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Actualizing Organizational Core Values: Putting Theory into Practice

George J. Byrtek and Mark Dickerson

Abstract

The literature on organizational culture and leading by shared values suggests a prescriptive model for use by leaders in actualizing stated organizational core values. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, this study sought to examine the efficacy of this theoretical model in representing actual efforts by practitioners to embed diversity as a new organizational core value. Leadership actions to embed and actualize diversity as an institutional core value at two private universities were examined and compared. Findings suggest the theoretical model inadequately addresses the critical role of contextual assessment and under represents the dynamic cyclical nature of value embedding and actualization processes, particularly with respect organizations with high stakeholder turnover such as institutions of higher education.

Key words: diversity, core values, organizational change, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Both the nature and pace of contemporary societal change are presenting leaders in post-secondary education with critical new challenges. Higher education has been described as being in a state of ferment, struggling to address access, attrition, affordability, and accountability, as well as shortages in funding, the need for cost efficiencies, competition, new technologies, and the evolving knowledge economy (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011). Though there are indeed opportunities within this revolution, and college education remains highly valued, the risks and hazards presented by these issues are amplified for private universities and colleges, which generally are more reliant on tuition revenues, rather than stable endowments, as funding sources. As such, allowable margins of error are small, and there is growing recognition that the key to successful survival in a world of rapid and continuous change is adaptability. Berberet (2008) maintains that the success of colleges and universities in the current environment will be directly tied to their ability to be nimble, empower faculty, and achieve “an adroit balance of top-down management and collaborative governance” (p.1).

Values-based leadership has been advocated as an effective means of achieving distributed leadership in organizations that both guides action and provides for necessary environmental adaptability and responsiveness (Fairholm, 1991). Religiously affiliated institutions of higher education by their very nature are value-focused, and therefore, would seem to readily lend themselves to values based leadership. A challenge for leaders of such institutions may very well be determining which, among the host of important principles proclaimed and supported in their religious faith, should be highlighted as core to the institution in its operations and strategy. However, once leaders identify a specific value as essential to the organization’s identity, mission, strategy, success and survival, the task becomes one of deciding on the methods necessary to bring stakeholders to think and act accordingly. At that point all values-based leaders are confronted with the question, “what actions are necessary to transform a newly identified strategic value into an actualized core value of the organization?”

The literature on organizational culture and leading by shared values suggests an eight-step prescriptive model for use by leaders in actualizing stated organizational core values. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, this study sought to examine the efficacy of this theoretical model in representing actual efforts by higher education leaders to adopt a new organizational core value for their institutions. Leadership actions to embed and actualize diversity as an institutional core value at two private universities were examined and compared to the eight-step process advocated by the model

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTUALIZATION OF STATED CORE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

The means necessary for achieving effective and authentic core values in an organization have been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Ferguson and Milliman (2008) contend that a four-step process of spiritual leadership is essential. As a sequential reinforcing set of steps, the first requires leadership to articulate meaningful, inspiring values tied to achieving the organization's vision. The second step entails leadership actively modeling the values. In the third step leadership engages employees through education, development, and participation in values implementation efforts. The final step entails the alignment of the organization's systems with its values in order to remove obstacles and foster reinforcement. However, Kouzes and Posner (2007) include the critical role of reinforcement through their fifth leadership practice. Others (Barrett, 2006; Lencioni, 2002) maintain that core values must be woven into every human resource management process such that, "From the first interview to the last day of work, employees should be constantly reminded that core values form the basis for every decision the company makes" (Lencioni, 2002, p.117).

Beyond strategies for initial implementation, are the approaches aligned with the common management wisdom, results are often determined by what one chooses to measure. Similarly, Barrett (2006) maintains that extensive monitoring of values and related behaviors is essential to an organization's sustained high performance and too often failure to do so is at the root of organizational underperformance or collapse. While advocating the importance a regular accounting (measuring) of the organization's values, Thyssen (2009) emphasizes that establishing common definitions and classifying the values in terms of their expected role in decision premises are essential steps in the process.

In synthesizing the various approaches to core value actualization articulated in the literature, an eight-stage model of the implementation process emerges (see Table1).

Table 1: *Stages of Core Value Actualization Process*

Stage	Leadership Actions
1 Articulation	Meaningful and inspiring expression of value by leadership
2 Definition	Establishing a common understanding of value meaning and expected role in decision premises
3 Active Modeling	Intentional leadership behaviors to demonstrate the meaning of the value in action
4 Engagement & Empowerment	Employee(and stakeholder) education, development, and participation in value implementation efforts
5 System Alignment	Eliminating obstacles, challenging existing processes, creating value facilitating mechanisms, and integrating value into human resource management practices.
6 Reinforcement	Integrating value into recognition and rewards , and celebrating value actualization in the context of community
7 Creation of Measures	Articulation of objective measures of progress in value implementation
8 Measuring & Monitoring	recurring cyclical process of assessing progress in value actualization

Each stage represents a broad segment of leadership's responsibility in moving a given value from conceptualization to full actualization as a functioning core organizational value. Utilizing this model for core value actualization, theoretically, leaders have a framework which explains to how to embed a new value into the core value system of an organization. However, before advocating the widespread use of such a values-based leadership tool, it is essential to determine the extent to which this model actually reflects the steps and dynamics of the core value implementation efforts leaders pursue in practice. Does this model include all necessary stages? Is the implementation process as linear as the model represents, or more cyclical in nature? Are there foreseeable challenges associated with a given stage that are particularly important for leaders to anticipate? Are there issues associated with university settings that should be taken into consideration? These are the questions this study seeks to address.

METHOD

Study Design

The critical components of the case study methodology are outlined by Yin (1994). The methodology addresses a bounded system in which the number of data points may be less than the number of variables of interest. In order to do so it relies on multiple evidence sources with the process of evidence gathering proceeding in a triangulating fashion. In addition, the methodology uses prior theoretical constructs to guide the process of data collection and analysis.

Following the guidelines set forth by Yin, in this research undertaking we employed a case study approach to data collection in two university settings, including interviews, observations, and review of institutional documents, records and communications, to generate an in depth, description of the leadership actions and initiatives associated with efforts to actualize diversity as a new core value.

Description of the Cases

Located in a large metropolitan area on the West Coast of the United States, the first of the two institutions examined in this study will be identified as Metro Christian University (MCU). Founded at the start of the 20th century to educate and equip students for mission work, and though non-denominational, the institution maintains a strong connection to its evangelical roots. In the years ensuing its founding, MCU has grown to a total student enrollment of nearly 10,000 students. Through its residential campus and multiple regional campuses, MCU offers more than 75 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Demographically, the student enrollment is 65% female, 36% ethnic minority, and nearly 85% students coming from the state of California. Shortly after coming to office, the president of MCU began an initiative to establish Diversity as a core value of the university.

The second institution of this study, here in referred to as Christian University of Cascadia (CUC), is located in the Pacific Northwest, with its residential campus and three regional centers residing in small to moderately-sized cities. Established in the late 19th century by pioneer families seeking a means to educate their children, CUC has retained close ties to its founding denomination, while growing to become an evangelical non-denominational liberal arts university in character and practices. Offering more than 60 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, CUC serves an enrollment of over 3,500 students. This student population is 52% female, 19% minority, and predominantly from the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California. Four years prior to the time of this study, the new president of CUC launched a strategic planning process for the university. Among the outcomes of this strategic initiative was the development of new statements of mission, vision and values, which included the addition of diversity as new stated institutional core value.

Sampling

During the spring semester of 2011, a review of university materials and publications was conducted along with interviews of selected university officials of each university to establish a list of faculty, administrators, and board members who had served in leadership activities associated with the development and implementation of diversity as a core value of the institution. Through this process a total of 34 interview candidates were identified, 15 from MCU and 20 from CUC. Email invitations to participate in a 90 minute direct interview were accepted by 14 of the 15 MCU candidates and 18 of the 20 CUC candidates. This sample represents participation by nearly 90% of identified leaders from each university.

Data Collection

During visits to the residential campuses of each university, 90 minute one-on-one structured interviews were conducted with the selected leaders who had agreed to participate in this study. Interview questions sought subject perspectives on the origins of diversity as an institutional value, interpretations and role of the value, the processes of implementation used, and the nature of critical university incidents associated with the value. Subjects were assured their responses would be anonymous, and that they would be given the opportunity to strike any comments from interview transcripts deemed threatening to their anonymity. Data collection also included obtaining copies of relevant historical documents and publications, meeting minutes, brochures, institutional audit reports, applications for the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities' Diversity award, and strategic planning documents for subsequent triangulation analysis. Additionally, university web pages were reviewed for evidence of leadership activities associated with diversity core value implementation.

Data Analysis

Given the objectives of this study focused on the desire to understand interrelationships among leader actions, environmental conditions, and subsequent consequences, grounded theory was chosen as the appropriate approach to interpretation of gathered data (Goulding, 2000). After data collection, analysis of the data was carried out by following a model developed by Strauss and Corbin (2007) with attention to the cautions regarding efforts to study organizational culture advocated by Pearse and Kanyangle (2009). All interview recordings were transcribed and key subject responses grouped in accordance with the eight stages of core value actualization model. For each stage, responses were analyzed using thematic content analysis to construct units of meaning and patterns essential to understanding the nature and extent of leadership's efforts to employ the given stage of the actualization model. Gathered documents from each university and website review results were used to triangulate and substantiate identified themes and patterns. Formation of theory was derived from the formulation of networks of categories or concepts and the interactions among them.

FINDINGS

To better understand the context in which the new core value was initiated, subjects were asked to describe the origins of diversity as an institutional core value. Though recognizing the important role the current university presidents and senior leaders played in the process, none identified an individual leader as the primary originating source. Assessing the data and responses for MCU revealed there were multiple forces providing momentum for adoption of diversity as a core value, including historical roots, an emerging theological understanding of scripture, institutional survival concerns (given predictions of dramatic demographic shifts), local community shifts in diversity, accreditation requirements, broad social/cultural forces, student feedback, community life and retention issues, and the desire to enable students to function successfully in a global environment.

The data and responses for CUC revealed there were similar forces at work, but with several points of variation. Historical roots were tied to the denomination's commitment to social justice, and the liberal education of young Christians, rather than missionary preparation. Given low proportions of minorities in the local communities in which CUC operations were located, the theological understanding was directed toward a desire for the institution to represent the global church rather than the local church. With the geographic region from which CUC draws its students remaining above 80% Caucasian, the related diversity motivations were tied more to a focus on expansion opportunities and long term market trends, rather than institutional survival. Finally, CUC had concerns regarding the practical ramifications of the lack of a critical mass of minority students in the student body. The insufficient numbers of minority students made it increasingly difficult to attract and retain new minority students, whether coming from the existing local market or internationally.

The nature of these motivations range from idealism associated with the foundational religious cornerstones of the institutions, to the pragmatic survival elements necessary for drawing in and retaining students in the future, to responses to shifting societal and political expectations, such as accreditation requirements. Employees interviewed expressed varied opinions as to how these various motivational elements influenced both the selection and articulation of diversity as a core value, as well as the manner in which initiatives were developed and resources allocated for its implementation. Generally there was recognition that a variety of forces, motivations and individuals played a role; however, there was disagreement as to which played primary roles in pushing diversity towards adoption as a core value. This likely contributed to aspects of resistance, ambivalence, and confusion encountered in subsequent stages of the actualization process.

Stage 1: Articulation

At both institutions current and former university presidents played a significant role the process of identifying diversity as necessary for adoption as a new core value. Each of the current presidents capitalized on the groundwork and expressions in support of diversity made by their predecessors and other leaders and groups within the institution. Each, shortly after taking office as president, launched initiatives to persuade university trustees and senior leaders to adopt this core value. As prescribed in the actualization model, the articulation of diversity as a value was expressed by the current MCU president in a manner that was both inspiring and tied to the institution's mission and vision.

Following a similar theme but with a slightly different focus, the prior CUC president expressed the value of diversity in various university forums during his tenure in office, noting that “all persons are to be valued”. This former CUC president also noted that two of the most influential individuals in initiating the process of articulating diversity as a value were two female vice presidents who urged him to act on his own deep commitment to diversity. This resulted in the issuance of several iterations of a “Blueprint for Diversity” document outlining goals and strategies for making CUC a more diverse community.

Beyond the direct actions of the presidential leaders, another significant influence on the movement towards articulation of diversity as a value at both CUC and MCU was the emphasis placed on diversity by the accrediting bodies of certain academic programs such as graduate psychology and education. For example, to comply with National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) the School of Education at CUC adopted its own diversity plan which required SOE curriculum to “include multiple perspectives grounded in equity and social justice, with intentionality in incorporating the perspectives of historically marginalized and/or underrepresented groups.” Similarly, the CUC and MCU graduate psychology programs were guided by the American Psychological Association (APA) definition of diversity which includes age, disabilities, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, language, national origin, race, culture, and socioeconomic status.

An administrator at MCU noted that the influence of these secondary professional accreditations did more than just raise the level of discussion regarding diversity as a potential university value. He observed that these accrediting bodies strongly emphasize diversity, ensuring the programs are inclusive, and they require demonstrated ongoing development of competencies in diversity. In addition he noted that, “the pursuit of professional accreditation by several programs led to I would say more diverse hiring, and to a greater emphasis in the curriculum on diversity as well”.

Student life leaders and the students themselves also gave impetus to the process of articulating diversity as a value at both institutions. This was particularly true at MCU where the President had previously served in a variety of student life leadership roles in the institution, and thus carried a special affinity for programs and challenges in this realm of the university. To enhance student retention and address student needs and concerns offices such as Multi-Ethnic Programs, student groups such as the Black Student Awareness, the Latin American Student Association, and the Asian and Pacific Islanders Organization served as support networks for diversity populations on campus. In contrast, at CUC, impetus largely arose from the struggles of both enrollment services and student life, through repeated failed efforts to recruit and retain a critical mass of minority students, more so than the creation of campus based programs to support existing students. Due to its location and recruiting market, CUC struggled with having a minority student population substantial enough to enable new minority students to feel at home and part of a supportive identity group with similar a perspective and understanding. Low retention of minority students continually raised concerns for student life leaders.

Stage 2: Definition

At both institutions the formal process of developing a definition of diversity as a core value initially followed the general nature of the process set forth in the literature. The presidents established task forces composed of a cross section of university leaders and stakeholders and charged them with the task. Unique to MCU, however, the president established a framework around the process of definition by limiting the core value terminology to “God honoring diversity”. He noted, “Early on in the conversation ...people were trying to hijack the definition in their own direction”. This overt framework created a direct tie to the institution’s historical focus and another core university value, its position on human sexuality. Thus, while allowing the university community to engage in creation of the definition, the prospect of adopting a meaning inclusive of sexual orientation and religion, similar to that of surrounding secular society, was foreclosed and a narrower definition required.

In contrast, at CUC, the president utilized both the services of an outside consultant and a faculty member designated as the Director of Strategic Planning to facilitate a process of strategic planning through multiple departments and campus groups. Diversity, included among the values articulated in the resulting strategic plan, was defined in terms of “the ethnic, socio-economic, cultural, and gender

diversity of the broader Kingdom of God". Here the inclusion or exclusion of LGBT community was left ambiguous, as gender diversity was undefined and the mention of religion completely omitted.

Ambiguity can be used strategically in organizational communication (Eisenberg, 1984) and there was some evidence of intentional ambiguity being utilized in this situation. Responses to questions about the types of diversity that are included in the institutional core value varied among CUC respondents. One CUC administrator noted that while the original focus was on race and ethnicity, the then present focus was on ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability. He highlighted that while sexual orientation and religious diversity have been discussed, they were not the focus of diversity efforts on campus at the time. His view was that it is more productive to identify areas of diversity on which the university can show progress than to try to define the entire scope of the term. "In talks I avoided that conversation, not because I was afraid to engage in it, but I knew that it could derail or take years before you define diversity." The leading by values literature implies that process of value definition is a singular event, often carried out by an individual leader or group of leaders. From observing these two institutions we have seen that this is unlikely to be true in practice. Leaders, employees, students, and other stakeholders struggle with both coming to a common understanding of the meaning of the definition, and actualizing it.

The evidence we gathered from reports, records, events and initiatives at both institutions in this study demonstrated that the process of defining diversity as a value was a complicated community-engaged effort incorporating leaders and a variety of stakeholders. An important observation made by several MCU leaders during their individual interviews was that words are empty buckets, and the key issue at question is the meaning with which we fill them. They noted that their institution's struggle, as is the case with most institutions of higher education, was with the reality that 25 to 30% of its community members turned over each year. This constant flow of new members brought individuals functioning from their personal meanings for the term diversity, and often these meanings did not align with those established by the community, and in some cases, did not align with other community values as well. The lesson these leaders drew from this interactive process was recognition of the need to continuously review, renew, and reinforce the definition of the value as chosen by the institution.

Stage 3: Active Modeling

It is the active modeling by senior leadership, and particularly modeling by the university president that communicates whether or not a given value is intended to be core to the institution as a whole. Active modeling of a value can be thought of as a process with two observable dimensions: leader behaviors that are congruent with the value and leader decisions that demonstrate the value is indeed considered core to the institution. Leader behaviors arise from personally held values, and all of the subjects we interviewed indicated that diversity was among the values he or she held. In addition, we found no evidence of leader actions inconsistent with this value. However, it is also worth noting that apart from being welcoming, open, and respectful of those who are different, it can be difficult to substantially model diversity as a value in the form of individual behaviors. As with other potential core values, congruent behaviors by leaders may be essential, but they may also be less readily observable as a means to model the value, especially by comparison to the impact of leader decisions. Hence, leader decisions regarding issues relating to diversity were viewed as the primary means of active modeling of the importance of diversity as a value. Our investigation revealed that leadership decisions at both institutions had a significant role in modeling diversity as core to the university. These decisions generally fell into four categories: initiatives, resourcing, communications, and the response to resistance and critical events.

Prior to taking office, both university presidents had engaged in activities which supported the advancement of diversity within their respective institutions. Demonstrating a congruency with those prior actions, both individuals upon being inaugurated as president encouraged the overt stating of diversity as a core value, acted to diversify the board of trustees and embraced diversity-related initiatives, plans, and programs already in place.

At both institutions the initial presidential decisions included the launch and or expansion of mandatory employee trainings in diversity, and the inclusion of diversity as a goal in the university's strategic planning process. At CUC, a position of Dean of Transitions and Inclusions was created and included in the president's executive leadership team, and with presidential support, the previously adopted

Blueprint for Diversity with its benchmarks in hiring as well as efforts to improve the diversity of the undergraduate student body was revised and strengthened. At MCU, the position of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity was created and major symbolic statement was made by senior leadership through modifying the popular student chapel program to raise the visibility of minority groups in leading these events and to embrace diverse approaches to music and worship.

Decisions by the president and senior leaders regarding institutional resource allocation provided powerful modeling. The proportion of time spent by the president communicating, reinforcing and celebrating diversity was viewed as a strong statement regarding the importance of the value. Visibility and access to senior leadership were also seen as important resources. Presidential initiatives creating senior level diversity-focused positions, filled by skilled representatives of minority groups, were seen as important apportionments of visibility and access in support of this core value.

The amount of tangible resources allocated to implementing a given value, and the timing of those resources, provide a significant demonstration of leadership's commitment to the value and its role in the organization's current and future success. The president of MCU described his effort to resource diversity as entailing a sacrificial effort intended to demonstrate to the university community that diversity was indeed a core value:

At both MCU and CUC substantial resources were allocated to scholarships for minority students in order to further the development of diversity among student populations of the institutions. At CUC, while resources were devoted to increasing diversity were evident through an expenditure of over \$1 million per year for a diversity scholarship program and the existence of dedicated staff and administrative positions, these were viewed as insufficient to meet perceived needs.

Respondent concerns over underfunded or unfunded programs related to diversity served to highlight how modeling through resource allocation directly influenced the interpretation and application of diversity as a core value. The modeling by leadership demonstrated diversity as a value is primarily assessed and considered in terms of racial and ethnic dimensions. Though gender was considered in positional statements, it had only recently begun receiving some limited attention at either institution. Physical/mental ability, national origin, cultural and socio-economic dimensions were largely overlooked. Significantly, a number of individuals described the socio-economic dimensions of diversity as likely of largest consequence and impact for students. But, although articulated in the positional statements, they remained tactically unaddressed in university initiatives.

Modeling of a value in both in terms of meaning and its significance to the institution can be accomplished through leadership communications with community of stakeholders. The frequency, consistency and nature of such communication appear to have a correlation with the acceptance and understanding of the value. At both universities, the presidents initiated communication with stakeholders through a variety of means. Newsletters and campus meetings were a commonly utilized means of message delivery. Respondents described campus gatherings such as student chapels, monthly employee meetings, and faculty events as being frequently utilized by both MCU and CUC presidents as venues for communicating leadership's vision for diversity as an institutional core value. Leadership communications also included the use of symbolism, images, and the fostering of visibility. This was most evident in respondent descriptions of intentional efforts to incorporate diversity into university advertising, web spaces, and public relations events.

Staying the course, pushing past resistance, taking decisive action, and showing continuous commitment are ways leaders demonstrate the meaning of the value and its position as a core to the institution. At times, resistance arises as a result of the breakdown between leadership's intended messaging and understandings received by followers. Resistance also arises as with the typical response to any change, where individuals seek to protect personal interests, preferred practices, or values which they hold as higher priority. The president of MCU described his multiple encounters with resistance over the years as something he fully expected and viewed as opportunities to demonstrate the institution's commitment to diversity as a value. He noted, "There's always somebody on the other side that says, 'That is not the path to take and diversity is a code word for something else'". While recognizing the challenge this resistance presented, he credited the university's progress in overcoming it to "students, faculty and staff who were willing to speak out about their great pain or their deep questions".

Initially, the development of efforts to increase diversity on the CUC campus raised concerns about whether the initiative would cause a decline in academic quality and how it would impact the CUC culture. As one administrator noted, most faculty were originally opposed to an expensive scholarship program for diverse students due to their perception “that diverse scholarship programs are about helping kids who really can’t be at your institution because they are not prepared well to be at your institution. ...So from their perspective...all the arguments were against dumbing down the curriculum.” As with MCU, student actions appear to have been key to aiding leadership to overcome resistance. Minority students demonstrated they were well-prepared academically which helped to allay some of the fears of faculty regarding academic quality.

Concerns were also expressed by other stakeholders. Some board members and faculty saw diversity “as a political agenda.” Other stakeholders feared the changes that would occur in their safe, cloistered campus once diversity increased. At the time of our study we noted that many of these elements of resistance were still in process of being addressed at each institution, despite being a number of years into the effort to imbed diversity as a core value. This highlights the reality that leader efforts to overcome resistance and embed the value must be sustained over the long term until the value is fully actualized. It must be viewed as a long term effort in which leaders engage key stakeholders to act in support of the value and co-lead its implementation.

The most powerful and visible active modeling of diversity as a core value at both institutions in this study came in the form of leadership’s response to events which stood as a direct challenge to the value. Over the years in the process of implementing the diversity core value both universities experienced multiple critical events. The responses to these occurrences were led by the presidents, but incorporated active participation of other high level leaders, including board members to demonstrate the meaning and commitment to the value. The MCU president recognized the utility of critical events as a means to demonstrate and reinforce the value, noting, “...one of the things that people want to know is, ‘How are you going to respond?’.” He saw leadership’s opportunity to reinforce the value lay in taking action that communicates, “Here’s something terrible that happened. It will not be tolerated. We do not tolerate this behavior on campus.”

This taking a stand and reinforcing the value was demonstrated by the CUC leadership during the 2008 election season by responding vigorously to an incident where freshmen students hung a cardboard cutout of then Senator Barack Obama from a tree. The following morning the president addressed the faculty, staff and students in a chapel expressing outrage at the incident and stating, “We will not tolerate such displays and condemn it in the strongest terms.” As a result, the university led talkback sessions with students around the issue of racism and created an external diversity task force composed of community leaders and alumni to provide additional input regarding campus efforts to become more inclusive.

We observed that the process of responding to a series of critical events also provided leadership the opportunity to model growth in understanding of the new core value and an escalating commitment to it. Multiple respondents at MCU highlighted the growth they observed in the president’s active leadership of the Diversity value initiative. This self-identification as champion for the value had a profound impact, as it was mentioned by a majority of those we interviewed on this campus. Though expressed frequently in words, this assumption of the role of chief diversity officer had an even more powerful impact, as the president placed himself at the heart of dialogue arising from the critical incidents. As described by a member of the MCU diversity committee, “We had a couple of incidents that were racially charged on campus, and he hosted a town hall meeting and students let him have it....And he did not try to excuse it, did not try to be defensive. He took it.”

It must also be noted that this action by the president was sustained over time, as the initial town meeting was followed by a series of weekly town meetings, and remains in effect in the form of bi-annual diversity town hall meetings with students. This bold action on the part of the president was viewed as providential, and as a key turning point in the diversity value implementation process.

Stage 4: Stakeholder Engagement & Empowerment

The processes of stakeholder engagement and empowerment at these institutions were a combination of intentional leadership strategy and organic evolution. While ongoing diversity-related dialog had laid the

foundations at both universities, the initial stages of engagement in core value implementation consisted of presidential appointment of committees whose work included the charge of developing a definition for the value and a framework for its implementation. At MCU, the president formed a committee consisting of students, faculty, and administrative representatives and openly recognized them as having critical knowledge and insights on the topic which he and other senior administrators lacked. This admission of need and the articulation of committee role significance in the drafting the university's positional statement on diversity served to give members a strong sense of ownership and motivation for their task. More formalized and broadly based plans for diversity implementation at MCU arose organically from the decision to incorporate diversity as a theme in its regional accreditation assessment. Faculty task forces, appointed by the provost to develop a response to the accreditation visit, included a core faculty group focused on "God Honoring Diversity". After a three month period of research and discussion, recommendations from this latter task force were subsequently incorporated as five-year goals for diversity implementation within MCU's strategic Academic Vision 2016. These broadly stated goals were intended to guide diversity implementation efforts of schools and programs throughout the university in fostering structural and interactional diversity.

In contrast to MCU's more narrowly focused beginnings of a diversity core value implementation approach, at CUC stakeholder engagement began as part of a wide-ranging two-year strategic planning process initiated by the president and facilitated by a professional consulting firm. The undertaking included consultant-led focus group sessions across a broad spectrum of the university. During this process, work products were circulated to a wide scope of employees and other stakeholders in order to gain feedback from the university community. Diversity was identified among the university's five new core values, and strategic goals included a plan for updating and reframing of the Blueprint for Diversity and the establishment of an external board to assist the president in planning and assessing the university's diversity efforts. Pursuant to the strategic plan, an appointed 16-member Diversity Committee consisting of representative faculty, administrators, students and staff created the 2010 Blueprint for Diversity.

At the leadership level, presidents at both institutions demonstrated intentions to foster engagement through efforts to recruit leaders of diversity on campus, to involve members of the university's board of trustees, and to communicate with the campus community on the importance of diversity and the university's intentional efforts to inculcate that value. Some efforts to develop leadership in the area of diversity have been quite visible: the recruitment of minority individuals to serve as a member of the president's executive team and to act as point persons for diversity on campus, the recruitment of minority members for the board of trustees, and the establishment of both internal and external diversity councils. Trustees have been involved in reviewing and approving the university's diversity related plans. In addition, they engaged in annual discussions about the university's progress in meeting its diversity goals.

At both universities, engagement initiatives in the academic arena had mixed success. Individual schools and programs following mandates by their professional accrediting bodies moved steadily forward in incorporation of diversity into the core curriculum and outcome assessments. However, other efforts, particularly in the areas of curriculum and faculty evaluation have been met with varying degrees of uneasiness and opposition. The president of CUC reported that his recommendation that diversity and cultural competency be addressed in all courses has met with resistance, since a number of faculty see that goal as an infringement of academic freedom. Anxiousness and resistance could also be seen in the CUC internal diversity committee reporting on audit results regarding diversity content of undergraduate general education classes to the general education committee. One of the faculty members involved in the audit reported that "it was a tense conversation." At MCU similar resistance and anxiety related to these areas was in evidence. Diversity committee members reported very tense conversations in faculty meetings in response to their proposal to include questions related to diversity in faculty course evaluation forms completed by students. At both institutions resistance was also described as coming from faculty members in areas such as mathematics and science, who stated they had trouble seeing how diversity-related topics connected to what needed to be taught in their academic disciplines.

Results of engagement and empowerment efforts with respect to campus climate were constructive, but also mixed to some degree. Progress was achieved at both institutions through leadership responses to crisis events, and numerous activities sponsored by the offices of multicultural services and other groups within Student Life, and regular celebrations of diversity. Other efforts to engage students on the topic of diversity included discussion of multicultural issues in student seminars, in town hall meetings with university leaders. Beyond the initial diversity training programs, periodic efforts were made to engage faculty, staff and administrators in opportunities to dialogue about diversity. For example, at CUC, a large percentage of the faculty, staff and administrators took the Intercultural Development Inventory and then engaged in conversation about the results. At MCU, the president and provost held regular town hall meetings with faculty to enable direct face to face dialog with on the topic of diversity and the issues of concern regarding its implementation. Over all, the constancy of leadership initiatives, programs, and communications fostered a climate of commitment to progressing toward diversity as a core value.

Despite this progress, gaps in empowerment and engagement related to climate were evident in a number of areas. While the top down nature of the core value implementation process provided direction, structure, resources, momentum, and leadership, the creation of specialized units and diversity leaders also fostered disengagement among some employees. For faculty who had extensive knowledge, experience and even scholarship with respect to diversity, “mandatory one-size fits all” employee diversity training was received as an annoyance and waste of time by some and a measure of disrespect by others. For other employees, the gap was revealed in confusion as to who was responsible for and empowered to carry out the diversity core value. Despite leadership’s intention to drive ownership downward and throughout the organization, respondents noted examples of employees, including faculty, administrators and staff, who tended to view diversity as the responsibility of the specialists and affiliated departments on campus, rather than a value related to their own activities and responsibilities. Among the staff and some administrators at MCU, this perspective appeared to arise less from a reluctance to support the value than a lack of clarity as to the practical ways they could engage with it.

In the context of culture and climate, engagement and empowerment efforts also gave rise to a number of dynamics that may have been unforeseen. First, in the process it appears that the inclusive dimension of diversity, the recognition of individual uniqueness and value, was underdeveloped. For some stakeholders, who were not diverse in dimensions emphasized in university initiatives, this led to elements of apathy, feeling marginalized, or struggle with feeling connected to the implementation of the value. Additionally, empowerment led other stakeholders, e.g. advocates of sexual orientation inclusion, to take initiative in the process to press for redefinition of the diversity value. Finally, engagement and empowerment efforts also gave rise to pushback. Resistance arose among stakeholders, some viewing the diversity value as political, while others viewing as it receiving a disproportionate allocation of resources and thus compromising other priority institutional values.

Stage 5: System Alignment

The system alignment stage facilitates implementation of the value as core to the institution through eliminating obstacles, challenging existing processes, creating value facilitating mechanisms, and integrating the value into human resource management practices. We found that a significant portion of respondents had difficulty speaking to this question, which suggests that leaders may not have engaged in an in depth consideration and targeting of organizational systems issues. From the varied pattern of responses, actions and initiatives, it appears many of these elements were addressed on an ad hoc basis as problems arose, or as part of a learning process, and were more evolutionary as implementation efforts unfolded.

Creation of value facilitating mechanisms at both universities occurred in the early phases of implementation through organizational restructuring to create and staff diversity-focused units and committees, and placement of diversity leadership on president’s cabinet. While these structural arrangements aided in launching implementation, there are also signs that over time the organizational structure may have served to some extent as an obstacle in and of itself.

Barriers can be seen in the conflicting perceptions and expectations between administration and key academic leaders arising from the organizational structures. As an example, senior leadership at MCU

expressed the intent for diversity to be considered everyone's responsibility. However, some academic leaders described the existence of special diversity offices and committees as barriers to achieving those expectations and questioned the rationale for doing so relative to other core values.

Staffing within the structure can also serve as a barrier. Concern was expressed among some MCU academic leaders regarding the qualifications and competence of specialized diversity leaders pressing for academic changes. The existence of specialized departments and committees also means that those visible leaders and their credibility serve as representation of the institution's commitment to the value. Though some leaders were seen as having credibility with respect to the value of diversity, the lack of sufficient academic credibility on the part of others was seen as hampering implementation. It also must be noted that some individuals serving in formal diversity roles expressed concerns over becoming professionally stereotyped as a diversity person. As an evolutionary response to address a number of these staffing related issues, the provost restructured the Office of Diversity Planning and Assessment to be led by a half time faculty member combined with a rotation of a number of faculty "fellows" given load release to assist with diversity implementation issues. This adaptation served to not only broaden participation, but also brought increased diversity and representation to academic implementation of the core value.

Employee training and development systems can function as value facilitating mechanisms. Both institutions aligned new employee training systems, to incorporate training supportive of the new diversity core value and to offer ongoing workshop opportunities for staff and administrators. Different approaches were utilized with respect to initial training for fulltime faculty, resulting in varying degrees of initial success. However, there is also evidence that this was an evolving process in which subsequent efforts utilized a more sustained and multi-pronged approach. CUC incorporated diversity training for faculty by bringing faculty diversity experts to lead workshops on the topic at the annual multiday faculty retreat. Nearly all faculty members attended the event and completed the training. At MCU, multiday diversity training was designed for all employees with the expectation that all would enroll and complete one of these training workshops during the course of the academic year. Though a majority of staff and administrators completed the initial training, the time intensive structure created logistical barriers and schedule conflicts for faculty members. In addition, the uniform content and instructional design did not take into consideration the diverse learning needs of staff, administrators, and faculty. Consequently, only a minority of faculty members completed this diversity training program. At both MCU and CUC subsequent training programs and workshops were more effectively tailored to meet the unique needs of faculty and those of staff and administrators. However, despite the growing utilization of adjunct faculty to teach classes at both universities, neither CUC nor MCU had successfully implemented a system of diversity training for these part time employees.

At both universities we found significant efforts to modify communication, marketing, and public relations systems to aid in challenging existing practices, overcome obstacles, and facilitate value implementation. Given the functional organizational structures common to universities, both CUC and MCU utilized institutional diversity committees to overcome the silo effects relative to diversity initiatives and to facilitate communication and coordination in implementation efforts among units in student affairs, administration, and academics. In terms of public relations, university web pages, promotional materials and publications were substantially modified to provide ready visibility for diversity initiatives, position statements, and policies to stakeholders and the public at large. Even non-verbal elements of communication regarding diversity were addressed through the adoption of policies and practices to intentionally include images in media, or persons in university events, representing the diverse community to which each of the institutions aspired.

With respect to student recruitment and financial aid systems, we found that significant modifications to facilitate diversity had already been put in place during the period leading up to the initiative to establish the core value. Both universities had implemented scholarship programs designed for ethnic minorities, and both employed a variety of outreach and support operations to recruit ethnic minority students to campus. However, the financial aid programs were also seen as not fully adapted to facilitate the full scope of diversity intended for the core value.

In the area of human resource management we found both universities had engaged in implementing diversity facilitating practices both prior to and during the process of core value implementation. Aside from training and campus communication about diversity, examples of facilitating integration of the value of diversity into the life of the university were found in CUC's human resource practices. Staff and administrators are rated on their openness to diversity and ability to work with a variety of people. Faculty, however, were not evaluated on their openness to diversity, their skill in intercultural communications, or their scholarship or service related to diversity. With respect to hiring, CUC engaged its senior diversity administrator to work with all hiring managers and search committees on diversifying the hiring pool for positions above a minimum threshold and in developing interview questions designed to determine whether candidates work well with diverse populations. At MCU in an effort to improve retention of diverse faculty, a "Faculty of Color Network" was established to provide support, mentoring and networking opportunities through monthly luncheon meetings.

Respondents from both universities identified hiring of faculty as an area of ongoing struggle with respect to diversity implementation, and for similar reasons. A MCU administrator attributed this in part to the hybrid hiring structures used in university settings, wherein faculty hiring is separated out from the rest of the university's hiring processes. A CUC administrator described achieving diversity in hiring faculty as being the most difficult goal to reach. He noted that "the argument is that we have to have to hire the best candidate and the best candidate just never happens to be diverse." He went on to point out that the graduate programs had done a much better job of diverse hiring because the accreditation agencies "mandate numbers." In contrast, change in undergraduate faculty had been slow. He stated that faculty "sees diverse hiring as a mandate from the administration to change the quality of the faculty as a whole. So we've had really little success with that, particularly in the undergraduate program." Others asserted that limited availability and costs are primary impeding factors. As this MCU faculty member remarked, "the pool of minority candidates is small so to be able to attract them costs a lot of money"

Stage 6: Reinforcement

The utilization of value reinforcing mechanisms appears to be among the underdeveloped areas of the core value implementation process at both universities. Within student affairs at CUC and MCU, the diversity related scholarships, programs, events and experiences acted as reward mechanisms for the students involved therein. However, in the initial phases of value implementation, CUC did little to recognize or reinforce progress toward meeting its diversity goals. No reward, award, or recognition systems with respect to the diversity value were implemented. While explanation for lack of such programs was described as going against the CUC culture, ironically one administrator contradicted this by stating that the primary focus for public recognition is scholarship. At MCU, reinforcing celebrations and communications surrounded the university's receipt of the Counsel for Christian Colleges and Universities Diversity Award. And a program was implemented to annually recognize the individual faculty member making the most significant contribution to diversity. However, apart from the annual presentation of this award to a single faculty member, respondents indicated they couldn't identify any other tangible rewards or reinforcements for diversity efforts at MCU.

From the foregoing and similar statements, it appears awareness, perception, and design may be factors impeding the implementation of effective diversity reinforcement mechanisms at these universities. For example, an MCU executive described resourcing as a means of rewarding diversity implementation efforts. What would otherwise be considered resourcing and aligning of systems and structure in the core value implementation model is viewed by some senior leaders as being a form of value reinforcement. It was also clear that faculty members and other respondents interviewed did not hold a similar interpretation, and felt neither reward nor reinforcement through these factors.

We also found recognition among leadership at both universities of the need to improve reinforcement mechanisms. For MCU this effort was particularly focused on faculty members. At the time of this study a number of proposals were under way. One sought to provide faculty members with credit within the established faculty evaluation program for diversity training workshops completed. Another sought to provide faculty with specific release time to work on diversity-focused scholarship or community service. Another was intended to create semester long diversity fellowships, where faculty would receive load credit for diversity-related work. At CUC, efforts were focused on the broader university community and

entailed increased efforts to provide comprehensive feedback to staff, administrators, faculty, and trustees regarding initiatives and progress toward diversity implementation.

Stage 7: Creation of Measures

Effective measures provide feedback and reinforcement of the efforts to embed the core value. We found desire and commitment to establish means by which progress in achieving diversity as a core value could be gauged, but the design, development, and implementation of measures was an area of uneven success. Initial efforts were focused on demographic data as measures, generally limited to gender and the broad federally defined dimensions of race and ethnicity. As such, the measures did not capture data related to other significant dimensions of diversity, such as culture, national origin, age or religion. The application of these measures was focused in the areas of student recruiting, enrollment, and retention, as well as faculty, staff, and administrative employment and retention. In addition, the universities relied on ad hoc indicators such as campus community surveys, student attitude surveys, analyses conducted by specific schools for accreditation reviews or by specific departments for their own use, and the occasional administration of instruments such as the Intercultural Concerns Faculty Survey and the Intercultural Development Inventory to faculty and staff.

At MCU, difficulties arose in the efforts to craft measures to assess progression of the value going beyond demographic representation and focused on the results of institutional strategic efforts. The strategic plan to advance the value was structured with a primary focus to address two dimensions: structural and interactional diversity. Within this framework the strategic plan incorporated broad five-year goals to improve recognition and valuing of structural and interactional diversity, promote faculty and student scholarly development in diversity, and increase funding. The plan also set forth general goals to annually assess the diversity-related composition of student, faculty, course offerings, scholarly activity, and the diversity of academic curricula and programs, as well as the implementation of diversity recommendations. Goals were expressed in terms of “increasing” or “adding” but omitted from the plan were any specific targets, objectives, action plans, standards or measures of effectiveness. Thus, measurement was to be conducted largely in the form of retrospective audit. In practice, this consisted largely of counting activities, programs and initiatives completed, and functioned as a gathering of evidence rather than measurement against key indicators of impact or effectiveness.

With respect to CUC, early obstacles to implementation of diversity initiatives related to the lack of an integrated effort and measurable goals, a condition similar to that of MCU. However, subsequently, CUC moved to incorporate a guiding framework within its Blueprint for Diversity. The 2010-2015 edition of the Blueprint was structured using the dimensions of diversity initially set forth by Smith (1995) and subsequently elaborated by Clayton-Peterson, et al. (2007): Vitality and Viability, Educational and Scholarly Mission, Access and Success, and Campus Climate. Within each dimension the accompanying Blueprint operational plan articulated four to six specific indicators of success, a total of 18 in all. For each of the 18 indicators the plan included multiple initiatives, a total of 69, designed to drive progress. Some indicators were assigned objectives, targets, or benchmarks through which progress could be directly measured. Included were targets for representation and participation levels among faculty, staff and students. In some cases, qualitative indicators were specified as measured through use of standardized surveys or scales. Among the dimensions, there a number of qualitative indicators lacking identified measures. However, generally incorporated within such indicators was an objective calling for a task force to identify or develop the measures required.

Stage 8: Measuring and Monitoring

The ongoing process of utilizing measures and monitoring results can serve to provide direct feedback and reinforcement with respect to the progress of core value implementation, as well as highlighting value-performance gaps. At both universities we found clear evidence of a commitment to measure and monitor the progress of implementing diversity and indications that the efforts at doing so served to highlight obstacles needing to be overcome. As is common to institutions of higher education, both universities utilized departments of institutional research which annually tracked and reported statistics in accordance with the Common Data Set initiative. This reporting provided basic gender and racial/ethnicity data for students and faculty, revealing trends in minority enrollment, retention, and faculty employment. Initial efforts at measuring the progress of demographic diversity among staff,

however, were impeded by a lack of baseline information on the pool of existing employees. At CUC, this deficit was overcome by sending email requests to staff employees to voluntarily provide the information within the designated university's enterprise software system site. This enabled employee diversity demographic reports to be generated on demand. Leaders at MCU recognized that they had data on only 50% of the staff employees, but at the time of this study were still struggling with the development of a cost effective method for garnering and imputing data for the remaining staff.

MCU leadership viewed the regional accreditation cycles as a means of self-assessment with respect to diversity, and therefore, included it as one of four core themes for the university's current cycle. The onsite Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) in March 2011 resulted in a positive report regarding the university's self-examination of its diversity efforts. Largely an artifact gathering process, this qualitative retrospective did yield insights, though not always timely or beneficial in providing actionable feedback. In addition, the university's self-study included plans to annually progress in the diversity component of its Academic Vision by gathering data through its Academic Vision Diversity Assessment Tool (AVDAT). However, after compilation of the first institutional audit report in 2010 using this tool, academic leadership determined that this report and the AVDAT did not provide sufficiently useful data or feedback. So, despite having described this tool as the primary means of assessing academic progress with respect to diversity in the accreditation review, MCU terminated use of the AVDAT after one application attempt.

A number of MCU respondents indicated concerns over the lack of specified targets, identified means of measurement, data collection, and plans for analysis and evaluation with respect to diversity. These expressions show that the existing approaches to monitoring and measurement were not providing timely, sufficiently concise, direct, and actionable feedback. Yet, momentum for improvement in this area could be seen through ODPa recommendations to senior leadership that a new more detailed means of measurement be incorporated into the university's strategic planning process. Additional evidence of initiatives for improvement could be seen in the effort to incorporate diversity-related questions in student course evaluations. Though successful in incorporating such questions in the evaluations of service learning courses, at the time of this study, general application across all courses was still a matter of intense debate among faculty members.

The utilization of a detailed operational plan with respect to diversity implementation and measurement made CUC much less dependent upon retrospective audits. With a more detailed set of indicators and benchmarks, data gathering and reporting functioned more systematically. Feedback was provided through regular reports to senior leadership, an annual status report presentation to members of the campus community, and intermittent updates at monthly all employee meetings. This process of frequent measurement, reporting and feedback was a significant point of difference between the two institutions. Though MCU started core value implementation earlier than CUC, it appears the use of a dimensional framework (Clayton-Peterson, et al., 2007; Smith, 1995), key indicators, and targets enabled CUC to achieve a functional system of monitoring and measuring, while MCU continued to seek suitable methods.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary objective of this study was to determine the adequacy of the core value actualization model in representing what occurs in leadership practice. Our findings with respect to the origins of diversity as a core value at these two universities indicate that the theoretical model is missing the initial step of the leader's assessment of the current and historical dimensions of the organizational context. To some degree the model assumes this to have taken place. However, the introduction of a new core value constitutes a significant organizational change, and as Lewin (1947) argues, the identification of driving and restraining forces is essential to unfreezing the current status quo and moving to a new state. Hence, assessing the organizational context is an essential step for the leader's process of instilling a new core value and should be identified as such in the model.

Lewin (1947) advocates that one should harness the impelling forces and accentuate them as they aid in unfreezing. Our research revealed sources of driving forces leaders of Christian universities should consider which include: historical roots, emerging theological understandings, institutional survival

concerns, local community shifts, accreditation requirements, broad social /cultural forces, student expectations, and desired educational outcomes. We also learned that as part of the process it is vital that leaders help the university community understand which forces impel the adoption of the new value, how, and why. Lack of common understanding can lead to resistance, ambivalence, or confusion during subsequent embedding /actualization stages. The failure to acknowledge all of the motivating elements can foster skepticism among organizational stakeholders and increased resistance. Moreover, an over emphasis on individual motivational elements, particularly those in realm of idealism can even induce perception of hypocrisy on the part of leadership, when other well-known motivating factors are understated or ignored.

For leaders new to the organization, the assessment process should include exploration of the latent values embedded in the institution by virtue of its historic development. During the process of such examination, leaders may discover dormant or under emphasized values that have key relevance to the future success of the organization. As such, the process of actualizing such values as core to the institution becomes one of resurrection, reinvigoration, and perhaps reinterpretation, as opposed to the introduction of values entirely new to the organizational culture. Here tradition, major events, heroes, and other historical elements can be utilized to add legitimacy and support for the adoption of these values as core to guiding the direction of the organization.

Our research undertaking started a number of years after the initial leadership articulation of diversity as a core value of these institutions. The fact that this process was still occurring at time of our interviews demonstrates that the articulation stage is not a onetime event. In addition, we found that even though it appeared the value had reached the level of being core to members of senior leadership, the presidents and other leaders continued to articulate and hold the value out to the rest of the institution as aspirational. This process can be seen as a means to drive the value to core status at lower levels within the organization. Finally, the shifts in the nature of the articulation by leadership over time demonstrates the process is ongoing, progressive, and evolves as leadership understanding of the meaning of putting the value into practice grows.

Though the leading by values literature implies that an individual leader or group of leaders craft core value definitions in a singular event, we have found that this is not necessarily true in practice. Leaders in these institutions invited participation from representatives of all stakeholders. In essence, this functioned as the blending of the definition stage and the beginnings of the stakeholder engagement and empowerment stage. We also noted that inviting broader participation in the value definition process can bring forth political efforts to control or shape the meaning to support the views of particular individuals or interest groups. However, leaders demonstrated that a delegated inclusive value definition process can be managed through employing boundaries or frameworks that set necessary constraints and ensure alignment with existing core values.

Creating the statements defining the diversity value, at both universities, was an iterative process spanning a number of months, and hence could be considered a single project. However, we learned that the establishment of a written definition does not ensure continuity of meaning. To provide intended guidance, core value meaning must be maintained over time. For university leaders this is a challenging and ongoing process due to the dynamic nature of population comprising the stakeholder community. The annual turnover in university population includes a substantial and continuing influx of new members accompanied by their personal meanings for the core value terms in use. These meanings may not align with those established by the community. The leaders' references to "words are empty buckets" metaphor highlighted the importance of recognizing the need to continuously review, renew, and reinforce the established definitions of core values.

Though the value definition process has potential to provide leadership and guidance, it can also be employed to foster unity, engagement, connection, and innovation. One factor in this dynamic seems to be the intentional or unintentional use of ambiguity. It appears that an organization can give the appearance of unity in values if the value is expressed or operationalized ambiguously. In our study, for example, there was ambiguity between diversity as a focus on domestic minority groups and a focus on international outreach/experiences. In terms of understanding diversity, there was ambiguity between diversity meaning "God loves everyone so I love everyone", versus "celebration of differences", and

“cultural competence”. In other words, because of the operation of ambiguity, members of the community could all embrace diversity but mean very different things and be enabled to implement the value in different ways. Further, the content of the term could variously include race and ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or a number of other characteristics depending upon the community member using the term. This suggests that leaders should carefully consider the use of strategic ambiguity in the value definition process as well as those elements that exert explicit guidance and limits.

Active modeling was demonstrated to be not only a critical leadership action during the initial phase of value actualization, but also necessary over time. Endurance, pushing past resistance, taking decisive action, and showing continuous commitment are ways leaders demonstrate the meaning and significance of the value. We also found that modeling by leadership can either serve to focus implementation efforts on particular dimensions of the value, e.g. racial and ethnic diversity, or support an all-encompassing approach. For some values, such as respect, modeling can be readily accomplished through direct individual behavior, e.g. acting respectfully towards others. However, for more diffuse values, such as diversity, we discovered active modeling was accomplished indirectly through leader actions, decisions, resource allocations, and communications that indicated support for the value. Additionally, the frequency, consistency and nature of leader value communications appear to have a correlation with the acceptance and understanding of the value by stakeholders. However, leaders must be cautious as there is danger in over reliance on one-way communication, as we found this tends to inhibit important feedback.

It appears that leadership efforts to actualize a new core value inevitably give rise to public events which might best be described as moments of truth. We observed that such critical events in the university community, wherein the new value has been violated or threatened, provided leadership the some of the most intense and powerful means to model the value in action and commitment to the value as core to the institution. We observed that these responses, particularly those of senior leaders were broadly remembered years after the occurrences. In some cases, such senior leader action seemed to be moving towards becoming incorporated as legends within the institutional culture.

Leaders in our study utilized a variety of methods to engage and empower stakeholders. They demonstrated that engagement can be accomplished organically over time, through formal strategic planning protocols, or a combination of both. We observed that the expression of need by leadership can foster engagement, if accompanied by stakeholder empowerment. It was also clear that adding value-representing individuals at high levels of leadership enabled them to both influence the processes of decision making to support the value and model and deliver the benefits of the value to the teams with whom they engaged. They, in effect, helped teach other team members the meaning and importance of the value in action. We also noted that delegation of the value actualization process to specialists should be approached with caution. The credibility and capability of the specialized leaders tapped to shepherd the value implementation down through the institution can either advance the process or impede it. Without proactive effort, the very existence of value-specialized units and leaders can foster confusion as to who is responsible for and empowered to carry out value actualization efforts.

Despite leadership’s intention to drive ownership downward and throughout the organization, in examining engagement with respect to this particular value, we found an uneven distribution across stakeholders. Our impression is that the individuals who most readily engage a given value were those whose daily work must embodied it—e.g., in this case diversity for faculty in education, graduate social science programs, and staff in the areas of student affairs and those who are diversity professionals. Members of these groups were found to have engaged in informal efforts to infuse diversity as a value before leadership began the formal process. We also noted that the pattern of ambivalence or resistance to engagement with the core value among employees generally arose from one of two sources. The first was the inability to conceptualize a direct connection between the value and the daily work activities and decisions required by the employee’s particular position. Examples we found include mathematics and chemistry professors faced with the expectation to incorporate diversity in all courses and student evaluations. The prospect of having one’s performance measured with respect to the value under these conditions, in fact, gave rise to resistance. The second source of ambivalence or resistance to engagement

arose from individuals who perceived the new value or the methods of value actualization as either conflicting or competing with existing core values. This was illustrated by what some respondents perceived as the disproportionate resourcing and attention diversity was receiving, relative to that for faith integration. These findings suggest in order to optimize stakeholder engagement and empowerment, leaders must proactively address these two sources of ambivalence and resistance.

From a theoretical perspective one might envision the system alignment stage as a holistic strategic assessment by leadership to identify and address organizational systems and procedures which need to be changed, eliminated or added in order to support actualization of the new value. In examining the leadership activities and responses at these universities we found that in practice this was not the case. Instead, it appeared to be an organic, opportunistic process, unfolding over multiple years. We are uncertain as to whether this is indicative as to how organizational leaders in general approach this stage, or it is simply more characteristic of universities. Given how loosely coupled institutions of higher education are, it is likely very difficult (and more difficult than for more tightly controlled organizations) to implement substantial systems changes in order to infuse a new value.

The duration and nature of the systems alignment stage at these universities were indicative of an emergent approach. With respect to the value of diversity, we found that modification of some processes and procedures (e.g. human resources, student life, academics in some graduate programs) were underway during the period leading up to the articulation of this new core value. (Here we must highlight that this particular value had advanced systems alignment momentum, which other core value implementation efforts may not.) The subsequent creation of new positions, offices, programs and initiatives appeared to be combination of efforts to put into place the necessary value facilitating mechanisms, as well as to harvest low hanging fruit, achieve early wins, and gain momentum. There was also evidence that to some extent, the process of system alignment was one of learning and discovery, as efforts to advance the value revealed barriers unforeseen in the early phases of this change initiative. In some cases leadership discovered that the new value-related initiatives, organizational structural changes, and diffusion of efforts themselves also gave rise to new barriers needing to be addressed.

Despite the power and importance of value reinforcing mechanisms, at both universities we found utilization with respect to diversity among the least developed and unevenly applied segments of the core value actualization process. Principal applications were in the realm of student affairs, where scholarships, programs, multi-cultural events and experiences were deployed. In contrast, we identified little to no active use of reinforcement/reward mechanisms with employees, apart from training events and a diversity award given by one of the universities annually to single member of the faculty. This phenomenon may be in part caused by a competing values effect as existing values (e.g. scholarship, teaching) with strong reinforcement mechanisms already in place inhibited the adoption of similarly prominent reinforcements for the new value. Alternately, it may be attributable to leadership expectations that efforts by employees to actualize the value should be intrinsically rewarding, and hence further reinforcement is not necessary. Interestingly, interpretation of what constitutes a reward or reinforcement of employee efforts may also be a factor. Regardless of the actual causes for the existing limited deployment of diversity reinforcing mechanisms there was also evidence that this was not going to be accepted as status quo. We found multiple examples of ongoing plans and initiatives by leadership to increase rewards and reinforcements for diversity-focused efforts by faculty.

As called for in the theoretical model, we found clear evidence of leadership actions to create measures for diversity's progression in becoming a core value as well as a variety of attempts to conduct monitoring and measurements. However, at both institutions this was initially an area of struggle and false starts when attempting to enact measures beyond basic demographics. In some cases baseline data or data capturing mechanisms were missing. Using broad goals expressed in vague terms such as increasing or adding programs, courses, trainings, or initiatives were found to be indicators of activities, rather than of progression of diversity. Without objective indicators for the value, with targets or benchmarks, feedback to stakeholders and leadership was inadequate, delayed, and insufficient to assess cause and effect from organizational efforts.

The relative success of CUC in this area suggests that for multifaceted values, such as diversity, the process of monitoring and measuring is aided by the use of an operational plan which utilizes a

conceptual framework with multiple dimensions, key indicators for each dimension, and associated targets or objectives specified for each. This appears to result in the use of more objective measures which can be readily applied, monitored and reported as feedback to stakeholders and leadership on a timely basis.

Our examination of the practices and processes used by leadership at these two universities has led us to a number of conclusions with respect to the theoretical model for core value actualization. First, the model itself is deficient in its recognition of the important organizational and environmental assessment activities which must be undertaken, especially by leaders new to the institution. These activities must occur before the stage of articulating a particular value as core to the institution as they aid identifying critical rationale for the value as well as the impelling and restraining forces for the changes required to implement it. Adding assessment to the model as the initial stage would make it more representative of actual leadership practice. Second, though the model with its eight stages implies a segmented sequential process, we noted that frequently aspects of these stages overlapped and occurred concurrently. Furthermore, we found that as leadership engaged in value actualization efforts, learning occurred, which caused elaboration and modification activities upstream in the model. This suggests that core value actualization includes both linear and evolutionary processes.

Finally, we find that core value implementation is not a journey with a singular destination and the theoretical model should represent it as such. Particularly in university settings, where stakeholder turnover is high, embedding a core value is long term endeavor that requires continuous effort on the part of leadership. To provide guidance, intended meanings and applications in relation to other core values need to be continually reinforced. Articulation, definition, modeling, engagement, empowerment measurement and monitoring must be ongoing processes, if the value is to truly function as a guiding vector perceived by all stakeholders, both present and future, as core to the institution. Therefore, it is wise for organizational leaders to recognize that the decision to embed a new core value for the institution is in fact a commitment to engage in an enduring and dynamic undertaking.

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