is given by tradition and therefore often done unthinkingly whether it fits the situation or not. Aging presents another inevitable dynamic: the addition of new people, primarily as replacements for those who leave. Newcomers are a potential source of enrichment via their new perspectives brought in from the outside. They also are, however, a potential threat to established activities because of their inexperience, their ignorance of traditions and routines, and their lack of relationships.

Organizational age produces both internal and external handicaps related to the ability to change. One of the problems of age is the dilemma of success. The same accumulated habits, skills, technical systems, and values that helped an organization succeed in the past can turn into deeply embedded knowledge sets that inhibit innovation. The organization's belief in itself and in its distinctive competencies can become entrenched and unexamined.

The jarring impact of the conflict at Seaview between its maturity gained from history of excellence rooted in academic tradition and the inevitable forces of
the environment driving new changes produced two general questions for many on campus: how do we get there, and is it worth the trip? The aging of an organization as it proceeds through its life cycle clearly both causes change and also helps to stifle change.

The results from the team building workshop reflected the common feeling that something had to change for the organization to continue to support its students. But it also indicated a hidden unease with all of the new changes, including the new people, which and who had not been a part of Seaview’s rich history and enduring success.

An institution’s ethos integrates history, tradition, values, ecological context, and individual personalities into an invisible tapestry. In this tapestry, the affective dimensions of the organization such as loyalty and commitment can preserve and enhance the social ties across constituent groups by establishing common belief systems.

The previous administration had supported a clan culture, in which shared values, goals, and the development of faculty and staff were emphasized. Their internal transactions were primarily guided by congruence of beliefs, trust, and tradition. The leader in a clan culture is generally considered to be a mentor, sage, or father figure, and that was also true at Seaview. While many on campus had described this culture as stifling and patronizing, the kaleidoscope exercise reflected current doubts about the new leadership team’s ability to build trust within a new cultural norm of responsiveness and entrepreneurship. What were the new rules?
And could the social ties be preserved as a new fabric of interactions, decisions, and relationships was woven?

The new leadership team carefully analyzed the results of the survey as they began to plan their efforts, and recognized many fears about the implications of change imbedded in the results. In an effort to respond to the environment, would respected old programs (or people) be dumped to make room for new ones? Would changes happen randomly, or would there be a plan for them in which the campus would have a voice? Would the current administration honor the tradition of “family” of Seaview? Could they become a part of that family?

There are constraints on top management’s freedom to set strategic direction in the mature organization, and that interferes with the organization’s ability to change. The constraints are often a result of fears that then turn into political struggles for power and control.

**Research Question #2**

*What were the external and internal forces that influenced significant organizational change in this institution?*

In a relatively stable environment, established institutions can afford to look inward rather than outward, and to concentrate on protecting existing advantages rather than innovating. Change can be incremental, consisting of add-ons to the status quo by established players.

Then the environment shifts. New technology challenges the dominant mode of production or distribution. The area of competition widens as players from other
places migrate toward each other's resources. Political changes alter the landscape of known rules that the organization had previously mastered to become successful. Innovators from within the industry invade, with new approaches that win support.

At this point, the environment both internally and externally is turbulent. The competition resulting from the new environment forces the organization to begin to rethink its contracts, assumptions, and way of doing things. The ways environmental forces shape the pressures and possibilities for change feel to those in the organization like a gale-force wind.

The genuine desire to be part of the change process comes when individuals agree that change is necessary, beneficial, and not harmful to what they believe is their domain or interest. Organizational leaders play an important role in preparing their organization for change and for its institutionalization by influencing the perceptions and attitudes of the organization's members by defining and describing the environmental forces pushing on the organization.

Forming relationships outside the institution with local leaders helped the new president to gain credibility in his initial efforts to describe the need for change to the institution. His decision to create the strategic planning team, charged with a first task of scanning the external environment, was an important one, along with his choice not to be an official part of the group. The team, comprised of representatives from key constituent groups, was able to independently assess the forces that were impacting Seaview, and because of their influence elsewhere in the
institution, were able to communicate the importance of their findings in a way that was heard as legitimate by the rest of the organization.

Hiring a former vice-president as a facilitator for the strategic planning group was a risky decision, given the continuing speeches the president was making related to Seaview's dire economic straits and the necessity for change to create a safe future for the institution. It could have been interpreted that Seaview really did have money for extra's, and therefore the president was simply crying wolf. But instead, the action communicated to the campus community the importance of the strategic planning effort, since contracted positions were rare at Seaview. Hiring a retired senior administrator of the former regime also ensured that the president would gain some help in understanding established cultural values and norms, as well as assured the campus of some continuity of a familiar face and style during a time in which an entire new senior leadership team was being recruited and hired. Finally, since the former vice-president was clearly an advocate for change and for the new leadership, it formed an emotional bridge for some who were tempted to equate "old" with "good."

Though the forces of the environment were seen fairly clearly through this process, there was a conceptual gap in linking the institution's core values with the changes necessary to respond to the environmental demands. Though many at Seaview did recognize the strength of the environmental forces impacting them, they also were socially and psychologically comfortable with the established order at Seaview and were reluctant to accept the attendant changes that responding to the
changing environment would bring. Though they had consciously hired a president who would help the institution, and therefore them, survive in a changing world, they were not expecting their own world to really change, and in fact, liked their institution's elite reputation and insular culture. Their history was part of their definition of success.

As described in Chapter II, Beckhard and Pritchard (1992) define five forces that serve as the focus to fundamental change: change in the mission, change in the identity or outside image, change in relationships to key stakeholders, change in the way of work, and change in the culture. Although one focus of change may be the primary driver of the organizational change, the others will inevitably be affected as well. When the leadership at Seaview decided that the mission and purpose of the organization must evolve, subsequent decisions about changes in the way of work, outside image, and organizational design and structure also had to be considered.

Research Question #3

*What was the impact on the organization of a shift from organizational stability to one of change?*

Political dynamics are forces for change, but they also produce inertia, especially for older organizations. The benefits come when political conflict allows more voices to be heard and innovation to appear. Despite those benefits, however, moving toward organizational change can be painful in previously stable organizations.
As long as there is an assumption of shared values, conflicts can be about differences over tactics and not ultimate ends. Leaders need to ensure that the clash of ideas does not result in a formation of firm groupings unable to identify with a larger shared vision.

The situation involving the lighting on campus at night for night classes seemed initially to be about logistics. The leadership team thought that they were doing simple problem-solving. They realized late that issues of politics and culture related to change were central to the problem.

Institutional culture is difficult to modify intentionally. But leaders can be knowledgeable about the institution's history and translate stories and lessons so that they can fit the current organizational picture. The vision and actions of the leaders must be congruent with the history, traditions, and nuances that flow from the institution's own particular cultural context.

Obviously the cultural and political values at Seaview related to governance, structures of decision-making, and historical traditions were stronger than the externally driven need for increasing enrollment through night classes. The leadership team was making decisions about lights. The rest of the campus saw political and cultural wins and losses.

People think they have something to lose if they have something invested in the system in terms of status, beliefs, or values. Those who have a stake in that status quo are able to derail innovation, at least temporarily, by attacking the system at its weakest link: the bond that holds the group together. The group that blocked
the contractor's truck coalesced by their common history at Seaview and shared value surrounding the trees. Though the lighting at night might also have been a concern to them, the political forces created a resistance to change that inhibited their ability to see the innovation as positive.

At Seaview, all of Kanter's three forces of change (Kanter et al., 1992) were in motion simultaneously, and reinforced each other. The organization's position in its environment, combined with its life cycle stage, set the framework for politics and decisions that both impacted the leaders and helped the leaders to impact the organization.

Looking at the sources of emergent change assists leaders to view the larger context in which they are trying to carry out their strategic intentions. Even while leaders are formulating goals and directions, forces in the environment are pushing in many directions, and life cycle and political dynamics within the organization are creating still other challenges.

**Research Question #4**

*To what extent did the new senior leadership team influence or manage organizational change?*

The nature of the ties that organizations have with their key constituencies or stakeholders is vital. When aspects of relationships with those stakeholders are altered, either consciously or unconsciously, the organization changes. The degree to which the change can be managed depends on how much the leadership is aware of those stakeholder relationships.
Many people and groups that are not direct parties to transactions that signal change may feel an emotional stake in them because they sense that their relationship with the organization may be altered. The focus of identity changes, as Kanter et al. (1992) describe them, is often on things that are tangible rather than on how the organization will operate after the change. These changes produce distractions in the organization and divert attention from the critical focus.

The president and leadership team believed that the campus constituency did not have a strong investment in the design of the new logo and letterhead. That was probably true, at least literally speaking, although that was the focus of their reaction. In reality, the alteration of the institutional relationship with the stakeholders, implied through the actions of the president and leadership team, formed the fuel for the fury. The new logo did not matter as much as the perception of unilateral abandonment of the old letterhead and the values and relationships associated with it.

One important lesson for leaders is that organizations can claim an identity change long before their constituents accept it. On a human level, it does not change all that quickly or easily. The president and leadership team saw the logo decision as being relatively unimportant and uneventful since there had been so much discussion about the need for change at Seaview in the previous months. The campus, however, saw the new executive team as forcibly making the campus into its own image — and that was clearly not going to happen easily, changing environment or not.
Another important question was whether the organizational change at Seaview was allowed to be ad hoc rather than purposeful public policy. The president, while strongly suggesting that changes needed to occur in direction, did not formally articulate intended changes in mission or purpose. Is it possible that a 30-year-old campus heard and interpreted his words as campaign promises, emotion-filled and well-intentioned but devoid of real meaning? In that context, the subsequent actions of the leadership team would certainly have seemed arbitrary and arrogant, and would have elicited predictable reactive responses.

Research Question #5

*How was organizational change implemented by a new senior leadership team in one community college?*

Leaders in organizations at the mature end of the life cycle often attempt to dismantle the complex and slow-moving mechanisms that have developed over time and are now not responsive to the new environmental pressures or to the new identity of an organization endeavoring to respond to those pressures.

In some cases, coordination changes occur informally without reorganizing the whole institution. Relationships, communication, and the flexibility to combine resources are more important than formal channels and reporting relationships. In other instances, substantive changes in the structure and processes drive the organizational change.

As fledgling institutions with a desire for quality and standards of excellence, community colleges invented rules and procedures as they were needed.
Over time a hierarchy and rules proliferated, giving community colleges many of the characteristics of a complex bureaucracy. The president and leadership team at Seaview viewed the budget process as a large-scale way to effect change at the college. Building a budget from the department level up would give employees at the lowest levels inclusive opportunities to have a voice in the organization’s decisions. It would encourage objective assessments of programs and data driven by the external environment and community needs. It would eliminate arbitrary and confusing processes and procedures, building trust and confidence. It would be tied to the Strategic Plan, making budget allocations consistent with the new major thrusts and directions of the institution. To drive transformational change, the team was endeavoring to alter the parts of the organization in relation to the whole in a way that would be congruent with the institution’s belief systems.

Leaders who are guiding an institution through the process of change can piece together many of the parts of their organization’s beliefs to serve as a magnet for the building blocks of institutionalizing change. Figuring out what those beliefs are, however, can be likened to the story of the blind men attempting to describe an elephant. It involves constructing an organization’s history, observing current perceptions of structure and function, and understanding the coordination of the separate pieces in relation to the whole. And it is an especially challenging task for new leaders. Interest groups, managers, and leaders of change are likely to describe the elephant all differently, depending on what part they were looking at.
The initial enthusiasm for the new process was misleading. Many people at the program level believed that having a voice in the budget process meant that their own budget priorities would be fulfilled, hence the staff member in Financial Aid's comment about finally being able to get new furniture for their department. When it became clear that that was not the case, some of them felt betrayed.

The process itself moved without a hitch from the department to the division level throughout the college. However, the leadership team had not expected the level of emotional upheaval that the process engendered. The departments and divisions had, in the past, formed tight collegial bonds through mutual griping about their department's budget allocation determined unilaterally by the president — a sort of "us against them" force. Without that process to bind them together, individual idiosyncrasies suddenly led to petty conflicts and divisiveness that was disturbing to them.

Resistance to change arises when leadership challenges the comfort of a group who then resents having the ideology with which they are comfortable called into question, and they resent even more being forced to question that ideology themselves. Because the proposed change disturbs the carefully constructed world in which they have learned to live and have power, the group strikes back with moral rectitude of established practices and values. Even though the leaders may argue that the change will not affect the power, prestige, or positions of the group, the people impacted understand intuitively that change does, in fact, undermine their ideology, upset their belief system, and cause them general discomfort.
Research Question #6

What can be learned from this case study about the impact on a large and stable community college resulting from a significant change in executive leadership?

When stakeholders or interest groups become dissatisfied with organizational performance, or when their roles or power change, struggles for control can ensue. Stakeholders seek control changes when they think management strategies will not be beneficial to their interests. But control changes can also bring management changes permitting new ways of thinking. A new leadership team or CEO can find it easier to define and implement a new strategy on a honeymoon that would not be tolerated from a more established manager. However, a control shift can only permit or enable reorganizing or revitalizing. It does not automatically entail the right moves.

Colleges are professional organizations "where [individuals] can act as if [they] are self-employed yet regularly receive a paycheck. [They are seemingly] upside-down organizations, where the workers sometimes appear to manage their bosses" (Mintzberg, 1989, p. 173). Leaders in such organizations do not control, instead, they mobilize resources within a network of complex relationships.

Bringing about change requires leaders to understand those relationships and be able to discern the interests individuals and groups have in supporting or resisting change. To a large extent, the coordination structures of higher education institutions influence those interests.
The division director in the science division at Seaview had learned over time to win via a political strategy based on the old rules. He knew well how to manipulate the game so that his division would emerge victorious, and in fact, felt obligated to protect his division against what he perceived to be predators. The new budget process negated his hard-won skills, which became clear to him when his strategy to get the new math lab faculty member failed. He was humiliated and furious.

He quickly figured out, however, how he might be able to change the structure back to the one in which he could be successful. By making the budget process difficult and time-consuming for the faculty in his division, as well as by placing a few well-timed comments to key faculty, he could suggest implicitly that the new process was not central to the teaching and learning mission of the college. The value of teaching and learning was such a central core to Seaview’s tradition of excellence that had reverberated throughout its long history, faculty in the division were instantly galvanized.

In an ideal organization, people understand the necessity for change and support it accordingly. In real organizations, commitment to change only follows discussion that helps create the setting for change by facilitating reconciliation of differences. The exchange of ideas, often accompanied by both enthusiasm and acrimony, makes it more difficult for the organization to return to business as usual. This part of the change process is uncomfortable for all involved, but it is the catharsis that takes place during the debates that permits movement forward.
The science division meeting was not the last conversation that faculty had with the leadership team about the new budget process, and indeed, those discussions continued even after this study as the process was fine-tuned and political factions regrouped. But the old way did not prevail, and organizational change at Seaview continues to evolve.

Changes in identity, coordination, or control of an organization are often associated with dramatic upheaval. Leaders need to both prevent crises from spinning out of control and also to keep the everyday activities going that keep the organization moving toward the intended change. It is often difficult to avoid just managing the changes others are creating rather than continuing to proactively steer change in desirable directions.

It is clear that leaders cannot mandate change, nor are they exempt from its effects. Many stakeholders, relationships, history, and systems impact organizational change. The challenge of change is not simply a large-scale conceptual and philosophical issue. It is also a practical issue of choosing actions and making decisions. Change only looks revolutionary in retrospect. There is no break between time before change and after change. Major changes in large organizations are more likely to represent the accumulation of small concrete actions built up slowly over time, step-by-step. Seaview Community College was no exception.
WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THIS STUDY

Some conclusions may be drawn from this study, although as with all qualitative research, results are not generalizable and are only applicable within the context of the research.

Because the CEO and the leadership team changed in a short time period at Seaview, the altered team demographics allowed the senior team to take substantive action in a turbulent environment. According to the research described in this study, frame-breaking change requires direct executive involvement in all aspects of change. In reality, it was often difficult for the team at Seaview to determine at what level and to what degree their direct intervention was needed, especially when decisions and events overlapped with one another in the complexity of organizational life. The old analogy of trying to change a tire while their vehicle was moving is an apt description for the frustrations of the team.

Also, system-wide organizational change may have been too often viewed by the leadership team as occurring through formal processes and procedures, rather than through cultural and political influences. The research in this study suggested that homogeneity in terms of length of service in a top leadership team is associated with positive organizational outcomes during times of change, and the Seaview team did, in fact, move cohesively and without conflict in decision-making. However, the homogeneity, and the resulting collegiality, also occasionally contributed to a kind of "group think," in which the president's natural tendency to solve problems through formal channels and avoid dealing with affective concerns, was not
counteracted or balanced by his leadership team. They thus missed, on several occasions, the subtler hints of political and cultural resistance that ultimately impacted their intended formal changes.

This study also pointed to the importance of mid-level managers in change efforts, and that lack of support and commitment from them has an extremely negative impact on the success of large-scale change efforts. The president and the top leadership team could have involved this group at Seaview to a greater degree, especially in efforts that would have resulted in a greater philosophical understanding of the importance of the change of direction at Seaview. People think they have something to lose if they have something invested in the system of status, beliefs, or values. The long-time mid-level managers at Seaview were strongly tied to their historical successes at Seaview, and increased efforts to help them gain competencies in the new skills required to succeed at the new Seaview might have eliminated some of the confusion created in the redesigned budget process.

The first year of the new leadership team was significant in its opportunity for change, but it also created pressure to do things quickly. Some of the changes of the team were probably implemented too soon, before they could translate the organization’s stories and history so that they fit the current organizational picture. On the other hand, the new paradigm of change was quickly communicated to the campus constituency through the team’s actions, although whether it was negatively or positively perceived varied. Could the president have helped by more consciously articulating the mission change at Seaview? The organizational changes that
occurred without formal college statements of policy could have been viewed by the campus as reactive as opposed to conscious, proactive choices, thereby creating more resistance.

CONCLUSION

Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth century scholar, took his colleague James Boswell to a performance of a celebrated dog that walked on its hind legs. Boswell was disappointed and pointed out that the dog didn’t walk very well and didn’t always respond appropriately to its master’s instructions. Johnson answered, “It’s not how well the thing is done. It’s that the thing is done at all.”

Seaview Community College provided an interesting glimpse into organizational change at its most dramatic: a traditional 30-year-old institution steaming toward the twenty-first century with new leadership who sometimes guided the huge vessel in making large, slow turns in a new direction, but who also sometimes just held on tight while the vessel lurched and swayed in the unpredictable seas of change.

The case study format for the research provided a rich opportunity for gathering data on organizational change in the community college setting. Compiling thick descriptive information was made easier by being a participant-observer; there would have been much subtle information that would not have been included if access to meetings, conversations, and documents, both formal and informal, had been more limited. On the other hand, as a participant observer, it
was also sometimes difficult to know when enough information had been gathered. A case study is simply a snapshot that can provide opportunity for qualitative examination, but as a participant as well as an observer, it was tempting to continue the descriptive investigation of some complex situations past the point in which clarity of analysis could be achieved.

Also, while being a participant observer was particularly valuable in this case study because it provided opportunities to see organizational change from the inside-out, it also was an unusual situation that could not be duplicated in another time period. Being one of the new senior leadership team members during the year of the research, allowed the researcher for this short time to be somewhat objective in observations, as people on campus had no history or experiences with me that limited their interactions as data were gathered. After another year or two at this institution, even were the researcher to intend otherwise, the researcher will also become a part of Seaview's past and current history, and will no longer be able to see with a clear perspective. This opportunity for participant-observer research was unique; the research would not have been effective at another institution or in another time period.

As with all qualitative research, this study cannot be generalized to other situations. The findings in the study provide support for prior research about organizational culture and suggest areas in which further exploration is necessary. The case of Seaview Community College provides some insight into organizational change. There, a new senior leadership team was beginning to work together to
change very long historical patterns within a traditional institution. But does change of this magnitude occur in institutions of higher education with less history and fewer entrenched traditions? To what degree do the external environmental pressures influence or limit routine and daily decisions? Can necessary organizational change occur without the complete replacement of the president and senior leadership team? Additional research is necessary to place the ramifications of this study's findings in a larger context.

Organizational change in community colleges will continue to occur, both driven by the forces blowing it toward the twenty-first century, and by the leadership encouraging and nurturing new ways of thinking in academic institutions. Further research in organizational change at community colleges specifically is necessary to continue to explore how leaders can most effectively use the forces and forms of change to most positively impact their institutions, their communities, and their students.
REFERENCES


Blackburn, R. T., & Lawrence, J. H. (1990). *Same institution, different perceptions: Faculty and administrators report on the work environment*. Ann Arbor, MI: National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, University of Michigan.


APPENDIX
CURRENT AND ARCHIVED RECORDS AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS REVIEWED FOR THIS CASE STUDY RESEARCH INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- VISTA (internal college newsletter) produced 1967-1997.
- Student newspaper (various names) 1967-1997.
- President’s correspondence 1978-1997.
- Specific memos, letters, and reports relevant to the study.

FORMAL INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH:

- Faculty member, mathematics, 30 years at institution.
- Faculty member, business, 27 years at institution.
- Faculty member, liberal arts, 5 years at institution.
- Classified staff member, office assistant, 25 years at institution.
- Classified staff member, plant operations, 12 years at institution.
- Program coordinator, student services, 16 years at institution.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Members of a Board of Trustees, which officially governs each local community college, are appointed by the Governor in the State of Washington, where this research was completed. During the time of the research between November 1996 and July 1997, the Board of Trustees at the institution studied was very new. Prior to the new President’s hire and in the subsequent year after his hire, all positions changed on the Board for various reasons. This is unusual, and it also meant that the Board did not play as much of a role in guidance or decisions as they might otherwise, and for this reason, their input was not considered a relevant part of the research in the study.