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Anchoring Change in Higher Education: Narratives from Senior Executives at Malcolm Baldrige Award-Winning Institutions

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ANCHORING CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: NARRATIVES FROM SENIOR EXECUTIVES AT MALCOLM BALDRIGE AWARD-WINNING INSTITUTIONS

by

Cheryl H. Kisunzu

Chair: Loretta B. Johns
Title: ANCHORING CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: NARRATIVES FROM SENIOR EXECUTIVES AT MALCOLM BALDRIGE AWARD-WINNING INSTITUTIONS

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage for leading change. Specifically, it is to identify strategies for anchoring planned change in institutions of higher education.

Design

This is a qualitative multiple case study. Each of the participating organizations is an institution of higher education uniquely distinguished as a recipient of the United State’s highest recognition for progressive excellence—the Malcolm Baldrige Award. A narrative design is used to conduct in-depth exploration of leading planned change,
specifically anchoring this planned change into the culture of academic institutions of higher learning. Purposeful sampling was used to identify a homogenous group of 6 participants. These individuals were senior leaders with rankings equivalent to dean or higher. Each of the participants was an active leader in their organization’s planned change to implement the Malcolm Baldrige criteria. They each played an active role in seeking to secure recognition for performance excellence as defined through sustained implementation of this change. In addition, they each served as senior leaders at the respective organizations when this award for excellence was granted to these distinctive institutions. Cross-case analysis was used to identify strategies for anchoring planned change in academic organizations.

Results

A trilogy of shared strategies from all three institutions emerged that answers the research question, “What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award- winning academic institutions of higher education?” They are as follows:

1. Utilize sustained leadership to ensure that change aligns with the organization’s mission, vision, and values and is integrated into the strategic planning process through assessment of progressive performance excellence.

2. Incorporate performance expectations of excellence into new employee and new student orientations.

3. Implement communication systems which are open, authentic, and responsive—especially with faculty.
Conclusion

I recommend that greater consideration be given to the length of contracts for presidents and senior leaders (e.g., 5 years); that intentionality be given to attaching the planned change to strategic planning; that research specific to the role that orientation plays in sustaining change be conducted; and that multifaceted communication systems which create organizational trust between leadership and faculty, such that a culture of abundance is implemented.
ANCHORING CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: NARRATIVES FROM SENIOR EXECUTIVES AT MALCOLM BALDRIGE AWARD-WINNING INSTITUTIONS

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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External: Date approved
To my parents, John Rufus Harris and Herdisene Theresa Robinson Harris. I fully recognize that if my leadership is but a glimmer of theirs, God will be glorified and lives will be enriched. This is my prayer.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Change has consistently characterized the human experience. At its most fundamental level, change can be defined as the process of altering or experiencing a different course (“Change,” n.d.). In his 1970 bestseller, *Future Shock*, Toffler (1970) raised the world’s consciousness regarding the accelerated rate of societal and global change. In this work, he stressed the overwhelming impact of change on individuals and organizations. He championed the message that responding to the inevitability of change will be an essential competency for life in the 21st century. Wheatley (1992) writes of observing her feet in a stream of water and wondering about the diversity of its composition—the mud, silt, grass, water, and rocks—and its ability to adapt and to shift its configuration in response to the balance of nature’s power. She suggests that understanding how a new structure emerges will provide insights for responding effectively to our modern-day experience with change. Wagoner (2004) expands these observations by noting that an organization’s ability to navigate change is critical for success in today’s business arena.

As noted by Kotter (1996), “Major change is often said to be impossible” (p. 6). Yet, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) observe that today’s executives continue to be faced with the challenge of effectively leading their organization during times that are increasingly complex and uncertain. This challenge also resonates in higher education.
Wagner (2001) observed that, historically, our educational system functioned more like a type of sorting machine. Consistently, about 20% of students were sorted out to go to college and pursue a professional career. The remaining 80% of students received more of a functional or technical education. However, the primary change confronting the system of learning in the 21st century is that all students need more sophisticated skills in order to compete effectively in the workplace. Baker (1992) further observed that academic executives must be prepared to navigate effectively through organizational change in order to ensure that their institutions will respond effectively to the varied needs of changing constituencies.

**Background of the Problem**

Seventy percent of organizational change initiatives fail (Keller & Aiken, 2008). Kotter (1996) states that unless planned change is anchored into the culture, the organization will slip back into patterns that were existent prior to the initiative. The absence of attentiveness to this problem by organizational leaders results in the ever increasing reality of business dysfunction and demise. Given the significance of this adverse outcome upon our economy and quality of life, research needs to be conducted to identify strategies for anchoring desired change in organizational culture. The specific area of interest for this research is anchoring change in higher education in the United States.

Kotter (1996) has identified an eight-stage process for leading change. These eight stages are as follows:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy

4. Communicating the change vision

5. Empowering broad-based actions

6. Generating short-term wins

7. Consolidating gains and producing more change

8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture.

Of these eight stages, he determined that a fundamental leadership error that results in the failure of potentially effective change initiatives is the eighth stage, during which leaders neglect to anchor change firmly in the organization’s culture. In other words, the planned change does not become a part of the organization’s group norms or values. The organizational challenge is to identify strategies that will effectively graft newly desired practices into an existent system. Collins (2001) has identified the role of the executive leader as that which is most significant for organizational excellence and endurance. Argyris (1992) agrees by noting that it is the top management of organizations who must have ownership for change initiatives. He asserts that it is this leadership alone that will prevent the “not invented here” syndrome from developing, which, if not attended to, will result in the death of planned change (p. 1).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the need to identify strategies for anchoring change in institutions of higher education.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage of leading change. This stage is identified as “anchoring change in organizational culture” (p. 14). This study sought to determine whether effective strategies for anchoring planned change in organizational culture, specifically academia, exist. Senior executives from Malcolm Baldrige academic winners in higher education were interviewed to determine what, if any, strategies they had identified for ensuring that this planned change is retained. The goal was to generate information that will be of practical value to leaders as they intentionally seek to anchor planned change into institutional culture, thereby strengthening their respective organizations to achieve their missions.

Research Question

This study investigates a single research question which is as follows: What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?

Rationale for the Study

Little research has been conducted to identify the existence of effective strategies for anchoring planned change into organizational culture. Van de Ven and Huber (1990) confirm that the vast majority of research on change has focused on questions that answer the impact of change on organizations, while minimal research has been conducted that seeks to answer the “how” of change—how organizational change emerges, how organizational change develops, and how change is terminated or embedded in an organization.
Biblical wisdom also asserts that there are fundamental practices that should be established or anchored in our lives, or, in this case, in our organizations, in order for us to experience abundance. Solomon, known as the wisest man who ever lived, advised that one should not meddle with those who are “given to change” (Prov 24:21, NIV). It is God Himself who states, “I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal 3:6)\(^1\). Thus the argument is made that there are organizational best practices which should be intentionally retained.

Of the research that exists, Tushman, Newman and Romanelli (1986) observe that implementing change effectively is crucial for the viability of an organization. Through their punctuated equilibrium model for leading change, they have discovered that sustaining change is difficult. Their research suggests that organizational change occurs through relatively long periods of equilibrium. These seasons of stability are punctuated by short bursts of fundamental change which they call revolutionary periods. Through these periods of upheaval, patterns are established for new cycles of equilibrium. Unfortunately for the organizations, they discovered that there is no change in structure, power distribution, or intentional identification of strategies for continuing the change. As a result, the organization’s ability for progressive effectiveness is compromised to the point that often its very existence is also placed at risk.

To date, research in this area has primarily focused on health care and business arenas. Martin, Quigley, and Rogers (2005), in their study on how to implement a learning management system for health-care delivery, have identified strategies for embedding change within this type of organizational culture. Their recommended strategies include the establishment of a governing board, which would ensure the

\(^1\) All Bible texts, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the King James Version (KJV).
implementation of a system that would respond to identified problems in a time efficient manner. In addition, they recommend the following strategies: (a) the creation of a network of contacts who would ensure continued implementation of the desired change, (b) the nurturing of organizational support for the desired change at all levels within the organization (senior management, middle management, and frontline employees), and (c) the establishment of a reinforcement system for the desired change, which would utilize a system of follow-up goals with results measurement to ensure that the desired change becomes embedded change.

Once again, with respect to health care, Richen (2004) confirms the value of managerial support and participatory governance to help ensure that desired change is integrated into clinical operations. Richen (2004) also suggests that the following strategies would be potentially significant for ensuring that the planned change remained: (a) financial compensation for compliance, (b) linking change to the organization’s strategic long-range plan, (c) establishing a connection between the developers of the change and the implementers of the change, (d) designing systems that would track specific measurement of effectiveness, and (e) the establishment of financial resources that would ensure the sustaining of the desired implementation.

Studies which confirm these findings in higher education are virtually non-existent. Without this essential knowledge, centers of higher learning are at risk for experiencing a perpetual state of flux and minimal productivity, which has the strong potential to create a compromised learning experience for society’s workers and leaders and as a result, will ultimately have an adverse impact on the quality of life for all.
Theoretical Framework

Kurt Lewin’s (1951) change management theory is the framework for this study. What I find inspiring about Lewin’s change management theory is Lewin’s avowed purpose behind the theory. This purpose was to more fully understand systems under tension so that through this understanding we can build a better life experience for all—ultimately, a better world. This theory is based on the primary premise that, in order to be understood, individual behavior must be evaluated within its associated context (Gershwin, 1994). Lewin (1951) continues to assert that every system is either in a state of equilibrium or seeking to establish equilibrium. Lewin defines equilibrium as a balance between opposing and restraining forces. From his perspective, change represents a disruption of this steady state of equilibrium. Lewin further observes that there are three stages to this dynamic change process. He defines these stages as unfreezing, forming (a new level of equilibrium), and refreezing.

As it relates to stage 1, unfreezing, Lewin’s (1951) theory of change asserts that old habits must be unfrozen in order for the experimentation with proposed new habits to occur. Through use of the analogy of attempting to force water into a bottle that is already full, he asserts that careful attention must be given to stage 1 in order to ensure a readiness for change.

Lewin (1951) defines stage 2 of his change theory as forming or movement for the establishment of a new equilibrium. May (1996) states that group-carried change is characterized by greater effectiveness and sustainability than that which occurs with individuals alone. Lewin (1951) observes that even desired group change which results in a higher level of performance, as required for stage 3 of freezing change, tends to have a
short duration. He observes that after a brief span of improvement, the change is relinquished and the group returns to its previous level of functioning. I believe that this observation by Lewin reinforces the significance of studying the “how to’s” of anchoring planned change into organizational culture. It is this stage 3 of freezing that most closely aligns with Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage of anchoring change.

**Significance of Study**

I believe that the findings of this study are extremely valuable for those academic organizations committed to consistent advancement, as required for enduring institutions (Collins, 2001). Academic leaders are provided with knowledge necessary to anchor desired change in an academic organization, thereby enhancing their leadership effectiveness, as required for organizational development. Ultimately, this intentional application of knowledge will result in a stronger organization characterized by a more stable environment for the preparation of students and constituents who depend on these centers of learning for career preparation and refinement essential for life-long learning skills. From the perspective of societal commitment, these organizations will be transformed into models of effectiveness for developing organizations and leaders.

**Basic Assumptions**

The following fundamental assumptions provided the framework for this study:

1. Senior executives in higher education have the primary responsibility for anchoring planned change into organizational culture.

2. Senior executives are best positioned to identify the existence of strategies that anchor planned change in organizational culture.
**Delimitations**

This study was delimited to High Performing Academic Settings, as defined by Malcolm Baldrige criteria. These academic organizations have each received this esteemed recognition since the year 2001. The study was further delimited to senior executives in these high-performing settings, as defined by Malcolm Baldrige criteria, with appointments equivalent to that of the dean ranking or higher. Lastly, strategies and themes for the findings are delimited to those shared by all participating institutions.

**Limitations**

A limitation of the study was the varied amounts of responsibility and/or participation that each of these leaders had in implementing this planned change. The amount of time which had passed since each of the senior executives participated in the planned change and were interviewed for this study is also considered to be a limitation.

An additional limitation of the study was that two of the eight interviews were conducted by phone. One participant who had just received a new academic appointment in an institution different from the one in which he worked to implement the planned change was not available for a face-to-face interview. This participant’s interview was therefore conducted by phone. In addition, one participant who had been scheduled for a face-to-face interview had an unexpected conflict which required that his interview also be conducted via phone.

**Definitions**

To help ensure understanding of terminology, it is necessary to highlight definitions for the following key terms as defined within the context of this study:
Academic organizations: Those institutions that have the teaching and learning of students as their primary mission (“Academic organizations,” n.d.).

Anchoring change: The process that results in the desired behavior or practice being integrated into the organization’s group norms or values (Kotter, 1996).

Appreciative inquiry: The use of positive imagery, affirming questions and organizational strength as the means of creating momentum required to effectively implement change and fulfill organizational initiatives (Simmons, 2007).

Change: The process of “altering” to experience a different course or direction, and/or the experience of transformation (“Change,” n.d.).

Culture: Set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices which characterize an institution or organization (“Culture,” n.d.).

Cultural pragmatist: Individuals who believe that an organization is the culture and the culture is the organization (Frost & Gillespie, 1998).

Drivers: Factors that help to achieve change (Levin, 1951).


Exclusionary management: An organizational structure where the president is positioned atop the power structure (Garvey, 2007).

Failure to anchor change: Backsliding into past practices that no longer work.

Frame: Organizational structure through which culture is understood and change is implemented (Eddy, 2002).

Freezing: Establishing new changes into a system (Lewin, 1951).
Grounded theory: Systematic, qualitative procedures used by researchers to generate a theory that broadly explains process, action, or interaction about a substantive topic (Creswell, 2005).

High performing: Performance that has been recognized by the Malcolm Baldridge reviewers as congruent with their organization’s education criteria for performance excellence.

Higher education: Education beyond the secondary level, especially that provided by colleges and universities (“Higher education,” n.d.).

Incremental change: Smaller units of organizational transformation (Fullan, 2001).

Image: How the members of the organization view themselves and believe others view the organization (ASHE, 2001e).

Institution: An established organization with a minimal expectation to change (“Institution,” n.d.).

Institutionalization: In academia, anchoring change into the academic culture.

Kotter’s Eight-Step Model for Leading Change: Progressive acts for organizational enhancement which transform business errors into intentional actions for success (Kotter, 1996).

Leadership: To assume responsibility for creating the systems that managers use to avoid hazards and take advantage of opportunities through attentiveness to creating vision and strategy; communicating and setting direction; motivating action and transforming systems so that they are available to the organization as readily needed to
support its growth, avoid hazards, and energize its evolution toward progressive excellence (Kotter, 1990).

*Malcolm Baldrige:* A world-renowned foundation created to identify, recognize, and reinforce organizational excellence.

*Management:* To assume responsibility for implementing systems which collectively result in creating effective interactions between organizational practices, such as budgeting and conflict resolution, to achieve the organization’s desired outcomes (Kotter, 1990).

*Planned change:* To influence deliberately to a new stable process or a desired evolving process (Felgen, 2007).

*Power:* The measure of a person’s potential to get another person to do what he or she wants them to do, as well as avoiding being forced by others to do what he or she does not want to do (Kotter, 1979).

*Power-oriented behavior:* Action intentionally aimed at acquiring or using power (Kotter, 1979).

*Reforming:* Implementing new system changes (Lewin, 1951).

*Resistors:* Factors that inhibit change (Lewin, 1951).

*Retention:* Sustained employment (Mouchayleh, 2009).

*Unforming:* Removing undesired practices/patterns from the system (Levin, 1951).

*Vision:* A picture of the preferred future (Boyce, 2003).

*Senior executives:* Academic leaders with responsibilities equivalent to those of dean or higher.

Summary

This study seeks to provide organizational leaders with strategies identified as effective in anchoring planned change into organizational culture. This knowledge will enhance leaders’ ability to lead in a more intentional and strategic manner, thereby enhancing organizational growth and development while minimizing organizational regression and ineffectiveness. When applied, this knowledge has the potential to transform organizations into models of progression and effectiveness rather than models of regression and ineffectiveness.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction for the study, research background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, rationale for the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, definitions of terms, assumptions of the study, general methodology, delimitations and limitations, summary, and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 contains an introduction and review of the literature, identification of the problem, and any associated gaps in the literature. The concept of organizational culture, particularly as it relates to higher levels of academia, is explored in relationship to change management theory. Special attention is given to the role of the senior executive in leading planned change. The case is made for exploration of the eighth stage of change as defined by Kotter (1996)—that of anchoring planned change in
organizational culture. Special emphasis is given to the need to identify effective strategies that ensure this desired outcome.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology, including the study’s purpose and research design, the description of the population and sampling procedures used in the study, a restatement of the problem, the description of the instrumentation, and procedures that were used in the collection, process, and analysis of the data. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the methodology used for the research.

Chapter 4 is a presentation and analysis of the data, including an introduction, a description of the data, an analysis of the data as it relates to each of the research questions, and a summary.

Chapter 5 provides an overall summary of the study and discusses the findings from the study and their implications. In addition, recommendations for future research are made.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, relevant literature has been grouped into three main sections. First, a context for this research is created through an overview of organizational change as experienced in the United States. A primary focus for this section is change in higher education. The second section reviews the role of the leader in change management. It is followed by a third section which discusses models for leading change and their relevance for higher education. The chapter concludes by identifying a gap in the literature relative to effective strategies for anchoring planned organizational change.

Databases used to identify articles and peer review studies were Academic Search Complete, Andrews Dissertations, Article Finder, ERIC, Citation Index, Dissertation Abstracts, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Net Library, Psych Info, and SAGE Publications. Personal communication with Dr. John P. Kotter, his website, and those of John Collins and Michael Fullan were additional resources. Books written by leading authors on change were reviewed to supplement these findings. Key words to conduct this review included, but were not limited to, terms such as change, leading organizational change, change management, change theory, models for leading organizational change, leading change in higher education, organizational structure and higher education; culture and change in higher education, change in higher education, culture and change in higher
education, image and change in higher education, power and change in higher education, retention and change in higher education, employee retention and change in higher education, workforce retention and change in higher education; tenure and change in higher education, turnover and change in higher education, vision and change in higher education, anchoring organizational change, research in organizational change, research on change in higher education, and Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

Organizational Change in the United States

Context

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is quoted as saying that “the only constant is change.” This statement made thousands of years ago is even truer today. As the accumulation and integration of new knowledge becomes key to exceptional performance and responsiveness, today’s economy demands unprecedented flexibility from organizations (Shults, 2008). Organizational awareness of this truth is evidenced through an increase, since the 1960s, of greater than a 100 fold in the publication of business books, journals, and articles on this subject (McLagan, 2003). Given this reality, responding to and anticipating change is a primary responsibility for all organizations. Failing to implement planned change is identified as being very costly for organizations and for society.

Recent research has analyzed the characteristics of enduring and great companies (Collins, 2001)—specifically as it relates to their responsiveness to change. Tearle (2004) notes that there are common features which identify organizations that are ready for change. Of significance is that these characteristics include an adaptive culture. Tearle
(2004) further observes that, regardless of the type of culture—adaptive versus controlling—ultimately change occurs only if the people in the organization are willing to alter the way in which they work. He concludes that it is much easier for individuals to keep doing things in the manner in which they have always been done. As a result, change occurs only when individuals are convinced that the reason to do so is valid.

Many organizations experience change more as a “state of being” rather than periodic major initiatives (Boyce, 2003). Some organizations experience the “down-side of change,” as evidenced through initiatives which start and stall. As a result, businesses are left bereft of energy, poised for inertia (Clark, 2005) and potential failure. Change is not always initiated as a new product or process; it may be implemented as a return to past practices and values which may once again be deemed relevant (ASHE, 2001b). This type of planned change is experienced by the organization as an intentional modification to its structure and/or processes (ASHE, 2001c). These deliberate initiatives are multidimensional. As a result speed, sequence, decision making practices, communication systems, resistors of the change and supporters of organizational change must be evaluated for maximum effectiveness, replication, and sustainability (Barnett & Carroll, 1995). It is also observed that the culture of an organization determines whether planned change will be successful (Frost & Gillespie, 1998). As a result, when implementing change, consideration must be given to this dynamic.

Through a quantitative analysis of the variables on communication about planned change, expected employee involvement in the change, and employee readiness for change, Chilton (2010) found no significant relationship. However, as a result of the qualitative analysis of her findings, a positive relationship among these three variables
and success of the change initiative emerged. Accordingly, she suggests that the success of change initiatives will be enhanced when leaders intentionally address these organizational needs.

Summary

Increasingly leaders must proactively address the pace, the unpredictability, and the impact of change on organizational effectiveness. These responses must be intentional and multifaceted. In order to be relevant they must consider such realities as business culture, communication, and employee readiness for change.

Change in Higher Education

Change in higher education is no longer defined in centuries, but is now measured in years, months, days, and even moments (Minogue, 2006). It is a unique industry whose intricate governance structures, planning processes, and culture cause it to cautiously approach change. Leadership which understands this distinctive nature of our educational system is crucial for successful implementation of planned change (Boyce, 2003).

In addition, our system of education has become a market-driven commodity characterized by competition and diversification. In ways which are unprecedented, it is forced to respond to the burgeoning knowledge and demands of its stakeholders. An example of the consumer demands, which reflect our technological society, is the student’s expectation of immediate access to learning and instructor feedback (Shults, 2008).

A major challenge faced by academic organizations is that change in education is cumbersome. By definition, to be an institution means to be established with a minimal
expectation of change (“Institution,” n.d.). Accordingly, this defined state nurtures a culture which tends to resist change.

Organizational Structure and Change in Higher Education

Academic organizational structures tend to be loosely coupled systems characterized by shared decision making and goal ambiguity. In these systems, objectives are divergent, power is diffuse, and leadership roles are shared. This structure makes it difficult to generate the organizational coherence required for effective responsiveness to change (Boyce, 2003). These are the attributes which shape an institution of higher education’s change process. Responses to change emerge which result in the ability to implement small adjustments relatively easily. However, difficulty is experienced when attempts are made to implement major change throughout the organization (Boyce, 2003). The interdependent nature of its departmental and divisional structures also creates a culture which is at risk for mixed and multiple messages related to the planned change (ASHE, 2001e).

Eddy (2002), when investigating how college presidents at 2-year institutions implement planned change, discovered that it was the organizational structure which provides the frame through which the culture is generated and understood. These presidents intentionally “talk the frame, walk the frame, write the frame and symbolize the frame” to ensure success of the change initiative (Eddy, 2002). Consistent with this finding is the insight generated by Smerek (2009). In his study on how new college presidents lead change, he discovered that these CEOs intentionally use the organizational structure to advance planned initiatives. This is accomplished by
frequently creating a crisis through adjusting the organizational chart such that it provides energy needed to move the institution positively toward the change. As a result, the organization more closely realigns with the initiative. Another strategy is to revise the organizational structure so that it provides support for the chief executive by creating positions close to the president which serve as sources of truth. These trusted insights are then used to inform the change initiative and support its success. Through his qualitative case study on how President James Gallagher, at Philadelphia, led planned change, Garvey (2007) shares that this executive intentionally recreated his university’s organizational structure to help rescue it from impending financial doom and to create fiscal viability. To ensure the vitality of his organization, he created a structure which aligns with an exclusionary management system—where the president is positioned atop the power structure. Through this hierarchy, resistance to his planned change of a revised institutional mission was addressed through such combined strategies as isolating and removing dissenting voices while simultaneously recruiting new faculty, administrators, and trustees who were active supporters of the initiative. Kinney’s (2008) research of organizational structures in community colleges, “past, present, and future,” discovered that this traditional structure for leading change in higher education is that which was most commonly used 5 years ago, remains that which is the most common structure presently used, and is projected to be the most preferred by senior academic executives in the future. On a 4.0 scale, the CEOs who participated in this study gave this structure an overall mean rating of 3.24 on its effectiveness for implementing organizational change.

Barnett (2005), through his qualitative case study, further investigated organizational change. She came to understand that it is through the organizational
structure that a similar understanding of goals is affirmed among members of the workforce—specifically as it pertains to clarity regarding which individuals have the position power to implement the desired change. Accordingly, she recommends that this structure be intentionally created by leaders.

Expanding these insights on academic organizational structure and its impact on implementing planned change is the research by Salguero (2009), who discovered that the success of these initiatives is further enhanced through the creation of integrative institution-wide structures such as shared governance campus-wide committees and co-curricular learning communities. Her research confirms that these cross-departmental structures enhance the building of the collaborative culture required for the success of planned change. Duponte (2007) expands this finding through her research which recommends that these integrative structures for leading change are most effective when faculty-administrator relationships are intentionally created and implemented on behalf of these preferred initiatives. Adding yet another perspective on organizational structure and its impact on implementing change in higher education, is the research conducted by Mayo (2005) where she discovered that equally relevant to the formal organizational structure is the informal organizational structure of social networks which are consistently used by members of the workforce to understand performance expectation and complete responsibilities as assigned with implementation of change.

The Effect of Learning Culture on Change in Higher Education

As with change, there is no definition for organizational culture which is accepted by all (Frost & Gillespie, 1998). This research uses the definition for organizational
culture as the “set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices which characterize an institution or organization” (“Culture,” n.d.). Frost and Gillespie (1998) expand this definition by observing that meaningful cultures consists of (a) the values and beliefs held by members of the organization; (b) the policies and practices used by the organization; and (c) those values and beliefs which align with its vision. They observe that culture serves as the primary conduit for change and as a result provides a sense of meaning and shared purpose for its members. Cultural pragmatists believe that an organization is the culture and the culture is the organization. In reality, organizations have multiple cultures—those which are formal or official and those which are unofficial, yet powerful determinants of organizational responsiveness and therefore must be respected (Frost & Gillespie, 1998). Iancu (2009) shares this perspective as expressed through his definition of organizational culture as the collection of values, beliefs, aspirations, expectations, and behaviors which have been developed over time such that these attitudes and practices dominate decision making and influence performance. Kotter (2008) observes that when it comes to affecting behavior and implementing change that it is these organizational feelings that are more important than the intellectual arguments in favor of an initiative.

Although there is disagreement over the nature of organizational culture as defined for academic organizations, it is observed that this culture’s distinctive attributes are evidenced by clearly political yet consensus-oriented practices which oftentimes result in tension and inertia. The existence of the dual faculty and administration subcultures results in clashes which have the potential to adversely impact the implementation of planned change (ASHE, 2001e). Iancu (2009) further explores
academic culture and recognizes that it is characterized by two distinct levels. For example, he defines one dimension of culture as normative or the formal aspect of organizational life which includes, but is not limited to, rules, positions, and policies as defined in written documents. He continues to define the second dimension of culture as expressive or informal. This aspect of organizational life is experienced through stories about the company and its heroes.

In 2007, Foster, through his research on perceptions of organizational culture of executives, administrators, and faculty at North Texas community colleges discovered that organizational culture must be considered when implementing change in higher education. Specifically, he recommends that role in culture be understood. He discovered that throughout the organization, members of the workforce respond more effectively to implementing change when they understand their role and the role and responsibilities of those individuals who are primarily responsible for the initiative. This understanding provides the context for cultures of abundance to emerge. This abundance is experienced, not just as the absence of ineffective responses to change, but as the intentional creation of learning cultures which embrace change with a mind-set defined through positive possibilities. As a result, responses are created which transcend available resources and exceed consumer expectations. Shults (2008) suggests that this culture of abundance is the preferred culture for implementing change when contrasted with academic cultures of challenge or choice. He describes this climate as a state of wellness where excellence in learning is nurtured in such a way that a state of institutional responsiveness exceeds stakeholder expectations by providing exceptional value, building capacity through leveraging resources, and proactively meeting diverse challenges. He expands this insight
by noting that abundance refers to an organizational state and mind-set rather than financial health, as is typically thought. He further observes that community colleges which tend to be fiscally sound seem more likely to experience the absence of an abundant culture since they often lack a crisis or catalyst needed to generate the energy essential for the creation of an abundant culture.

Lindner (2008), through her research on the influence of organizational culture and implementing incremental change, discovered that, unfortunately, leaders of change tend to seek to understand the impact of the organization’s culture of these initiatives after the change has already been launched, thereby potentially placing the success of these initiatives at risk. Her recommendation, therefore, is that leaders of change develop strategies which are culturally sensitive prior to the onsite of the change, thereby strengthening their probability of success.

Marconi-Hickman (2001) affirms this finding through her research on leading change. She concludes that effective implementation of change requires that leaders of these initiatives not only understand the impact of organizational culture on the successful implementation of change, but that these insights must not be implemented in isolation. That for maximum effectiveness, corresponding efforts to engage a critical mass and establish guiding sets of principles to lead the change must accompany this assessment of the potential impact of the organization’s culture on the preferred outcome of these initiatives.

Alternately, Pellow (2006), when conducting a case study on New York’s St. John’s University’s implementation of the major change to adopt a residence life strategy after 127 years of being a commuter campus, recommends that while leaders
must consciously attempt to understand the organizational culture in which the change is to be implemented, it is equally important that these senior leaders understand the ability of the planned change to create a new and preferred culture. Of additional relevance are Hogan’s (2004) findings, through research conducted at a small liberal arts college on implementing change, which suggest that leaders of change must not only understand the organizational depth of culture, but in addition, they must understand the reality, that culture is also a personal experience which is uniquely interpreted by members of the workforce. Therefore, communication strategies must include both broad and personal messaging which address the individual benefit that comes from active support of the initiative. By contrast, it is inferred that it is equally important that individual employees understand personal consequences which may come when support for the initiative is withheld or resistance is intentionally generated.

**Organizational Image and Change in Higher Education**

A unique attribute of higher education, which impacts the organization’s response to planned change, is that of image. Image is defined, not only as how the members of the organization view themselves, but how they believe others view the organization. Since image is tied to identity, to initiate change which could change the image will most likely be resisted by those members of the organization who prefer their established identity (ASHE, 2001e).

Smerek (2009), in his research on the leadership processes of new college presidents, discovered that each of these leaders consistently used establishing an inspiring vision of the future as one of their primary strategies for successfully
implementing planned change. Joyce (2005) found that concerns about its region’s negative image, and the associated declining enrollment, provided the catalyst needed to stimulate the creation of a consortium of Baltimore colleges and universities which resulted in implementing the planned change of a revitalized brand of academic excellence that attracted the brightest undergraduate and graduate students and which ultimately revitalized this region’s system of higher education.

Tormey (2007) recommends that leaders of academic change transfer insights, gained through his analysis of speeches made each Thursday by coach Don James of the University of Washington to members of the football team, to members of the workforce during change initiatives. This study examines the effectiveness of positive mental visualization techniques 48 hours before each game on the team’s success. Tormey (2007) implies that similar positive imaging, incorporated strategically by leaders during the organization’s change process, would support the success of these initiatives.

**Power and Change in Higher Education**

Kotter (1979) observes that power is defined as “the measure of a person’s potential to get another person to do what he or she wants them to do, as well as the avoiding of being forced by others to do what he or she does not want to do” (p. 1). He further suggests that power should be understood from the perspective of power-oriented behavior—which is action intentionally aimed at acquiring or using power. In addition, he believes it relevant to consider, as a parallel, the concept of power dynamics. This phenomenon refers to those interpersonal interactions which result from power-oriented behavior.
Jia (2009), in research on leading the academic organization through a change of its mission, discovered that in higher education, change occurs in response to power. He describes this phenomenon as political power, suggesting that implementing changes on mission is a political, not a rational, process. Therefore, for maximum effectiveness with this type of planned change, organizational power in higher education must be shared between the Board, faculty, administration, and members of the workforce. Kucia (2004) refers to this type of power sharing as purpose-driven collaboration. He suggests that this type of intentional building of the internal community, such that trusting relationships are established, is a crucial element often overlooked by leaders of change in higher education. Perhaps this is because, in higher education, distinctive, yet overlapping power structures exist between diverse constituents such as faculty, administrators, the Board, and state-governing organizations. As a result, ambiguity not only exists about who holds authority for initiating change but on who is accountable for its success or failure. Ambiguity of goals can, however, enhance organizational receptivity to change. In this context employees tend to not feel committed to established processes and therefore are more open to new initiatives (ASHE, 2001e, p. 71).

Complicating this structure is academia’s cultural mandate to support ambiguous decision making and to never visibly display position power. These intricacies serve only to make the implementing of planned change more complex (ASHE, 2001e, p. 71). Supporting this finding is Soetaert’s (2008) investigation of strategic change in higher education, through which she identifies the existence of subsets of power between and among employee groups which interplay throughout the implementation of planned change. As a result, she recommends that leaders of this change intentionally take into
account this persistent dynamic, specifically as it pertains to top-down change initiatives. She suggests that successful implementation of this type of change requires ongoing negotiating with departmental members on strategies, outcomes, and timelines. She notes that failure to do so could result in failure of the initiative as members of these subcultures exert a stronger counter-power which could result in the demise of the planned change. These findings align with the insights of Yankelovich (2005), who observes that higher education labors under too many politics, too many traditions, and too many structural constraints (e.g., shared governance) to effectively implement planned change. Committees, task forces, and project-specific teams are actively involved in the institution’s policy and decision making which, while promoting an inclusive culture, often delays efficient responses to change (ASHE, 2001e). Adding to the distinct nature of this culture is the fact that its two primary employee groups tend to have different value systems. Administrative power tends to be constructed and experienced through a hierarchal system which values bureaucratic norms. In contrast, the faculty systems tend to be based on knowledge and value systems which emphasize collegiality, conversation, shared power, autonomy and peer review (ASHE, 2001e).

In his research on the impact of power and politics on planned change, specifically the restructure of the educational system of governance in Kentucky, Garn (2005) advises academic leaders to consider the influence of external power to support or adversely impact success of change initiatives. For maximum effectiveness he recommends the appointing of an entrepreneur for the change. He observes that change initiatives intended to result in organizational restructure must address the redistributing
of power needed both to implement the change as well as the power realignment required to sustain the change subsequent to its implementation.

**Impact of Retention of Employees and Change in Higher Education**

The dominant trait in academic organizations of high employee retention rates among most employee groups also contributes to the institution’s resistance to change. The longest average length of employment is experienced by faculty who tend to sustain lengths of service at a primary institution as a result of the tenure system. These extended years of service result in loyalty to the organization which prompts employees to resist change, because of their comfort and familiarity with established systems. Mouchayleh (2009) observes, however, that a new dynamic, which impacts the successful implementation of change in higher organization, is the tension between organizational loyalty which increasingly emerges as senior faculty are replaced by newer faculty with shorter lengths of service. This difference in lengths of tenure results in varying degrees of loyalty to established organizational practices. These inconsistent levels of commitment may hinder or support the effective implementation of planned change.

This sustained service of academia’s general workforce is contrasted with the shorter tenure of presidents. Donnelly (1996) in his research on the longevity of college presidents and their ability to successfully lead change determined that the average length of service by these senior executives has steadily declined from 10-15 years of service to an average of 6.8 years. These contrasting years of employment stimulate complacency in the workforce, whose members increasingly choose to hold out on making a commitment.
to planned change until a new president is hired and the initiative is most likely forgotten (ASHE, 2001e).

**Visioning and Change in Higher Education**

Organizational responses to planned change in higher education must be empowered by vision, collaboration through new competencies, and the consistent implementation of skills which create distinctive templates for the successful implementation of change (Boyce, 2003). Boyce continues by observing that the challenge to successful implementation of change in higher education is more about developing and sustaining new ways of seeing, deciding, and acting than planning and implementing. He suggests that successful change is about learning enough collectively so that adverse institutional consequences are averted and desired outcomes are achieved. This effective response to change must be rigorous in inquiry, skillful in dialogue, and fearless in examining all aspects of the institution. Searcy (2010), in his research on presidential leadership during strategic transitions, determined that during periods of change, this chief executive must strategically engage in visioning to varying degrees as warranted by the unique requirements for successful implementation of the associated change initiative. He suggests that for maximum effectiveness, this type of visioning be crafted within the context of understanding systems of internal relationships and communication. Frost and Gillespie (1998) observe that implementing change in higher education is more likely to be successful if the change is communicated and received by members of the workforce as essential to the organization’s mission and vision. They further note that the proposed change should be confirmed as critical to future success of
the college or university. Finally, they observe that this proposed change must align with the organization’s values and beliefs. An equally important message to communicate is that some behaviors will not only be modified, but eliminated as required for success of the initiative. Their observation is that when senior leaders seek to impose any change upon an organization which does not align with its culture, values, and norms, that the planned change may become policy, but that it will not be experienced deeply by the organization. These initiatives at their best are superficial shared encounters which most likely erode over time or are discarded by future leaders.

Marconi-Hickman (2001) observes that this type of visioning in higher education is challenged by loyalty to the previously established vision as constructed by members of the internal and external communities. These constituents tend to prefer the comfort of an existing vision rather than the opportunities and challenges associated with the unknown requirements of a new vision and its associated impact on mission. In contrast, Hughes (1999), when studying the understanding and use of power to achieve organizational change as experienced by student affairs middle managers, discovered that collaborative visioning was one of the four attributes embraced by these members of the workforce—so much so that it was deemed essential for leaders who were successful with these initiatives. He found that the effectiveness of this collaborative visioning is enhanced when the leader of change is also exhibiting attributes of intuition, integrity, and credibility.

Summary

Organizations must make fundamental changes in how they conduct business in order to be successful in an increasingly competitive and challenging environment
(Kotter, 2007). This ability to effectively respond to change will determine its probability for profit or loss (Shults, 2008). In higher education, change is being faced in unprecedented rates (ASHE, 2001d). Parsons and Fidler (2005) note that, in the past, educational organizations had the option of having a more static culture. They were more consistently insulated from major upheavals than those which characterize other businesses. However, the need to respond rapidly to the expectations of a demanding society has made this option extinct. Implementing planned change in organizations of higher education is complex. Its distinct culture of established organizational structures, shared governance, and competing values is an example of challenges faced by these institutions as they attempt to respond to change (Boyce, 2003). Leaders of change in higher education must also give intentional consideration to the unique impact of organizational structure, established image, culture, power, workforce retention, and visioning on the successful implementation of planned change.

**Role of the Leader in Organizational Change**

**Significance of the Leader**

Petranker (2010) observes that in today’s accelerating society, the leader is called to transform organizations so that resilient responses to societal needs are timely. As a result, an organization’s service is enhanced and its viability is affirmed. *Merriam-Webster* (“Leader,” n.d.) defines a leader as “a person who directs or guides.” An expanded definition as provided by Malm (2008) observes that leadership is the process of influencing people so that they are mobilized to achieve a common goal. Shults (2008) further observes that leadership must be experienced through meaningful connections between those who lead and those who follow. For purposes of this research, leadership
is understood to be a blend of these definitions, so that it is considered to be the experience of positively influencing others so that they are effectively mobilized to achieve a shared goal which advances mission and enriches lives. Petranker (2010) observes that today’s effective leader must strengthen organizations to not only achieve their desired outcomes, but attain outcomes which go beyond their limitations and as a result exceed the expectations of all.

McKinney and Morris (2010), through their qualitative research, examined the nature and extent of organizational change that occurs when community colleges expand their offerings to include baccalaureate degree programs. Conducted at two Florida colleges, executive administrators were interviewed to gain insights on how they implemented this multifaceted transformational change. One of their primary findings was that effective leadership is essential to making organizational change a reality. Like Collins (2001), Van Loon (2001) confirms the significant role that a leader plays in implementing planned change. This successful initiator will be able to redefine the change into an experience which is not perceived as controversial, but which instead aligns with the norms of the organization’s culture. The ongoing challenge during this process is to affirm norms which enrich the change while correspondingly challenging practices which impede its implementation. Miller (2010) confirms that nothing stops change more quickly than when the senior leaders are not aligned with the change. He notes that too often these executives believe that their cursory appearances are enough to ensure effective implementation of change—but these brief appearances are insufficient. Petranker (2010) believes that a leader, who wishes to transform an organization, must be a master of change. He describes this type of leadership as transformative. From his
perspective this style is ever open to the opportunities that time presents. It is inspired by a vision that is not delegated, but actively communicates to members of the organization. Interestingly enough, the primary vehicle for the inspirational sharing of this messaging and securing of buy-in from members of the workforce is the leader’s presence. This leader uses personal presence to not only complement the institutional messaging about the planned change, but will, through presence, create a readily accessible antidote to organizational fear. This leader uses change to focus on the vitality of future accomplishments. Effectiveness in leading change is determined, not only by completing the change, but by impacting the organization so that it becomes a learning institution in which knowledge grows and freedom to explore new change is conveyed as an expectation for all.

Collins (2001) believes that leaders of change must ignore what he describes as myths about change. He asserts that there is the myth of the change program, where change is experienced as a unique episode. The myth of the burning platform purports that change starts only when there is a crisis. The myth of the stock option suggests that higher salaries and bonuses are successful incentives for leaders to use in implementing change, whereas the myth of fear is characterized by anxiety that the company will lose its competitive edge if the change is not effectively implemented. An additional myth, as challenged by Collins, is the myth of the revolution which asserts that for change to occur it must be wrenching and painful. Instead, to effectively implement change, Collins recommends that leaders create what is defined as the “flywheel effect.” Through this strategy, leaders intentionally use change to create organizational momentum through the successful accomplishment of defined goals. These achievements are then highly
publicized both internally and externally, thereby generating a feeling of organizational capacity and well-being. This positive energy provides the leverage for new change initiatives as required for progressive organizational responsiveness evidenced by great companies.

In her doctoral research, Gradwell (2004) suggests that the positive energy generated through successful change yields another desired outcome which is the enhanced credibility of the leader. She observes that when leaders are attentive to seven categories of effective communication for organizational change, specifically—
(a) re-branding the vision, (b) garnering employee support of change, (c) connecting the change to the preferred organization, (d) ensuring that communication from the leadership team is unified, (e) increasing leadership visibility, and (f) implementing a well-structured, well-orchestrated, multi-channel communication plan with (g) follow-up face-to-face meetings with all participants—leadership credibility is enhanced. She further discovered that this enhanced credibility is enriched when the planned change is viewed positively by participants; the leaders’ messaging is consistent through the change process and the communication process is perceived by participants as well structured.

Kotter (1990) believes that when considering change it is important to distinguish between management and leadership. He views management as assuming responsibility for implementing systems which collectively result in creating effective interactions between organizational practices, such as budgeting and conflict resolution, to achieve the organization’s desired outcomes. On the other hand, leadership creates the systems that managers use to avoid hazards and take advantage of opportunities. Leadership is characterized by attentiveness to creating vision and strategy; communicating and setting
direction; and motivating action and transforming systems so that they are available to the organization as readily needed to support its growth, avoid hazards, and energize its evolution toward progressive excellence.

McLagan (2003) observes that the behaviors of top management have a significant impact on an organization’s learning and therefore on an organization’s ability to respond positively to change. She asserts that leaders create a capacity for change when they link present and future, make learning a way of life, support continuous improvements, ensure diverse teams, encourage mavericks, shelter breakthroughs, integrate technology, and build and deepen trust.

Collins (1995) believes that leaders most effectively address change when they make the company the ultimate product. In other words, the greater deliverable for the leader is not the exceptional service, but the exceptional organization which is continuously strengthened to provide enduring service, because of its progressive responsiveness. This happens as leaders guide their organizations to embrace their core ideology through the form of core values and/or a centralized purpose beyond that of just making money or generating profits for stockholders. It is through these values that a strong sense of identity matures and emanates its unique ideology. The leader then builds a cult-like culture around this image, which is intentionally used to ensure the success of planned change, as words and themes specific to the change perfectly align with the ideology. Collins (2001) uniquely observes that for exceptional success, the leader of this change is most often homegrown. Of the 11 great companies, with their combined existence being greater than 1,700 years, only 2 of these organizations hired a chief executive from outside of the company. These leaders of great companies grow up with
the organization and, as a result, work to initiate change in a manner which preserves the core values through an understanding which is typically not evidenced in the leadership of outsiders.

Collins (2001) continues by noting that the effective leader of today’s organizational change builds visionary organizations by creating a counterbalance to the fixed core ideology of a relentless drive for progress. He notes that the core ideology must not change, for it provides the stability and cohesion necessary to promote change, improvement, innovation, and continuous renewal. In this context, planned change is implemented through what he describes as Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs), which are so clear and compelling and imaginative that, through their accomplishment, fuel is generated for new change initiatives. The leader, who creates this type of response to change, transforms the organization into a visionary institution where continuous improvement is a way of life. In these companies the critical question is not “How can we do well?” but “How can we do better tomorrow what we did today?” As a result the leader builds an organization which is equipped for long-term responsiveness through appropriate responses to the changes of today. Collins (1995) asserts that the effective leader of organizational change responds to the one overarching mandate to passionately preserve the core ideology while simultaneously progress as the ideology matures. This creates what he refers to as the “genius of the and” where leaders of planned change create responses which embrace both ends of a continuum such as continuity and change; predictability and chaos; heritage and renewal.

Collins (2001) notes that those organizations which are constantly improving are also those which have acknowledged that change is a way of life, not just a one-time
program. He also identifies the significant role that the leader plays to ensure the effective implementation of planned change. His research indicates that through “level 5 leadership” (Collins, 2001, p. 12), which is characterized by a blend of personal humility and professional competency, organizations are transformed from the typical norm of good to the envisioned breakthrough of greatness. Collins (1994) further notes that this achievement of extraordinary performance results from the leader’s tenacious commitment to excellence. This conclusion was based on his more exhaustive study of 11 out of 1,435 companies. These 11 companies were identified as those that achieved break-through performance. Break-through performance was noted as results that continued to exceed industry standards. It was further observed that this sustained change is characterized by continuous innovation, which was reinforced by periodic formal change initiatives.

McLagan (2003) observes that success with achieving planned change occurs when the following conditions exist: The culture is defined as knowledge-friendly, a reward system for sharing knowledge has been established, and multiple channels for sharing knowledge through personal contact have been established. She further suggests that these organizations are characterized by diverse top management teams that encourage mavericks who are risk takers. By default, the intensity of these risks requires what she defines as “break through shelters,” or organizational structures that protect the desired change from institutional resistance. Finally, she acknowledges that this type of change must be supported by integrated technology. Ultimately, however, she notes that employees are most likely to support organizational change when trust and credibility for organizational leaders exists.
The Leader of Change in Higher Education

Wagner (2001) observes that unless leaders understand principles for leading change, organizations—specifically, academic settings—will fail in their mission to be centers which consistently improve in the delivery of excellence in teaching and learning. He further observes that during the last quarter of a century, the nature of work, the demands of the learner, the expectations for citizenship in a global society, and the change of learner motivation have rendered the current system of learning to be totally obsolete and at risk for failure. This failure will ultimately impact not only the quality and potential of professional accomplishment for students, but also has the ability to adversely impact the quality of life for our global society.

Therefore, Gustafson et al. (2003) recommend that leaders of change, in higher education, create and implement systems which continuously assess the organization’s readiness for change. This assessment evaluates the level of dissatisfaction that exists with the status quo; it validates the desire for a future improved state; and it determines the receptivity from members of the workforce to strategies required to achieve this new state and the perceived cost of changing to achieve this future portrait of responsiveness. Change results when dissatisfaction with the status quo is high, the desire for a future state is stronger than the dissatisfaction with the current state, a plan exists to attain a better level of responsiveness, and the benefits of attaining this preferred state are greater than the pain that will be required to achieve this new level of being. Through her doctoral analysis of leadership beliefs and practices of 25 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) leaders, Sams (2010) identifies 10 valuable leadership practices for leading change, as required to achieve this preferred state. These
attributes are as follows: (a) collaborating, (b) listening and implementing effective communication skills, (c) building relationships, (d) serving others, (e) encouraging others, (f) modeling or acting as a role model, (g) using personal influence to benefit others, (h) mentoring, (i) communicating and implementing the change vision, and (j) a commitment to learn.

Van Loon (2001) further observes that, in academia, a new president will almost always be viewed as a leader of change. He further asserts that major organizational change is likely to happen only in the face of a truly difficult situation. He defines this difficult situation as a moment in time when the people in the organization are genuinely afraid that unless the proposed change is implemented, the organization will not survive.

In academia, this ability to lead and therefore effectively influence so that planned change is implemented, must be understood from the perspective of the members of its two primary subcultures—faculty and administrators. In accordance with its purpose to serve as a resource for teaching and learning, employees of academic cultures are more likely to allow themselves to be influenced by a leader whose knowledge they respect and trust (ASHE, 2001e). A unique nuance for leading in academia is that planned change must be implemented through the intricacies of shared governance and academic freedom (ASHE, 2001a). As the effective leader navigates the change initiative through these difficult organizational waters, it becomes institutionalized or integrated into the culture.

McKinney and Morris (2010) further note that effective leadership is absolutely essential for leading change in higher education. Their belief is that it is the president who must ensure that a shared vision guides this process. They state that “the president
must know where he or she is going” (McKinney & Morris, 2010, p. 198) in order to ensure that the objectives of the planned change are achieved.

Malm (2008) takes the strong position that leading organizational change is among the most important and challenging responsibilities that a leader has. In order to be effective, these executives must not only surmount entrenched interests which may be counter to the initiative, but they must also garner workforce commitment to engage in the change and then stick with the change until its completion. Evans (1993) suggests that to implement change it is essential to understand its five dimensions, which he identifies as the following: (a) the content of the reform, (b) the faculty’s willingness and capacity for change, (c) the organizational strength of the academic organization, (d) support and training for the planned change, and (e) leadership. With respect to academic leadership, he observes that change is more likely to be accepted by faculty if the planned change is championed by someone who is trusted; if the proposed change is linked to values that are held by those responsible for implementing the change; and if the change is both focused and practical.

Summary

Effective leadership by senior executives has been confirmed as essential for the successful implementation of planned organizational change. This is especially true for change initiatives in higher education. The leader of change in this environment must understand its unique characteristics and create implementation strategies which respond to these nuances. While the needs of all constituents must be considered, for success of these initiatives in higher education, it is recommended that specific attention be given to the needs of faculty. This constituency is more responsive to the proposed change and,
therefore, supportive of its success when leaders of the planned change have intentionally
developed trusting relationships with members of this unit.

**Theories for Leading Organizational Change**

Primary theories for leading organizational change reviewed in this section are Kotter’s eight-step model, punctuated equilibrium, incremental, Lewin’s three stages of change, appreciative inquiry, and organizational change manager. In recent years, change management models relevant for leading organizational change are being developed, implemented, and evaluated with greater frequency.

Wagner (2001) suggests that any theory of change must first and foremost seek to explain how conditions and capacities for sustaining change are created. He further asserts that this fundamental understanding must be attained prior to the development of any action plans for intentional change. This mind-set is not consistently expressed as a first step by other theorists; however, I believe that Wagner’s admonition for this pre-change reflection is particularly relevant for anchoring change in the academic culture of higher education. This recommendation aligns with Covey’s (1989) observation that in order to be effective one must seek to understand and then to be understood.

Research specific to organizational change has focused on effective strategies for leading this change (Gale, 2002). Towers (2007), through his doctoral research on organizational change, observes that when evaluating these models, it is important to understand that the processes of organizational change are interlinked such that change phenomena at one level of the organization affects change phenomena in another area of the organization. The result is the emergence of what he describes as change offshoots.
An awareness of this potential impact of planned change is essential for its effective implementation.

Kotter’s Eight-Step Model

Kotter’s (1996) model will be presented briefly in this section, so it can be examined in relationship to other theories. However, because of its significance to this study, it will be thoroughly covered in a separate section. This model consists of eight steps. The first is that of creating a sense of urgency. This initial stage is then built upon to ultimately implement and anchor the planned change as required by the model’s eighth step. Taylor (2010) joins other researchers who have tested this model for its effectiveness. Progression through its steps effectively provided the template for leaders to use as they implemented the planned change to seek accreditation. As a result this goal was achieved, with state and national accreditations being attained. In a completely different setting Haskins (2009) further piloted the effectiveness of Kotter’s (1996) eight-step model for leading change through the analysis of its sequences as a necessary progression for implementing the desired initiative. His work confirms this eight-step sequence to be effective.

Al-Mashari (2003) complements Kotter’s (1996) work with what he also describes as essential steps for effectively leading change management initiatives. While the focus of his work is Enterprise Resource Planning software system implementation, his recommendations have been identified in other change management literature. Examples of these essential steps include the following: (a) communicating goals and long-term perspectives that focus on public mission and ensuring high-quality standards and organizational security, (b) defining vision, and (c) defining the case for change.
Similar to Kotter (1996), Peterson’s (2010) doctoral research identifies six stages to the change process which contribute to an organization’s ability to successfully implement the initiative. These stages are to (a) establish the need for change; (b) obtain top management support; (c) develop an implementation strategy; (d) obtain internal support, which Kotter (1996) refers to as “buy-in”; (e) confirm supporting personnel and financial resources; and (f) institutionalization of the change, which Kotter refers to as stage eight, “anchoring.” In addition, Peterson (2010) chooses to further contrast these stages of leading change with Lewin’s (1951) change model as referenced in Table 1.

Table 1

*Peterson’s (2010) 6 Stages of Change Contrasted With Lewin’s (1951) 3 Stages of Change*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peterson’s (2010) 6 Stages of Change</th>
<th>Lewin’s (1951) 3 Stages of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing the Need</td>
<td>Unfreezing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Top Management Support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of Implementation Strategy</td>
<td>Forming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obtaining Internal Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Supporting personnel and financial resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutionalization of change</td>
<td>Refreezing</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Punctuated Equilibrium

According to the punctuated equilibrium theory, the change stage of relative stability must align with the following five primary components: (a) core values and beliefs, (b) strategy that aligns with organizational priorities, (c) distribution of power,
(d) organizational structure, and (e) control systems (Gold, 1999). Sastry (1995) confirms that change experienced through this theory is perceived as occurring only during relatively rare periods of organizational reorientation. During these brief periods of punctuation, members of the organization experience distress and uncertainty, given that their sense of security is being threatened. This discomfort stimulates the members to attempt to resolve the uncertainty as quickly as possible, and, as a very positive productive period of new ideas and possibilities emerges, incremental organizational change is experienced. On the other hand, revolutionary change tends to come as a result of major external pressure which is viewed as credible by the members of the organization. The risk during this phase of a great event of punctuation is that premature decisions are more likely to be made that do not take into full consideration the extent or impact of the planned change. In addition, the punctuation must be so strong that it breaks the old deep structure so that a new one is established. This theory observes that the pain associated with this punctuation can be so severe that the organization may choose to remain the same rather than undergo what is experienced as an institutional revolution. Gallo’s (2010) finding relative to the sequence of the five components of punctuated equilibrium theory is that the order of these essential elements is not significant. As a result he invites leaders to understand that patterns for implementing change will vary and that these patterns may or may not impact the change process or organizational performance. Expanding these insights is the research of Moerschell (2009), who through retrospective accounts of wilderness leadership, trainees discovered that a unique outcome of punctuated equilibrium theory is that, as a result of sudden unexpected change, new organizational leadership emerges. Since these roles emerge
during a time of organizational need, members of the workforce tend to experience this leadership as preferred, for it tends to be guided by compassion and a sense of member responsibility for each other with no regard to formal positions or titles. Subsequent to the crisis, the organization must conduct a self-assessment to confirm which previous leaders will continue to assume responsibilities for implementing change and which responsibilities should be transferred to the newly emerged leaders.

Benjamin and Levinson (1993) support the concept of equilibrium as defined in this punctuated equilibrium theory of change, as evidenced in the second of the eight principles they have formulated as components of their change process model. These principles are as follows:

1. Develop a systematic process for change.
2. Manage organizational equilibrium and mutual adaptation of staff.
3. Determine whether enough organizational energy exists to initiate and implement the planned change.
4. Analyze the size of the change initiative.
5. Assess and harness stakeholder commitment to the planned change.
6. Identify a change champion.
7. Establish a prototype for the organizational response.
8. Incorporate change reviews into the performance management process.

Incremental Theory

The incremental theory also recognizes this concept of equilibrium as significant and incorporates it into its structure. Like the punctuated equilibrium theory, Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991) observe that this theory of change is also relevant for understanding
planned change which occurs in educational settings. These insights are generated from
the extensive research which he conducts on organizational change, specifically that
which occurs in higher education. Unlike the punctuated equilibrium theory, which has
the two primary characteristics of stability (equilibrium) punctuated by metamorphic
change (revolution), Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991) believe that incremental theory
suggests three stages of organizational change. These stages are adoption,
implementation or initial use, and institutionalization. The first stage, adoption, is
described as the process that precedes and includes the decision to adopt the planned
change. Stage 2 is characterized by the initial use or implementation of the planned
change. Finally, stage 3, known as institutionalization, is the stage in which the change is
integrated into the ongoing fabric of the organization. It is also during this stage that the
planned change may be consciously discarded or simply disappear due to attrition or
erosion of support for the initiative (Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991). Nadler, Shaw, and
Walton (1995) note that this type of incremental change is achieved only when an
organization’s leaders exercise focus and sustained efforts.

The incremental theory further suggests that if institutionalization is to occur, it
will most likely require approximately 3 years. This final stage of institutionalization
aligns with Kotter’s (1996) observation of an eighth stage for effective change
management. He identifies this stage as anchoring the planned change into the corporate
culture. Unlike the punctuated equilibrium theory, the incremental theory does not
acknowledge the organization’s core values or beliefs—known as the organization’s
“deep structure” (Gold, 1999)—as a consideration for effectiveness of the change
initiative. Insights from Lindner’s (2008) doctoral research suggest that when seeking to
implement incremental change in higher education, factors which include the need for thoughtful planning and articulating desired outcomes at the onset of change; the need for organized training and communication efforts; the importance of working towards clear, measurable results and project end dates, and the critical need for a culturally sensitive approach to planned change should be considered.

Lewin’s Three Stages of Change

In contrast to the incremental theory and the punctuated equilibrium theory, Lewin’s (1951) theory of change was not specifically designed for academia, yet its broad relevance and transferability has been established. Similar to the incremental theory, Lewin’s (1951) theory also has three stages. These stages are unfreezing, reforming, and freezing. This theory suggests that these stages are characteristic of planned change as it occurs in all organizations. Lewin (1951) proposed the existence of factors that help to achieve change; these he refers to as drivers. He further notes the existence of factors that inhibit change; these he refers to as resistors.

Through the lens of this theory, our state of equilibrium is understood to exist as a result of a large force field which is maintained through a balance between driving and restraining forces (Lewin, 1951). On the other hand, change is understood to occur in response to alterations in this balance. Unfreezing is further defined as consisting of three sub-processes which are (a) disconfirmation, (b) induction of guilt or survival anxiety, and (c) learning anxiety.

Disconfirmation occurs in response to dissatisfaction or frustration that results from information received. This dissatisfaction stimulates an imbalance in the previously established equilibrium as established through the force field. In this state, the individual
chooses to ignore the information which is causing discomfort or accept the information, connect it to something that is cared about and then respond. This response stimulates the survival anxiety of this first stage of unfreezing (Schein, 2010). During this stage of responsiveness, feelings are experienced which cause us to think that if we do not change, we will fail to meet our needs or achieve our goals. It is in response to this survival anxiety that a different type of anxiety, learning anxiety, is experienced. It is this desire to create positive responses to the change that transitions an individual into the second stage of change as defined by Lewin’s (1951) model, which is reforming. Schein (2010) suggests that the key to leading change effectively through this model is to create enough psychological safety so that the change target is able to accept the information associated with the proposed new behavior, feel the survival anxiety, and become motivated to change. The cognitive restructuring which results from this new learning is the dominant characteristic of the third stage of the Lewin (1951) model for change, which he calls freezing. It is during this final stage that the individual adopts the new behavior. Schein (2010) observes that these new practices must, to some degree, align with the existing behavior and personality of the learner or internal incongruence results which stimulates new cycles of disconfirmation that result in unlearning the information which was just learned.

Gold (1999) observes that a criticism of incremental change theory is that it seeks to explain relatively short change initiatives—those that typically occur over a 3-year period—whereas the change theories proposed by Lewin (1951), as well as the punctuated equilibrium theory of Romanelli and Tushman (1994), allow for the implementation of planned change over an extended time.
Appreciative Inquiry

A change theory that is almost completely different from those discussed thus far is that which is socially constructed and is best described as action research. This theory of change is called appreciative inquiry. As with punctuated equilibrium theory, this theory of change views the depth of an organization’s relationships and values to be a significant consideration in the understanding of organizational change. At its core is the use of positive imagery as the means of creating momentum required to effectively implement change and fulfill organizational initiatives (Simmons, 2007). Through research conducted in health care organizations, Clarke (2004) also confirms that the principles of appreciative inquiry are effective strategies for inspiring and motivating the workforce to implement planned change. In her study, insights specific to appreciative inquiry were enhanced when coupled with understandings specific to principles for implementing change from the perspective of the emotionally intelligent leader. Supporting these findings is research conducted by Sekerka (2002) during which she facilitated the recollection, by members of the workforce of a large government medical center, of their organization’s strengths and positive core values. This study analyzed both the cognitive and physiological outcome of participants in the introductory step of appreciative inquiry, that of “discovery.” Her findings contribute to the understanding of this process for implementing change in that the members of the workforce who participated in the conditions of appreciative inquiry experienced significant decreases in negative emotions toward the planned change while correspondingly experiencing favorable shifts in heart rate variability (HRV). Comparatively, participants who experienced the typical problem-based approach to implementing change had no
favorable shifts in affect or HRV; as a matter of fact, these individuals experience a more negative view of self and the proposed change.

Through a 9-year longitudinal study, Mantel (2001) analyzed the impact of leader conversations, characterized by principles of appreciative inquiry, on the effective implementation of organizational change. His study was conducted at the Chicago office of World Vision. This research was initiated in 1992 at a time when this private volunteer organization was seeking to initiate an organizational redesign. He found that, in accordance with its principles, appreciative inquiry leader conversations reflect (a) a belief in the possibility of a positive outcome, (b) a generous use of words through which unconditional positive regard for members of the workforce is conveyed, and (c) the radical inclusion of employees in the change process as experienced by continuous movement of the leaders toward members of the workforce. This positive commitment by leaders was also embraced by senior executives on the corporate level. As a result, organizational voices were both initially and repeatedly invited to be heard throughout implementation of the planned change. He suggests that this intentional use of appreciative inquiry conversations not also supported effective implementation of the change initiative, but that through this process shared organizational meaning regarding this desired outcome was achieved. Through over 100 interviews with donors in a volunteer organization, Stavros (1998) also discovered that through appreciative inquiry, even a non-paid workforce is able to effectively implement planned change and correspondingly identify and build upon the “best of what is” about the organization as it seeks to establish a vision for tomorrow.
Yoder (2005) further espouses that the appreciative inquiry theory of change is not based on a deficit approach to change (e.g., a response to what needs to be improved), but rather on an approach of organizational abundance (e.g., the identification of what is being done well that needs to be done better). The following eight assumptions are fundamental to this theory:

1. In every organization something works.
2. What an organization focuses on becomes its reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment; therefore, there may be multiple organizational realities.
4. The act of asking questions to the organization about the change directly influences how the organization will respond to the change.
5. Members of the organization will have increased confidence and emotional comfort to embark on change that will impact the future if this change is incorporated into successful experiences with organizational change of the past.
6. Parts of the past that are carried forward must only be the best parts of the past.
7. Differences must be valued in order for the effective implementation of change to occur.
8. Organizational language is that which creates organizational reality.

These assumptions of the appreciative inquiry change theory are intended to focus on the positive; in other words, that which gives life to the organization. The premise is that by consciously revealing to the members of the organization those change successes that are valued, individuals will be motivated to demonstrate the required engagement for the success and vitality of the proposed change initiative. While I support a change theory
that builds on the positive, in my mind a primary concern for this model is the absence of this theory’s definition of “the something that works” as required by the first of the eight fundamental assumptions upon which this theory is based. Without this clarification, I do not see how this theory can be advanced as a viable theory for effective organizational change. Carr (2006) expresses similar concerns about the credibility of action research that extends to issues about the validity of the knowledge produced through action research. These concerns are based on the theory’s strong dependence on the interplay of undefined components of human personality as experienced in organizational relationships. Malone’s (2007) doctoral research indicates that it is through implementing the appreciative inquiry theory for leading change that organizations enlarge their capacity for continuous and adaptive organizational change. She suggests that the intentional development of processes which result in ongoing adaptive organizational change (AOC) is now an essential organizational competency. This type of organizational change should be expected to be experienced as non-linear and multi-dimensional.

Organizational Change Manager

In contrast to the appreciate inquiry model for leading change, Gustafson et al. (2003) have constructed what they refer to as an organizational change manager model for leading change. This framework for change is extremely comprehensive and consists of the 18 steps which include, but are not limited to, the following: step 1: mandating the initiative; step 2: establishing leader goals and commitment; step 3: identifying supporters and opponents, etc.

From my perspective, unique to this model are steps 8 and 12. Step 8 is defined as “change agent prestige and commitment.” Step 12 is defined as “radicalness of design”
(Gustafson et al., 2003). Step 8 responds to their position that change is effectively implemented when the individuals who are leading the initiative have either achieved or been granted institutional esteem. Step 12, which addresses design, responds to the proposition that change is more likely to be effectively implemented if the proposed change is perceived as reasonable.

Summary

Theories of organizational change have been created which seek to understand how change can most effectively be implemented within the unique dynamics of these entities. Some models, such as that created by Kotter (1996), use steps to describe this phenomenon. Others such as the punctuated equilibrium and incremental theories consider the ability to successfully implement change within the context of an organization’s dynamic state. Lewin (1951) identifies three primary components to an organization’s response to change which are thawing, forming, and refreezing.

Contrasted with these theories are the strengths-based tenets of appreciative inquiry, which suggest that change is most effectively implemented when organizational strengths are not only harnessed to garner yet more strength but are leveraged to effectively confront concerns through the implementation of planned change. Based on the established understanding of the leader’s role in successful leading of change, the organizational change manager theory provides a framework for use by organizational leaders which honors their significance in these initiatives.
Change Theory in Higher Education

Tearle (2004) expresses the belief that educational change is technically simple and socially complex. The existence of this reality, from his perspective, makes it impossible to generate a change management theory that applies to all situations. He identifies the need to consider the element of time in any review of change management theory. He notes that it is leadership effectiveness that determines the time-efficiency and endurance of any change initiative.

Gold (1999) observes that the primary reason for change failure is resistance. This resistance can be championed by either an individual or group. Gold (1999) further observes that the resistance is not necessarily directed toward the value of the change, but rather to the fact that the proposed change is new. Wagner (2001) concurs with this observation and asserts that in the academic setting—especially for teachers—the three most common factors that underlie their resistance to change are risk aversion, “craft” expertise, and autonomy and isolation. He describes risk aversion within the context of the security and stability for employment that typically characterizes the educational organization. He describes craft expertise as the ability to work proficiently alone, which, he asserts, is a fundamental competency for teachers who are required not only to master, but to teach an established body of knowledge. Wagner (2001) suggests that while risk aversion and craft pride contribute to reluctance by educators to change, the primary factors that limit their capacity to change are their autonomy and isolation.

In order to effectively respond to this resistance such that planned change is anchored in the organization’s culture, Wagner (2001) suggests the following strategies, which he calls the S-U-R-E approach for educational change:
1. Shared vision
2. Understanding of the urgency of change
3. Relationships that are established on mutual respect and trust
4. Engagement strategies designed to create and nurture commitment rather than compliance.

Wagner (2001) continues to recommend that effective change theories, especially for the academic setting, must address the following question: What motivates adults to desire to do new things that are also most probably difficult? He believes that this question is particularly relevant for centers of education, because work conditions foster a mind-set in teachers that predisposes them to not want to change. He observes that, given the fact that leaders tend to be individuals who like change, tension between leaders and teachers is automatically established to the extent that leaders begin to see teachers as stubborn or indifferent and teachers begin to see leaders as out of touch.

Parsons and Fidler (2005) suggest that the punctuated equilibrium theory as formulated by Romanelli and Tushman (1994) is that which is most relevant for academic organizations. They proposed that fundamentally this theory seeks to explain how organizations typically experience transformation or planned change. Their position is based on the observation that collegial organizations, such as centers of higher education, are slower to change. This reality therefore more closely aligns them with the fundamental characteristics of punctuated equilibrium theory, which is based on a succession of long periods of relative stability that are interspersed with brief periods of rapid planned change. This theory suggests that during the stable periods only small incremental changes can be attained and sustained. In contrast, periods of
transformational change are initiated by external (e.g., a new president) or internal (e.g., a failing institutional computer system) influencers. Punctuations are defined as those brief periods when the organization experiences transition or transformation. As a result, this theory seeks to understand change from the perspective of long-term organizational development.

In contrast to the punctuated equilibrium theory, the appreciative inquiry theory for leading planned change builds on long-term past achievements to identify organizational strengths which may be harnessed for current success. Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2008) note that when an organization builds on what it does well, it is positioned to discover and achieve its highest potential. Through a case study, Walters’s (2006) doctoral research, on the merits of appreciative inquiry to effectively lead change, discovered that this theory was most effective in multi-cultural college communities where common strengths needed to emerge from multiple contexts. As a result, a collaborative culture emerged as a by-product of the successful implementation of change.

Given this overview of viable theories of change, Pettigrew (1990) would argue that none of these theories adequately explain organizational change. He would observe that the theories are flawed because they tend to treat change as a discrete unit of analysis, rather than a continuous organizational state of being. As a result, his position is that these aforementioned theories of change provide very limited understanding in that they are void of the essential holistic analysis of the intricacies that underlie an organization’s change experience. He would further assert that the attempt to search for the illusive single grand theory of change should be abandoned. He would argue that it is
grossly ineffective to seek to identify single independent variable causes and their impact on dependent variables or outcomes. His position statement would most likely be that planned change has multiple causes that are best explained by loops rather than by lines.

Much like the appreciative inquiry theory of change, Pettigrew (1990) would advocate for a longitudinal theory of change that would be based in a contextual mode of understanding, thereby honoring the interconnectedness of planned change. He would require that this change theory address the analysis of change within the past, present, and future contexts. Additionally, he would require that the theory explore change from both linear and longitudinal perspectives. This requirement aligns with his observation that “for the analyst interested in the theory and practice of changing, the task is to identify the variety and mixture of causes of change and to explore through time some of the conditions and contexts under which these mixtures occur” (Pettigrew, 1990, p. 269).

I appreciate Pettigrew’s (1990) position and agree that no single theory fully explains all of the intricacies of planned change, yet I have a deep concern with understanding how one can implement his longitudinal perspective on change theory without creating individual units for analysis. Perhaps these units of the change experience would have to be excised from defined periods of time in order to generate the desired longitudinal perspective on change. This type of analysis would then have the potential to be of great value in identifying effective strategies for anchoring the planned change in organizational culture.

Kotter’s Eight-Step Model for Leading Change

Dr. John P. Kotter (1996), of the Harvard School of Business, has developed a model for leading change which has been tested extensively in business and academic
settings. His model resulted from the analysis of extensive comprehensive data obtained from over 40,000 participants at over 100 businesses and organizations ranging in size and complexities. This data collection included interviews with hundreds of senior executives, which included many of the organization’s chief executive officers. His model converts the eight errors committed by organizations when leading change into eight steps for effectively implementing change. These eight steps are as follows:

1. Establish a sense of urgency—the creating of an intense understanding that a response is needed now.
2. Create a guiding coalition—identifying the roles and responsibilities of the primary leaders for the change.
3. Develop a vision—the creation of a picture of success, a preferred state which will result from implementation of the planned change.
4. Communicate the change vision—developing systems through which the change, the vision, and performance expectations associated with implementation are disbursed.
5. Empower broad-based action—ensuring that resources are available to members of the organization for effective implementation of the change.
6. Generate short-term wins—implementing the change management plan in such a way that ongoing success is both identified and celebrated.
7. Consolidate gains and produce more change—intentionally creating momentum needed to propel the change to a successful end.
8. Anchor new approaches into the culture—creating structures which secure the planned change into the organization’s system of operating.
Analysis of Kotter’s Model for Leading Change

Hurd (2007) discovered that Kotter’s (1996) model for leading change was effective when applied to a university’s initiative toward internationalization. However, he also found its linear approach to leading change to be limiting. As a result, he recommends that when implementing this model of change, leaders also seek to identify complementary models which address the complexity and multiple dimensions of organizational change. Although Stich (2008), through a metaethnographic analysis, found Kotter’s (1996) model effective for successful leading of change at a community college, she also found its linear approach to be limiting. Accordingly, she recommends that this model’s implementation be strengthened through using strategies which result in building trusting relationships essential for a strong foundation for change; generate clarity of vision for unified direction of organizational initiatives; develop change expertise or change competency by organizational leaders so that their ability to effectively implement change is enhanced; identify and implement interactive communication strategies which nurture the development of followership; create organizational capacity through organizational development; seek to intentionally align organizational structures, procedures, and systems; create internal systems of sustainability; and visibly integrate strategies proven effective for successful change.

Application of Kotter’s Model to Higher Education

Abrahamson (2008) used action research methodology to apply Kotter’s (1996) model to a student learning outcomes initiative in one California community college. She found organizational ambivalence associated with its first step—that of establishing a
sense of urgency—primarily as a result of faculty fears about the standardization of learning and its potential impact on faculty performance and student outcomes. Lack of time to be involved in the initiative, lack of compensation or incentives for involvement in the change, and difficulty in involving adjunct faculty were each identified as obstacles for garnering the essential sense of urgency as required by Kotter’s step 1 of his change model. Abrahamson (2008) further discovered, however, that persistent use of the model resulted in garnering understanding about the ambivalence, which, when addressed, resulted in effective implementation of the planned initiative. As a result, course outcomes increased tenfold, and one third of program outcomes were identified, while progress was also made on institutional outcomes. By way of contrast the effectiveness of Kotter’s (1996) model for leading change was further piloted at a Midwest faith-based college by Ague (2008). This research not only confirmed the effectiveness of this model, but through its use confirmed that implementing change is enhanced when leaders actively seek member involvement in the change, implement feedback mechanisms, and utilize multi-level organizational communication systems throughout the initiative to enhance the effort. Supporting this finding is the research by Herr (2007) who tested the effectiveness of Kotter’s (1996) model to lead change in three private church-related institutions. His qualitative multiple case study was conducted at church-related institutions of higher education that had been identified as having attained superior academic and fiscal performance. While he found that these institutions effectively responded to change by enhancing delivery of instruction, challenging the established role of the faculty, improving student campus life, and implementing formal financial
processes, he also found Kotter’s (1996) model to be effectively used by the institutions’ leaders to lead organizational change.

Ly (2009) also sought to understand resistance to planned organizational change by using Kotter’s (1996) model to gain insights on perceptions held by administrators on political behavior experienced during the change initiative. Through this qualitative study conducted at three Michigan community colleges, the following five major findings emerged: Administrators intentionally engage in a myriad of political behaviors to secure the guiding coalition as required by stage 2 of Kotter’s model; the five core behaviors of getting buy-in, building relationships, involving others, listening and showing respect, and being data informed through the analysis of relevant research characterized the administrators’ efforts to implement the planned change. At the Lady of the Lake University, Kahne (2005) attempted to validate a scale that could be used by leaders to measure this first step of Kotter’s (1996) model defined as “urgency.” The results were that this blended instrument of the 23-item Kahne Change Scale and the 60-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) did not effectively measure the required organizational urgency.

Reed (2008) evaluated the effectiveness of Kotter’s (1996) model for leading change through a case study of presidential leadership at a prestigious central state university. Through this research, he sought to understand how a president strengthens an already-strong institution. As a result of effectively applying Kotter’s (1996) eight-step model for leading change to the president’s self-assessment of his leadership, he discovered that leaders strengthen strong institutions through an emphasis on hiring and promoting strong leadership; embracing opportunities as they emerge; allocating time to
the most important strategic priorities; grounding and strategically connecting strategic planning to the institution’s mission; securing the support of the board; developing and implementing a resilient communication plan; and ensuring that senior leadership had an in-depth understanding of the university’s fiscal and operational systems.

Hagovsky’s (2004) research at Chestnut Hill College—a coeducational Catholic institution in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—explored the effectiveness of Kotter’s (1996) model of change to lead this organization through a major planned change initiative—that of deciding to expand its culture by admitting men to a 75-year-old historically female institution. In accordance with this model, organizational leadership ensured that a guiding coalition as required by the model’s step 2 was secured prior to further implementation of this major initiative. The college’s successful transition to a coeducational institution is attributed to the leader’s diligent adherence to the model’s eight steps.

Hedley (2002) also found Kotter’s (1996) eight-step model for leading change to be thoroughly sufficient. He found that through its implementation, organizational learning capacity was increased, desired results were achieved, and the capacity for organizational learning was sustained. Matthew (2005) expands this finding through her research on the effectiveness of Kotter’s (1996) model of change through her discovery that its implementation requires creative leadership as compared to the management and sequential steps. She describes creative leadership as the art of institution building, the reworking of human and technological materials to fashion an organization that embodies new and enduring values with ever-increasing responsiveness. She asserts that creativity is an essential leadership attribute for leading change, in that it is fundamental to creating
urgency, establishing vision, and garnering the leading coalition as required by Kotter’s 
(1996) model. Her research is a correlational study which contrasts creativity in novice 
cadet leaders at West Point and seasoned early-mid-level and mid-level leaders in the 
United States Army. Her hypotheses were that creativity would be a positive and 
significant predictor of the capacity to lead change and that creativity would predict the 
capacity to a greater degree to lead change than it does to predict the capacity to manage 
change. Both hypotheses were confirmed. Ly (2009) further suggests that administrators 
who lead change must consistently exhibit anticipatory thinking and calculated patience, 
and model participation in the planned change.

Summary

Kotter’s (1996) model has been found to be effective in leading change in 
academic organizations. It provides a template that leaders can understand and 
consistently implement such that success of the planned change is achieved. This model 
is both linear and concurrent. There is a synchronicity among the eight areas that must 
occur along with the linearity.

Gap in Literature

With respect to Kotter’s (1996) theory for leading change, a sense of urgency is 
identified as the most crucial step for initiating change. However, it is the eighth error, 
failure to anchor planned change into the organization’s culture, which is confirmed 
through Kotter’s (1996) extensive research as the primary reason for the failure of change 
initiatives. In academia, anchoring change into the academic culture is referred to as 
institutionalization. It is suggested that this integration occurs in the following three
phases: (a) mobilization, where the system is prepared for change; (b) implementation, where the change is introduced into the system, and finally (c) institutionalization, where the system stabilizes the practices into its new state (ASHE, 2001c).

Frost and Gillespie (1998) observe that the ability of new concepts to be anchored to the organization is dependent upon the responsiveness of the culture. To endure, they suggest that members of the organization must actively nurture a positive mind-set toward change. They further note that these positive beliefs regarding the planned change may or may not be sustained throughout the implementation process. Leaders of change therefore will need to assess member responsiveness to change throughout the implementation process to help ensure its continuance. Frost and Gillespie (1998) agree with Kotter (1996) that, for maximum effectiveness, the practices should be integrated into the organization’s structure and practices. However, they make no recommendations on how to ensure that this anchoring occurs. It is here that the literature is lacking. Proven strategies which are available to leaders, specifically academic leaders in the complex arena of higher education, are minimally identified. The absence of this understanding is why Kotter (1996) believes most change initiatives fail. For purposes of this study, this outcome is referred to as “anchoring” the planned change. At its most fundamental level, to anchor this change aligns with the Merriam-Webster (“Anchor,” n.d.) definition which is “to attach or secure firmly.” This research is conducted in centers of higher education whose service aligns with the established definition as “colleges and universities which provide teaching and learning beyond the secondary level” (“Higher education,” n.d.).
Summary

This research responds to this gap in the literature. Its findings present themes which emerge for leading change. McGuire’s (2006) research indicates that Kotter’s (1996) model for leading change is effective in an organization’s quest to achieve this highest standard of recognition as confirmed by the Baldrige Criteria. This research identifies strategies for anchoring the planned change in cultures of higher education as recommended by senior leaders in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning organizations of higher education.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and gain understanding of the phenomena known as Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage of leading change. This stage is known as “anchoring planned change into the organization’s culture” (p. 145). This chapter addresses the research design, purposeful sampling, data collection, generalizability, and ethics for this research study. Strategies for anchoring this planned change into organizational culture are identified. Academic institutions of higher education are the organization of study. Approval for this study and its questions was obtained from the Andrews University Institutional Review Board in 2009.

Research Design

This was a qualitative multiple case study. Creswell (2005) has observed that if the researcher’s intent is to investigate question(s) that result in the generating of data that can be generalized, then quantitative inquiry will effectively achieve this objective. However, if the researcher’s primary objective is to conduct an inquiry that is characterized by an in-depth exploration of a central concern or phenomenon, then qualitative research is the preferred method to use for this type of formal analysis.
Silverman and Marvasti (2008) assert that if the researcher is interested in gaining an understanding of behavior and the meaning associated with that behavior, then the qualitative research method tends to be more favorable for exploring the research phenomenon. It is for these primary reasons that the qualitative design was chosen for this research.

The qualitative design, as utilized with a multiple case study, is defined by Merriam (1998) as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. She notes that the characteristic of being particularistic ensures that the cases will be studied in order to gain understanding of a specific phenomenon. Additionally, she asserts that the research design will ensure that the findings are descriptive. She suggests that the “end product should be a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study” (p. 29). Her final requirement for this case study design is that the study be heuristic. She notes that this characteristic for case study qualitative research ensures illumination of the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon. It is for these reasons that the multiple case study design was most appropriate for this research.

A narrative research design was used to conduct this qualitative inquiry. The use of a narrative design facilitated understanding of how planned change can be anchored into an organization’s culture. Creswell (2005) asserts that this understanding is an outcome of systematic inquiry into the meaning of the research problem as experienced by study participants. When describing narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also affirm that this form of inquiry tends to more effectively result in making sense of a phenomenon. Narratives of senior academic leaders in Malcolm Baldrige organizations
were analyzed to determine what strategies they have used for anchoring planned change in academic culture.

**Context of the Study**

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was formed as a direct result of Public Law 100-107, signed into law on August 20, 1987. The award was named for Malcolm Baldrige.

Mr. Baldrige served as Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until his tragic death in a rodeo accident in 1987. He was recognized for his commitment to managerial excellence. The long-term improvement in efficiency and effectiveness as experienced by the United States government has been directly attributed to his leadership excellence (The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act, 1987).

The following beliefs help form the foundation of this nationally recognized award:

1. The concept of quality improvement is directly applicable to small companies as well as large, to service industries as well as manufacturing, and to the public sector as well as private enterprise.

2. In order to be successful, quality improvement programs must be management-led and customer-oriented, and this may require fundamental changes in the way companies and agencies do business.

3. Several major industrial nations have successfully coupled rigorous private-sector quality audits with national awards, giving special recognition to those enterprises the audits identify as the very best.
4. A national quality award program of this kind in the United States would help improve quality and productivity by:

(a) helping to stimulate American companies to improve quality and productivity for the pride of recognition while obtaining a competitive edge through increased profits; (b) recognizing the achievements of those companies that improve the quality of their goods and services and providing an example to others; (c) establishing guidelines and criteria that can be used by business, industrial, governmental, and other organizations in evaluating their own quality improvement efforts; and (d) providing specific guidance for other American organizations that wish to learn how to manage for high quality by making available detailed information on how winning organizations were able to change their cultures and achieve eminence. (The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act, 1987, p. 1)

In order to receive this recognition, organizations must meet the specifications of seven quality performance criteria. The Baldrige performance excellence criteria are a framework that any organization can use to improve overall performance. The following seven categories make up the award criteria: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results.

Only organizations that are headquartered in the United States may apply for the award. Applications for the award are critiqued by an independent Board of Examiners composed of primarily private-sector experts in quality and business. These examiners look for achievements and improvements in all seven categories. An initial screening is required. Organizations that pass this initial screening are visited by teams of examiners to verify information in the application and to clarify questions that come up during the review. Each applicant receives a written summary of strengths and areas for improvement in each area addressed by the criteria.
One of the main purposes of the award is to pass on information about the recipient’s performance excellence strategies to other organizations. As a result, these other organizations can also progress in performance excellence.

Since the year 2001, three academic organizations of higher education have been recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige Award. Accordingly, these three Baldrige recipients were the focus of this research. The recipients are as follows: the University of Wisconsin-Stout (2001 recipient), the Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business (2004 recipient/University of Northern Colorado), and Richland College (2005 recipient/Dallas County Community College).

**Self as Research Instrument**

Since 1994, I have been entrusted with progressive leadership responsibilities in higher education. In accordance with these roles, I have been given the primary responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of a variety of change initiatives. Examples of these initiatives include program reviews, reorganizations, national accreditation self-studies, change management for a new enterprise resource software system, and implementation of an historic grant award of $1,746,000 for employee skills development.

As a result of these current and projected responsibilities, I have developed a deep respect for the possibilities and potential of enhanced institutional effectiveness when this topic is understood and responded to proactively by senior leadership. For this reason, I am driven to identify strategies that are powerful, practical, and relevant for both the short- and long-term needs associated with anchoring planned change in the higher education academic organizational culture. I acknowledge that a potential bias exists for
me to filter the findings of this study primarily through the lens of my professional experience.

**Purposeful Sample**

Purposeful sampling was used to identify participants for this study. Creswell (2005) has observed that this type of sampling is characterized by the researcher’s intentional selection of individuals and/or sites in which the phenomenon is to be studied. This type of purposeful sampling was homogenous in nature. Each of the participants in this study were senior academic leaders in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education as granted since the year 2001.

There were three of these organizations at the time this study was conducted. For purposes of this study, the criterion for identification as a senior academic leader was an individual with responsibilities equivalent to those of dean or higher.

In accordance with the criteria for narrative research design, the target audience size for this study was small (Creswell, 2005). It consisted of two senior administrators from each of these Baldrige winners. Therefore, the total number of participants for the study was six.

Academic leaders of Malcolm Baldrige winners were chosen because of the Baldrige objective to identify high-performing organizations that have effectively implemented planned change. This criteria challenges leaders to not only identify what they are doing well in their organizations, but to correspondingly identify what they could be doing better (Spong & Collard, 2008).
Data Collection

Silverman and Marvasti (2008) confirm that a range of methods is used to conduct qualitative research. Of these methods, they assert that the in-depth interview is the one most commonly used. Additional tools that also support these methods include, but are not limited to, journals and participant observation.

Participant Interview

The primary tool for this investigation was the open-ended interview. Questions in this research script were similar to those utilized in the executive interviews conducted by Collins (2001) in his research on great organizations. Over a period of 5 years the Collins (2001) research team analyzed histories, data, and thousands of interview pages for over 1,435 companies to determine criteria for organizational greatness. External statisticians were used to confirm the questions and components of his research. The questions for this research were piloted at Andrews University through the required qualitative research graduate course for leadership students. These questions were further reviewed and received support by experts in qualitative research. In addition, these questions were reviewed and approved by the Andrews University Institutional Review Board on January 27, 2009.

A personal invitation was extended to each research participant. Interview questions were provided to participant(s) prior to an on-site or phone interview. The interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy with text analysis.

From each interview, the broad themes that gave meaning to findings were identified. For the purpose of this research, these themes provided the foundation
required to understand those strategies that were identified as effective for anchoring change in academic culture of higher education.

Essential interview questions for this interview were as follows:

1. Please give an overview of your relationship with this academic institution, including years involved and primary responsibilities held.

2. Describe an institutional change initiative that has been effectively implemented at this institution.

3. How did your organization get commitment from its employees to implement this change?

4. Can you give a specific example of this alignment process?

5. Can you give me specific examples that demonstrate that this planned change has been effectively implemented?

6. What strategies were utilized to ensure the implementation of this change initiative that was effectively completed?

7. What strategies resulted in the ineffective implementation of the change initiative that was not successfully completed?

8. For the change initiative that was successfully implemented, what primary indicators confirm that this planned change has been anchored into the organization’s culture?

9. Do you believe that anchoring change in an academic organization’s culture is necessary? Why or why not?

10. Many companies undertake change programs and initiatives, yet their efforts do not produce lasting results—in other words, the change is not anchored in the
organization’s culture. What were the primary factors in the endurance of this planned change for your organization beyond the first few years?

11. What other member of senior management do you strongly recommend that I interview?

12. Are there any questions that I did not ask, but should have?

For the in-depth interview, Silverman and Marvasti (2008) counsel the researcher to allow for the participant to expand the inquiry and as a result gain additional insight into the phenomenon. For this study, I served as the primary instrument for data collection.

Documents

As previously referenced by Silverman and Marvasti (2008), document review has been confirmed as a valuable tool for use in qualitative research. Insights into the research phenomenon can be confirmed, enhanced, or rejected as a result of this analysis. Data collection for this study included the review of outcome reports as required for Baldrige winners. This analysis provided additional insight into the strategies for anchoring change that were identified by the Baldrige senior academic leaders.

Field Notes

Field notes were utilized to supplement the fundamental data collection as obtained in the participant interviews. Each of the interviews with senior academic leaders was recorded and subsequently transcribed. These transcripts were supplemented through the use of field notes that were formulated during and after the respective interviews. These field notes recorded non-verbal observations and impressions.
Data Analysis

A manual analysis of this qualitative data was utilized for the evaluation of data. Subsequent to the transcription of the data, a preliminary exploratory analysis of the data was conducted to identify strategies utilized to anchor planned change in organizational culture.

An inductive process was utilized to analyze the qualitative data. To facilitate this process, the data were coded in accordance with the process required for segmenting and labeling text to identify required descriptions of findings and broad themes.

Subsequent to the coding of the transcripts, a list of code words was formulated. Redundant codes were identified. Alignment with specific quotes from the transcripts that supported the codes was then confirmed. Strategies that were directly associated with themes for anchoring planned change in these organizations were identified. Bernard and Ryan (2010) refer to the process of moving from coding to interpretation as that of transformation. They suggest that at this stage, coded data transitions into meaningful data. Bernard and Ryan (2010) further suggest that from this meaning, understanding of the phenomenon under review emerges.

The identified strategies were then summarized and returned to the study participants for clarification and/or concurrence. Accuracy of the data was refined in accordance with this feedback. The implications of these findings and the identification of opportunities for further research were specified. Themes were compared for alignment with the identified strategies.

An integrated method for transcription of interviews by me, the actual interviewer/researcher, was used. This integrated role of interviewer and researcher
provided for a depth of analysis of findings that is more comprehensive than that which would occur through an analysis of transcript verbiage only. This integrated role did, however, have an associated risk of potential bias. I could have been tempted to rewrite questions or rephrase responses in order to generate a more desirable finding. Therefore, a commitment to honor the integrity of the data with its associated findings had to be evidenced throughout this narrative inquiry.

Findings from this research were analyzed to determine the shared meaning as derived from the narratives. This meaning focused on understanding how academic leaders in higher education anchor desired change in an organization’s culture. This understanding aligned with the fundamental purpose of this study, which was to understand Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage of leading change—that of “anchoring” planned change in an organization’s culture.

**Validity and Reliability**

Validity of findings was affirmed through structural corroboration and consensual validation. Eisner (1998) observes that with structural corroboration, different types of related data are reviewed to determine the contradiction or validation of findings. In the case of this research, this corroboration minimally occurred through the review of the relevant institutional and public documents. The primary objective of this process was to look for those recurrent behaviors that formed the context for emerging themes.

Through the use of consensual validation, agreement between appropriate individuals was sought to confirm credibility of the identified strategies. These individuals included, but were not limited to, the research participants and John Kotter,
originator of the eighth stage for leading change. As a result of this comparative analysis, the credibility and reliability of these results was enhanced.

Validity of findings was ensured through the use of triangulation. Triangulation is defined as “the comparison of different kinds of data and different methods to see whether they corroborate one another” (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008, p. 511). Utilization of the process of triangulation was appropriate for this study given that the research was conducted at multiple institutions with multiple interviews, observations, and field notes.

An additional review of the transcripts was requested from the participants, thereby ensuring the reliability of findings. Through this follow-up review, emergent themes were confirmed. Finally, these strategies were evaluated within the context of relevant change theory. For purposes of this study, the theory that forms the basis for this inquiry was Lewin’s (1951) Theory of Change. Accountability for my potential bias was provided through a review of the research findings of this study against the findings confirmed in current literature, participant review, and relevant change theory.

**Generalizability**

Bernard and Ryan (2010) suggest that qualitative data are messy and therefore are here to think with and to think about. It is this process of “going beyond the data” that they define as generalizability (p. 153). Eisner (1998) defines generalizing as “transferring what has been learned from one situation to another” (p. 198). Based on this definition, the understanding gained from the findings of this qualitative study can be generalized. Eisner (1998) cautions, however, that in order for this generalizing to occur, it is essential that the similarity between one situation and the next be confirmed.
He continues to identify three types of knowledge that can be generalized. He suggests that these categories of knowledge are skills, images, and ideas. For purposes of the findings from this study, all three types of knowledge have the potential of being generated. As previously acknowledged, the small sample size minimizes the ability to generalize findings of this study as typically thought of when using a quantitative model; however, generalizability as provided for by the qualitative research methodology remains plausible.

**Ethics**

Creswell (2005) asserts that “in all steps of the research process, you need to engage in ethical practices” (p. 11). He further confirms that at each stage of the research process, sensitivity and respect for the rights of the participants must be ensured. In addition, he counsels that, prior to participation in a study, the participants must know the purpose of the study and its potential impact on their lives.

Adherence to this rigorous standard was attained through compliance with the criteria identified for research as defined by the Institutional Review Board of Andrews University. Approval was also sought from the Institutional Review Boards of the Malcolm Baldrige winners.

This study was conducted on human subjects. Study participants were individuals who were 18 years of age and over. Informed consent was obtained prior to each interview. As previously identified, these subjects were senior administrators at Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic organizations.
Summary

The focus of this study was the exploration of Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage of leading change. This stage is identified as anchoring change in organizational culture. The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that are used to anchor change in academic organizations of higher education. Participants in the study were senior academic administrators in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning organizations of higher education. Two administrators from each of the three award recipients were interviewed for this study. The total number of participants in the study was six.

A narrative research design was used to conduct this study. A primary tool for this investigation was the open-ended interview. Findings from these interviews were compared with relevant literature, documents, and change theory.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award (MBQA) guide the annual decisions of organizations that choose to improve through its standards for performance excellence. The award, named for an exemplary Secretary of Commerce who served from 1981 until his death in 1987, is granted by the White House and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Its purpose is to stimulate American companies toward progressive quality improvement and competitive edge, achieving and sustaining increased profit margins. Seven criteria are used to evaluate potential recipients: leadership; strategic planning; student, stakeholder, and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and organizational performance results.

While over 60 organizations, such as hotels, hospitals, and school districts, have received the award since it was created in 1988, only three of these have been institutions of higher education—possibly as a result of reluctance on the part of academics toward the intentional transfer of business principles into higher education. The winning educational organizations are the University of Wisconsin-Stout (Menomonie, Wisconsin), the Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business (Greeley, Colorado), and Richland Community College (Dallas, Texas). The senior executives at the institutions,
who had the primary responsibility for leading planned change in their schools, were the participants in this study. Each of the three award-winning organizations represents a unique dimension of higher education. The 2001 award recipient, the University of Wisconsin-Stout, is the first institution of higher education and the only university to receive this recognition. In 2004, the Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business became the first and only business program to receive this award. In 2005, Richland Community College became the only community college to have attained this recognition of excellence.

While these organizations represent different spheres within higher education, each of them voluntarily chose to expand its self-assessment from the accreditation norms in higher education to those which align with United States’ highest standard for organizational excellence. The expansion of self-assessment practices to achieve this level of excellence is the “planned change” in this study, which asked the following question: What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?

To enhance understanding, I have organized my findings into two sections. The first provides an overview of each organization and its characteristics. The second section identifies five themes for leading change that emerged from the participant interviews. These are Determining What and Why, The Leader’s Role and Strategies, Characteristics of the Change, Implementing the Change, and Continuing the Change. The theme Determining What and Why explains the stimulus for the organization’s choice to implement the Baldrige criteria. The Leader’s Role and Strategies describes each leader’s role in implementing this decision. Characteristics of the Change reviews how this
organizational change was uniquely experienced by its employees. Implementing the Change provides an overview of processes used to live according to the Baldrige criteria. Continuing the Change identifies the strategies used to anchor the choice of progressive performance excellence, as experienced through the Baldrige criteria, into the organization’s culture. This last category answers this study’s research question.

**University of Wisconsin-Stout: “Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University”**

In 2001, The University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) received the esteemed Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for Performance Excellence, becoming the first institution of higher learning to receive this recognition. Its unique niche was further recognized on March 9, 2007, when the Board of Regents formally identified this organization as “Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University” (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 2010). This made UW-Stout one of only two University of Wisconsin system universities to be designated with a “special mission.” This special mission is to provide a select number of undergraduate and graduate offerings in specialty areas that are not duplicated in the state or region.

UW-Stout creates programs that respond to the learning needs of Wisconsin high-school graduates. Each year, this institution prepares over 9,000 students from multiple Midwest cities and towns for professional careers in industry, technology, applied art (e.g., apparel design), and the helping professions (e.g., marriage and family therapy education). Students experience a comprehensive curriculum that equips them for professional careers. Undergraduates comprise about 80% of the student body, and graduates make up 20%. Approximately 51% are female, and 49% are male. Just over
150 are international students, who represent over 35 countries. The ethnicity of on-campus students is 0.5% American Indian, 0.8% African-American, 2.9% Asian-American, 0.9% Hispanic-American, 1.7% International, and 2.0% two or more races. Anglo-Americans are the overwhelming majority with 91.4% of the campus population. In 2001, UW-Stout was one of four schools nationwide to be recommended by students as a “hidden treasure” (Sorensen et al., 2005).

Students receive 99% of their instruction from faculty and academic staff. Less than 1% of students are taught by graduate assistants. Learning is experienced as a dynamic blend of theory and practice, and the competency of creating innovative solutions to real-world problems is infused throughout the curriculum. This approach to education results in students who are very employable. For more than 26 years, 90% of UW-Stout graduates have found jobs within 1 year of graduation. In accordance with its “special mission,” this organization works closely and collaboratively with businesses, industries, and relevant centers of learning to effectively equip students for employment.

Organizational Profile

This overview of the University of Wisconsin-Stout includes a general description of its setting, as well as a review of its mission, vision, values, enduring goals, and priorities.

The University of Wisconsin-Stout is located on 119 acres in the small lumber and hunting town of Menomonie, just 70 miles east of Minnesota’s twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The area has a rustic feel that emerges from its natural systems of lakes and parks. As the waterfront community’s primary employer, the university’s buildings are strategically placed throughout the town. Central to the campus is its oldest
building, Bowman Hall. This distinctive structure is home to administrative offices and student support services. Its huge clock chimes hourly, enriching campus culture.

The school is the only institution in the University of Wisconsin system that is named for a person. This recognition is given to the white pine business entrepreneur, James Huff Stout. As an expression of his heart for philanthropy, Mr. Stout founded the university in 1891. Mr. Stout is described as a person who “turned toward the morning of life. The past did not awe him; the future alone lighted his path. He wrought a new venture in schooling that paved the way for vocational education” (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 2009, “Values” section). UW-Stout is a vivid portrait of his dream to create a center of career-based learning.

The UW-Stout mission is to provide career-focused education to a diverse group of students in a manner that integrates innovation, scientific theory, humanistic understanding, creativity, and research. Nobility of spirit, which results in respect and inclusion for all, is actively affirmed, and a collaborative culture that achieves progressive academic excellence has been intentionally created. Strategic planning is characterized by responsiveness to current and future trends. Excellence in teaching and learning is viewed as a means to illuminate life.

The University is committed to being a resilient educational resource. As a result, it has created seven enduring goals. These are (a) to offer high quality, challenging academic programs that respond to the needs of our dynamic society; (b) to preserve and enhance educational processes through the application of active learning principles; (c) to promote excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service; (d) to recruit and retain a diverse university population; (e) to foster a collegial, trusting, and tolerant
campus climate; (f) to provide safe, accessible, effective, efficient, and inviting physical facilities; and (g) to offer educational support programs that are responsive, efficient, and cost-effective (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 2009, “Enduring Goals” section). From these goals, university priorities emerge. These are to develop a focused multi-year recruitment and retention plan for students from underrepresented groups (e.g., Hmong, Hispanics, and veterans), which includes faculty, staff, and student exchange programs. University leaders also have the development and implementation of strategies for organizational sustainability as a primary focus. An additional priority is to fully integrate experiential learning into the curriculum so that this strategy saturates and defines the University’s culture and identity.

The ultimate objective of UW-Stout is to equip students with competencies essential for real-world problem solving. It is expected that students will apply this knowledge in a way that stimulates the economy through service that responds to the needs of our society’s diverse needs. The UW-Stout vision is to further establish its position as a distinctive polytechnic organization that has an established international presence. Its ultimate intent is to prepare lifelong learners who will enrich the world as ethical leaders and responsible citizens.

Organizational Themes

The five categories for leading planned change that emerge from my data analysis are as follows:

1. Determining what and why
2. The leader’s role and strategies
3. Characteristics of the change
4. Implementing the change

5. Continuing the change.

In this section, each of these themes is reviewed within the context of the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s journey from “crisis to quality” (Sorensen et al., 2005) as experienced through the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

**Determining What and Why**

Senior leadership at UW-Stout has been provided by a chancellor of more than 20 years. Initially appointed in 1990, this executive describes the mid-1990s as the most horrific time in his professional career. In direct response to drastic budget reductions, internal tensions erupted. Employees expressed fear that the administration’s discussions on the budget and shared governance were not open and honest. Trust between administrators and faculty quickly eroded. In the midst of this turbulence, the chancellor, in response to a request from the University of Wisconsin system, proposed charter status for UW-Stout. If accepted, this approval would have resulted in separating the University from the Wisconsin system. The University would then have been recreated as a state-funded independent entity. Unfortunately, this vision had not been effectively communicated to internal constituents. Shortly after the chancellor requested and received permission from the board of regents to explore this option, internal dissention became even more intense. An excruciating vote of no confidence in the chancellor’s leadership swiftly followed. Through courageous efforts he confronted these intense and hostile internal concerns. In accordance with his commitment to transformational leadership, the chancellor decided to redirect this “crisis” into an “opportunity for
quality.” As a result, the UW-Stout journey toward progressive excellence through the Baldrige Criteria was launched (Sorensen et al., 2005).

The Leader’s Role and Strategies

Determined to rebuild trust in his leadership and to heal the fractured organization, the chancellor took the initiative to conduct numerous listening sessions with faculty, staff, and administrators. In these meetings he created “healing conversations,” through which employees expressed a desire for open communication and for participation in decision making. Believing that healing was possible, the chancellor researched options to regain the organization’s health. He refers to this season of review as his “leadership pause” through which his commitment to move forward was reaffirmed. Believing this to be a “mission critical” moment for his University, the chancellor chose to weather the storm of stinging criticism from employees as perceptions of his less than honorable leadership were aggressively expressed. Persisting through personal pain, he continued to reflect on the fears and dreams of his workforce. As a result, the chancellor decided not to “waste this crisis.” Instead, he recommitted himself to creating healing opportunities from this wound by creating a culture that enjoys change through the visioning of “positive possibilities.” After hours of reflection, he decided to be the “change agent” who would assume responsibility for “putting the pieces” of the organization back together. He knew that his intentions were honorable. He knew that he was a capable leader, and he knew that this organization had the potential to be an exemplary polytechnic university. Strengthened by this awareness, he immediately implemented three strategies to nurture organizational healing.
The first was to form the Chancellor’s Advisory Council (CAC). This is an inclusive group of 21 members who represent every employee and governance group on campus. The chancellor states that “this was the best decision I ever made.” Through bi-weekly meetings, this council communicates University accomplishments and addresses concerns. It serves as the primary communication vehicle between the chancellor and members of his internal community. The chancellor honors the work of this group through his radical choice not to make a decision on any issue until he brings it to the council for review. His second strategy was to create an Office of Budget, Planning, and Analysis. This office coordinates the highly participatory annual budget process. As a result, fiduciary decisions are transparent and accountability is shared. Budgetary decisions are required to align with ongoing data analysis so that short- and long-term priorities are funded. The chancellor’s third immediate strategy was to appoint a chief information officer who is responsible for all technology planning. To support these initial strategies for organizational healing, the chancellor recognized that he needed to identify an external resource that would strengthen the University during its healing process by creating a collective focus on their shared dream of progressive excellence. He found this resource in the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria. His decision to implement these criteria for performance excellence at UW-Stout is the planned organizational change that is the primary focus of this study.

Through his leadership and the collaborative hard work of faculty and senior members of the executive team and staff, UW-Stout not only experienced healing, but is thriving today. The chancellor beamed as he shared that UW-Stout has successfully navigated its road from “crisis to quality.” It now enjoys serving as a beacon of light and
hope for other organizations. Through his strength in leadership, the local community also benefits. An example of this positive impact is the 1,000 new high-paying jobs that have been added to the region through his visionary efforts with the Stout Technology Park. UW-Stout is now an exemplary model, which proves that healing can occur, that enduring change is possible, and that the highest level of performance excellence can be achieved.

**Characteristics of the Change**

The UW-Stout shared governance system is composed of the Faculty Senate, Senate of Academic Staff, and the Stout Student Association. While this structure results in the desired outcome of participatory decision making, it is cumbersome. The Baldrige criteria provide the framework for a fresh, resilient leadership structure that replaces this more traditional format. Central to this revised system is the Chancellor’s Advisory Council (CAC). Supporting the work of this core group are organizational committees such as the Strategic Planning Committee, the Planning and Review Committee, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, and the Educational Support Unit Review Committee. Each of these groups relies on data for its decision making. At UW-Stout, the practice is to enter data one time at one place (Sorensen et al., 2005). In response to identified needs, performance indicators of success are identified. Goals are subsequently created to ensure a timely response to these concerns. The integrity of data is reaffirmed with corresponding analysis, which ensures continued relevance of the original performance indicators. In addition, the chancellor insists that favorable and unfavorable data are considered for organizational decision making. Leaders work against potential
frustration and mixed messaging as occasionally experienced when members choose not to be informed yet choose instead to complain.

The chancellor recognizes the value of “buy-in”—especially from the faculty. He intentionally seeks to identify and remove barriers to internal communication. Faculty support is actively sought through “defining conversations” that not only answer “what we will do,” but also “what we will not do,” through which greater clarity is achieved on “what we will be.” These conversations are energized by a shared desire to achieve organizational best. The expression of various points of view and the exchange of ideas help to fuel the desire to build on past failure to create a positive legacy. The chancellor intentionally identifies and shares success stories from other organizations, which nurtures this desired outcome. Progressive strength is reinforced through “silly humorous learning” experienced through fun team-building exercises.

UW-Stout is an organized environment. Most of its classified staff is represented by one of five state unions. Monthly union/management meetings are held to ensure clarity of performance expectations. Understanding of the Baldrige criteria and their potential for organizational excellence is incorporated into these discussions. As a result, concerns regarding changes in working conditions are addressed in a timely manner, thereby preventing grievances.

Faculty members are invited, but not required, to inform their teaching through the standards of performance excellence as defined through the Baldrige criteria. Leadership works collaboratively with faculty to show that these standards for performance excellence are most effectively experienced when integrated into current practices rather than imposed as an additional responsibility. Leadership intentionally
seeks opportunities to fund faculty creativity. Faculty presence on the CAC reinforces this responsiveness to their unique concerns. As a result, increasing numbers of faculty are teaching by the criteria in a manner that not only enriches their instruction, but that also provides graduates with another valuable professional competency. A key message to faculty is that the use of the criteria provides an opportunity to confirm that which faculty members do best: “to teach.”

Living by the Baldrige criteria creates new opportunities for organizational service. Members of the senior leadership team frequently share their insights on performance excellence with colleges and universities. They do not view receiving the Baldrige award as the end of their journey; rather, it is a door to greater achievements.

**Implementing the Change**

The chancellor observes that implementing the Baldrige criteria requires that the “right people are moving in the right direction at the same time.” Shortly after the CAC was created in 1996, it became apparent that members did not know how to work together as a team to achieve the University’s goals. It was also realized that, though members were representative of all internal constituents and deeply committed to its purpose, they were not informed about organizational issues and therefore not positioned to make the more excellent choice on behalf of the University and as defined through the Baldrige criteria. As a result, the Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) was created. Although it is almost identical to the CAC (e.g., student members tend to change more frequently), this group consistently participates in experiences that strengthen relationships, teambuilding, and leadership skills. This group has developed a vision to be recognized as a “world-class leadership system” and a mission to “function as an
effective leadership team” (Sorensen et al., 2005). Members evaluate each meeting of the ALT for effectiveness. Strengths and gaps for realignment are identified and responded to in a timely manner. On an annual basis, this group recommends strategies to the chancellor for enhanced leadership effectiveness. Members of the group make site visits to Baldrige Award winners to identify which of their best practices are relevant for UW-Stout. University priorities are evaluated from the perspective of trends in higher education as defined through an ongoing review of the literature. These insights not only enhance the work of the CAC, but positively impact the University climate through enriched collaboration among employee groups.

The impact of the Baldrige criteria is readily apparent in the organization’s strategic planning process, which builds upon the University’s values of participation, communication, and “data-driven and outcomes-based” results. A strategic planning model comprised of triennial tasks, biennial tasks, annual tasks, and semiannual tasks is used to facilitate goal accomplishment. A unique component of the UW-Stout model is the inclusion of situational analysis, through which the potential impact of action plans is evaluated. These insights are informed through stakeholder visioning captured through internal and external surveys. Six outcomes are identified for this planning process, as follows: to (a) facilitate planning and discussion, (b) encourage participation, (c) improve the quality of decisions and buy-in, (d) build a trusting climate, (e) increase the understanding of both the budget and the plan, and (f) strategically focus the campus to retain its competitive edge.

Within the strategic plan, the Baldrige criteria most significantly impact the creation of the annual budget. What was a centralized process is now decentralized and
richly collaborative. It is experienced as a five-step process that begins with the CAC summer retreat. In Step 1, priorities identified at this planning session are shared with employees during the early fall through nine facilitated group sessions. Step 2 is to receive employee feedback on these priorities. More than 30% of the members of UW-Stout’s internal community participate in these “listening posts” (Sorensen et al., 2005). During step 3, the CAC conducts two budget planning sessions in which a template for analyzing each priority is implemented. Step 4 is the chancellor’s budget recommendation, which reflects the CAC’s proposed funding allocations. The Office of Budget, Planning, and Analysis then ensures that budgets at the division, college, and unit levels are balanced. When finalized, during step 5, the chancellor communicates the budget to employees through two University-wide forums. As a result of this rigorous process, over 45 priorities have been funded. One of these priorities of which the University is most proud is its ability to provide each new student with a laptop that is refreshed every 2 years. Celebrating this type of positive outcome from the excellence criteria is readily integrated into the campus culture through organizational meetings and employee recognitions.

**Continuing the Change**

Each summer the chancellor conducts a retreat with members of the CAC. At this time, members of this team review the University’s mission, vision, and values. This work is informed through a series of pre-meetings conducted by the chancellor and members of his leadership team with members of all employee groups. Input is sought from all members of the workforce relative to their assessment of the organization’s performance during the past year. Recommendations for improvement are made by any
employee. Comparative internal and external benchmarking data are used to enrich these discussions. Access to these data aligns with the UW-Stout commitment to ensure that the right data are available to the right constituent, through their preferred means at the right time. Five-year business plans by managers of auxiliary units build on the richness and relevance of this information. Situational analysis that considers the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats establishes the foundation for institutional visioning.

Senior leaders believe that change is best continued when longevity in leadership exists. As a reflection of his commitment to integrity and progressive excellence of his leadership team, the chancellor requires periodic evaluations of his leadership, the leadership of the vice chancellors, and the leadership of the deans by faculty and staff. Insights gained through this 360-degree listening on effectiveness are used for personal growth and enhancement of the leadership system. Each fall, orientation sessions are used to inform these new students of how the Baldrige standards for performance excellence impact their learning expectations. New employees participate in a 3-day orientation during which their role in the UW-Stout quality journey is reviewed. Employees who leave the University through natural attrition are replaced by individuals who express support for the criteria. In accordance with the Malcolm Baldrige commitment to leadership development, senior UW-Stout executives share their progressive understandings of exemplary leadership at state and national meetings.

The effectiveness of organizational decision making on student learning is confirmed through numerous venues. These include, but are not limited to, insights from advisory committees, focus groups, student “taste tests,” the ACT Student Opinion
Survey, and the annual Student NSSE Senior Survey. Relationships with graduates are nurtured through gatherings hosted by the Stout Foundation. Additional insights are also obtained through the ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey.

Continued responsiveness to the community’s economic development is integrated into the UW-Stout strategic plan and budgeting process. Members of the senior leadership team lead by example through active involvement in the town’s development by participating in initiatives such as Menomonie Development Committee, the Stout Technology Transfer Institute, and the Menomonie Chamber of Commerce. UW-Stout offers the unique service to area businesses of posting their employment opportunities on its website. The strength of these collaborative efforts is further evidenced through such local initiatives as the development of the new athletic/recreation complex, which is located on the UW-Stout campus.

Central to its ongoing self-analysis is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award feedback report. Data from formal employee listening posts, such as that obtained through exit interviews, are compiled and analyzed. Complementing the comprehensive employee morale survey, which is conducted every 3 years, is the UW-Stout unique 1-minute employee climate survey. This assessment of employee morale is conducted on alternate years. Formal data are enriched through such informal organizational listening posts as attendance at campus meetings and employee participation on shared governance committees. Based on a review of these data, the strategic long-range plan is created. It is constructed through goal statements. Action plans that identify short-term and long-term performance measures are created for each of these statements. These data-driven plans ensure the University’s resilience and responsiveness to student learning needs.
Faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to act as Baldrige examiners at both the state and national level. This service not only enriches their understanding of performance excellence, but also exposes them to the nation’s best practices, which are then reviewed with members of the CAC. The chancellor expressed excitement when sharing that, as a result of the success of their quality journey, UW-Stout will host our country’s first summit for polytechnic universities.

Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business: “High Touch, Wide Tech, Professional Depth”

The Monfort College of Business (MCB) proudly proclaims that it “measures everything.” This esteemed center of learning is located within the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado. As part of the University of Northern Colorado, it exclusively provides instruction in undergraduate business studies. This service is offered to just over 1,000 students. The majority of these students, approximately 87%, reside in Colorado. Eighty-two percent of the students are Anglo-American, 7% Hispanic, 4% Asian-Pacific, and 2% African-American. Less than 1% are international students. Fifty-eight percent are male, and 42% are female.

Students enter MCB from high school, external college transfers, or internal changes-of-major. Instruction is offered primarily to resident upper-division students. Its services are offered almost exclusively through on-campus faculty instruction. MCB is recognized as providing a “private school education at a public school price” (MCB, 2004).

The MCB commitment to progressive excellence was first formally recognized in 1992 through earned accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of
Business. In 2000, it became the only business program in Colorado to receive the Program of Excellence Award. This award is given to programs that demonstrate comprehensive excellence and positive positioning for national prominence. Projected national recognition for performance excellence came in 2004, when the Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Choosing to implement the Baldrige criteria has most directly impacted the MCB commitment to progressively implement a performance improvement system of analysis. It is from this context that the declaration “we measure everything” emerges. I observed that the verb *benchmarking* dominates conversation. Key performance indicators are consistently created, implemented, evaluated, and revised to ensure that the goals of the MCB strategic plan, mission, and values are met.

Organizational Profile

This overview of the Monfort College of Business begins with a general description of its setting. The organization’s culture is then defined. Emphasis is given to key strategies that are identified as core to their culture of educational excellence. Its vision, mission, and institutional core values are then identified and reviewed.

The MCB campus is located approximately 50 miles from the Denver International Airport. I rode to campus on the Rocky Mountain Region Shuttle eight-passenger van. Most of our trip was made on a two-lane highway, which was transformed into a blend of awe-inspiring elegance through the majesty of the surrounding mountains and fear from the assault of wind storms that rocked our tiny van as blinding sand reduced visibility to near zero. The road widened as we neared the community of Greeley, Colorado, where MCB is located. I learned that this characteristic of the area’s
streets has been intentionally retained from the region’s stagecoach era. During this time, roads were intentionally enlarged to accommodate explorations of the West. I further learned that services provided through MCB are richly embedded in its community’s history and cattle industry. A dominant presence in this history and industry is the school’s namesake: Ken Monfort.

Mr. Monfort became legendary for his business accomplishments, which began at the early age of 12 when he sold a Grand Champion Steer for $1,055—a 10-fold profit over the $105.50 that he had paid for the calf a year earlier. Monfort went on to assume responsibility as CEO for his father’s meat business. He transformed it into a Fortune 500 Company as Monfort meats became the preferred choice of grocers and consumers. Monfort became known as a beef baron, political figure, and philanthropist. His contributions to Colorado and the development of business industries in the West were formally recognized in 1991, when he received the prestigious “Citizen of the West Award.” The Monfort name on the University of Northern Colorado’s College of Business is intended to inspire students to reach similar levels of excellence.

Monfort’s engaging presence is embodied in a larger-than-life statue that stands near the entrance of the newly renovated college building. I was further inspired by a review of emblems from his life as housed in its internal library. A pair of Ken’s shoes symbolizes his humble beginnings and journey of progressive excellence. Students are encouraged to gain additional insights from Monfort’s life by reading the book *Kenny’s Shoes* (Barnhart, 2008), which is readily available in classrooms and which I was pleased to receive.
The MCB culture is defined by two long-term strategies. The first of these strategies is to create a learning experience that is high-touch, wide-tech, and rich in professional depth. High-touch refers to the MCB commitment to smaller teacher-student ratios through which meaningful interactions between teachers and peers are experienced. The commitment to create a learning culture defined as wide-tech is evidenced through technology-rich experiences that encourage mastery of technology competencies. Professional depth describes the MCB commitment to student learning through faculty whose insights are diverse, relevant, and visionary.

A visual declarative of this three-prong strategy is seen in the three pillars positioned at the top of the stairs that lead into the college building. The culture of high-touch is created through face-to-face student/professor contacts. Accordingly, class sizes are small. Lectures are web-recorded for post-class review, but not for use as a primary mode of instruction. By design, no graduate assistants teach in MCB classrooms. This strategy also guides the design of classroom and student study space. The classrooms are tiered so that the teacher is able to make ready eye contact with each student. Desks in these classrooms are accompanied by large swivel chairs designed for conversation and comfort. High touch is also extended to the community through wall murals, in both the classrooms and lecture halls, that showcase regional businesses that partner with the college for internships and instruction. An extension of the classroom is the “high touch” student study space, which is uniquely created throughout the college building and designed to facilitate conversation among three to five individuals. Understanding gained through these interactions is also affirmed through hands-on learning opportunities, such as instruction in real-time stock simulated investing, not experienced through larger
learning environments. High-touch key performance indicators have been created by MCB leadership and are consistently monitored through student and alumni satisfaction surveys.

The high-tech component of MCB’s strategy is immediately obvious from the stock market updates streaming live across the wall of the main business learning lab. Real-time updates of College, University, and world news are strategically provided through numerous state-of-the-art hallway monitors. The latest versions of multiple technologies have been infused into the curriculum to ensure that students refine business technology competencies that will provide the competitive edge. Examples of these instructional resources are the Bloomberg tools for investment analysis and the Macromedia suite for Web design. Student learning is also enhanced through such resources as a finance trading room, an applied computer networking lab, a multimedia lab, and a designated electronic meeting area. In accordance with the MCB commitment to “measure everything,” student, alumni, and employer satisfaction with graduates—specifically as it relates to technology competencies and learning—is measured and informs planning.

The third component of the strategy, defined as a commitment to professional depth, is evidenced through a review of the portfolio of the MCB teaching faculty. At least 90% of these faculty members have either attained terminal degrees in their disciplines or have held executive leadership positions in industry. A complementary group of “executive professors” supports the expertise of the teaching faculty by providing practical insights on exemplary business effectiveness. In 1990, the MCB created a program that has become a model for other business programs across the
country—the Monfort Executive Professor Program (MEPP). Participants in this program are nationally known executives who expand student learning by serving as Monfort Executive Speakers (e.g., national business leaders), Monfort Executive Professors (e.g., nationally recruited senior business leaders), and Colorado Executive Professors (e.g., experienced professors who lead and practice within the state of Colorado). In accordance with their practice, effectiveness of this learning is measured through student and graduate surveys.

The second long-term strategy employed is its commitment to high-quality and low-cost value for undergraduate business students. Primary key indicators of organizational performance relative to competitive tuition, fees, and instructional quality are determined in accordance with a review of external benchmark data from 182 United States’ schools of business. These data provide insight for comparative and strategic planning. Satisfaction fiscal indicators from faculty, students, and alumni on program expenditures are consistently evaluated. As a result, the desired outcome of this strategy has been achieved regionally, state-wide, and nationally.

The MCB vision to become Colorado’s best undergraduate business program emerged from its desire to create a niche for its service and educational responsiveness. Conversations specific to the pain and potential of realizing this dream were facilitated by the Dean in his home. It was here that faculty openly participated in these difficult, yet exciting discussions. The discussions were difficult because, at that time, the business school provided instruction to be both graduate and undergraduate students. Implementing this focus would require experiencing the pain of eliminating the graduate school. The significance of this decision was immediately experienced as the 2-year
process for eliminating all graduate programs—including a Ph.D. program and Colorado’s largest MBA program—was implemented.

In spite of the pain, excitement about the potential for performance excellence propelled the vision to move forward. This dream of making program quality a top priority was energized by the recognition that business schools were experiencing prolific growth, which resulted in the University of Northern Colorado’s school of business being overshadowed by previously unknown competitors. This decision was also courageous given the fact that the trend in the United States was for business schools to implement a growth strategy that included the expansion of its graduate programs. Yet, inspired by the potential of this focused responsiveness, the College decided that to provide Colorado’s best undergraduate business education would be its exclusive mission. This mission continues to be informed by values statements as embedded in the MCB framework for the pursuit of academic excellence.

Organizational Themes

In this section, each of the five categories for leading the planned change to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is reviewed. These categories are a direct outcome of my data analysis. This review reflects the unique experience of the Kenneth Monfort College of Business (MCB).

**Determining What and Why**

In the mid-1980s, senior leaders at MCB were unhappy with their performance. This absence of satisfaction is especially relevant since it occurred at a time when the College was enjoying coveted enrollment growth. The source of this unhappiness
stemmed from recent news that constituents perceived its service as average. Unhappiness with this rating became an intrinsic motivator for organizational change. Though not clear on what to change, the institution’s administrators and faculty recognized that they were at a defining moment in their College’s history. To continue the status quo of being defined as average was painful and unacceptable. Informal visionary conversations began among College leaders, through which unmet student learning needs were identified. These conversations expanded to include dreams of ways in which these needs could best be met. It soon became apparent that clarity regarding what needed to be changed could only occur through extended sustained discussions. As a result, the Dean hosted a planning retreat at his home with these leaders. During this session, conversations focused on identifying exactly what type of learning experience could be greater than average, or even distinctive. Participants were encouraged to express “wonder” regarding how learning could be different if this distinctive focus became not just a dream, but a reality. Impact conversations were used, especially with faculty, to discover how the College’s responsiveness to its students could be enriched and redefined.

This exploration included informed speculation regarding whether a niche could be created for their responsiveness—if so, what could this niche be? Exploratory questions continued to emerge such as, “If we create this niche, what will we need to eliminate to ensure its best success?” and, “If created, how will the MCB mission and vision be enriched?” In response to these and similar questions, hard but necessary choices were made. These choices honored the fundamental need to respect the College’s financial integrity while correspondingly strengthening student learning. An additional
non-negotiable outcome was the attainment of a ranking, not of average, but as first among premier organizations. As a result of this reflection and self-analysis, the decision was made to implement the MCB exclusive focus on undergraduate business excellence as defined through the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence.

**The Leader’s Role and Strategies**

This decision to implement the MCB exclusive focus on undergraduate business quality as defined through the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence was courageously embraced by senior leadership. The Dean, in collaboration with faculty leaders, continued the retreat conversations and through them gained clarity on the impact of their decision. It was reaffirmed that the vision could be attained and that its excellence could be quantifiable. These conversations intentionally kept the “big picture” of responding in a unique, relevant, and excellent manner to student learning needs in mind. Through “leader-leader,” “leader-small group,” and “leader-individual” conversations, a “win-win” mind-set was established. This perspective affirmed that excellence in student responsiveness would result in a more excellent organization for everyone. As a result, work would be more meaningful and sustained. Consensus was reached that the benefits of this change were greater than the costs to the organization and its members.

Recognizing the power of conversation for clarity and collaboration, leaders took the initiative to create ongoing “improvement conversations.” Through these sessions, progress was critiqued, while new strategies for continuous improvement were formulated. Leaders took the time to express their belief in the power of their decision to enrich the responsiveness and reputation of its offerings through this exclusive focus.
Buy-in was secured from members of the internal and external community. It was affirmed that what was of value to the organization must be of value to members of its workforce. Inspiration was obtained through the formal and informal review of the vision of their prominent community leader, Kenneth W. Monfort, who later became the college’s namesake. Workforce considerations were addressed—specifically, short- and long-term commitments to faculty. Special attention was given to the blend of skills, competencies, and recognition needed in faculty and administrators as required to richly implement this quality response. Relationships were established to achieve the standards of performance excellence. Meticulous attention was given to clarifying proposed new roles and responsibilities. A plan for implementing the change was formulated and initiated. The College honored its commitment to current students to ensure degree completion. Graduate programs were eliminated, which included not only the MBA course of study but also the Ph.D. in business. As a result, the singular focus on undergraduate business excellence and the Malcolm Baldrige recognition were achieved.

**Characteristics of the Change**

MCB sees itself as a “forward looking” organization that intentionally affirms a culture of change. Even so, its executives recognized the fears—which they articulated as “ifs”—that can impede this change. In order for organizational change to occur, the “if” of getting started must be conquered. This is generally the fear of having to change previous practices and strategies. This “if” is further experienced through employee concerns that their role and responsibilities may be changing. There is also the “what if” I do not have the skills and competencies necessary to perform successfully in the changed environment. The question is asked, “Will I still have a job if I don’t have the skill?”
MCB executives chose to intentionally overcome this fear through what they called “the consistent creation of positive energy” that comes when everyone in an organization deliberately tries for its very best. This journey toward achieving performance excellence is as important as accomplishing this desired outcome because of the positive energy it generates. MCB executives characterized this positive energy as consisting of a spirit of exploration and discovery and as clarity regarding the desired outcome. They asked themselves, “What do we want to be known for?” “What can we pursue that is special?” “What are we currently good at?” and “What do we want to be known as good at?” Those involved in this discussion were invited by the executive members to “help us understand where we are weak, so that we can improve,” which demonstrates vulnerability and willingness to admit problems in order to achieve results. This invitation was extended within the context of an organizational commitment to take appropriate action to remedy identified areas for improvement. As a result, internal partnerships were created through which timely responses occur, an example of which is the collaboration faculty and administrators required for redesigning the undergraduate program of study for business students. Faculty and administrators together reflected on goals and objectives so that clarity of direction was confirmed. A fundamental guiding principle is that all changes must actively advance the college’s mission and vision in a way that is value added. At MCB, this value-enriched dimension is defined as progressive performance improvement.

Change is never entered into simply for the sake of change. It is instead supported by a culture that embraces, understands, and embodies the objective to modify its practices in a manner that ensures that it performs at levels that exceed expectations of
the external audience. This culture is characterized by unique “organizational desires.”

These include the desire to “get better,” the desire to tell people about the commitment to “get better,” and the desire to have this state of “betterment” confirmed through an external quality standard for excellence.

Data are used as a chisel to carve the organization’s distinctive excellence—its niche. Examples of these data are the national rankings for business programs, which in 1984 indicated that the University of Northern Colorado’s program was comparatively viewed as average. Another example is the scores of MCB students on Educational Benchmarking Indicators (EBI) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Field Achievement Test in business. MCB has set the goal of a 10% ranking by its seniors in key performance indicators of the EBI. The progressive excellence that results from a review of these findings considers the benefit of a proposed change for the whole organization and not just to individuals. Responses are characterized by a competitive desire to win the highest ranking and to be formally acknowledged as the best.

**Implementing the Change**

Administrators and faculty worked in a committed and sustained manner to create a plan that used macro and micro goals to implement the transition from a comprehensive school of business to an exclusive undergraduate college of business. “Next steps” for implementation were articulated and communicated to members of both the internal and external community.

The Malcolm Baldrige criteria for performance excellence provided the framework for this organizational refocusing. Implementation was characterized by deleting those programs and practices that were no longer relevant to the new exclusive
vision. This included the mammoth decision to discontinue *all* graduate studies. As a result of this decision, a dynamic blend of organizational positive and negative energy erupted. Positive energy spontaneously exuded from the excitement of creating this preferred niche. Negative energy correspondingly emerged from fears of a potential adverse impact to the college if the preferred outcome was not achieved.

Leaders anticipated this need to weather the storms of implementation. Accordingly, a system for ongoing “impact conversations” by leaders with members of the organization was created and conducted. Through these forums, organizational fears regarding the change and its implementation were confronted in a manner that was timely, respectful, credible, and responsible. Questions asked during these conversations were, “Do we understand what the change is and is not?” “If we don’t have the clarity, what do we need to do to enhance understanding?” “If we have this clarity, what is stopping us from moving forward?” and “Should we change our focus—if so, what should a potential new focus be?” As a result of this feedback, insights were affirmed and implementation gaps in need of realignment were identified and addressed. This process of obtaining and responding to feedback was so valuable that leaders came to believe that this enriched organizational communication was more valuable than any potential external recognition for excellence in achievement.

Recognizing that it was important to continue to move forward in spite of fears and opposition, leaders harnessed any negative energy to propel the organization more efficiently toward its goal. Piloting strategies, such as external benchmarks for performance excellence, were discovered to be valuable tools to enrich and enhance implementation. These limited experiences effectively projected the organizational
impact of “next steps” while correspondingly achieving necessary buy-in. At MCB this support was especially needed from administrators and faculty. Evidence that the desired buy-in had been attained was confirmed when employee conversations spontaneously championed the initiative. Effectiveness with strategy implementation was progressive, yet sometimes inconsistently experienced—for instance, with curriculum infusion of business ethics with measurement of student mastery of this competency. However, it was noticed that with persistent self-analysis and responsiveness, the desired mastery of this competence was achieved and was affirmed through satisfaction surveys of student employers.

It was energizing to discover that implementing the exclusive focus as an undergraduate college of business enriched rather than diminished student demand for their services. It was also gratifying to realize that the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence, while rigorous, were understandable, relevant, and practical. Throughout implementation, leaders sought to learn best practices for leading this change from the stories of Malcolm Baldrige organizations. Leaders from these award-winning institutions, such as the University of Wisconsin-Stout, served as consultants. These experts proved to be effective external champions for the change through their incredible messaging that the exclusive MCB vision was relevant, valuable, and attainable. Their incredible messaging served as a catalyst for this organizational change, thereby stimulating movement toward goal attainment.

Updates to the implementation plan were made in response to ongoing review of relevant data such as before and after student enrollment numbers. It was during this process that the MCB distinctive practice of “measuring everything” emerged.
Conversely, it was recognized that too many data have the potential of stifling implementation. Therefore, an ongoing practice of assessing which data are needed and which data should be disregarded is used to inform organizational change.

**Continuing the Change**

In 2004, the redesigned MCB exclusive program for undergraduate studies achieved its goal of external recognition for performance excellence by receiving the Malcolm Baldrige award. This commitment to a culture of progressive performance excellence is affirmed through ongoing self-assessment experienced by “measuring everything.” Senior leaders recognize that a danger of this long-sought achievement is succumbing to the belief that “we are good.” Therefore, systems of ongoing communication and self-assessment intentionally define this culture. The fact that these processes of organizational review are intentionally transparent generates organizational trust. Goals, strategies, objectives, action plans, and key performance tracking measures pulsate through this responsive organization. Student surveys, parent surveys, and stakeholder surveys drive the strategic planning processes in a way that is meaningful.

Key assessment tools are used to evaluate and improve organizational performance. These instruments are the External Benchmarking (EBI) Surveys and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Field Achievement Test in business. Each of these tools is recognized as the national standard for benchmarking undergraduate programs of business. MCB has developed for itself target points of ranking nationally within the top 10% on key performance indicators as defined through these instruments. Committees use these findings to initiate ongoing evaluation of organizational performance. The primary force for sustaining performance excellence in this organization is the
commitment by senior leaders to respond to these benchmarks through its strategic and master plans.

New students and new employees are introduced to these exemplary benchmarks prior to admission or employment. These expectations are reinforced through new-member orientations. Each is expected to work in a manner that assures that these standards will be progressively sustained. Mentoring programs are designed to ensure an understanding of the MCB culture of excellence. Recognizing that improvement is contagious, members of senior leadership model a personal commitment to progressive excellence while intentionally identifying champions of desired organizational change. These workforce leaders recount the story of the MCB journey and invite organizational members to remain actively engaged in writing the next chapter of its exemplary performance. Senior leaders believe that words that support the College’s commitment to progressive excellence must be intentionally used to define the culture. For example, personal letters are written to students from executive leaders, such as the Dean, to celebrate their excellence as evidenced by attaining the benchmark of a 10% national ranking on identified external benchmarks. These student celebrations of success are echoed through organizational celebrations of these attainments in its publications, its events, and its internal recognitions. As a result, joy in the workplace is associated with the rigor for the highest standard of excellence, thereby affirming its perpetual existence.

Achieving the Malcolm Baldrige recognition for performance excellence serves as an ongoing source of positive energy for growth in exemplary service. Each successive member of the organizational team is invited to understand that they must answer in the affirmative to the question, “Does my work make things better?” As a result, meaning is
infused into roles and responsibilities of respective positions and the commitment to premier progressive responsiveness is sustained through transitions in both administration and faculty leadership.

Richland College: “Whole People, Whole Organization, Whole Lot of Fun”

Richland is boldly committed to both organizational and individual “wholeness,” as indicated in its banner statement: “Whole People, Whole Organization, Whole Lot of Fun.” Located in Dallas, it is the largest community college in the county. More than 16,000 credit and about 5,000 continuing education students attend this college. Fifty-five percent of the student body are women, and 46% are men. These students are internationally and ethnically diverse. They come from over 130 countries and speak more than 80 first languages. Thirty-eight percent are Anglo-American, 21% Hispanic, 19% African-American, 16% Asian-American, 2% international, and 4% undisclosed.

Students build their future through courses that may be applied to the first 2 years of a baccalaureate degree, 1- or 2-year certificates in career fields, and training in the latest technology for students who want to advance in their current professions. Approximately 70% of students are enrolled in university transfer courses (Richland College, 2009b).

Richland’s commitment to progressive excellence in the delivery of teaching and learning has been recognized in various ways. In 2005, it became the first accredited institution of higher education in Texas to receive its highest quality performance award—the Texas Award for Performance Excellence. Additional awards include the 2005 and 2008 Tech Titan of the Future Award for its articulated Associate in Science engineering degree, the 2008 Earl W. Eames Award for its progress and contributions in
the use of electronic communication technology, and the 2007 National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Award for three decades of curricular leadership through exemplary teacher preparation. Its highest recognition of excellence is receipt of the MBQA. Richland is the only community college out of 1,500 2-year degree-granting institutions of higher education to receive this recognition. The impact of this decision to change their standard for performance excellence to that which is defined by the Baldrige criteria most directly impacted their strategic planning, transforming them from isolated to integrated processes. For example, creating the annual budget tended to be an independent experience; however, now its construction directly aligns with the timelines and discussions associated with formulating institutional priorities and goals.

Organizational Profile

This overview of Richland Community College begins with a general description of its setting. Within this context, the organization’s culture is defined. Its vision, mission, purpose, and values are reviewed. This section concludes with a discussion of the impact of the president’s leadership upon the organization. Special attention is given to both his commitment to excellence and to aspects of the organizational culture.

Richland’s campus sits on what previously had been the old Jackson farm in the Lake Highlands area of Dallas. When I arrived on campus, I saw indications that it was a vibrant organization. While the campus was heavy with construction work and the sounds of machinery, these sounds were often interrupted by chimes, which are used as intentional creation of serenity for this campus culture of wholeness. “Serenity” is cultivated very carefully on campus. Small lakes create natural separations for campus
buildings and add to the holistic environment, as does the brook that flows throughout the campus. Award-winning architects have designed the campus carefully to protect mature trees and local wildlife such as birds and small animals. Buildings are connected by internal walkways that protect students and staff from the regional heat, which often exceeds 100 degrees. Paths for walking meander through the 155 acres of the school, affirming reflection as a key foundation for learning.

Perhaps more than any other feature, these paths affirm the organization’s commitment to excellence in learning that responds to the needs of our global society. “Peace poles” are strategically positioned along paths, proclaiming “peace on earth” in the variety of languages reflecting the diversity of the student body. Watching the students of varied ages, gender, and ethnic backgrounds walk past these poles or linger on benches beside them is a unique multicultural experience. I was particularly surprised at the large circular Native American reflection path, which is nestled in a corner of the campus. Given my awareness of space demands that characterize academic settings, I was impressed that this space has been intentionally preserved. By design, this path has no formal entrance or exit, thus communicating the message that contemplation is both a spontaneous and continuous attribute of the whole person and this whole organization.

Richland’s vision is to be the best place for learning, teaching, and building a sustainable local and world community. This vision complements its three-part mission of “teaching, learning, and community building.” Its purpose is to “prepare students for successful living and responsible citizenship in a rapidly changing local, national, and world community (Richland College, 2009b).
Richland’s institutional core values are referred to as “ThunderValues.” Members of the organization have defined behavioral expectations for each of these values. I find that each of these values has at least one attribute that is especially compelling. For example, integrity gives permission to admit mistakes, say when we do not know, avoid silence when it may mislead, and seek the root cause to problems. Mutual trust values and accommodates differences and commonalities while correspondingly affirming motives that are trustworthy. Wholeness believes that whole people learn, teach, serve, lead, and build community. Fairness is experienced as giving the benefit of the doubt while forgiving mistakes. Communication is meaningful and forthright so that paradox and ambiguity as movement toward consensus are affirmed through careful listening. Respecting silence, using it for reflection and deeper understanding—not immediately filling silence with words after someone has spoken—rushing not to judgment, but to wonder what is intended or felt is how mindfulness is experienced. Members have agreed to intentionally look beyond self-interest to achieve common goals—remaining helpful and forgiving in difficult situations to achieve meaningful lives as defined by the value of cooperation. Intercultural competence is valued and encouraged as an essential behavior of diversity. Responsible risk-taking is valued and experienced as responding well to challenges—moving forward despite criticism. Pulsating through each of these values is the “ThunderValue” of joy, which is uniquely defined as valuing laughter, play, love, kindness, celebration, and joy—taking learning and work seriously and self lightly (Richland College, 2009a).

Richland has created a unique resource in its “Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher Education.” This center prepares facilitators and teams from colleges and
universities to create professional development programs in renewal and wholeness. Preparation occurs through week-long retreats and annual nationwide/regional gatherings of facilitators. Implementation of learned principles is supported through mentoring. More than 45 United States’ colleges and universities have participated in these experiences of renewal. This work is informed by writings of Parker Palmer, who affirms the value of a balanced life and courageous teaching. Through dialogue and relationship building, insights as espoused by servant leadership and appreciative inquiry are also affirmed.

These insights are not only taught in this Center but are deeply embodied in the president’s leadership. Dr. Stephen Mittelstet has been president of this college for more than 30 of Richland’s 37-year history. Prior to his presidency, he served as a member of the faculty through both adjunct and full-time appointments. This commitment to academic leadership extends beyond Richland. He has personally mentored over 30 senior academic executives who serve the Texas system of higher education. He believes that “my life is my message” (Mittelstet, 2008). Accordingly, his leadership is characterized by excellence, wholeness, reflection, and joy. He confronts difficult issues with honesty, integrity, and reflection. His primary directive to his executive team is “Don’t just do something; sit there!” He intentionally supports this directive through designing his suite in a manner that supports this reflective mandate.

As I entered his office, I observed that it consists primarily of large and small meeting tables that are surrounded by comfortable chairs and supporting colors. Noticeably absent is the imposing desk and chair that are typically present in executive suites. I have never seen a president’s office like this! As I wondered about the
whereabouts of this furniture, I noticed an unmarked adjacent door. I accepted the invitation to open the door, and there I discovered a small room, just large enough for a standard computer desk and chair. By design, this space affirms the organization’s value of relationships and conversation as the primary vehicle for progressive excellence. The president continues to actively affirm organizational conversation through the creation of listening stations throughout the campus. Here, at scheduled times, he makes himself available to speak and to listen to students and staff. I find this commitment to responsive leadership to be remarkable.

When asked by a New York Times columnist to describe Richland in 50 words or less, the president responded by stating that “Richland College is a bumble of Montaigne’s busy bees—stealing from this flower and that—striving to be authentic, whole-person Thunderducks rowing gently and merrily (as we make our own honey) with Malcolm Baldrige and Parker Palmer to our organizational wholeness dream of teaching, learning, and building sustainable local and world community” (Mittelstet, 2008).

Organizational Themes

In this section, five categories for leading change toward performance excellence as experienced through implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence are reviewed. These categories emerge from my data analysis. This review reflects the unique experience of Richland Community College.

Determining the What and Why

Planned change is identified and recommended by any member of the organization. I believe this is a powerful strategy that positions this organization for
change readiness. It often builds on initiatives that have been previously enacted. Sometimes it requires taking a controversial position to ensure that the highest standards for benchmarking internal and external excellence are met. It is experienced as innovative, agile, and uniquely created in response to organizational need. Determining what will change emerges from teams as they effectively learn to “ask the right questions.” These questions are spontaneously generated within this culture of continuous improvement.

The decision to implement the Baldrige criteria as the organization’s primary initiative for planned change originated as a recommendation from the CEO. It occurred in response to a desire to achieve and sustain the highest level of organizational academic excellence. The first step in determining this change was a collective decision to “move forward.” I am impressed by the power and the impact of this choice, which continues to propel this organization forward.

**The Leader’s Role and Strategies**

The president invites members of the organization to “first turn to wonder then to judgment” (Richland College, 2009a, “Thunder Values” section). As a result, a safe environment for creativity, informed mistakes, respectful accountability, and institutional learning is experienced. He has created an organization that values risk taking as an essential for excellence. He believes that change is “informed by” not “driven by” data. It is further characterized by a willingness to learn from the stories of others. Practices and priorities are intentionally aligned in such a manner that the organization is liberated to experience the creativity of the change. While the change is futuristic in its nature, intentional consideration is also given to the creation of legacy.
Through meaningful conversations, classroom observations, and personal classroom instruction, the president proactively maintains relationships with the faculty, which he affirms as essential for implementing academic change. This has been my experience as well. He ensures that insights from these interactions are incorporated into the organization’s strategic processes for identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. His leadership is characterized by a willingness to intentionally respond to the fears of faculty, such as those that are associated with performance expectations, contracts, workload, and compensation. He consistently looks for ways to showcase faculty excellence in ways such as that which was affirmed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. This organization identified only two community colleges in its 2007 report as leading examples on how to incorporate essential learning outcomes into 21st-century learning. Richland was one of those two.

Strategies for leading change, as created by senior leadership, build on a quotation from the 16th-century French essayist, Michel de Montaigne: “Bees steal from this flower and that and create a honey that is all their own” (Mittelstet, 2008, p. 81). An example of this tradition of acquiring good ideas from others is the Richland Performance Excellence Model, which has fundamental elements borrowed from a previous Baldrige recipient, St. Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City, Missouri. The first stage of this performance excellence model is strategic planning. Senior executives meet for an annual 3-day planning retreat in August. Goals are formulated based on the review of the past year’s performance. Data are generated from the bimonthly Environmental Scanning Council and College-wide conversations from more than 200 Richlanders inform this planning process. Change is then implemented in a manner which aligns with these insights.
A willingness to learn, by senior leaders, is evidenced through intentional efforts to gain understanding of the desired change prior to its implementation. These insights are integrated into leading the desired change through ongoing attention to relationship building—with those individuals who are implementing the change and those who will be experiencing the impact of the change. This intentionality aligns with the organizational core value of cooperation, which is expressed as a commitment to help one another shape meaningful lives by remaining helpful and forgiving in difficult situations (Richland College, 2009a).

Through these relationships, members of the organization are invited to participate in the initiative. Opportunities are provided for listening to fears from members of the internal community, such as “How will this proposed change impact me?” During these sessions, leaders made an effort to ask the “right questions”—those which help to ensure that implementation of the Baldrige criteria is sustained by addressing expressed fears and concerns in a timely manner. The efforts of members are recognized through the employee newsletter. Admiration for the work of participants is consistently and appropriately expressed by senior leadership. Through creating ambitious goals that align with the Baldrige criteria for excellence, just enough organizational discomfort is stimulated so that the desired change is accomplished. This, I believe, is one of the most challenging leadership strategies to implement; yet, it is my observation that this implementation has effectively occurred here. Throughout the implementation process, leaders assume responsibility to motivate themselves to ensure project completion. They recognize that it is their personal responsibility to guard against frustration and discouragement. I believe that this commitment to self-leadership is most
essential. The senior leaders also understand that their effectiveness as leaders will be questioned if the change is not implemented as planned. For this reason, they actively seek to maintain organizational trust through accountability and transparency. This trust aligns with the organization’s “ThunderValue” of “mutual trust,” which is experienced as “valuing and accommodating both differences and commonalities when motives are trustworthy” (Richland College, 2009a).

Leadership is enhanced through the creation of joyful opportunities for moving the organization forward, such as employee recognition parades. The reality of joy in leadership is palpable and is expressed in the voices of executive leaders as they describe strategies for effectively leading change. This commitment to joy in the workplace is also evidenced in the organization’s core values. A strong belief in the ability of the desired change to enhance excellence in teaching and thereby positively impact not only the organization but also society at large is expressed.

**Characteristics of the Change**

At Richland, change is experienced as an evolving process characterized by reflection. It is through this process that the standard for organizational best is identified and continuously evaluated. An equally important outcome is the determination of what the organization will not be. The decision to live by the Baldrige criteria is a direct result of this process. Prior to this decision, excellence existed in isolated areas. The organization planned and worked in silos. Strategic planning was a once-a-year activity that was separate from other key processes, such as budgeting. Performance indicators were not defined and therefore not clearly tracked. Stakeholders were demanding that success be substantiated by accurate data. In three legislative sessions, state funding to
the college plummeted from approximately 70% to 30%. College leaders recognized that a change was necessary. This change had to respond to their dual commitments to progressive excellence and fiscal soundness.

Rather than an impulsive response to this fiscal challenge, a choice to change in an intentional manner was made. A response of continual improvement that nurtures the whole person, the whole organization, and the whole community was created. The mission and vision were reviewed and rewritten to align with this commitment to “wholeness.” Senior leaders, faculty, and staff created institutional core values that paint a portrait of holistic organizational behaviors to live by. The belief that whole people best learn, teach, serve, lead, and build community became the foundation for all decision making. As a result, decisions are made and processes instituted that nurture a unified mind-spirit-body, as well as emotional and intellectual intelligences as requisites for meaningful lives. Creating and sharing best practices to create this enriching culture for learning proved to be so attractive that enrollment growth persists and demand for its services continues to birth new offerings in a way which results in fiscal soundness which aligns with their district’s commitment to excellent fiscal management. Evidence of successful adherence to these rigorous financial standards are the 2010 AAA ratings of excellence from Fitch Ratings, Moody’s Investors Services Incorporated, and Standard and Poor’s Incorporated (Dallas County Community College District, 2011).

Implementing the Change

Implementation is guided by an agreed-upon framework. This framework is established by the Baldrige criteria and defined through the use of a pilot. It is informed
by the organization’s core values and organizational practices. Relevant examples of these organizational practices include the following:

1. Identifying and using benchmarks and best practices to improve work while focusing on institutional purpose, vision, mission, and values

2. Recognizing problems, collaborating to seek root causes, and implementing effective solutions; empowering and freeing those closest to the work to make responsible decisions

3. Assuming personal and collective stewardship of college systems, processes, facilities, and resources to keep them vital.

Specifics regarding implementation are clearly articulated in organizational documents such as the “Thunder Onion Dashboard for Effectiveness.” Often multiple approaches are used to ensure that the rigor of the Baldrige criteria is met. Regardless of the approach, language that is positive and supportive of the change is intentionally chosen. Successful implementation hinges upon confirming viability of the desired change. This confirmation is actively sought by the CEO through venues such as individual, small-group, and organizational conversations. Initially, feedback is sought from members of the senior executive team. This team tests, evaluates, and processes this internal feedback through pilots, which are limited in scope and impact. Modifications to implementation are made in a timely manner. “Buy-in” is correspondingly obtained. Ideas that do not pass this initial stage of analysis are discarded. Ideas confirmed as viable by the executive team are “rolled out” to the internal audience in accordance with the objective to grow in excellence through implementation of the Baldrige criteria.
This process of seeking and obtaining feedback is treasured and valued as equal to that of goal achievement. It is experienced as essential fuel for the organization’s progressive movement to the next level of highest performance. Faculty support is intentionally sought. The fundamental questions answered throughout the implementation are “Why the change?” and “Is this change making us better?” Processes were immediately discontinued if at any time the rationale for their use could not be articulated or the enhanced service to students could not be substantiated. Implementation is characterized by a skeptical critique of data. This skepticism is fueled by a willingness to confront that which is difficult so that the ultimate goal of progressive excellence was achieved. A path for implementation of the criteria is created where one has not previously existed. This creativity results from the collective energies of effective teams.

As appropriate, implementation is strategically supported through the use of an external consultant—in this case, individuals who are experts with the Baldrige criteria in the non-academic business world. These insights are harnessed to inspire performance excellence. Practices are carefully critiqued and adapted to the unique needs of higher education in general and to Richland specifically. Progress toward this performance excellence is confirmed through conversations with employees from all groups. These conversations create an agile, responsive organization that reverberates with excitement for the power and potential of the change.

**Continuing the Change**

Living by the Baldrige criteria requires organizational discipline. President Mittelstet believes that this discipline is similar to that which is required for rowing a boat. He proudly acknowledges that he learned this metaphorical concept from one of the
philosophy professors. He believes that the strains from the children’s song “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” aptly describe the Richland culture of change. He identifies a principle for progressive excellence from each of its lines.

Performance Excellence: Principle 1 is inherent in its first line—“Row, row, row your boat.” The discipline to continue Baldrige performance excellence is likened to that which is required to excel in boat rowing. It is demanding. It is creative. It is innovative and continuously nurtures the whole self. This boat-rowing discipline, as a model for performance excellence, is readily available to all employees through an intranet “hot-link.” When achieved, the desired change is incorporated into the advancement of the organization’s mission, vision, planning, and culture. This is viewed as an essential strategy for continuing the change. For example, to ensure continued growth through the Baldrige criteria, the following strategic-planning priority goals were created:

1. Identify and meet community educational needs.
2. Empower all students to succeed.
3. Empower all employees to succeed.
4. Ensure institutional effectiveness.

These primary organizational processes are accessible to all members of the workforce through the Intranet. This accessibility aligns with the commitment to transparent communication—especially with faculty, shared learning, and enhanced efficiency through minimized redundancy. In addition, leaders intentionally express and actively affirm their belief that the change continues to be of organizational value.

These beliefs are evidenced through actualization of their performance excellence model. This model is characterized by a four-part cycle of improvement to approach,
deploy, learn, and integrate the desired change. Where “to approach” means to identify the improvement need, assign ownership, and identify the root cause. The deployment component requires the development of a solution and the implementation of a pilot that approaches and responds to the identified needed. Learning occurs through measuring the potential impact of the solution as projected through findings from the pilot. Integration is actively supported through the dissemination of results and evaluation of the improvement process. Any change must ultimately advance student success through implementation of the overall quality enhancement plan. This plan is designed to advance student learning through progressive outcomes at the institutional, core-curriculum, cross-disciplinary, program/departmental, course, and service levels. Formal and informal means are used to receive feedback and enhance understanding through tools such as the monthly Thunion (Thunder Onion) Report Card. This report provides monthly scores for the college as a whole and specifically for each of the four priority goals. These findings are weighted through the generation of key performance indicators. At a glance, this report informs the organization of its progress. A green light indicates health. A yellow light indicates a need for explanation and conversation. A red light indicates cause for concern or alarm. Like peeling back an onion, layers of data for each indicator are provided and critiqued. These layers of data are specific enough so that understanding is generated and corrective action is initiated. These data are reviewed at monthly executive sessions. Organizational energies are focused on responding to yellow and red light findings. Peer institution and best-in-class comparisons are also conducted. Summative annual, multi-year trended data are referenced. Subsequent to this review, monthly findings are disseminated via the Intranet for individual and departmental use. Archival
access is also provided for purposes of comparison, research, and learning. The change remains a part of the culture as long as it has a positive impact on the organization.

Performance Excellence: Principle 2 is embodied in this second line—“Gently down the stream.” Prior to the start date, potential employees are introduced to significant components of the change. They are informed of the organizational expectation that they will actively champion the change. It is clearly communicated that if they cannot support progressive excellence as defined for a Baldrige organization, they must not accept the appointment. This clarity aligns with the ThunderValue of considerate, meaningful communication. When understood, the employee signs a document called “Confirmation of Understanding—Professional Development Expectations for New Full-Time Employees.” This signed document becomes part of the official application for employment. Once the invitation is accepted to join the Richland team, the new employee participates in a 3-year orientation program. When I became aware of this extensive orientation, I thought, *These folks are really serious about their culture and commitment to excellence in ways that I have never seen before.* I learned that through this experience, the new employee obtains a thorough understanding of the organization within the context of performance expectations for sustaining Baldrige excellence through their position. Through orientation sessions new students are also informed of the expectation that their learning will reflect these standards of performance excellence. I believe these to be powerful practices for sustaining this preferred culture.

Performance Excellence: Principle 3 is “Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily” (line three of the song). As with implementation, change is sustained through joyful organizational celebrations. These celebrations embody the institutional core value of joy,
in which a formal commitment to laughter, play, love, kindness, and celebration in learning and work is affirmed. This commitment to a joyful workplace is evidenced through spontaneous college-wide and area “laugh breaks,” celebratory annual convocations, and positive humor. Early in my career I attended a seminar that focused on the grim reality that many organizations are characterized by joyless striving. I remember wondering if this speaker’s gloom assessment for our culture of employment is an inevitable reality or if a positive alternative is available to us. I am delighted that Richland’s answer to my question is “Yes!”

Performance Excellence: Principle 4—“Life is but a dream,” is based on the song’s final line. Richland believes that the dream is a realization of organizational wholeness. An example of how commitment to wholeness is experienced is the required workforce professional development that occurs through the Thunderwater Organizational Learning Institute. During the past decade, over 200 Richlanders have participated in a year-long retreat series known as “teacher/leader formation circles of trust,” which builds on the work of Parker Palmer. These circles of trust create a ripple effect throughout the organization. An outcome of this experience is a compilation of 23 essays written by Richland’s faculty and staff who explore this organizational wholeness and trust through the theme of teaching through soft eyes (Mittelstet, 2008). Whole-person authenticity includes completion of a year-long course in intercultural competence. This experience is offered in collaboration with the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communications. It is noteworthy that all of Richland’s employees have participated in this training. I am deeply impressed by this commitment to cultural
competency. It is a remarkable organizational response that helps to ensure that learning at Richland will respond to the needs of our global society.

Reflection as the foundation for wholeness is affirmed through the honoring of silence. Space and time are dedicated to this discipline through the intentional design of workspace, which consists of quiet reflection rooms, park benches, meditation gardens, fountains, waterfalls, a lakeside peace-pole trail, protected wildlife habitat, and the outdoor labyrinth. It is expected that students and employees incorporate moments of reflection and gratitude into their day through access to these spaces. A reminder of this expectation is the quarter-hour peal of carillon bells that resonates serenely throughout the campus. I remember being impressed by the serenity that this simple yet consistent practice generates. Insights from this reflection are shared in the teacher-leader-service-provider formation groups. During these sessions, participants proactively learn to interact with their colleagues in ways that are considerate, respectful, and affirming. Special emphasis is given to refining the skill of turning to wonder before judgment.

Supporting these sessions for more than two decades is the Uncommittee Reading Circle. More than 100 volunteers agree to read monthly selections of fiction alternating with nonfiction directed toward responding to the question, “As a result of this reading, what is evoked from my life and what implications do these insights have for my work with Richland students and colleagues” (Mittelstet, 2008, p. 89).

These reflective conversations are held informally and without a facilitator. Frequently they take place in the homes of participants. I am amazed that employees extend these conversations outside of the formal workplace to their homes. Truly the relationships established through these encounters are of value. Implications from these
conversations frequently serve as a catalyst for new innovative programs and a strengthening of organizational trust.

Whole-person formation is affirmed as a lifelong journey so that an individual’s gifts and abilities are used to create learning experiences that help both students and colleagues live better with each other in a manner that results in a more meaningful life. Efforts to sustain this wholeness and to avert a nightmare are experienced through the institution’s use of declarative organizational conversation. These conversations are characterized by affirming statements such as, “We’re going to be whole.” Through his position as CEO, President Mittelstet gives ultimate power to these affirmations by his declarations that “we are going to be the best place we can be to learn, teach, and build sustainable local and world community” (Mittelstet, 2008, p. 80); as a result, the dream is achieved!
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter consists of five main sections. In the first section, five themes for leading change, which emerged from my research, are identified. It is from the fifth theme that strategies for anchoring change are specified. The second section provides results from my cross-case analysis which answers the research question, “What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?” This review begins with the fifth theme “continuing the change”. The discussion of strategies is followed by findings for supporting themes, one through four. Section three provides a summary of this study. Section four identifies recommendations for future research. The final section is the chapter’s conclusion.

Findings

Five themes for leading change in academic organizations of higher education emerged from my research. These themes and their associated definitions are as follows:

1. Determining what and why—explains the process for identifying what the organization will choose to change and its associated rationale.
2. *The leader’s role and strategies*—describes the role of senior leaders in leading organizational change.

3. *Characteristics of the change*—reviews how this organizational change is uniquely experienced by employees.

4. *Implementing the change*—provides an overview of processes used to make the change a reality.

5. *Continuing the change*—identifies the strategies used to anchor the choice into the organization’s culture.

These themes created a progressive path for realizing the organization’s commitment to progressive performance excellence as experienced through implementing the planned change of the Baldrige criteria.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

Leaders at Malcolm Baldrige award-winning organizations of higher education experience the change of implementing its criteria for performance excellence in ways that are similar and different. An inductive process was used to analyze the data. First, the data were coded in accordance with the process required for segmenting and labeling text to identify required descriptions of findings and broad themes.

Subsequent to the coding of the transcripts, a list of code words was formulated. Redundant codes were identified. Alignment with specific quotes from the transcripts that supported the codes was then confirmed through triangulation. Themes for leading change which aligned with this coding were then identified. Through a critique of the supporting data for these themes, shared strategies for anchoring change at each of these institutions emerged. It was from recurrent strategies, as experienced by leaders at each
of the Malcolm Baldrige winners in higher education, that a trilogy of strategies for anchoring change was confirmed. This review begins with theme five, since its findings answer this study’s research question. The context for these strategies is then provided with a review of the findings for themes one through four.

Theme Five—Continuing the Change

In answer to the research question, “What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?” this study identifies the following three strategies:

1. Utilize sustained leadership to ensure that change aligns with the organization’s mission, vision, and values and is integrated into the strategic-planning process through assessment of performance excellence.

This strategy is substantiated by the fact that at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, the chancellor has served in this capacity for over 20 years. At Richland College, the president’s tenure was just over 30 years. By way of contrast, the president of the University of Northern Colorado, home of the Kenneth Monfort College of Business, began her executive service through an appointment on its Board of Trustees in 1995. She then continued service as a senior administrator through her appointment as Vice President for University Affairs and Senior Counsel to the Board of Trustees. In 2002 she accepted responsibility to serve the University in the capacity of its 12th president. Accordingly, her cumulative senior executive service to the University, at the time of their Baldrige Award for Performance Excellence, was 9 years. To date, she continues to serve in this capacity. With respect to integration of the performance excellence standards into the institution’s plan of strategic long-range planning, each of these organizations
launches this initiative with an annual planning retreat during which key performance indicators are critiqued, revised, discontinued, and added. At the University of Wisconsin-Stout, this annual session is enriched through a highly participatory series of pre-retreat employee-listening sessions. Whereas at the Kenneth Monfort College of Business, where “we measure everything” is a description of the culture, key performance indicators, which inform the strategic long-range process, are collected continuously. Richland consistently ensures that these attained standards for performance excellence are anchored into its culture, by consistently implementing systems that are data informed and not data driven. This strengths-based culture anchors the planned change of progressive performance excellence into the experience of its performance model to approach, deploy, learn, and integrate change into the culture.

This first strategy, utilize sustained leadership to ensure that change aligns with the organization’s mission, vision, and values and is integrated into the strategic-planning process through assessment of performance excellence, is supported by the findings of Virany, Tushman, and Romanelli (1992) and their research on executive succession—through which they confirm that CEOs and senior leaders need time to implement and ensure the continuance of the change. Accordingly, their observation is that, ideally, these senior leaders will serve for 5-7 years. This recommendation is in stark contrast to my observation of a current practice in higher education which is to offer 2- or 3-year contracts to Presidents. It seems that our system seeks to implement change which responds to immediate organizational needs without as much rigorous attention given to increasing the capacity of the institution for enhanced service, progressive excellence, and long-term responsiveness. For example, my current institution has experienced four
different presidents in 7 years. This minimal tenure has made it difficult to create and implement a strategic long-range plan with its elements of intentional change. Lindner’s research (2008) further supports the dimension of this strategy which recommends that planned change be integrated into the strategic-planning process. As a result, strategies are created which ensure advancement of the institution’s mission, vision, values, and desired outcomes. From this intentionality, Malone (2007) observes that the institution’s essential competency of a capacity for continuous adaptive organizational change (CAOC) is refined. Lindner (2008) concurs by recommending that leaders of change in higher education should consider factors such as including the need for thoughtful planning and articulating desired outcomes at the onset of change. As a result, the ability to work toward clear, measurable results is enhanced. Kincl (2007) further recommends that, in higher education, the development of strategies to advance the institution’s vision for planned change is positioned for greater effectiveness when these senior leaders establish collaborative relationships with faculty.

2. Incorporate performance expectations of excellence into new employee and student orientations.

At Richland College, new employees must sign a letter that affirms their commitment to actively support the College standards of progressive performance excellence prior to their actual first day of employment. Failure to provide this formal commitment is sufficient reason to rescind the intended offer of employment. Once this intent is obtained, these new employees begin a 3-year period of orientation to the culture’s established standards of excellence and their role in ensuring its continuance. At the Kenneth Monfort College of Business, not only are new employees oriented to
performance standards of excellence, but new students, prior to acceptance, are informed that they will be expected to meet the external benchmarks for distinctive academic accomplishment throughout their course of study. The University of Wisconsin-Stout also ensures that new employees are required to attend a 3-day orientation session during which their role in continuing progressive quality improvement is reaffirmed. At each of these organizations, students and employees are proudly oriented to the distinctive culture of excellence that has been attained at these institutions, via marketing materials and a visible presence of their established commitment to continuing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence through a dominant presence on their respective Web sites. These supporting documents reinforce the institutional expectation that any new student or employee will actively work to anchor these standards of progressive quality improvement into the organization’s culture, their work, and their performance.

This second strategy, incorporate performance expectations into new employee orientation, aligns with the findings of Szabla (2006) who suggests that orienting constituents to the workplace can either enhance responsiveness to planned change or set the foundation for a mind-set of resistance. Her findings suggest that a foundation for positive responses to organizational change occurs best when benefits regarding the change are communicated at the outset of the employee’s relationship with the institution. However, this study also suggests that just the opposite occurs when power-coercive strategies for implementing the planned change are used during this pivotal time of entrance into the organization. This adverse mind-set becomes increasingly difficult to redirect. Kath (2005) shares this observation from her research on organizational cynicism toward change which she suggests begins during orientation and, therefore,
must be intentionally countered. Landolt (2003) recommends that one way to counter this negative mind-set is to intentionally link the change to stories of strength from the organization’s past while correspondingly relating them to future organizational challenges. As a result, active support for the change is elicited and its ability to be sustained is enhanced.

3. Implement communication systems which are open, authentic, and responsive—especially with faculty.

At the University of Wisconsin-Stout, examples of the organization’s commitment to open systems of communication which nurture institutional trust, as required to sustain the Baldrige standards for performance excellence, are the Chancellor’s Advisory Council, the Administrator Leadership Team, and the biannual 1-minute climate survey. The chancellor recognizes the unique interest of faculty and seeks to identify barriers that might exist to their acceptance of progressive performance excellence as defined by the Baldrige criteria. He finds that “defining conversations” which clarify “what we will do” and equally important “what we will not do” anchor the continuance of these standards through maturing organizational trust. As a result, faculty are invited, not required, to use the Baldrige criteria to enrich their instruction and responsiveness to student learning needs. This practice continues to prove effective. The physical structure of the Monfort College of Business with meeting areas for faculty and administration as well as faculty and students is credited with affirming a collaborative culture where the language of excellence is experienced and momentum is harnessed for anchoring standards of progressive excellence as defined by the Baldrige criteria. Monfort also finds “impact conversations” and “improvement conversations” to be
particularly effective with faculty as invitations are extended to these professionals to create an enriched learning experience for students through the Baldrige standards for performance excellence. At Richland, the president’s office décor of meeting tables instead of formal traditional desks immediately reinforces this institution’s commitment to systems of trust-building communication which are further experienced through the president’s listening sessions, especially with faculty. Richland has also found that the use of pilots is valuable to attain consistent support from faculty as these members of its workforce are invited to experience the standards of progressive performance excellence which are anchored into its culture.

This third strategy, implementing communication systems which are open, authentic, and responsive—especially with faculty, aligns with findings by Cowan (2010) who observes that a fundamental necessity for organizational communication regarding planned change is conversations by presidents and members of the senior leadership team with members of the institution specific to the reason for the change, their role in the initiative, and its intended benefit. Baird (2010) further recommends that it is through this strategy that organizational trust is built. She observes that trust is essential for institutional effectiveness. The absence of this organizational attribute results in delayed implementation of planned change, a politicizing of the change and intentional avoidance of risk taking. As a result of her meta-ethnographic analysis of organizational change at community colleges, Stich (2008) concurs with this assessment by recommending that institutions of higher education employ an integrative, relational, and contextual approach to change by using such strategies as building trusting relationships, implementing communication strategies which build followership, and visibly integrating strategies into
organizational processes which support the initiative. Through his research on leadership which sustains organizational strength as experienced at Boston College, Reed (2008) agrees that an essential strategy for sustaining organizational change is an on-communication plan with all constituents. Research conducted by Gomez (2007) determined that this communication plan must be constructed in a manner which responds to a present-future duality—where organizational members are informed about present dimensions of the change initiative while correspondingly preparing for future requirements for sustaining the change. His research suggests that the three practices of proactive information sharing, using real-time information, and employing collective reflexivity will enhance the implementation and continuance of the change initiative. Sawyer (2005) recommends that in higher education, teacher leadership teams be established as part of the communication structure. As a result, communication of messages essential for sustaining the change is enhanced as faculty respect this portrait of institutional collaboration. He observes that potential drawbacks associated with this strategy are competing responsibilities experienced by faculty, discomfort with leading peers, and frustration with the cumbersome institutional processes which create organizational misalignment and often counter continuance of the change.

Organizational joy, which creates positive momentum for anchoring the planned change, is an outcome of abundance institutional cultures. Shults (2008) observes that this culture supports the achievement of outcomes which exceed stakeholder expectations by providing exceptional responsiveness, fully leveraging resources, and proactively meeting consumer demands through continuance and expanding of existing change or through implementing new change. Freebairn-Smith (2010) concurs that change is more
effectively sustained when leaders intentionally create cultures of abundance. Her caution for leaders, however, is that too much abundance can work against sustaining the planned change by dispersing energy and misplacing optimism. While acknowledging similar concerns, Okatan (2010) suggests that the benefits of abundance cultures for sustaining change outweigh the risks. His research confirms that, in these settings, a holistic culture which considers not only workforce competencies, but the emotions and human need for meaningful contributions, planned change is most likely to be sustained. Fullan (2008) concurs through his observation that this type of culture nurtures endearing relationships between the organization and its constituents. As a result, the probability of continuing the planned change is enhanced.

Theme One—Determining What and Why

Organizational change results from a catalyst, which may be internal or external. In the cases of UW-Stout and MCB, this catalyst was external. At UW-Stout, the catalyst was reduced state funding. This external crisis then fueled a new internal crisis, as trust in leadership broke through unintentional miscommunication by the chancellor of a proposed new vision for the University. By contrast, at MCB the external catalyst took the form of average performance ratings, which were unacceptable to the organization’s leaders. In each of these cases, though positive outcomes were achieved, the initial catalyst for change was painful. For unknown reasons, at UW-Stout this pain resulted in “no confidence” between the members of the organization and senior leadership, which occurred in spite of years of enjoying a trusting relationship. At MCB, trust between senior leaders and staff was maintained in spite of a painful and extensive reorganization. In contrast, at Richland the catalyst for change did not stem from a crisis and was
internal. Here the catalyst was experienced as a positive response to an established objective for progressive growth in performance excellence. A potential financial challenge anticipated from reduced state funding was viewed not as a crisis, but an opportunity.

Theme Two—The Leader’s Role and Strategies

In each of these organizations, it was the leader who led an organizational response to the catalyst. Each of these organizational leaders also chose to engage in conversations with its members to identify what change should take place and to define why it was needed. The group process was used to obtain understanding and buy-in. At Richland, these conversations were also supported by the strategic use of pilots, through which organizational impact was projected. Each of the leaders recognized that their organizations were experiencing defining moments. They chose to seize the moment to create exemplary organizational responses to student learning needs. The achievement of this outcome was accompanied by a unique organizational desire. In the case of UW-Stout, this desire was to heal through renewed trust in executive leadership. At MCB, this parallel desire was to achieve ratings of performance excellence by local constituents and students. For Richland Community College, achieved performance excellence must correspondingly create a “whole” organization where “whole” people work to respond to the needs of our global society.

Each of these executives demonstrated confidence in their ability to lead courageously during organizational transitions. When necessary, position power was used to implement reorganizations required to enact the change. Each of the leaders created structures for communication that are open and rich in organizational listening and
responsiveness. At UW-Stout, this commitment was experienced through the CAC and the ALT, with special attention given to affirming organizational trust with faculty. At MCB, authentic communication was affirmed through leader-led improvement conversations, during which a “win-win” organizational culture was affirmed, whereas at Richland, the president consistently created “listening posts” through which he communicated with students and employees in a manner that nurtured organizational “wholeness.” This president also used pilots more frequently to test the impact of potential initiatives. Special attention was given, by each of the leaders, to listening and responding to faculty fears. This commitment to authentic communication was further affirmed through annual organizational retreats, during which reflection was used as a primary strategy to confirm the concerns and ideas that would be integrated into the strategic plan. Positive energy for change was intentionally generated through organizational celebrations, which create working environments that are characterized by joy.

Theme Three—Characteristics of the Change

Unlike the other institutions, workforce considerations unique to an organized environment were addressed when implementing change at the UW-Stout. However, each of the organizations used data to fuel decisions associated with change. At UW-Stout, the chancellor insisted that data were collected only once. He further insisted that the “right data [were] available at the right place to the right people at the right time.” The chancellor also formally stated that all data, favorable or unfavorable, must be considered during organizational planning. Change at MCB was energized through its commitment to “measure everything.” This commitment was further experienced by
“forward looking organizations” through “improvement conversations.” Central to these conversations was a response to the question, “How can we get better?” Richland was very intentional about noting that it is an organization that is “data informed” and not “data driven.” Accordingly, it created dashboards that were used to assess its strengths, cautions, and organizational roadblocks. Each of the organizations ensured that the integrity, transparency, and accessibility of its data to students, employees, and community were readily available. Data were also used in each of the organizations to address faculty fears. At MCB, impact conversations that responded to the question “what if?” were found to effectively respond to these concerns. Each of the organizations discovered that faculty buy-in was best achieved through an invitation to participate and contribute to planning and decision making. Faculty support was further achieved as administrators in each organization intentionally sought to identify ways to fund faculty creativity. A key message to faculty was that the criteria showcase the excellence in teaching as currently experienced in their classrooms, without creating another performance expectation. Neither organization required faculty participation. Through progressive excellence, these organizations created cultures that view change as an opportunity for exploration, discovery, and wonder.

Theme Four—Implementing the Change

Each organization used the framework for performance excellence as specified through the Malcolm Baldrige criteria to implement change. UW-Stout found that these criteria ensured that “the right people are moving in the right direction at the right time.” At MCB, micro and macro goals were used to ensure synergy in organizational responsiveness. Each organization created and implemented its own unique system for
comprehensive feedback that ensured that implementation was timely, effective, and resilient. As a result of these systems, a listening culture was affirmed through which opportunities for responsiveness were generated and fears, especially of the faculty, were addressed. Success was affirmed through formal and informal organizational celebrations. At Richland, for instance, one organizational practice is to pause for laughter. Each organization integrated the recognition of employee contributions to organizational excellence into its performance reviews and recognitions.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study uses Lewin’s (1951) theory of change as its framework. At each organization, its first stage, thawing, was stimulated by a unique catalyst. At the University of Wisconsin-Stout, it was a “no confidence vote by faculty.” At the Monfort College of Business, it was decline in its performance as indicated by falling numbers on student learning indicators. At Richland, it was an awareness that an acute decline in state funding would require the need to realign and refine its culture.

The choice to proactively respond to this catalyst propelled these organizations into stage two of Lewin’s (1951) theory of change, that of reforming. During this stage, each of these exemplary organizations asked themselves the questions, “How will we be distinctive?”—“What will be our niche?” Each chose the Malcolm Baldrige for Performance Excellence as the standard through which answers to these questions would be discovered and experienced.

As a result of this choice to attain and sustain distinctive excellence, Lewin’s (1951) stage three of change, that of freezing, brought each of these organizations to a higher level of responsiveness than that which had been previously experienced. The
University of Wisconsin-Stout found that it would become distinctive by recreating itself as the first academic organization of higher education to receive the Malcolm Baldrige Award for performance excellence and that they would do so through refining their offerings to uniquely align to those of a polytechnic university. “Freezing” at the Monfort College of Business meant eliminating the graduate MBA program and focusing on creating an exclusive exemplary center for undergraduate business education. At Richland, Lewin’s (1951) stage three of “freezing” resulted in its discovery of a distinctive niche through the creation of a strengths-based holistic culture where “whole people” obtain holistic learning and leave their organization to enrich “whole communities” and, as a result, positively impact our global society.

When considering strategies to anchor this exemplary change—as is desired by each organization, required by Kotter’s (1996) eighth step, and the focus of this study—I find that I am increasingly intrigued with the role the leader plays in anchoring the planned change. In each of the participating organizations, senior leaders assume primary responsibility for ensuring that this change not only aligns with, but is connected to the organization’s mission, vision, and values in a way that advances the institution’s journey toward progressive excellence. I believe this reality makes it extremely important for boards and search committees to be attentive to leadership transitions. My research indicates that for continued responsiveness, it is imperative that leaders are identified who will champion the planned change. I recommend that this commitment be confirmed during the interview process. It is my additional recommendation that, in the absence of expressed support for the planned change by the finalist, an alternate candidate be selected. In some cases, this will mean that the search is reopened. While this is never the
preferred choice, it is better to identify a leader who indicates a commitment to the planned change, than later experience the adverse impact to the institution when the change is not anchored into the organization’s culture.

Sustained leadership is a relevant need for academic organizations. Most college presidents serve an average of 3 to 5 years in this capacity; however, at two of the three Malcolm Baldrige award-winning institutions, the senior executive has been president for over 20 years. The president at the third institution was approaching her 10th year of executive service. This difference in the typical tenure of senior executives and that at these Baldrige winners generates the question, “Should sustained length for academic leadership be the norm if planned change is to be continued? If so, what is the preferred length of time to ensure that the planned change is anchored into organizational culture?”

My research further indicates that for change to continue, it must be integrated into the strategic-planning process. Accordingly, senior leaders should critique institutional planning processes to ensure that any planned change is a part of this review. Each of the senior leaders finds that this analysis best occurs through annual planning retreats. For maximum benefit these sessions must be highly participatory. While nurturing buy-in, this structure also ensures that external and internal benchmarks are identified and used to confirm continued relevance of the change.

It is imperative that time be invested in creating experiences that orient new members to the change. It is equally important that these individuals understand the role they play in advancing the change so that the organization’s response to student learning aligns with these standards of progressive excellence.
Finally the results from my research confirm that in order to anchor planned change into organizational culture, leaders must develop internal communication systems which are authentic, consistent, and highly participatory. Through these systems, understanding and buy-in is created. These structures ensure that feedback is acquired in an ongoing manner as required for progressive organizational results. It is also through these systems that the essential trust between senior leaders and employees is nurtured. In academia, special attention must be given to establishing this trust between faculty and senior leadership. My study indicates that this trust is developed through conversations, pilots of the proposed change, and invitations to faculty to participate. Positive energy to continue the change is further obtained through spontaneous and structured institutional celebrations which recognize individual and organizational success. Through these celebrations a culture of joy that delights in wonder and discovery as required for student success is created.

Summary of the Study

Organizational effectiveness is determined by the institution’s ability to respond to change in ways which ensure that a competitive edge is achieved and sustained. In response to this reality, businesses seek change agents to serve as senior leaders. These leaders skillfully navigate their organizations in a visionary manner to ensure effective responses to current and projected needs (Toffler, 1970).

Researchers and change experts, such as Lewin (1951), Collins (1995), Kotter (1996), and McLagan (2003) provide guidance for leaders regarding the process of change. This study emphasized Kotter’s (1996) eight-stage process which recommends that leaders use the following stages to implement planned change:
1. Establishing a sense of urgency—the creating of an intense understanding that a response is needed now.

2. Creating the guiding coalition—identifying which roles and responsibilities of the primary leaders for the change.

3. Developing a vision and strategy—the creating of a picture of success, a preferred state which will result from implementation of the planned change.

4. Communicating the change vision—developing systems through which the change, the vision, and performance expectations associated with implementation are disbursed.

5. Empowering broad-based actions—ensuring that resources are available to members of the organization for effective implementation of the change.

6. Generating short-term win—implementing the change management plan in such a way that ongoing success is both identified and celebrated.

7. Consolidating gains and producing more change—intentionally creating momentum needed to propel the change to a successful end.

8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture—creating structures which secure the planned change into the organization’s system of operating (Kotter, 1996).

Of these eight stages, Kotter (1996) determined that a fundamental error committed by organizations is to neglect his eighth stage of leading change. He observes that leaders tend not to anchor planned change firmly in the institution’s culture. As a result, the organization does not develop the stability and resilience needed for progressive advancement of its mission and vision. He further observes that unless the new behaviors of the planned change become rooted into the organization’s norms and
values, the desired change will degrade as soon as the pressure for its implementation is removed (Kotter, 2007). The outcome is that its ability to enrich society is minimized, institutional inefficiency is perpetuated, and the probability of potential failure is increased. My research addresses this problem. The purpose of my study was to explore Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage for leading change—specifically, to identify strategies for anchoring planned change in institutions of higher education.

To gain further understanding, I called Dr. Kotter at the Harvard School of Business and discussed his eight steps for leading change. He explained that he first began to formally observe change around 1985 as he was conducting research for his first book, *The Leadership Factor*. Through conversations with leaders at DuPont, he became increasingly aware of the shortening of the product life cycle. In the mid-1950s the product life cycle was around 10 to 15 years. Then it shortened to 8 to 10 years, then 6 to 8 years, and then to just months. He began to wonder whether the rate of change was really increasing overall or if his observations related to one particular local experience. During this time Dr. Kotter began teaching a first-year course in Harvard’s Business School on organizational behavior. Increasingly, his instructional preparations focused on discovering how companies were responding to change. He summarized these observations in a paper entitled “Why Organization Change Efforts Fail.” The demand for this resource was of such that it launched his subsequent decades of research on leading organizational change. He observes that the “rate of change has never been higher—not only are business changes big, but they are exponential... which is why I am committed to helping people understanding this thing we call change” (J. Kotter, personal communication, March 2008). Our conversation continued as he observed that
a fundamental error of the eighth stage for leading change is that once people have something in place—e.g., quality has gone up—they take their eye off the ball. They don’t realize that the power of tradition is very, very strong. For example, you see that a plant manager is dedicated to a program, he is the reason that the change happened. Then he gets transferred and before you know it, the business reverts to doing things the old way. This revision happens by making one personnel decision. It’s like a tent, you buy a tent—it looks great. You put it up—you put in a couple of pegs, but if not nailed down, that tent blows away. I have found that those who succeed in anchoring change realize that this new change is still fragile. They recognize that we have a great thing here—but it is very fragile. We have to make it stick. It has to be connected to the emotions of the institution, which is why I wrote, “The Heart of Change.” The ultimate stake is culture—you don’t have to force the change into the culture like with cement, but you do have to attach the change to the culture, as if with a paper clip—it has to be attached in some way to the culture so that it moves with the culture. In this way the change becomes a group habit and then with any habit, it becomes natural and finally it becomes institutionalized as a similar mindset is established, but never forget that this thing, this new change is fragile. (J. Kotter, personal communication, March 2008)

I then asked whether he was aware of studies conducted with schools of higher education on his eighth stage, anchoring planned change. He was not aware of studies which had this exclusive focus. He observed, “I’ve got lots of evidence that the patterns we’ve found are fundamental to human nature—and human nature even includes academia” (J. Kotter, personal communication, March 2008). This conversation helped me to confirm the purpose of my study. I would investigate Dr. Kotter’s (1996) eighth stage for leading organizational change in academia. Specifically, I would seek to identify strategies for anchoring planned change in organizations of higher education. I was pleased to see that Knight (2002) had conducted an extensive analysis of this model. Her research investigated the relevance of the themes of Kotter’s (1996) model for leading change through a word and article analysis of business journals published from 1991 to 2000. Through citation analysis these journals were identified as being leading and influential resources. Her article-based analyses confirmed that each of the leadership
elements in Kotter’s model was positively correlated with effective implementation of change at the $p < .05$ level of statistical significance.

Once clarity was reached on the problem and purpose for this research, I then confronted another challenge. I did not know which academic organizations would be the more likely to have identified such strategies. Through my continued review of the literature, I was introduced to the Malcolm Baldrige criteria (The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act, 1987). Recognizing that these criteria are our nation’s highest standard for institutional performance excellence, I decided to study academic institutions of higher education who have achieved this recognition. Three such institutions exist. They are the University of Wisconsin-Stout (Menomonie, WI), the Kenneth Monfort College of Business (Greeley, CO) and Richland Community College (Dallas, TX). Each of these schools provides a unique context for leading and understanding change. The University of Wisconsin-Stout is a polytechnic university and the first to receive the Baldrige Award for performance excellence. The Kenneth Monfort College of Business is the first and only business program to receive this quality award. Richland Community College is the first and only community college to receive this quality recognition. Now that the places for my research were identified, I proceeded to reflect on which individuals within the organization would be its participants. Once again, I turned to the literature.

Collins (2001) observes that senior leaders significantly influence organizational success. Paglis (1999) discovered that many organizations are looking for managers who can transition to the role of leader for change initiatives. Accordingly, their research tests a leadership model which could be potentially used by organizations to assess a
manager’s motivation to lead. The findings from this screening could potentially be used to identify those candidates with the greater probability for success in leading the initiative. Once identified, Roberts (1997), through her comparative investigation of NASA and Xerox, discovered that to lead change which positively impacts the future leaders much implement strategies which recognize the importance of vision, communications, strategic partnerships, and employee involvement. This finding aligns with those of Northcott (1995) whose research with school leaders found that the senior leaders of organizational transformation through change accomplished this vision by enabling and empowering others to be active participants in the change process.

Malm (2004), through research which investigated six Maryland community college presidents and their response to organizational challenges, change processes, and leadership approaches, asserts that the ability to effectively lead change is the most important and challenging of leadership responsibilities. He found that the leadership styles which emerged as being most effective for implementing organizational change in academia are those which are situational, collaborative, and directive. In addition Van Loon (2001) documents that it is the leader who plays the most significant role in implementing change. McLagan (2003) echoes this observation when she notes that in higher education, success with implementing change is associated with the effectiveness of top management teams. Virany et al. (1992) in their investigation of executive succession have also identified the senior leaders as essential for continuity of change—especially as they navigate change through seasons of organizational stability and acute change. Brigham-Sprague (2001) in her work with community college leaders found that the periods of change tend to be stimulated by a crisis. Accordingly, she recommends
that, during these episodes of acute change, care be taken to determine the type of leader needed to address the unique organizational need. She asserts that it is critical to determine whether a leader is needed who will resolve the crisis or whether a leader is needed who will lead the organization’s implementation of a proposed planned change. Nichols (2007) further confirmed through his research, which examined the impact of transitions in leadership teams on leading change, that organizations have a need for strong leadership in order to successfully manage the change and minimize the frustration of faculty who were directly impacted by these initiatives.

In accordance with these findings, I chose to conduct my study with senior executives at each of these award-winning institutions of higher education. My research answers the following question: “What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?”

I considered different change theories as a framework for my study. Fundamental to this review were my contemplations on Wagner’s (2001) assertion that any theory of change must first seek to understand how conditions and capacities for change are created. This review was enriched through contemplation on his recommendation to question what motivates adults to desire to do new things that are also most probably difficult. He cautions that in academia a spontaneous tension exists between administrators and teachers where leaders actively initiate change and teachers resist. The result is that leaders view teachers as stubborn and teachers view leaders as out of touch. I have also observed this spontaneous tension in the culture of higher education. In addition, it is my observation that this tension results in inertia with academic decision
making. I considered the punctuated equilibrium theory as espoused by Romanelli and Tushman (1994) which asserts that organizations experience long periods of relative stability with bursts of rapid change through which incremental deliberate change occurs. I also considered the organizational equilibrium theory as constructed by Benjamin and Levinson (1993). The three stages of this theory of adoption, implementation, and institutionalization were reviewed. I did not choose this theory because, from my perspective, it does not align with an organization’s need to respond rapidly and effectively to 21st-century learning needs. By way of contrast, I evaluated the relevance of a totally different change theory as delineated through appreciative inquiry. Rather than a deficit approach, this theory views change from the perspective of organizational abundance (Shults, 2008). The theory suggests that change occurs best when it focuses on what is working well and, as a result, organizations experience renewed vitality. Exploratory questions are used to identify past strengths. These best attributes are then intentionally integrated into the culture. I enjoy the strengths-based focus of this theory, but find that organizations often don’t take the time to participate in its required self-reflection. I then explored Lewin’s (1951) theory of change and chose it as the framework for my research. I find that his three stages of thawing, reforming, and freezing align with the dynamic realities of change as required for resilient academic organizations. In addition, his theory provides a responsive framework for centers of learning as they creatively respond to diverse student learning needs.

This is a qualitative multiple case study. Each of the participating organizations is an institution of higher education uniquely distinguished as a recipient of the United State’s highest recognition for progressive excellence—the Malcolm Baldrige Award.
Implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is of the organization’s planned change. A narrative design was used to conduct in-depth exploration of leading this change, specifically anchoring planned change into the culture of academic institutions of higher learning. Purposeful sampling was used to identify a homogenous group of participants. Each of the participants served as senior leaders at these Malcolm Baldrige award-winning institutions of higher learning. I used myself as the research instrument to conduct on-site personal interviews with these leaders at each of their respective campuses. In the case of two participants, phone interviews were conducted. This was necessary because one participant was transitioning from the organization and the other had multiple travel engagements, which negated his face-to-face availability.

As recommended by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and in accordance with my desire that the data be accurately and consistently collected, I held myself accountable to the following questions:

1. Am I fully present?

2. Am I being careful not to allow my experience, interests, and needs to distort the interview?

3. Am I checking my intuitions through reflective questions?

4. Am I capturing the personality of the organization?

5. Am I asking questions which gain the desired insights on leading this organization’s planned change?

My answer to each of these questions was “Yes.” To prepare myself for the study’s data collection, I successfully conducted a pilot of the interview questions as part
of my doctoral program’s required qualitative research course. During the pilot, I personally interviewed senior academic leaders at the 2003 Malcolm Baldrige award-winning School District 15 in Palatine, Illinois.

To help ensure that participants shared their richest insights, questions were provided a minimum of 2 weeks before the interview. To ensure accuracy, the interviews were tape recorded. They were transcribed by an independent party. An inductive process was used for data analysis. I personally analyzed transcripts and coded insights and practices that emerged for leading change. The transcripts and coding were reviewed by participants to ensure accuracy. These findings were then categorized into themes. Recurrent themes were further analyzed to determine what, if any, strategies were used to continue the organization’s planned change of implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Silverman and Marvasti (2008) refer to this step of moving from coding to interpretation as the transformation process of qualitative analysis.

Walking on each campus, observing students, and hearing the sounds that emerge from their cultures provided me with a rich understanding of each institution’s unique personality. A cross-case analysis was used to answer the research question.

**Implications for Future Research**

In summary, organizations continue to experience change at exponential rates. To remain viable they must respond to this change. Kotter (1996) has determined that a major error made by leaders is to fail to anchor planned change into the organization’s culture. As a result, institutions are often fragile and the ability to fulfill mission and vision is compromised. Dr. Kotter (1996) identifies this failure as his eighth step of leading change. Senior leaders are identified as playing a key role in leading change. It is
their responsibility to ensure that systems exist to anchor planned change in organizational culture. This is also true in academic organizations of higher education. Given the importance of continuing this desired behavior, it is important to identify whether strategies exist for anchoring planned change in academic culture. Organizations that implement the Malcolm Baldrige criteria are recognized as operating by our nation’s highest standard for performance excellence. Senior leaders at the three higher education Baldrige winners confirm that strategies exist for anchoring desired change in academic institutions.

In conclusion, these strategies identify the role of the leader as essential for ensuring that the change continues. It is the leader who will assume primary responsibility for integrating a review of the change into the strategic-planning process in a manner that supports progressive excellence through the use of data which create internal and external benchmarks. It is the leader who will ensure that communication systems are created for understanding, buy-in, and implementation. It is the leader who will work to ensure that the change is experienced in a way which nurtures organizational trust. It is the leader who will further ensure that special attention is given to obtaining buy-in from the faculty in a way that is invitational. Orientation experiences will also be created which communicate the change and performance expectations to new members. Positive energy, experienced as joy and organizational wonder regarding possibilities for enhanced responsiveness as achieved through the change, will be integrated into the institution’s culture in spontaneous and established systems which celebrate success.

I recommend that future research be conducted to confirm similarities and differences between strategies identified for anchoring change in academic institutions.
and those which emerge for business organizations. It is also relevant to investigate what practices predispose the failure of change initiatives in academic institutions of higher education. I believe it is also essential to explore the concept of organizational choice and performance excellence. I am amazed by the crucial role of organizational choice and its relationship to attaining and sustaining progressive performance excellence. Regardless of the catalyst for change, each of the organization’s leaders ultimately had to choose the response of excellence. Their impact would be very different if they had chosen not to embark on this journey toward increased quality. It is my hope that the collective “yes” of these leaders to the challenges and opportunities of continuing change toward progressive excellence will inspire others to enrich lives through the discovery of their personal best.

“Sustained leadership” should also be further explored and defined so that decisions for succession planning of senior leaders are made in a manner which ensures that the planned change continues. I believe that leading for organizational trust, especially with faculty, is worthy of additional study as institutions seek to create the synergy required to respond to the diverse needs of 21st-century learning.

Through my research, I have identified what I believe is a new concept in continuing change. I am calling this concept “Paper Clip Leadership.” It is based on Kotter’s eighth stage of anchoring planned change and his associated recommendation to leaders that they remember the fragile nature of this new practice. In my phone interview with Dr. Kotter, he used the analogy as of the paperclip to describe how change should be attached to organizational culture (J. Kotter, personal communication, March 2008).

I thought, “What a practical yet powerful analogy.” Following our conversation, I reviewed the history and use of paperclips. As we are aware, these lightweight pieces of
metal are used to hold materials together. Their strength is found in their flexibility. In accordance with these attributes, I began to construct the concept of “paper clip leadership.” This concept nurtures in leaders an understanding that new change is fragile and must be tended to in order for it to be sustained. Accordingly, this leader ensures that the new practice is attached to organizational culture in a secure yet flexible manner. I think it would tremendously enhance leadership effectiveness, if at the end of implementation, the leader formally observed that “this new practice is fragile, let’s identify where it is most likely to break and then let’s identify strategies to counter this vulnerability. Let’s now determine how to attach it to our organization until it can stand on its own.” I will continue to explore this concept and determine its value and relevance.

Finally, from a personal perspective, having met with these leaders is one of the most meaningful personal and professional experiences of my life. I find that their insight, on leading change in a way that transforms effective organizations into extraordinary centers of progressive excellence, is both remarkable and inspiring. In addition, as a result of this research, my own responses to change are consistently informed and enriched through their stories. For example, now when I am experiencing the need to change—I pause, reflect, and walk through the themes which emerged through this research. I ask myself questions like, “What is the catalyst that I’m experiencing that is prompting in me an awareness that I may need to change?” I then enter more fully into the role of self-leadership and ask, “What do I need to understand about the potential change so that I make an informed choice?” “Who else will be impacted by this change?” “What strategies do I need to implement to communicate with them regarding the potential change?” “How do I ensure that this communication is
authentic and transparent so that trust in our relationship and in my decision making is nurtured?” I then ask, “Will this choice result in personal progressive excellence?”

Like the leaders of each of these organizations, I have decided that extraordinary service is my benchmark for performance. I continue my “change walk” by further exploring how the characteristics of the change and how they will impact my life. Then I determine how to implement this new behavior. Finally, if data confirm that the new practice is of value, I identify ways to attach the change to the fabric of my life in a way that strengthens me in my quality journey. Each step of the way, I find myself inspired by the courage of the chancellor at University Wisconsin-Stout who chooses not to waste a crisis and therefore creates triumph out of tragedy. I linger in reflection, because of the insights of senior leaders at the Kenneth Monfort College of Business and commit to understand the data of my life and as a result to create more fully my niche through exemplary leadership. I now also make decisions through the filter of Richland’s vision to create whole people, remembering to evaluate my outcomes by first turning to wonder, then to judgment, to celebrate successes and ultimately to experience joy in the journey.

**Conclusion**

The Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award is the only recognition that our country gives for performance excellence. It was created in 1988. Since its inception just over 60 businesses, ranging from health care organizations to hotels, have attained this esteemed standard of success. In 1999 the criteria was expanded to define excellence for schools. Only three recipients have been institutions of higher education. These winners are the University of Wisconsin-Stout (Menomonie, WI), The Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business (Greeley, CO), and Richland Community College (Dallas, TX). Each of these
schools voluntarily chose to enrich its self-assessment and implement the “planned change” of progressive excellence made possible through these criteria. This study asks the following question: “What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?” My research identifies five themes for leading planned change. They are “Determining What and Why,” “The Leader’s Role and Strategies,” ”Characteristics of the Change,” “Implementing the Change,” and “Continuing the Change.” A trilogy of strategies emerges that answers the research question, “What strategies do senior executives use to anchor planned change in Malcolm Baldrige award-winning academic institutions of higher education?” They are as follows:

1. Utilize sustained leadership to ensure that change aligns with the organization’s mission, vision, values, and is integrated into the strategic-planning process through assessment of performance excellence.

2. Incorporate performance expectations of excellence into new employee and new student orientations.

3. Implement communication systems which are open, authentic, and responsive—especially with faculty. As a result, organizational trust and joy are nurtured and a learning environment which sustains planned change and prepares students to respond to the needs of our global society is affirmed.
APPENDIX A

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: TABLES
### Table 2

**Determining What and Why**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UW-Stout</th>
<th>MCB</th>
<th>Richland</th>
<th>New Insight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Crisis:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reduced state funding</td>
<td>External crisis:</td>
<td>Without Crisis</td>
<td>New Theme:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Proposed New Structure for School</td>
<td>1. Performance rating of average by students</td>
<td>1. Requires a catalyst</td>
<td>2. Requires a choice to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Continuing status quo was painful</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader-Initiated Response:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intended to Benefit the School</td>
<td>Leader-Initiated Response:</td>
<td>Leader-Initiated:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expected support based on almost 8 years of expressed positive regard by member of organization for his leadership</td>
<td>1. Decided to identify niche for best response to student learning needs</td>
<td>Resulted from desire that his organization achieve its highest standard of organizational excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Vision accepted by organizational members—even though drastic reorganization required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulated Internal Crisis:</strong></td>
<td>Stimulated Leader-led reorganization – resulted in exclusive focus to provide undergraduate business education</td>
<td>Stimulated Leader-led discussions first with senior leaders then with members of organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Leader’s Response Misinterpreted by Organization’s members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. No Confidence vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Turmoil—Personal/Professional for Leader; Perceived betrayal from members to leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader-Initiated Healing:</strong></td>
<td>Leaders led reorganization</td>
<td>Leaders became trained in criteria for performance excellence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Recognized that the organization was at a defining moment</td>
<td>1. Initially unsure about what to change</td>
<td>1. Recognized that the organization was at a defining moment in its history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chose to transform crisis into opportunity for quality</td>
<td>2. Recognized that the organization was at a defining moment in its history</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Used conversation and group process to identify desired outcomes and obtain buy-in</td>
<td>3. Used conversations and group process to identify desired outcomes and obtain buy-in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

164
### Table 2—Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Identified Desired Outcomes:</th>
<th>4. Identified Desired Outcomes:</th>
<th>2. Used conversations, group process and pilots to identify desired outcomes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. To Restore Trust</td>
<td>a. Excellent Performance Ratings from Students</td>
<td>a. Progressive performance excellence which nurtures “whole person” development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To attain the highest standard for Performance Excellence as defined by the Baldrige Criteria</td>
<td>b. Excellent Performance Rating Nationally through Baldrige Criteria</td>
<td>b. To attain the highest standard of performance excellence as defined by the Baldrige Criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*The Leader’s Role and Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UW-Stout</th>
<th>MCB</th>
<th>Richland</th>
<th>New Insight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Executive led organization’s Rebuilding of trust</td>
<td>Senior Leadership led organization’s</td>
<td>Senior Leadership led organization’s</td>
<td>1. Faculty fears listened to and addressed by senior academic leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Implementing of Change: Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.</td>
<td>1. Defining of exclusive vision</td>
<td>1. Commitment to achieve highest standard for performance excellence</td>
<td>2. Leaders share insights with other leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Believed in his integrity and ability to lead</td>
<td>2. Implementing of Change: Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.</td>
<td>2. Implementing of Change: Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Believed that healing was possible</td>
<td>3. Led “improvement” conversations” characterized by reflection and</td>
<td>3. Led through continuous reflection – enriched through organizational listening and an intention to create legacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Utilized reflection – a “leadership pause” to determine next steps</td>
<td>a commitment to achieve understanding, buy-in and a “win-win”</td>
<td>4. Listened and responded to organizational fears - especially faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Used healing conversations – especially with faculty</td>
<td>mindset – especially with faculty</td>
<td>5. Sought to understand other organizational stories and intentionally stole their best strategies for tailored implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Courageously led through stinging personal criticism</td>
<td>4. Created/led annual planning retreat.</td>
<td>6. Created/led annual planning retreat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Determined not to waste a crisis, but instead initiated a “crisis to</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Intentionally sought to affirm organizational trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality” journey</td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Ensure that a culture of joy was created throughout implementation of the change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Created venue for organizational communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Implemented new reorganizational structure to support commitment to</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>trust and performance excellence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Created/led annual planning retreat.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Characteristics of the Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UW-Stout</th>
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<th>Richland</th>
<th>New Insight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Required addressing concerns of an organized workforce</td>
<td>1. Experienced through “improvement conversations” as required for a “forward looking organization”</td>
<td>1. “Data informed” not data driven in a manner which creates a culture of reflection</td>
<td>Given its central role in decision making – integrity of data is essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Based on right data in the right place at the right time – with a commitment to review favorable and unfavorable data</td>
<td>2. Data used to “measure everything” to document performance and address “what if” fears and carve the organization’s distinctive niche</td>
<td>2. Faculty are invited to use performance excellence criteria to enrich teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Faculty are invited to use performance excellence criteria</td>
<td>3. Faculty are invited to use performance excellence criteria to enrich teaching</td>
<td>3. Experienced in a manner which nurtures the whole organization in which whole people respond to the needs of our global society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Leadership looks for opportunities to fund faculty creativity with teaching.</td>
<td>4. Nurtures a spirit of exploration and discovery.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW-Stout</td>
<td>MCB</td>
<td>Richland</td>
<td>Insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Uses criteria for performance excellence to ensure that the right people are moving in the right direction at the right time</td>
<td>1. Uses micro goals and macro 2. Uses “impact conversations” to determine next steps, address fears and confront “storms” of implementation</td>
<td>1. Guided by a framework 2. Is informed through site visits to other Malcolm Baldrige Award Winning Organizations</td>
<td>Energized through opportunities for organizational feedback and responsiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Characterized by a commitment to strengthening internal relationships through team building exercises and organizational fun</td>
<td>3. Creates opportunities for organizational feedback</td>
<td>3. Uses a dashboard of internal and external benchmarks for performance excellence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Creates opportunities for organizational feedback</td>
<td>4. Is informed through site visits to other Malcolm Baldrige Award Winning Organizations.</td>
<td>4. Creates opportunities for organizational feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuing the Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UW-Stout</th>
<th>MCB</th>
<th>Richland</th>
<th>New Insight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reviewed at annual, highly participatory, planning retreat with on going assessment (Note: Chancellor conducts pre retreat meetings where employees recommend ideas for the retreat)</td>
<td>1. Leader requires the use of key performance indicators – reviewed at annual planning retreat with ongoing assessment</td>
<td>1. President for 30 years, prior appointment as faculty</td>
<td>Trilogy: 1. Sustained leadership ensures alignment with mission, vision, values with associated integration into the strategic planning process through benchmarks for performance excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Creating organizational communication systems for trust: CAC, ALT, one min. emp. climate survey, invitations to faculty</td>
<td>2. President appointed in 2002 (Note: Board of Trustees appointment 1995, VP for Univ. Affairs, 1998)</td>
<td>2. Leader ensures Aligned with mission, vision, values and strategic plan through annual retreat with ongoing assessment through “Thunder” documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sustained through use of internal &amp; external benchmarks</td>
<td>3. Incorporated into new employee and student orientation</td>
<td>3. Is incorporated into performance model to approach, deploy, learn and integrate the change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Experienced through longevity of senior leadership—20 years</td>
<td>4. Encouraged through organizational celebration which intentionally affirm “joy” in the workplace</td>
<td>4. Integrated into new employee and student orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Incorporated into new employee and student orientation</td>
<td>5. Creating systems for authentic transparent communication—physical design for conversations: improvement conversations; impact conversations, especially with faculty.</td>
<td>5. “Joy” of accomplishments is affirmed through organizational celebrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Celebrated through workplace fun</td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Creating systems for “circles of trust”; President’s office designed for conversations – with special invitations to faculty to experience the potential of the Baldrige criteria on instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Integration into the organization’s strategic long range plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Progressive expansion of a commitment to global “wholeness.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Integrated into the community’s plan for economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Senior leaders and faculty are encouraged to become Baldrige reviewers.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL FORM
January 27, 2009

Cheryl Kisunzu
1203 Saddle Ridge Trail
Cary, IL 60013

Dear Cheryl,

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVED HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #: 09-002 Application Type: Original Dept: Leadership
Review Category: Exempt Action Taken: Approved Advisor: Loretta Johns
Protocol Title: Anchoring Change in Higher Education: Narratives from Malcolm Baldridge Award Winners

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions. In all communications with our office, please be sure to identify your research by its IRB Protocol number.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to University Medical Specialties, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

Joseth Abara
Administrative Associate
Institutional Review Board

Institutional Review Board
(269) 471-6360 Fax: (269) 471-6246 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
REFERENCE LIST
REFERENCE LIST


Gallo, P. (2010). *See the good, speak the good, do the good: Three essays on organizational change for sustainability* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3418528)


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Certification: Family Nurse Practitioner – ANA

B.S., Nursing, (Honors) May 1977 – Andrews University: Berrien Springs, MI

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