Western University
Scholarship@Western

The Organizational Improvement Plan at Western University

Education Faculty

Spring 6-7-2017

# Supporting Department Chairs as Educational Leaders in a Polytechnic Context

Jennifer Marran
jmarran@uwo.ca

## Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) presents a possible solution to improve support for department chairs at a large polytechnic institution in Canada. It takes into consideration the unique situation where chairs are often hired directly from industry with little or no background in pedagogy/andragogy or postsecondary education and do not have teaching or research duties as part of their responsibilities. More specifically, this OIP focuses on the institutional Educational Development Centre's (EDC) role in supporting chairs and addresses the following Problem of Practice: Department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders.

By facilitating a collaborative approach through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), combined with a formal program design process, the intention is for department chairs to help create training that will support current and incoming chairs in the area of pedagogy/andragogy. This OIP emphasizes the importance of department chair training (Craig, 2005; Filan, 1999, Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Sirkis, 2011; Whitsett, 2007), the diversity of skills required by department chairs (Lloyd-Jones, 2012; Palmer, Hoffman-Longtin, Walvoord, Bogdewic, & Dankoski, 2015; Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt, 2005), and the lack of department chair training offered at most postsecondary institutions in North America (Filan, 1999; Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Smith & Stewart, 1999). This OIP could be adapted to the unique contexts of other institutions to help them explore ways to better support this essential leadership group.


Keywords: department chairs, pedagogy, andragogy, professional learning communities, PLCs, program design, polytechnic

**Acknowledgements**

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is a culmination of three busy, challenging, and thought-provoking years in Western's Doctor of Education program. I am extremely grateful for the support from my classmates in this program, and even though we have not met in-person, I hope we continue our conversations for many years after this program is complete.

My colleagues in the Educational Development Centre (EDC) have offered their patience, feedback, and friendship throughout the duration of this program, and they will continue to be my most favourite people to work with. Al, Brad, Ian, Jeff, Mavee, and, Moira—you really are the greatest.

I am fortunate to have had a fantastic supervisor, Dr. Paula Brook, who not only provided valuable feedback, but pushed me along and encouraged me when I needed it the most. Thank you also to Dr. Patricia Brown for providing a much needed external perspective on this OIP.

And finally, I would not have started, let alone completed, this program without the unwavering support of my incredible husband. Thank you for believing in me and giving me the time and space to complete this journey.

## Table of Contents

## List of Figures

**Executive Summary**

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is based on a large polytechnic in Canada and makes recommendations to solve the following Problem of Practice (PoP): Department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders. Chapter 1 begins by providing an organizational context and addresses how the hierarchical structure of the institution affects the development of a chair training program. A brief organizational history is outlined before the OIP applies academic literature to support the need for chair training. Literature emphasizes the importance of department chair training (Craig, 2005; Filan, 1999, Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Sirkis, 2011; Whitsett, 2007), recognizes the diversity of skills required by department chairs (Lloyd-Jones, 2012; Palmer, Hoffman-Longtin, Walvoord, Bogdewic, & Dankoski, 2015; Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt, 2005), and highlights the lack of department chair training offered at most postsecondary institutions in North America (Filan, 1999; Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Smith & Stewart, 1999).

The PoP is analyzed using Bolman and Deal's (2013) four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Internal data provided by the institutional Educational Development Centre (EDC) shows that there is a desire and need to create department chair training, and this data helps inform the vision for an improved future state: that support is provided to chairs which leads to increased employee satisfaction, student success, and organizational effectiveness.

Chapter 2 shows how the Change Path Model (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016) can be used to move this organizational change forward by following four stages: Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization. The chapter also

outlines how questionnaires and group sessions have been used by the institution to complete a needs assessment. Three possible solutions are proposed to address the PoP, and the chosen solution—a Professional Learning Community of department chairs, combined with a formal program design—is provided in detail. This OIP uses both a servant and team leadership approach to address the stated PoP.

Finally, in Chapter 3, an implementation, evaluation, and communication plan is presented. The plan identifies short, medium, and long term goals that need to be assessed as the training is developed, and the plan outlines five success measurement tools (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013) that the change leader can use throughout the change process. Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of leadership ethics when pursuing organizational change and states that the change leader should endeavour to accomplish the following five principles when moving this change forward: respect others, serve others, show justice, manifest honesty, and build community (Northouse, 2016). The communication plan uses a four-phase approach to ensure all stakeholders are informed of the change before, during, and after the OIP is implemented.

By following this plan, it is possible to provide consistent and purposeful training for department chairs to support them in their roles as leaders.

# Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) first provides an organizational context and then defines the Problem of Practice (PoP) that guides the plan. Chapter 1 presents perspectives on the PoP and then lists questions that have emerged from the PoP. The chapter also articulates a leadership-focused vision for change, addresses organizational change readiness, and outlines a preliminary plan for communicating the need for change.

## Organizational Context

The first section introduces the organization studied in this OIP and outlines the vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals of this organization. It also provides an organizational structure and explains the current leadership approaches evident at the organization. Finally, this section gives a brief organizational history.

### Organization Introduction and Context

This OIP focuses on a large polytechnic in Canada that has been operating for more than 100 years and currently offers certificates, diplomas, applied degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and apprenticeship credentials. The institution began in the early 1900s as a small trades-based school to fill immediate industry needs in its home province, and it now encompasses eight schools, has more than 15,000 full-time students per year, employs approximately 2,600 faculty and staff members, has more than 200,000 alumni, and includes four satellite campuses. This polytechnic, defined as "a publicly-funded college or institute of technology that offers a wide range of advanced education credentials—four year Bachelor's degrees, advanced diplomas, certificates, as well as in-class training for apprenticeship programs" (Polytechnics Canada, 2015, para. 1), has grown extensively since its inception. Even with this growth, the institution still focuses on helping students obtain employment in their field upon graduation and each of the eight schools works closely with industry representatives to accomplish this goal. The institution is working towards its 2015-2020 strategic plan that endeavours to maintain its position as a leader in applied education—defined by the institution as the combination of theoretical knowledge and hands-on practice that produce the most valuable graduates.

**Vision, Mission, Values, Purpose, and Goals**

The institution is a career-focused postsecondary school that works closely with industry partners to meet business needs, which differentiates it from many universities and colleges. The vision statement focuses on collaboration, excellence, and fairness as these values relate to students, employees, and industry partners. Faculty members are typically hired from industry for their depth of practical experience and education, but they may not have any formal training in postsecondary education or teaching and learning practice. Some faculty members have never attended university. Because of this, new faculty are required to attend a teaching workshop as part of their employment onboarding. This workshop, facilitated by the Educational Development Centre (EDC), provides basic pedagogical theory and practical skills to assist new faculty members in the classroom, and the workshop includes a one-year coaching component. This support demonstrates that the institution values effective teaching practice.

Many department chairs are also hired for their trade-specific qualifications and experience, but many do not have experience in academia. Although some chairs have moved into management from faculty positions, most are hired directly from industry—as evidenced from some department chair job postings that focus on industry expertise with no mention of experience in higher education. Chairs, however, are not provided with consistent and purposeful employment onboarding to support them in their new roles as department chairs. The institution's vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals all focus on industry expertise and preparing graduates to be career-ready, but the institution also wants to be a leader in education which requires support and/or training in the area of effective teaching practice—particularly for department chairs.

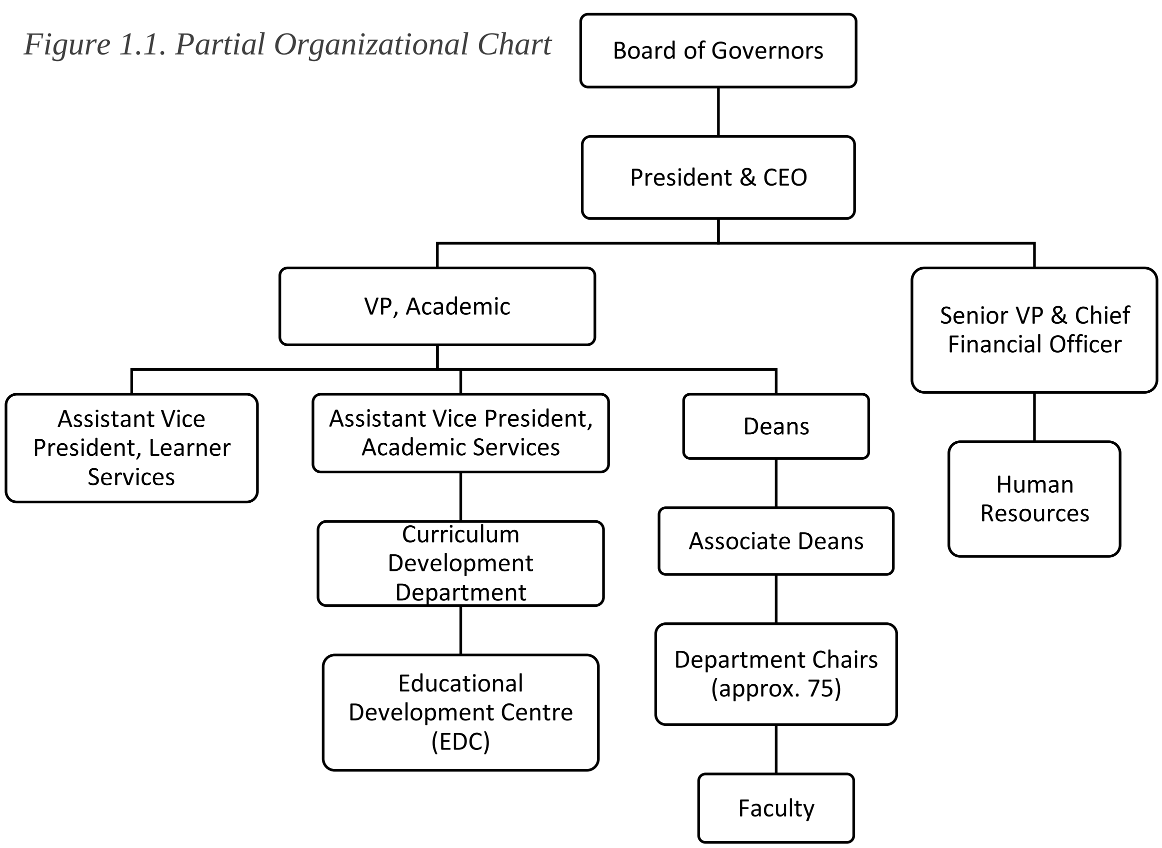
**Organizational Structure and Current Leadership Approaches**

The organizational structure of this institution is hierarchical and because of this, from a wide lens, the current leadership approach could be considered transactional. This does not mean that all leaders of the organization subscribe to a transactional approach, nor that they practice this approach, but as Northouse (2016) has highlighted, transactional leadership is commonly found in academic settings where "transactional leaders exchange things of value with followers to advance their own and followers' agendas" (p. 171) such as tenure being awarded for publications. The hierarchical structure of this organization must be considered as it can influence proposed organizational change.

As noted, internal training programs have been offered to faculty members at this institution for more than 20 years, and this has helped them transition from their industry role to that of instructor. The new faculty training is mandatory and has seen great success in supporting faculty members—largely because it is supported by upper management, middle management, human resources, and the efforts of the EDC. However, a formal training program for department chairs does not exist at the institution. There have been attempts to implement department chair training in the past, but efforts have been inconsistent, disjointed, and have had limited success. Because of this lack of support, there is an opportunity to create a unified in-house program that addresses the unique needs of department chairs at this applied education polytechnic and to support department chairs in their roles as academic leaders. Previously, training has been offered to new department chairs only, and even though it was marketed as mandatory, few chairs attended, and offerings did not recognize competency gaps in current and experienced department chairs. There was no follow through, no accountability, and nothing regularly scheduled.

The hierarchical structure of the institution can make it difficult to create and implement a unified department chair training program because there needs to be buy-in from several layers of management. Figure 1.1 is a partial organizational chart and shows the hierarchy that can influence the creation and implementation of a department chair training program.

*Figure 1.1. Partial Organizational Chart*



This figure shows multiple levels of management, and to successfully implement a training program, the deans, associate deans, and department chairs need to be supportive of the initiative. Ideally, support will also come from the president, vice presidents, and the assistant vice presidents. In addition, the Human Resources Department and the EDC need to be involved and supportive of the initiative. The Human Resources Department currently creates and implements employee training opportunities, such as safety in the workplace and ethics courses, for all employees at the institution. It is also working on creating general leadership training courses that would be available to all employees in a leadership position at the institution, not only the department chairs. The EDC creates and implements faculty training. Historically, both of these departments were involved in providing department chair training, but they have not worked collaboratively and this has been one of the reasons the chair training programs have been disjointed and unsuccessful. Not only do these departments need to be supportive of department chair training initiatives, they also need to cooperate on moving the training program forward.

**Organization History**

Although department chair training has been offered in the past, a formal needs assessment has never been conducted. Department chair competencies have not been defined, and the many roles that chairs fill have never been explicitly identified and/or recognized. The department chair role at this institution changed significantly approximately 10 years ago when chairs were removed from the faculty union. Unlike some institutions, where department chairs fill roles as both faculty members and department heads, chairs at this institution are in management roles only. Chairs are responsible for faculty performance reviews from a management perspective and they are not required (and in some cases, not allowed) to fulfill teaching duties. They are also not required to participate in research.

As outlined in the next section, which explores the leadership Problem of Practice (PoP), the organizational context has significant impact on the suggested actions proposed in this OIP.

## Leadership Problem of Practice

This OIP is based on the following PoP: Department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders. As previously indicated, inconsistent and disjointed training has been provided in the past, but there is an opportunity to create and implement formal, systematic, and sustained department chair training that will assist department chairs in their leadership roles.

Research in this area (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Whitsett, 2007) identifies that department chairs make major decisions, have critical impact on institutional success and growth, and that their leadership approach can influence stakeholders. In addition to the decision-making power of department chairs, those in the role play a crucial part in the success, smooth operation, and improvement of their individual departments, and in the institution as a whole (Craig, 2005; Filan, 1999; Lloyd-Jones, 2012; Sirkis, 2011). Because of this, it is essential to provide support for department chairs.

Another factor that contributes to this PoP is that department chair responsibilities at this polytechnic have not been updated since 2008, and they need to be reviewed to ensure they align with the current strategic plan and reflect the tasks that department chairs are actually doing. Many researchers (Craig, 2005; Palmer et al., 2015; Sirkis,

2011) have found that department chair training helps clarify the extensive responsibilities required in the job because although the chair position has been formalized since the early 1900s (Cohen, 1998 as cited in Whitsett, 2007), many people have differing expectations and understandings of what the role entails. Addressing this PoP will not only support department chairs, it will also clarify the role of the department chair, and this will benefit all stakeholders at the institution. Craig (2005) argued that "Clarification of work roles and the expectations held by faculty, colleagues, and senior administration are necessary for the department chair to function effectively" (p. 88), and Aziz et al. (2005) concluded that "…training in the specific responsibilities of the chair's role may help minimize role ambiguity and conflict and allow chairs to contribute more quickly and meaningfully to the functioning of their department" (p. 573). The ambiguous nature of the role is also supported by Benoit (2002) who found that chairs believe they have as many as 18 different roles in their department (as cited in Aziz et al., 2005). By addressing this PoP, support will not only be provided to department chairs, but the roles and responsibilities of department chairs will also be clarified in the institutional context.

The number of skills required by department chairs, and the discrepancy in the literature, is vast. Craig (2005) wrote that the department chair role continues to become increasingly complex and institutional stakeholders have also identified inconsistency in required chair skills. Wolverton, Ackerman, and Holt (2005) found that deans identified communication, dealing with conflict, collaboration, and fostering teamwork as the most necessary skills for chairs, but department chairs in the same study reported that budgeting, personnel management, and balancing roles were the key skills needed.

Tucker (1992) observed that:

> The job of chairperson varies so much from department to department that a detailed standard job description is difficult to compose…each chairperson, to a large degree, creates the role according to his or her own talents and skills within a framework that is consistent with institutional, department, and personal goals, both academic and administrative. (as cited in Aziz et al., 2005, p. 573)

Because responsibilities for this role are not clearly defined at this institution, these will need to be specified before department chair training can be created. The department chair responsibilities, and the subsequent training, will be specific to the context of this Canadian polytechnic, but the recommendations will also be relevant to similar institutions. Specifically, the following questions will be addressed in this OIP:

- What are the responsibilities of department chairs at this institution?
- What roles do department chairs fulfill at this institution?
- What training opportunities will most benefit department chairs in their various roles?
- How can department chairs best be supported in their positions as leaders?
- What challenges/barriers could affect the training program?
- How can training be sustained at the institution?

This OIP details how to create and implement purposeful and deliberate training opportunities for department chairs at this specific institution. It will also provide recommendations that can be used at similar postsecondary institutions and will contribute to the literature on department chair training.

## Perspectives on the PoP

This section provides additional perspectives on the PoP. It considers the problem through both historical and theoretical lenses. It also looks at the PoP from a role theory framework and discusses further literature on the topic. This section analyses the problem through four frames, which serves as the political, economic, social, and technological

(PESTE) analysis, and it explores relevant internal and external data. It also offers a leadership perspective on the PoP.

**Historical Overview of the PoP**

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, department chair training has been offered at this institution in the past, but it has been poorly attended and has not addressed the many needs of department chairs. The training was offered as one-hour lunch and learn sessions to all department chairs but mandatory only for department chairs that were hired within the previous one-year timeframe. Because of the informal nature of this training, the sessions were often only attended by new department chairs, and chairs who had been at the institution for more than one year were not offered training or development opportunities specific to their role. The previously offered training sessions did not consider the academic year cycle, so resources and information were often provided at times that were not relevant to the current responsibilities the chair needed to fulfill. For example, information regarding performing classroom observations was provided in May, but the chairs were not required to complete this task until the fall semester; thus, the training was not timely nor useful when it was offered.

In addition to the face-to-face short sessions that were offered, an online course was created in the institution’s learning management system (LMS) that contained resources available for the chairs. This course did not include any sort of facilitation, opportunities for discussion, or monitoring of the content. If chairs were inclined, they could access the somewhat dated resources within this course, but analytics from the LMS show that the course is infrequently accessed and has not been updated since 2014.

In 2015, the EDC was tasked by the VP, Academic and the AVP, Academic Services with the responsibility of creating department chair training. The EDC team conducted a survey in January 2016 to help determine if department chair training was seen as a need at the institution and what the focus of the training should be. Approximately 40% of leaders (chairs, associate deans, and deans) responded to the survey, with chairs representing 75% of the respondents. The results showed that more than 90% of total respondents believe general leadership training (defined in the survey as developing personal transferable leadership skills that are not specifically related to adult education) would have some or substantial benefit for department chairs; more than 80% of respondents noted that administration/management training (defined as using software and/or tools specific to a management position at the institution) would have some or substantial benefit; and more than 90% of respondents indicated that pedagogical training (defined as specific to adult education theory and principles such as conducting classroom observations and recognizing/supporting effective teaching practice) would have some or substantial benefit for department chairs.

The PoP for this Organizational Improvement Plan states that department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders. The lack of consistency and purpose in the previously offered training resulted in little or no benefit to leaders in the department chair position at this institution, and findings from the recent EDC survey show that the large majority of leaders believe training would have at least some, if not substantial, benefit to department chairs. The EDC team is in a position to address the pedagogical training needs of department chairs specifically because the unit is mandated to support quality teaching at the institution. The scope of this OIP is narrowed to this pedagogical focus in Chapters 2 and 3.

**PoP Framed Using Role Theory**

One of the significant challenges impacting this PoP is the lack of role definition for department chairs at the institution. This challenge is not unique to this particular institution; many authors have found that the department chair role is complex, rarely defined, and often ambiguous (Craig, 2005; Filan, 1999; Sirkis, 2011; Wolverton et al., 2005). Two of the most commonly cited authors in department chair literature do not agree on the number of roles that department chairs fill (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Seagren, Miller, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1994). Seagren et al. concluded that department chairs have three primary roles: an interpersonal role, an administrator role, and a leader role. Comparatively, Gmelch and Miskin (2011) listed four roles of department chairs: faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar. Department chair responsibilities at this polytechnic are outlined in the institution’s procedures, but they have not been updated since 2008, and in a facilitated group discussion hosted by the EDC in early 2016, department chairs specified that the administrative policy document does not accurately reflect the responsibilities they are actually performing. During the same discussion, chairs identified more than 70 responsibilities that they perform as part of their role. They also indicated that the role is not well defined, and before training can be created and successfully implemented, department chair roles and responsibilities need to be clarified.

Role theory indicates that understanding a person’s role in an organization is essential to achieving organizational objectives and role ambiguity has negative effects on performance and job satisfaction (Fellows & Kahn, 2013). The lack of role clarity not only impacts leaders working in the department chair position, it also impacts those in positions that interact with department chairs. As Craig (2005) contended, “Clarification of work roles and the expectations held by faculty, colleagues, and senior administration are necessary for the department chair to function effectively” (p. 88), and Fellows and Kahn (2013) explained that “Role theory is relevant in various ways to the functioning of organizations. First, a role does not exist in isolation; it is only meaningful when situated in a network of connected roles” (p. 671). It is also possible that this lack of role clarity is creating role strain which occurs when “….various sets of expectations associated with the role interfere with one another” (Fellows & Kahn, 2013, p. 674).

## Significant Themes Related to Department Chair Training

There are three significant themes from the literature on department chair training that are directly relevant to this OIP: department chair training is important, the diversity of skills required by department chairs is vast, and institutions do not often provide training for department chairs. These themes will continue to inform future chapters of this OIP, and they are briefly expanded below.

**Importance of department chair training.** The reviewed literature overwhelmingly supports the notion that department chair training is necessary because major decisions are made at this level, and the department chair role is vital to institutional growth and success (Craig, 2005; Filan, 1999; Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Sirkis, 2011; Whitsett, 2007). Leaders in a department chair position have the authority to make decisions that have far-reaching impact on an institution (Whitsett, 2007), and 80% of strategic decisions are made at the department chair level (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Filan (1999) also found that “Substantive operational and instructional issues within community colleges are taken care of at the department level" (p. 48). Sirkis (2011) emphasized that a poorly trained department chair could become a serious liability to the institution, and a lack of training could result in legal ramifications.

In addition to the decision-making power of department chairs, those in the role play a crucial part in the success, smooth operation, and improvement of their individual departments and in the institution as a whole—both at the university and college level (Craig, 2005; Filan, 1999; Lloyd-Jones, 2012; Sirkis, 2011). Academic leaders often face challenges such as limited resources, increased accountability, and constant change, and if they are not well prepared, they may jeopardize departmental and institutional effectiveness (Wolverton et al., 2005). Palmer et al. (2015) wrote that "It is ironic that department chairs are often ill prepared to lead because few roles…have such tremendous influence on the culture of an institution" (p. 426).

**Diversity of skills required by department chairs.** The second theme from the literature that directly applies to this OIP is that there are many skills department chairs need to possess and/or develop. Hecht et al. (1999) wrote that the department chair role "…has been described as one of the most complex and ambiguous of all leadership positions" (as cited in Craig, 2005, p. 82), and many researchers (Craig, 2005; Palmer et al., 2015; Sirkis, 2011) have found that department chair training is needed to clarify the extensive responsibilities required in the job. Gmelch and Miskin (2011) argued that the department chair role is changing, their responsibilities are increasing, and chairs can be responsible for seeking external funding opportunities, making personnel decisions, engaging in alumni relations, and balancing their multiple roles.

The literature indicates that researchers have not come to a consensus on the precise skillset required by department chairs. Although the most common necessary skill identified for department chairs was conflict resolution (Filan, 1999; Lloyd-Jones, 2012; Wolverton et al., 2005), other authors believe that political skills are vital to the department chair role (Seagren et al., 1994; Sirkis, 2011), and some believe that skills needed to transition to the position are fundamentally required (Bowman, 2002; Filan, 1999). Other researchers, such as Aziz et al. (2005), did not find any of the above skills as essential, and instead concluded that the highest priority training needs were managing budgets and financing, faculty issues, legal issues, and professional development. These differences in conclusions further indicate that roles are extremely diverse, need to be defined, and training is required at the department chair level.

**Lack of department chair training offered.** Although it has been identified that department chairs make major decisions and have a critical impact on institutional success and growth, it has been found that very few department chairs receive leadership training (Filan, 1999; Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Smith & Stewart, 1999). Gmelch and Miskin (2011) found that only 3% of department chairs receive training, but other researchers have reported that 10% of department chairs receive some formal training as an ongoing requirement (Smith & Stewart, 1999). Filan (1999) concluded that of more than 300 colleges surveyed, only 30% of department chairs received formalized training. Since formal training is generally not provided, department chairs often learn their roles through informal, self-guided activities or from prior work experiences (Smith & Stewart, 1999). Because of this lack of formal training, many chairs struggle to transition smoothly into their leadership roles (Palmer et al., 2015).

The above analysis further points to a need for department chair training at not only this institution, but at many postsecondary institutions.

**PoP Analyzed Using Four Frames**

To better understand the PoP being investigated, the following four lenses developed by Bolman and Deal (2013) are applied to the need for department chair training at this institution: Structural, Human Resource, Political, and Symbolic.

**Structural frame.** In general, this organization is structured as a hierarchical system with layers of upper management, middle management, and faculty members. Each of the eight schools has a dean, associate dean, multiple chairs, and many faculty, and above the deans, there are associate vice presidents, vice presidents, and a president/CEO (See Figure 1.1). In addition, there is a varying number of administrative staff members to support each school. A board of governors sits at the top of the hierarchical ladder. In addition, the institution supports two union organizations. Faculty are organized into a faculty association, and staff members are organized into a provincial union.

From a structural frame, the PoP is exacerbated because the institutional departments are organized into functional groups based on knowledge or skill (Mintzberg, 1979). Faculty and department chairs in their respective schools focus on knowledge and skills related to their specific industry, but senior leaders may not be addressing gaps in administrative and pedagogical leadership requirements that are consistent across the organization. In addition to this, the institution primarily models a divisionalized form, so “As long as (the departments) deliver, divisions have relatively free rein” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 80). The departments achieve the benefits of specialization, but “The result is suboptimization, an emphasis on achieving unit goals rather than focussing on the overall mission. Effort becomes fragmented, and performance suffers” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 51). By taking a larger institutional view, where educational leadership is promoted, there is an opportunity to offer department chair training that addresses the current gaps for all chairs at the institution as opposed to focusing on school-specific needs. Training can encompass both institutional-wide and school-specific gaps.

**Human resource frame.** The human resource frame emphasizes that people have diverse needs. Bolman and Deal (2013) have stressed that “…motivating people requires understanding and responding to the range of needs they bring to the workplace” (p. 120), and at this institution, with approximately 120 different programs, the range of needs is extensive. All department chairs have significantly different skill sets, experience with academia, pedagogical understanding, and leadership experience. This frame also emphasizes that although investing in people requires time and persistence, it is well worth the result to have well-trained, satisfied, and effective employees (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

This frame highlights that meeting people’s needs are important but identifying those needs is challenging (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Researchers (Craig, 2005; Palmer et al., 2015; Sirkis, 2011) have found that department chair training is needed to clarify the extensive responsibilities required in the job. Of all literature reviewed, there was no consensus on the precise skillset required by chairs, and many authors believe this can be attributed to the differing contexts in which these leaders work. Training may need to be tailored to specific contexts at the institution in which the department chairs are working and should include department-specific components. Addressing the needs of department chairs, from a human resource perspective, will result in more satisfied employees on both a personal and professional level.

**Political frame.** The political frame also needs to be considered when offering recommendations to create and implement department chair training at this postsecondary institution. Although the EDC at the institution recognizes the need for departmental chair training, other stakeholders may not recognize the same need. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) note that organizational training "…rarely affects stakeholders in the same way. Some may benefit, and some may feel threatened, and they may be harmed because it exposes a weakness in performance" (p. 151). Recommending a chair training program may suggest to some that there is performance weakness, and this can create political tension. Kotter (1985) suggested four steps for influencing and addressing political tension: identifying relevant relationships; assessing who might resist, why, and how strongly; developing links with potential opponents to facilitate communication, education, or negotiation; and if these steps fail, selecting and implementing more subtle or more forceful methods (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2013). Applying these steps can help identify and negotiate the complex political environment of the institution.

In particular, the political frame illuminates some potential challenges and roadblocks that need to be considered before embarking on this OIP. Stringer (2014) has suggested including all stakeholders from the beginning of the planned change. He wrote that "When researchers engage in political processes based on polarities of interest, they are likely to engage in conflictual interactions that generate antagonism" (p. 197). Although the intention is not to create conflict or antagonism, it may be inevitable;

identifying the political terrain at the beginning of the project, and including stakeholders in the entire process, will help mitigate conflict. However, a key consideration is that "from a political perspective, conflict is not necessarily a problem or a sign that something is amiss" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 201), and instigating change, which this OIP endeavours to do, may result in some conflict within the organization.

**Symbolic frame.** A department chair training program has never been successfully implemented at this institution as noted, and doing so will require a culture shift in the organization. Unlike training for new faculty members, that is mandatory, expected, and successful, formalized department chair training is a new initiative. For a training program to be successful, there will need to be acceptance from both experienced and new department chairs, as well as senior management at the institution. Bolman and Deal (2013) have clarified that "Culture is both a product and a process. As a product, it embodies wisdom accumulated from experience. As a process, it is renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves" (p. 263). Ideally, department chair training will become part of the organizational culture—it will be expected and accepted as beneficial training for chairs at the institution, but for this to occur, the current culture of non-existence needs to be considered.

Bolman and Deal (2013) wrote that "Values convey a sense of identity…and help people feel special about what they do" (p. 249). If leadership competencies are valued by department chairs (and others) at the institution, the chair training program will have positive success. To do this, current chairs need to be involved in the program design process, and possibly, as mentors and/or coaches during the implementation phase. This will help chairs shift the culture by placing value and importance on the training program.

**PoP Analyzed Using Internal Data**

In addition to the survey results collected by the EDC (discussed earlier in this chapter), the EDC also hosted two facilitated group discussions with a total of 15 department chairs and three associate deans in early 2016. Like the survey, the purpose of these discussions was for the EDC to start determining the direction of the training development. The participants in these discussions agreed that department chair training is needed, and they determined that chairs at this institution fulfill three key roles (ordered alphabetically): administrator, educator, and leader. They further defined the skills and knowledge they believed were required to successfully fill these roles, and these general topic areas are included in Figure 1.2.

*Figure 1.2. Department Chair Roles (Discussion Group Input)*

| Role identified by discussion group | Skills and knowledge required to fulfill the identified role |
|---|---|
| Administrator | • Basic computer skills<br>• Business communication<br>• Essential software<br>• Finance for department chairs<br>• Human resources basics<br>• Policies and procedures<br>• Safety |
| Educator | • Subject matter expertise<br>• Supporting faculty and staff<br>• Supporting students<br>• Teaching and Learning I (foundational)<br>• Teaching and Learning II (advanced) |
| Leader | • Conflict management<br>• Interpersonal skills<br>• Leadership competencies<br>• Systems thinking and decision making<br>• Time management and organization |

The discussion group participants further expanded on the topics by suggesting preliminary outcomes for training. These outcomes are outlined in Figure 3.1.

Department Chair Training Categories—Educational Development Centre as they are used to inform the implementation plan. This internal data, which was collected by the EDC before this OIP was proposed, is used to help inform the plan for creating chair training.

It may also be necessary to revisit the defined roles provided by the discussion group participants as it could be argued that the outlined skills and knowledge competencies all fall under the role of leader. Northouse (2016) specified that although there are many different definitions of leadership, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6), and the competencies in all three roles align with this definition. The separation of the administrator, educator, and leader roles may not be the best representation as all roles represent the leadership competencies required by department chairs.

**PoP Analyzed Using External Data**

The external data being used to support this PoP is the academic literature on department chair training. That literature has been analyzed in previous parts of this chapter and will continue to inform future chapters. Data from organizations such as Statistics Canada and OECD are not applicable to this OIP.

**Leadership Perspective on the PoP**

Although department chairs are placed in leadership roles, they may not have any experience with leadership theories and/or approaches, so providing training is an opportunity to influence the leadership approach that these chairs use. As Craig (2005) has written, “…middle management (plays) a significant role in changing the focus of leadership” (p. 85), and ensuring professional development of chairs in postsecondary education is necessary to increase their effectiveness as leaders (Palmer et al., 2015). Sirkis (2011) suggested that although there are many leadership models available, the collaborative leadership model, which builds on servant leadership, is the most appropriate model for leaders in a department chair role, noting that "Collaborative leadership can enable community college department chairs to co-opt faculty into a leadership collective that improves the coherence and effectiveness of an academic department" (p. 53). Filan (1999) supported Sirkis' findings and concluded that leaders at the community and technical college level need to act as servant leaders.

A second leadership approach that will be considered in Chapter 2 is a team leadership approach. As department chairs are required to lead diverse teams of faculty members, a team leadership approach may be most effective. Northouse (2016) specified that in team leadership:

> Cognitively, the leader helps the team understand the problems confronting the team. Motivationally, the leader helps the team become cohesive and capable by setting high performance standards and helping the team to achieve them. Affectively, the leader helps the team handle stressful circumstances by providing clear goals, assignments, and strategies. Coordinately, the leader helps integrate the team's activities by matching members' skills to roles, providing clear performance strategies, monitoring feedback, and adapting to environmental changes. (p. 371)

The above approaches to leadership may help improve the performance of the faculty group, and thus, increase organizational effectiveness.

The leadership theories used to support the department chair training program are further discussed in Chapter 2.

## Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

This section focuses on the envisioned future state that will benefit the institution. It includes priorities for change and discusses considerations for implementing the organizational change.

### Improved Future Organizational State

This OIP offers a solution for successfully creating and implementing consistent and purposeful training to support department chairs at this institution in their roles as leaders. In an improved future organizational state, department chair roles will be clearly defined, and chairs will be supported in their roles as administrators, educators, and leaders (the roles outlined in the EDC discussion groups). The support provided will align with the strategic plan of the institution, and ultimately, lead to increased employee satisfaction, student success, and organizational effectiveness.

Three possible solutions to address the PoP are identified in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 provides a recommended solution with an implementation plan. Some literature on department chair training suggests ideas and approaches that could be, and/or have been, successful in supporting department chairs (American Association of Community Colleges, 2005; Sirkis, 2011). Sirkis supports an internal training program because external training programs are too general and do not address skills required by leaders in a particular institution. The argument is that "A professional development program created in-house can have the advantage of addressing ongoing managerial and leadership skill development in the context of a specific school" (p. 51). The American Association of Community Colleges (2005) has also supported an internal training approach and commented that "The leadership gap can be addressed through a variety of strategies such as college grow-your-own programs, coaching, mentoring, and on-line and blended approaches” (p. 2).

Another possible future state could include joint work to increase department chair collaboration and the number of learning opportunities available. Katz and Dack (2013) have highlighted the benefits of joint work as follows:

> It is in joint work where colleagues share responsibility and really believe that they need each others’ contributions to succeed. In joint work, ideas are put on the table for discussion, analysis, debate, and challenge. People practicing joint work are challenging one another’s assumptions about teaching and learning, are providing feedback to one another (and are also receptive to receiving it from others), and are talking openly about differing views and opinions. (p. 44)

The above ideas are considered and analyzed further in Chapter 2, but regardless, the improved future organizational state offers better institutional support for department chairs than currently exists.

**Priorities for Change**

Before change can be initiated, a needs assessment must be conducted, and stakeholder buy-in should be considered. Literature (Aziz et al., 2005; Sirkis, 2011; Wolverton et al., 2005) has placed great emphasis on program pre-development needs for department chair training. Sirkis (2011) suggested that an assessment process must be used to determine department chair strengths, weaknesses, and developmental needs, and Wolverton et al. (2005) wrote that “Gaining conceptual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of department chairs as academic leaders and their place within the overarching system [become] the bedrock of program design” (p. 234). Aziz et al. (2005) have supported this and maintained that because there is no consensus on which skills are most important and would be the primary focus of a new training program, a needs assessment becomes a priority.

Department chair roles need to be defined (as indicated previously in this chapter), which will help determine the content for training. As role theory suggests, both functional and positional roles need to be analyzed and considered. Fellows and Kahn (2013) argued that “A key distinction in role theory exists between positional roles created and formally recognized by the organization and functional roles that arise from group interaction” (p. 671). Continued engagement with senior leaders at this institution will be beneficial as they can contribute ideas as to which components should be included in chair training.

**Implementing the Improved Future Organizational State**

A specific plan for implementing the improved future organizational state is included in Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication. The EDC team at this institution is in a leadership position to develop and implement department chair training, specifically as it relates to pedagogy. The Department has already been tasked by the Vice President and Assistant Vice President to research, plan, and implement department chair training, so it is reasonable to expect that this training will be successfully supported and implemented.

Two models are used to help frame the suggested change in this OIP: (1) The Change Path Model (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016) and (2) The Interactive Model of Program Planning (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). These models have been chosen in tandem because the Change Path Model is specific to organizational change, but not in an educational setting. The Interactive Model of Program Planning does not offer tools for overall organizational change, but it is specific to program planning in an adult education setting and is therefore directly appropriate and relevant to this OIP and institution.

The four-phase Change Path Model (outlined at the beginning of Chapter 2) provides a broad view to help structure the proposed change from beginning to end, and as Cawsey et al. (2016) have claimed "…the Change Path Model combines process and prescription" (p. 53). This model clearly directs the change leader through an organizational change process with both theoretical underpinnings and practical actionable items. With stakeholder input, this model will guide the development of recommendations to identify existing department chair training needs, develop training to fill those needs, effectively implement changes with continued stakeholder buy-in, and assess success (or lack of success) after implementation.

The Interactive Model of Program Planning (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013), although not promoted as an organizational change model, can be used to help develop the program that will ultimately result in organizational change. One of the benefits of this model is that it is "…presented as a guide, not a blueprint for practice, and represents a way of thinking about program planning that is interactive in nature" (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 30). The program planning model is much more flexible than The Change Path Model, and the authors encourage users of this model to interact with it based on individual context.

Both models provide useful and practical tools for leaders to instigate and promote change—whether it is at an organizational level or by creating programs to initiate change. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) have explained that "Each program component of the model includes a set of specific tasks and decision points" (p. 31). Similarly, Cawsey et al. (2016) have provided specific tasks at each step of The Change Path Model and noted that "Taking action creates influence and demands responses from others" (p. xvi). Both models are grounded in theory and experience, and they both provide examples of practical application for applying the theory to a real-life context. Thus, these models will be combined to effectively plan the implementation and assessment of a department chair training program.

## Organizational Change Readiness

This section outlines how the Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016) and the Interactive Model of Program Planning (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013) will be used to analyze the organizational change readiness. It also addresses competing internal and external forces, identifies key stakeholders impacted by the change, and proposes ideas to overcome potential resistance by those stakeholders.

### Understanding the Need for Change

Before identifying requirements for change and making recommendations, the change readiness of the institution needs to be assessed. The Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016) provides structure and suggestions for moving this OIP forward, and the first stage in the Change Path Model, Awakening, is particularly helpful in assessing the change readiness of this institution. Cawsey et al. (2016) have emphasized the importance of establishing change readiness as part of change planning and before moving forward to implementation. They write that "Many change-management programs fail because there is sustained confusion and disagreement over (a) why there is a need for change and (b) what needs changing" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 96). In particular, the authors outline four steps for developing an understanding of a need for change and creating awareness and legitimacy of this need. They recommend seeking out and making sense of external data, perspectives of other stakeholders, internal data, and personal concerns and perspectives (Cawsey et al., 2016). This chapter explores external and internal data related to the PoP and addresses why there is a need for change and what needs changing. This section expands on stakeholder perspectives.

In addition to the points made by Cawsey et al. (2016), the Interactive Model of Program Planning emphasizes the importance of conducting a structured needs assessment before attempting to create and implement change. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) stated that “The focus of the [needs] assessment is not to find solutions for specific problems but to clarify and define the problems” (p. 143). Not only does a needs assessment help clarify a change, it is also an opportunity to get stakeholders involved from the beginning of the change process. The authors also contend that the educational needs (a discrepancy or gap between what presently is and what should be) of the learners must be defined. As they note, “The term educational need is by far the most common descriptor in the literature and rhetoric of practice as the focal point for identifying ideas for education and training programs” (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 134). Chapter 1 explores educational needs, but these will continue to be addressed in Chapter 2.

All of these considerations will help create a change vision for this organization as it relates to department chair training. These two models will be used to articulate clearly, in Chapter 2, why a change is needed and what needs changing.

**Competing Internal and External Forces**

As noted earlier, the Vice President and Assistant Vice President at the institution have already tasked the EDC with creating department chair training, and this will require significant time and resources from the EDC team. The EDC team consists of seven full-time employees who currently facilitate workshops for new faculty, mentor and coach existing faculty, and assist with curriculum design projects. By adding the department chair training project to the current workload, and not removing responsibilities or providing additional team members, time could become an internal barrier to the creation and implementation of this training. Consideration will need to be given to the capacity of this team and how this new training will be successfully created and implemented, while the current faculty support is maintained.

The most significant external force that can influence the success of this OIP is the differing contexts in which department chairs work at this institution. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) have emphasized that “Program planners need to be aware of the context in which the program they are planning exists. The context, consisting of human, organizational, and environmental facets, affects the decisions planners make throughout the program planning process” (p. 80). This will be considered when posing possible solutions in Chapter 2. It is feasible that one department chair training program will not be beneficial for all department chairs due to the differing contexts and that training programs will need to be adapted to respective departments at the institution.

**Key Stakeholders**

Gmelch and Miskin (2011) argued that “The department chair position is the most critical role in the university, and the most unique management position in America” (p. 5). It’s possible that the same claim could hold true for all postsecondary institutions, including this polytechnic. Department chairs impact many people inside and outside the institution. For department chair training to be successfully implemented, there are multiple stakeholders who need to support the change, and there are many stakeholders who will be both directly and indirectly impacted by the training change.

**Stakeholder support required.** For this change to be successfully implemented, the following stakeholders need to support the training offered to these chairs.

***Senior leaders.*** The Vice President and Assistant Vice President are already in support of department chair training. As a hierarchical institution, senior leaders' support will help move this change forward. They can provide additional resources to the project, and they can influence those below them in the organization, such as deans and associate deans. Because department chairs report directly to associate deans, the support of these associate deans is also critical. Associate deans will need to provide time for department chairs to complete training, and they can encourage department chairs to participate in this training. If associate deans support the initiative, it is more likely that the chairs will see the change (training) in a positive way. If, however, associate deans do not support the initiative, the opposite can happen. As Caffarella and Daffron (2013) have written, "Support from participants' immediate supervisors is crucial at all points in the educational cycle, from assessing needs to learning transfer and evaluation" (p. 110).

***Department chairs.*** There needs to be buy-in from department chairs because they will be participating in this program. The EDC has already started to obtain buy-in from some chairs through informal discussions, as well as discussion groups, that were held in early 2016 to help determine the current needs for training.

***EDC team.*** Because the EDC team has been tasked with creating and implementing chair training, the members of the team also need to support the initiative.

If they see value in providing this training, they will be more likely to move it forward in a positive, systemic manner for a major sustained change at this institution.

***Human Resources.*** Although support from human resources may not be required to move this change forward, having support from that department will be beneficial. They can help coordinate the training and track the completion of training. Because human resources also offer training programs at the institution, it will be beneficial to collaborate with them on this initiative.

**Stakeholders impacted by the change.** All those who interact with department chairs, directly or indirectly, will be impacted by this change. Gmelch and Miskin (2011) identify the following as being impacted by chairs, and thus, by their training: deans, associate deans, faculty, other department chairs, administration assistants, department staff, students/parents, field professionals, potential new students, department alums, support staff, and the larger community.

## Overcoming Resistance

Many authors (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Cawsey et al., 2016) have suggested that involving stakeholders from the very beginning of the change process will help increase stakeholder buy-in and overcome resistance. Cawsey et al. (2016) contended that “Change leaders need to be aware of the perspectives of key internal and external stakeholders and work to understand their perspectives, predispositions, and reasons for supporting or resisting change” (p. 101). The EDC has already started to seek out these perspectives by talking to associate deans and department chairs about the need for change. Continuing those conversations will be a vitally important part of this OIP.

## Communicating the Need for Change

Being able to communicate change is a key component of this OIP, and this section discusses a plan to build awareness of the need for change using communication strategies. It also addresses communication implementation using the Change Path Model as a framework for communicating change.

### Building Awareness

Communicating the need for change will begin in this organization by having conversations with department chairs and listening to their thoughts and needs. As reported earlier, a majority of institutional leaders provided feedback that leadership, administration/management, and pedagogical training will benefit department chairs. Awareness of the need for change has already started by opening up the conversation with these academic leaders. Cawsey et al. (2016) have argued that change agents can effectively energize the need for change by openly engaging in dialogue with stakeholders and listening with care and consideration. The EDC started this process in early 2016 by conducting a survey and then bringing chairs together to solicit their feedback. Moving forward, the conversations need to continue. By engaging more of the chairs in conversations, and finding out their concerns and needs, awareness will be built.

### Communication Strategies and Implementation

Cawsey et al. (2016) outline a communication plan by addressing communication needs in the following phases: 1. Prechange phase, 2. Developing the need for change phase, 3. Midstream change phase, and 4. Confirming the change phase. Cawsey et al. (2016) write that this model centres on four main goals: “(1) to infuse the need for change throughout the organization, (2) to enable individuals to understand the impact that the change will have on them, (3) to communicate any structural and job changes that will influence how things are done, and (4) to keep people informed about progress along the way" (p. 320). This model will be used for communicating change in this OIP.

**Prechange phase.** In this phase, Cawsey et al. (2016) have explained that communication is used to get senior management buy-in and that change agents need to convince senior management of the need for change. In regards to department chairperson training, as previously indicated, senior leaders are already in support of this change. Because the Vice President and Assistant Vice President are in support of creating department chair training, this phase has already occurred.

**Developing the need for the change phase.** Cawsey et al. (2016) also explained that in this phase, the need for change must be clearly articulated. They wrote that "The vision for the change needs to be articulated and the specific steps of the plan that will be undertaken need to be clarified. People need to be reassured that they will be treated fairly and with respect" (p. 321). After determining the possible solutions to address this PoP in Chapter 2, communicating the need for change is a significant part of the Implementation, Evaluation and Communication section in Chapter 3. Communicating the need and plan for change will increase stakeholder buy-in and have an impact on whether or not this change is successful. The change communicated in this phase will also need to involve multiple approaches and people. Change can be communicated from the EDC, vice president, assistance vice president, deans, associate deans, and department chairs. A detailed communication plan is included in Chapter 3.

**Midstream change phase.** This phase of the communication plan will also be important to the success of this academic leadership training. In this phase, people are updated on the change and how it is going (Cawsey et al., 2016). It is also an opportunity to clarify the change, sustain interest in the change, and emphasize why the change is important. As Cawsey et al. (2016) have described, “An effective communications campaign can reduce the number of rumors by lowering uncertainty, lessening ambivalence and resistance to change, and increasing the involvement and commitment of employees” (p. 322). Simply implementing training for department chairs does not mean it will be successful. There will need to be consistent communication and monitoring to move the program forward, and the communication strategy in this phase will help do that.

**Confirming the change phase.** Although an important part of a communications plan, there will be less focus on this phase in the OIP than on the previous two phases. In this phase, change agents communicate and celebrate the success of the program (Cawsey et al., 2016), but chair training will be an ongoing program that will likely not have a definitive end. Successes will be communicated as the change is implemented (as part of the midstream change phase), but Cawsey et al. (2016) have indicated that this phase is implemented at the conclusion of the change, and department chair training implementation will not have an explicit conclusion.

The above phases will help determine the communication needs of this OIP and will impact the Change Implementation Plan detailed in Chapter 3.

## Conclusion

Chapter 1 introduced the organization being studied in this OIP and provided its context. The chapter highlighted the need to develop additional support for department chairs at this institution because of the significant impact those in the chair role have on the organization. By moving this OIP forward, roles will be more clearly defined which will benefit all stakeholders at the institution. In turn, this will lead to increased employee satisfaction, increased student success, and increased organizational effectiveness. Chapter 2 begins to outline a specific plan for creating department chair training by providing frameworks for leading the change and giving possible solutions for addressing the PoP introduced in Chapter 1.

# Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1 of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) by providing a framework for leading the change process. The framework includes relevant theories of organizational change and specific approaches for leading the organizational change. A critical organizational analysis is also provided by exploring a gap analysis between the current state and the future state. This chapter includes three potential solutions to address the PoP, and it concludes by specifying the theoretical leadership approaches influencing the chosen solution.

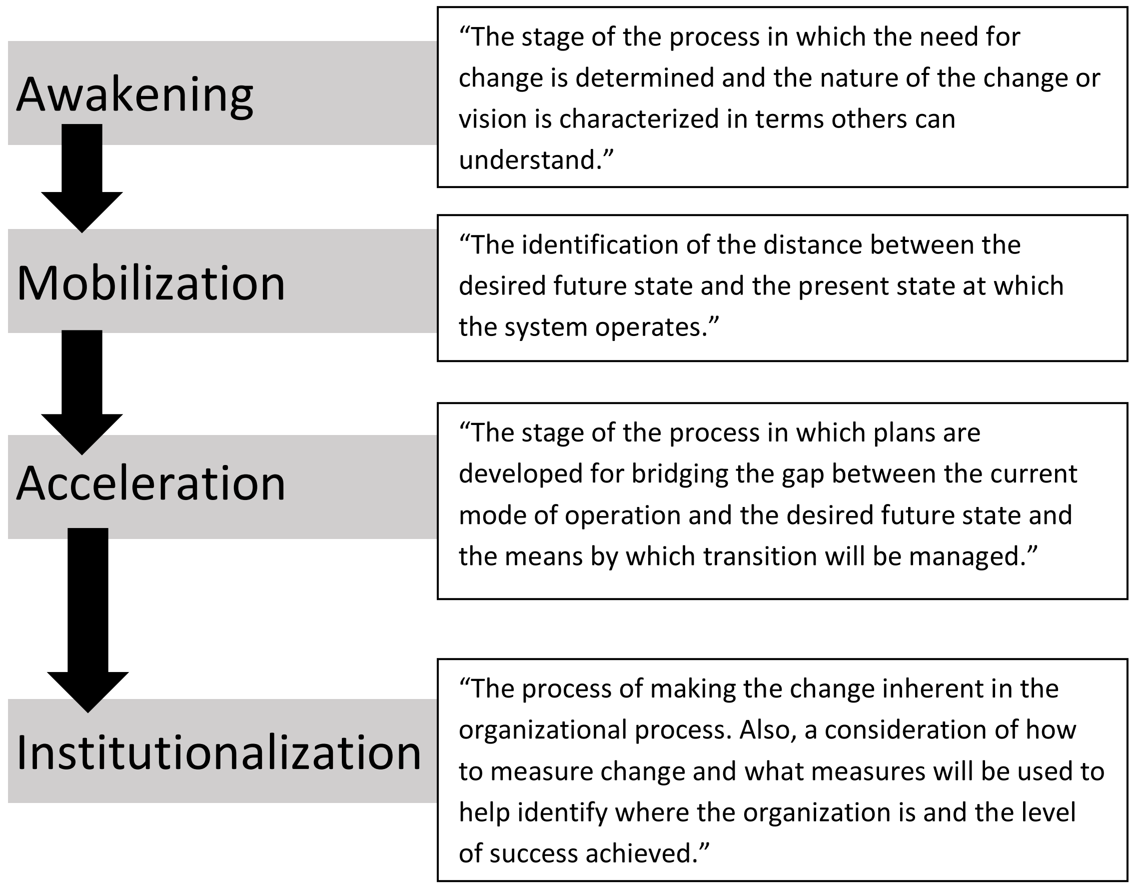
## Framework for Leading the Change Process

The first section applies two theories of organizational change to this OIP, outlines specific approaches for leading the organizational change, and explores relevant types of organizational change being considered in this OIP.

### Relevant Theories of Organizational Change

This OIP uses the Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model to frame the proposed organizational change. This model was chosen because it provides a structure, with practical and actionable components, for moving the change forward. The model promotes organizational change as a planned process that will enhance an organization's effectiveness. The Change Path Model (see Figure 2.1) includes four stages to follow when implementing organizational change: Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization.

*Figure 2.1. The Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016, p.60)*




In addition to the Change Path Model, Schein's (1964) theory of organizational change, including the need to create psychological safety, provides further considerations for implementing this OIP. Schein (1964) has stated that "Any change in behavior or attitudes…tends to be emotionally resisted because even the possibility of change implies that previous behavior and attitudes were somehow wrong or inadequate, a conclusion that the change target would be motivated to reject" (p. 78). For this OIP, suggesting that department chair training is needed may result in the change recipients rejecting the change because it highlights a current inadequacy, but as Schein (2010) has clarified, it is possible for the change leader to reduce resistance to change by increasing a sense of psychological safety. Schein (2010) provided eight activities that must be carried out almost simultaneously to create psychological safety for organizational members. These will be expanded on in the next section.

**Specific Approaches for Leading the Process of Organizational Change**

This section analyzes the application of the Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016), as well as Schein's (2010) theory of psychological safety in organizational change, to this OIP.

**Change Path Model.** All four stages of this model will help guide this organizational improvement plan. Chapter 1 partially addressed the first stage, Awakening, by identifying the need for change, and this chapter expands on that stage by articulating the gap between current state and an envisioned future state. The vision, to create consistent and purposeful training opportunities for department chairpersons at this institution, will need to be clearly communicated to all stakeholders, and this will be part of the implementation plan outlined in Chapter 3. The second stage of the model, Mobilization, was also partially addressed in Chapter 1 by describing the formal systems and structures of the institution and recognizing some of the hierarchical power dynamics in play. In brief, the change recipients are the department chairs, and the change agents are the members of the EDC, but there are additional stakeholders to consider and these are outlined in Figure 3.3. Stakeholder Map (see p. 62). Leading change recipients, and leveraging change agents, both part of the Mobilization stage, will be part of the implementation plan.

This chapter also identifies a possible solution to the PoP and to implement that solution, the 3rd and 4th stages, Acceleration and Institutionalization, will be addressed in

Chapter 3. These final two stages will also be used to reduce any resistance to change and ensure there is a method for measuring the change and assessing whether or not it is successful. As Jick (1990) has written, “No organization can institute change if its employees will not, at the very least, accept the change. No change will ‘work’ if employees don’t help in the effort. And change is not possible without people changing themselves” (p. 404). The Change Path Model—introduced in Chapter 1 and expanded here—and the implementation plan in the next chapter, will help ensure that employees are aware of the change vision and that they are supported through the change process.

**Psychological safety.** In addition to applying the Change Path Model, Schein’s (2010) theory on psychological safety is considered and included in the implementation plan. Although resistance to a training program is not anticipated, it is important to ensure the department chairs experience psychological safety because they may be asked to undergo transformational learning where a “personal model of reality is transformed in whole or in part and [the] associated perspectives, premises, strategies, and meanings are revised” (Mackeracher, 2010, p. 11). Schein (2010) specified that “Creating psychological safety for organizational members who are undergoing transformational learning involves eight activities that must be carried on almost simultaneously” (p. 305).

The implementation plan will consider these eight activities by including (1) a compelling positive vision and an aspect of both (2) formal and (3) informal training that (4) involves the learners. It will (5) ensure the resources, including time, are provided for the change to be successful. The solution will (6) establish a way of creating positive role models who can lead the change and will (7) create support groups for those experiencing the change. Finally, the solution will (8) address the organizational systems and structures that need to adapt to accommodate the change. All of these actions will establish psychological safety, and as Schein (2010) has noted, “when an organization sets out to really transform itself by creating psychological safety, real and significant changes can be achieved” (p. 307).

### Relevant Types of Organizational Change

As described later in this chapter, the proposed solution will be an incremental and continuous people-oriented organizational change. The change needs to be viewed through structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013), which were analyzed in Chapter 1, and these frames will continue to be applied as solutions are considered.

## Critical Organizational Analysis

This section explores the importance of a gap analysis and a needs assessment when preparing for an organizational change. The current state of the educational institution of this OIP, and a desired future state, is presented with considerations of movement between those states.

### Relevant Model to Conduct Gap Analysis

Before a solution is suggested and an implementation path is outlined, it is necessary to conduct a gap analysis by completing a needs assessment. Cawsey et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of a needs assessment in the first step (Awakening) of The Change Path Model. They have written that in this early stage, it is necessary to “Articulate the gap in performance between the present and the envisioned future state, and spread awareness of the data and the gap throughout the organization” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 98). This OIP uses Caffarella and Daffron’s (2013) model to support a needs assessment because the model directly relates to program planning for adult learners (i.e., a new training program for educational/organizational administrators). It has already been determined in the previous chapter that creating a training program for department chairs will be beneficial, and it was noted that a training program does not exist in the current state of the organization. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) have emphasized that "Identifying relevant ideas and needs—the program content—is one of the major tasks of people involved in planning education and training programs" (p. 133).

The needs of department chairs vary greatly across departments at this institution, and the leaders in the EDC cannot assume they know the needs of the chairs and the requirements for the training. Fortunately, internal data was already collected by the EDC in early 2016 to generate ideas for possible training program using two approaches: Questionnaires and Group Sessions.

**Questionnaires.** Also known as surveys, questionnaires gather "…opinions, attitudes, preferences, perceptions, knowledge, practices, and other desired information through a question and answer format" (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 140). Conducted electronically, it was easy to access the input of department chairs at both the main campus and the satellite campuses of the institution. It is important to assess the reason for conducting a survey, and in this case, it was to assist with organizational change and improvement. Kraut (1996) has noted that "By using surveys for self-assessment and then to stimulate and guide desirable changes, organizations make surveys a basis for deliberate efforts at better organizational functioning" (p. 306). A survey can be used to assess the current state and gather preferences about a desired future state.

A survey was conducted by the EDC in January 2016 to begin assessing the needs of department chairs as this had already been identified as a possible institutional requirement. The survey was distributed to all deans, associate deans, and department chairs, and more than 40% of these leaders responded. This survey resulted in valuable information to inform the chair training program development, but it also communicated to management that such leadership competence is an important topic to the institution's leaders.

As described in Chapter 1, the survey results showed that more than 90% of respondents believe general leadership training would have some or substantial benefit for department chairs; more than 80% believe administration/management training would have some or substantial benefit; and, more than 90% believe pedagogical training would have some or substantial benefit for department chairs. The questionnaire results show that there is a desire and need for department chair training.

**Group sessions.** As part of the survey, leaders were asked if they would be willing to participate in a voluntary group session to delve deeper into the topic of department chair training. Eighteen leaders, representing all eight schools at the institution, volunteered to participate in a group session. The EDC invited these department chairs (15) and associate deans (3) to a facilitated group session to discuss the educational needs of a chair training program. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) have written that "An educational need is most often defined as a discrepancy or gap between what presently is and what should be" (p. 134). They also wrote that program planners use needs assessments to determine the important topics, skills, and belief systems that program participants should know more about (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). A group session not only helps determine the educational needs of department chairs, but it also involves the department chairs (and their managers) in the creation of the program and thus, increases buy-in.

The group session was voluntary because although the program may eventually be mandatory, forcing participation at this stage of the planning process may have resulted in resistance. Cawsey et al. (2016) have written that even though change leaders often anticipate resistance to change, employees can actually be supportive and engaged in change initiatives when they are actively involved. The voluntary attendance of this group resulted in engaged and willing participants that enhanced the effectiveness of the group. Two professional facilitators from the EDC at the institution hosted the session. As Kaner (2014) has noted, “The facilitator’s job is to support everyone to do their best thinking. S/he encourages full participation; s/he promotes mutual understanding; s/he fosters inclusive solutions, and s/he cultivates shared responsibility” (p. 32). By coordinating the group sessions with engaged leaders who are participating in a voluntary capacity, and ensuring the session was managed by professional facilitators, the preliminary learning/training needs were determined through discussion and collaboration.

The participants in the group session determined that there were three main roles filled by department chairs at the institution: administrator, educator, and leader. As outlined in Chapter 1, the literature identifies similar roles filled by department chairs at other institutions (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Seagren et al., 1994; Whitsett, 2007). Through facilitation, the participants identified more specific topics, under these broad roles, that should be included in department chair training and are specific to this institution's context. These topics were outlined in Figure 1.2 (see p.19).

The group also created specific outcomes that could be included in each of the broad topics provided in Figure 1.2; however, participants expressed that much more work was required to actually develop the training that would support them in their roles as leaders. Thus, the gap analysis information and the needs identified from the internal data sources will be used to initiate a specialized chair training program. The next section analyzes how to move from this current state to a desired future state.

**Analysis – Current State vs. Future State**

This section summarizes where the institution is currently situated in regards to addressing the PoP: Department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders. It then explores the desired future state of the organization: To provide department chairs with purposeful and deliberate department chair training opportunities that meet their diverse needs as leaders.

**Current state.** As described in Chapter 1, department chair training at this institution is inconsistent and offered infrequently. Although there have been random one hour sessions offered to chairs, they were voluntary and poorly attended. New department chairs receive some support from within their department, but the support offered is inconsistent across the campus, and there are few opportunities for department chairs to network with their chair colleagues. To fill this gap, some department chairs have attended the formalized Chair Academy program (see details below), but the training provided in that program is external to the institution and does not consider the unique Canadian polytechnic context of this postsecondary. As Crossman and Cameron (2014) have noted, “One construct running through much of the literature of the current and past few years is the importance of context so that …competencies need to be prioritized and balanced in the context of that particular college and its environment” (p. 406). There is an opportunity to provide training that considers the context of this institution.

Chair Academy was a grassroots initiative developed in the United States in 1992 (Filan, 1999), and it is a one-size-fits-all program that is offered across North America. Department chairs at this institution have indicated that although there is some benefit to the generic leadership training (depending on the individual’s background), there are still training gaps that exist. This is supported by the survey results reported earlier. In addition, Chair Academy is expensive. There are approximately 75 department chairs at the institution, and the current registration fee to attend the first one-week workshop is $3,100CDN (The Chair Academy, 2016), so the institution will pay approximately $230,000CDN in registration fees for all chairs to attend – which does not include travel and accommodation expenses. To successfully complete the entire program, however, chairs need to attend a similarly-priced second week-long workshop – essentially doubling the expected cost to approximately $460,000CDN (minimum). Although some chairs have already completed this program, this cost is continuous as new department chairs will also need to be sponsored to attend the program.

The Human Resources Department also offers some generic training for employees, but it is not targeted specifically to chairpersons. In addition, chairs may be receiving some informal support from colleagues and supervisors, such as deans and associate deans in their departments; however, if this is occurring, it is not consistent or monitored, or perhaps, even reliable.

**Future state.** The future state from this organizational change will provide department chairs at this institution with purposeful and deliberate training opportunities that meet their diverse needs as leaders. This institution identifies both student and employee success as strategic plan priorities for 2015-2020, and this proposed future state aligns with both of those priorities. The survey and group discussion sessions conducted by the EDC in early 2016 show that leaders are in favour of a training program, and the information gathered from those activities was presented by the EDC to the vice president, assistant vice president, and deans in fall 2016. Senior leaders not only support moving forward with the creation of department chair training, but they have also asked the EDC to prioritize the creation of training related to pedagogical support. With senior leadership support already in place, this OIP proposes actions that will create the program with stakeholder buy-in and limited resistance.

Although other training needs have been identified, the EDC has been directed to focus on this one area of pedagogy because it falls within the department's mandate of supporting quality teaching. Collaboration with other departments will be required to fully support chairs in their roles, and the communication plan in Chapter 3 clearly outlines how this will be accomplished. The solutions considered in this chapter, however, will focus on the development of pedagogical training for chairs.

According to senior leaders, this new training will be part of onboarding for new chairs at the institution—similar to the current training offered by the EDC to new faculty members—and current department chairs may participate voluntarily or support the program in a facilitative and/or mentorship capacity. The program needs to be created internally to address the unique context of this institution. The American Association of

Community Colleges (2013) has supported an internal training approach, and Sirkis (2011) wrote that an internal training program is preferred because external training programs are too general and do not address skills required by leaders in a particular institution. Sirkis (2011) also wrote that "A professional development program created in-house can have the advantage of addressing ongoing managerial and leadership skill development in the context of a specific school" (p. 51).

In the next section, three possible solutions are proposed that will result in a department chair training program for the institution. The Change Path Model also needs to be considered when moving from current state to future state. In particular, the following suggestions for managing and minimizing cynicism about change will be implemented:

- Keep people involved in making decisions that affect them.
- Use two-way communication in order to see change from the employees' perspective and use this awareness to help with planning and future communication related to change.
- Ensure existing structures, systems, and processes are not sending conflicting messages, obstructing the change, and creating cynicism in the process. If they are, recognize their impact, discuss them openly, and take steps to address the issue and either bring them into alignment with the change or minimize their negative impact. (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 247)

The resources required for creating the training program also need to be considered, and those are included in the analysis of possible solutions in the next section. Regardless, there is strong support to move forward with a department chair training program to assist these leaders in their roles. As Smith and Stewart (1999) have argued, "For community colleges to remain strong, each two-year college in this country should establish a department chair leadership program for prospective and new department chairs" (p. 36).

## Possible Solutions to Address the PoP

This section explores three possible solutions to address this PoP. Each solution is introduced before outlining the resources needed to implement that specific solution. Benefits and disadvantages of each solution are also detailed. Finally, one solution is recommended, and this solution will be used to move forward with the implementation and communication plan in Chapter 3.

### Possible Solution 1: Maintain the status quo

Although the literature, survey results, group discussions, and feedback from senior leaders indicates that department chair training should be developed, it is also important to consider the benefits and disadvantages of maintaining the status quo. Chair Academy, plus the infrequent and random short sessions offered by this institution to department chairs, may be meeting training needs of this management group. In addition, some support is being provided in the individual departments in which the chairs work. Although this is not consistent across the institution, and some chairs may not be receiving all the support they need, it still exists. Maintaining the status quo would include department chairs being sent to Chair Academy, voluntarily attending sessions offered by the EDC or by other internal providers, and receiving some guidance from their peers and immediate supervisors.

**Resources needed.** This solution may appear to require minimal resources; however, as outlined below, there are considerable resources needed to maintain the status quo.

***Financial resources.*** Earlier in this chapter, it was determined that Chair Academy carries significant and ongoing costs as the registration fees (and associated travel costs) need to be paid for each new chair at the institution. As a publicly funded institution, this postsecondary has limited resources, and a significant financial investment in a generic training program may not be in the institution's best interest. It is also possible that government funding will change and leadership training could be cut if another solution is not considered.

***Time resources.*** There is a substantial time commitment required to send chairs to Chair Academy. To successfully complete the entire foundational program, chairs must attend two one-week sessions separated by one year (The Chair Academy, 2016). Between the two face-to-face commitments (off-campus), chairs must complete personal leadership activities that may add to their already heavy workload.

***Human resources.*** If the status quo is maintained, the human resources needed are limited to the participating department chairs who attend Chair Academy. There are minimal human resources being placed into the occasional training sessions hosted by the EDC through the efforts of one or two facilitators.

***Technological resources.*** At this time, there are no technological resources being used in the status quo.

**Benefits and disadvantages.** Although there are limited human and technological resources needed for pursuing this solution, the financial and time resources are significant. More importantly, senior leaders and department chairs have indicated that different training will help support them in their positions. Gmelch and Miskin (2011) emphasize the importance of providing training for department chairs:

> The department chair position is the most critical role in the university, and the most unique management position in America. Consider the facts: 80 percent of university decisions are made at the department level (Carroll and Wolverton, 2004); of the 50,000 chairs in America, one in five turn over every year; and

> while it takes 10,000 hours of practice to reach competence (projected as eight years for chairs and already established as seven years for faculty to get tenure) (Thomas and Schuh, 2004), only 3 percent of chairs receive training in leadership (Gmelch et al., 2002). (p. 5)

The status quo is the easiest way forward because it does not require organizational change, but this solution ignores the overwhelming evidence that an internal department chair training program would benefit the institution.

### Possible Solution 2: Professional Learning Communities

In this solution, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of department chairs will be established and a constructivist approach will be used to create the content for department chair training (as it relates to pedagogy). Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas (2006) write that a Professional Learning Community brings together academic professionals as a community of learners to pursue continuous inquiry and improvement. This approach would bring department chairs together to define and create department chair training for their peers.

**Resources needed.** This solution shows that significant time and human resources are required, but the need for financial and technological resources is limited.

***Financial resources.*** This solution does not actually require an additional expenditure of money, except perhaps for refreshments and/or some lunches. Time spent in the PLCs would be part of the current salaries being paid, so while there is an indirect cost to this approach, it does not require additional monetary resources from the institution.

***Time resources.*** Time will be one of the most significant resources required for this solution. It will require a time commitment from the EDC facilitators to create, facilitate, and collect content from the PLCs. It will also require a time commitment from the department chairs to participate in the PLCs—something that has already been identified as a valuable resource. Katz and Dack (2013) have recognized that a "lack of time is consistently cited as the number one barrier to implementing authentic professional learning" (p. 3), and this needs to be assessed when considering this, or any, solution.

***Human resources.*** Closely related to time, this solution requires human resources because it relies on the participation of EDC facilitators and the department chairs. It also requires support from senior leaders to ensure there is availability of these stakeholders. With eight schools at the institution, it would be ideal to have representatives from each of those eight schools participate in the PLCs. This will help ensure that the diversity of the department chair role is represented.

***Technological resources.*** There are no significant technological resources required to implement this solution.

**Benefits and disadvantages.** In addition to creating content for chairperson training, there is an opportunity for department chairs to connect from across the institution and discuss their practices. As members of a PLC, chairs can create a cohort. Ackerman and Holt (2005) have supported a cohort model and wrote that "Having the same individuals meet several times and assigning tasks that brought them together between sessions helped them build a support network that enveloped the entire campus" (p. 236). Conversely, the significant time and human resources can be a disadvantage. Katz and Dack (2013) identified that PLCs can often turn into wasted meeting time if there is no clear direction and learning is not actually taking place. To help mitigate this risk, facilitators can be assigned to the PLCs to help ensure the group is focused on the goal of contributing to department chair training.

**Possible Solution 3: Formal Program Design**

This 3rd solution offers the best and most appropriate opportunity to make a significant change at this institution**.** This institution has a dedicated department focused on curriculum development which includes a team of instructional designers, writers and editors, educational technology specialists, a copyright officer, multimedia specialists, and project managers. New and redesigned curriculum projects engage with this team to ensure rigour and quality requirements are met. In collaboration with subject matter experts (SMEs), a structured process is followed to create and redesign curriculum. Department chair training could be developed by following this process in collaboration with the curriculum development team.

**Resources needed.** The curriculum team is internal to the institution, so the resources identified below are primarily in-house; however, there are still significant resources required if this solution is chosen.

***Financial resources.*** When the curriculum team is engaged in a project, a transfer of funding is required. Although the team is internal, schools at the institution are required to spend funds to work with this team. To work with the curriculum team, the project will need to be approved by the Vice President, Assistant Vice President, and the Deans.

***Time resources.*** Of all three solutions, this option requires the most significant amount of time. The curriculum process is long because it requires a formal program design process, collaboration between SMEs and instructional designers, writing and editing support, multimedia creation, and copyright compliance. Although this rigorous process ensures the development of a high quality product, curriculum projects often span more than one year.

***Human resources.*** The human resources required in this solution are also substantial. As indicated above, there are a large number of employees who become engaged as part of the curriculum process. Typically, SMEs will also need to be hired to contribute content to the project. It is likely unrealistic to ask existing chairs to become SMEs and add this to their already busy workloads. On one hand, this provides increased support and access to more resources. On the other hand, it can be more costly and time-consuming.

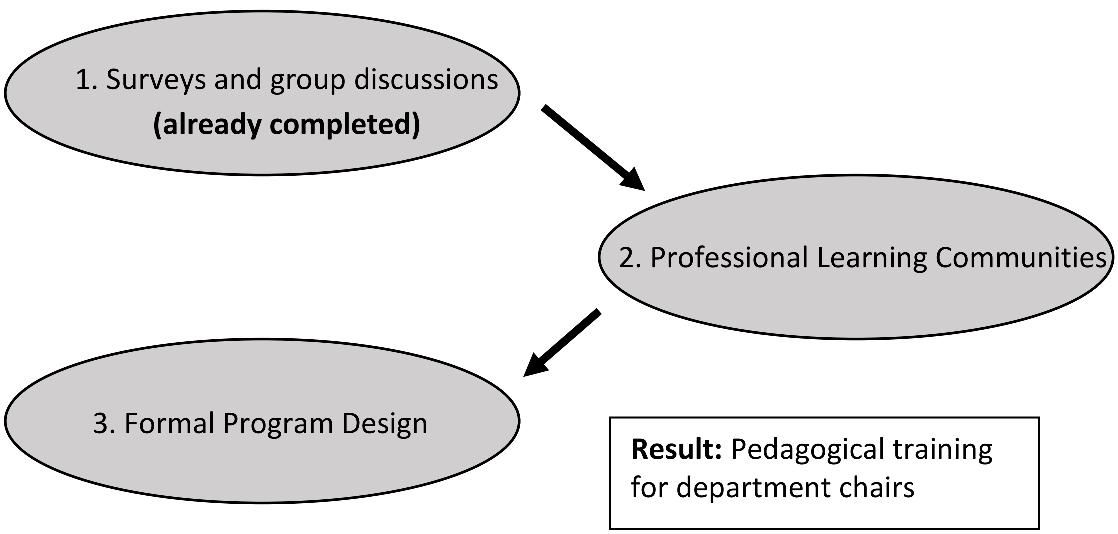
***Technological resources.*** This solution provides access to more technological resources. The multimedia specialists can create learning objects, and it will be easier to create the training using the institution's learning management system by use of the educational technology specialists' expertise.

**Benefits and disadvantages.** This solution provides a large amount of support and ensures a rigorous process is followed to design high quality curriculum. It can also be time consuming and expensive. Engagement with department chairs is limited if this solution is chosen. However, such an intensive in-house development could be used many times with minimal revision, thus spreading the costs out over several years.

## Recommended solution

For the EDC to most effectively ensure department chairs are supported in the area of pedagogy, solutions 2 and 3 have been chosen in combination. Existing chairs will be invited to participate in PLCs and discuss the training needs for those in the department chair role (building on the surveys and discussions already completed). They will have an opportunity to network, collaborate, discuss their practice, and contribute content that will help inform the curriculum creation (during Step 2—the PLC meetings). Once chairs have contributed this information, the curriculum development team (which has the resources and expertise to produce the formal curriculum) will be engaged to finalize the program content (during Step 3—formal design). Figure 2.2 shows the steps that will occur to result in pedagogical training for departing chairs.

*Figure 2.2. Creating Pedagogical Training for Department Chairs*




This solution allows for many checkpoints and opportunities for success measuring as the process moves forward. Organizational change goals and measurements are detailed in the next chapter.

**Leadership Approaches to Change**

This final section identifies two underpinning leadership theories that are foundational to this OIP and the selected solution. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the current organizational structure is hierarchical which lends itself to a transactional leadership approach. This organizational change, however, is grounded in both a servant leadership and team leadership approach.

**Servant Leadership**

As indicated in Chapter 1, department chair literature supports a servant leadership approach to the department chair role (Filan, 1999; Sirkis, 2011). More specifically, Filan (1999) wrote that "We are asking the present-day leadership of community and technical colleges to act as servant leaders…" (p. 54). By requesting department chair participation in PLCs, a servant leadership approach is being used in this OIP. The chairs who volunteer will be contributing their expertise and inquiry to, ultimately, assist their colleagues in their roles as leaders. Greenleaf (1970) specified that "Servant leadership values community because it provides a face-to-face opportunity for individuals to experience interdependence, respect, trust, and individual growth" (as cited in Hill, 2016). Voluntarily participating in a PLC will demonstrate that department chairs are, at least partially, acting as servant leaders.

The leaders at this institution who do not subscribe to a servant leadership approach will likely not choose to participate in the PLCs, and the ones who do get involved may not consider themselves servant leaders or display the 10 characteristics of servant leaders (Spears, 2002). The PLC facilitators will be able to more effectively facilitate the PLCs if they are aware of, and promote, the 10 characteristics identified by Spears, based on Greenleaf's original writing about servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Once the chair training has been created, these administrators will also have an opportunity to act as servant leaders through facilitation of the training and or mentorship/coaching opportunities.

**Team Leadership**

The PLC approach to creating department chair training is also strongly based on a team leadership approach. Hill (2016) explained that “A team is a type of organizational group that is composed of members who are interdependent, who share common goals, and who must coordinate their activities to accomplish these goals” (p. 363). By creating PLCs, teams will be working together towards a common goal. The chosen solution is also based on team leadership because it relies on a distributed approach to accomplishing the common goal.

If, as planned, the PLCs are comprised of department chairs (both new and experienced) from all eight schools (minimum), the team will have vast diversity in the experience and knowledge these leaders bring. Although the PLCs will be facilitated by a member of the EDC team, an individual department chair will not be assigned as the leader of the group--this will naturally result in a team leadership approach. Hill (2016) wrote that “When leadership is shared throughout the team, various members are diagnosing problems and intervening with appropriate behaviors” (p. 367), and this will be an ideal method for all team members to contribute.

## Conclusion

This chapter determined that a Professional Learning Community approach, combined with a formal program design, will be effective in providing a solution for the PoP. Supported by the Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016), and Schein’s (2010) theory of psychological safety, the chosen solutions will facilitate collaboration amongst department chairs and result in relevant curriculum for a department chair training program. Surveys and discussion groups conducted by the EDC had already determined that a need and desire for department chair training exists at the institution, and the chosen solutions promote both servant and team leadership approaches to address this need. Chapter 3 will provide details about how these solutions will be successfully implemented, evaluated, and communicated at the institution.

## Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) focuses on creating and implementing training for new department chairs by the Educational Development Centre (EDC) at this postsecondary institution. Through discussion groups in early 2016, current chairpersons at the institution identified three roles (administrator, educator, and leader) that they fill as a chair. In those same discussions, participants brainstormed the skills and knowledge they believed was needed to fulfill those roles (Figure. 1.2), and they further provided preliminary learning outcomes that can be used to inform the development of chair training. Figure 3.1 details the preliminary outcomes for these categories. The additional categories of training that were identified by the discussion group participants are listed in Figure 3.2 and will be provided by other departments at the institution; therefore, a plan for developing training in those categories is not detailed in this OIP (although collaboration will be required).

A combined Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach, with a formalized program design process, will be used to create training in the four categories for the educator role. Four PLCs will be created (one per topic) to clarify and expand on the outcomes listed in Figure 3.1. These outcomes (listed in alphabetical order) are a result of the initial discussion groups and are somewhat vague. The PLC participants will discuss, clarify, expand, and possibly change the preliminary outcomes suggested.

*Figure 3.1. Department Chair Training Categories – Educational Development Centre*

| PLC | Preliminary Learning Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Supporting Faculty and Staff (PLC#1) | • Apply techniques to develop faculty accountability<br>• Assist faculty in developing effective performance goals<br>• Build positive relationships with faculty and staff<br>• Coach and mentor faculty and staff<br>• Deliver supportive performance feedback<br>• Effectively address performance management challenges<br>• Encourage critical self-reflection in faculty and staff<br>• Promote professional development opportunities for faculty and staff<br>• Recognize faculty success<br>• Support scholarly activity opportunities<br>• Use student surveys as a support and development tool |
| Supporting Students (PLC#2) | • Build positive relationships with students<br>• Coach and mentor students<br>• Effectively address performance management challenges<br>• Encourage critical self-reflection with students<br>• Identify tools and techniques for retaining students<br>• Maintain current knowledge of student demographics |
| Teaching and Learning I (PLC#3) | • Conduct supportive classroom observations with faculty<br>• Encourage the implementation of technology into instruction/curriculum<br>• Identify instructor competencies<br>• Identify student engagement<br>• Recognize and encourage effective classroom management approaches<br>• Recognize and encourage effective instructional techniques<br>• Recognize and support teaching best practices |
| Teaching and Learning II (PLC#4) | • Expand your understanding of the academic experience at the institution<br>• Identify and participate in professional development opportunities<br>• Identify current theory in adult education/pedagogy/andragogy<br>• Identify opportunities to contribute to educational scholarship<br>• Identify opportunities to contribute to industry scholarship<br>• Identify student development theory<br>• Participate in scholarly activity opportunities<br>• Recognize postsecondary structures |

Previous chapters provided detailed organizational context, analysis, and possible solutions as they relate to the Problem of Practice (PoP): Department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders. This chapter focuses on implementation, evaluation, and communication of this OIP to address the PoP. The chapter includes a change implementation plan, a proposed method to monitor and evaluate the change, consideration about leadership ethics in this organizational change, a change communication plan, and next steps with future considerations.

## Change Implementation Plan

This section discusses the goals of the planned change and a plan for managing the organizational change.

### Goals and Priorities of the Planned Change

As written in previous chapters, the goal of this OIP is to provide deliberate and relevant training for department chairs at this institution. Engaging these chairpersons, through professional learning communities, will increase stakeholder buy-in and help ensure that the training program is pertinent to existing and future administrators. Current training is inconsistent, and it has been documented that there is an opportunity to provide training to support department chairs in their roles as educational leaders. With a mandate to support quality teaching at the institution, the EDC will focus on the four categories directly related to that mandate.

The planned change will, ideally, provide opportunities for department chairs to consider their current practices as leaders, question their approaches to their role, and if needed, adapt their leadership approach to best support instruction, faculty, and students. The PLC approach will create an opportunity for department chairs to network and discuss their needs and interests as leaders. As well, they will not just experience professional development (which often does not result in permanent change), but also to engage in meaningful learning that has the potential to improve their leadership abilities through conceptual change (Katz & Dack, 2013). Katz and Dack (2013) have contended that “conceptual change happens when people make their current beliefs explicit, subject them to scrutiny from themselves and others, consider how new information either fits or challenges their existing beliefs, and then make permanent changes to what they know and do" (p. 7). Professional learning communities create the space for department chairs to engage in this process of conceptual change.

SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals can help ensure that organizational change efforts are successful (Cawsey et al., 2016). Short, medium, and long-term goals for this change effort are outlined below.

Short-term goal: For this change to be successful, using a PLC approach, department chairs will need to participate voluntarily. The short-term goal is to recruit a minimum of one department chair from each school for each of the four PLCs within two weeks of sending the initial participation invitation.

Medium-term goal: Once the PLCs have started, the groups will need to meet and contribute content and ideas to inform the future training program (based on the already identified topics). As Supovitz (2006) clarified, "For the most part, PLCs are more about doing things together, rather than learning things together" (as cited in Katz & Dack, 2013, p. 31). The medium-term goal is for the PLCs to span a period of two months from when they are initiated. Facilitators will be able to determine, with their specific PLC, when and where to meet (in-person and/or virtually). This will give a deadline for content to be created and will provide the chairs with an expected time commitment of two months—assisting them with time management which has been identified as a possible barrier. The assigned facilitators will be an integral part of this goal as they will be able to move the group forward.

Long-term goal: Once the PLCs are created and content is provided, the long term goal is to create a formalized training program within six months of the PLCs concluding, which will be part of a supportive onboarding process for new department chairs. The institution's program design process (outlined in Chapter 2) will be used to create the pedagogical training for department chairs.

In total, these goals suggest that the creation of training in these four topics will take approximately nine months. The following communication strategy could be applied to help achieve the above goals:

1. Short-term goal: EDC facilitators can schedule face-to-face information sessions to explain the proposed change and the plan for accomplishing the change. This will also allow facilitators to recruit PLC participants and solicit feedback from chairs. These sessions should be short (one hour or less) and offered at multiple times to help accommodate varied schedules. Invitations can be sent via email.
2. Medium-term goal: Ongoing communication between facilitators and PLC participants will be required during the two months while the PLCs are in place. This could be done in-person or through regular email updates, depending on how the PLCs have agreed to meet. In addition, facilitators could provide regular email updates (perhaps once every two weeks) to all department chairs, associate deans, and deans to update these leaders on the change progress.
3. Long-term goal: While the training is being developed using the formal program design process, facilitators can provide monthly email updates to department chairs, associate deans, and deans. This will communicate that the change is

continuously moving forward and for the PLC participants, it will provide an update on the progress of the work they contributed.

Further communication strategies are outlined later in this chapter.

**Strategic Organizational Chart**

The current organizational chart (partial) is provided in Chapter 1, and this organizational improvement plan does not require altering the existing organizational chart. Consideration must be given, however, to how the departments will work together to best support department chairs. The discussion groups held in early 2016 outlined training categories that would benefit department chairs. The EDC will focus on four categories, and although the remaining categories are not in scope of this OIP, they will be addressed by other departments at the institution. Figure 3.2 outlines which departments could address the remaining categories identified in the 2016 discussion groups.

*Figure 3.2. Department Chair Training Categories by Department*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Educational Development Centre (EDC)** | **1. Supporting Faculty and Staff**<br>**2. Supporting Students**<br>**3. Teaching and Learning I (foundational)**<br>**4. Teaching and Learning II (advanced)** |
| Finance Department | 5. Finance for Department Chairs |
| General Education Department | 6. Basic Computer Skills (Microsoft Word, Excel, etc.)<br>7. Business Communication |
| Human Resources Department | 8. Conflict Management<br>9. Human Resources Basics<br>10. Interpersonal Skills<br>11. Leadership Competencies<br>12. Safety<br>13. Systems Thinking and Decision Making<br>14. Time Management and Organization |
| IT Department | 15. Essential Software for Department Chairs (such as the Learning Management |

| | |
|---|---|
| | System) |
| Legal Department | 16. Policies and Procedures |
| Specific to individual schools (i.e., School of Business) | 17. Subject Matter Expertise |

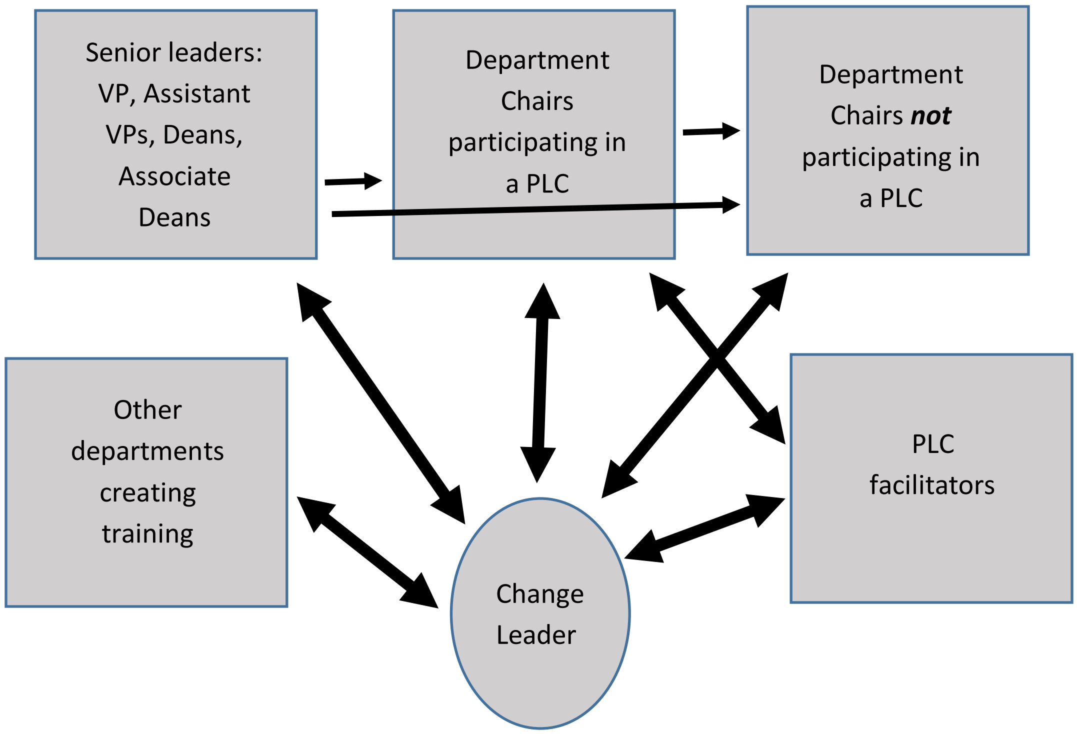
The communication plan will need to clearly address the fact that these categories were identified as required training but are not part of the development approach being used by the EDC for this OIP.

**Managing the Transition**

This section addresses the need to manage the transition from the status quo (limited and inconsistent training for chairpersons in regards to teaching and learning) to the creation and implementation of relevant training. The section outlines ways to understand the reactions of stakeholders, engage and empower others, ensure the necessary supports and resources are in place, anticipate potential implementation issues, identify goals during the change, and recognize potential challenges.

**Understanding stakeholder reactions.** As with all organizational change plans, there are going to be varying reactions to the proposed change from stakeholders. In this change, the most obvious stakeholders are the department chairs. Their participation is required in the PLCs, and the change will directly impact them. There are, however, many stakeholders that need to be considered for this OIP to move forward. Cawsey et al. (2016) suggested creating a stakeholder map to "… [lay] out the positions of people pictorially and [allow] the change agent to quickly see the interdependencies" (p. 200). A stakeholder map is provided in Figure 3.3, with arrows representing the lines of communication that need to occur throughout the change. These are expanded on in the communication plan at the end of this chapter.

*Figure 3.3. Stakeholder Map Showing Communication Patterns*




*Note: Large arrows indicate a two-way flow of communication; whereas, small arrows indicate a one-way flow of communication.*

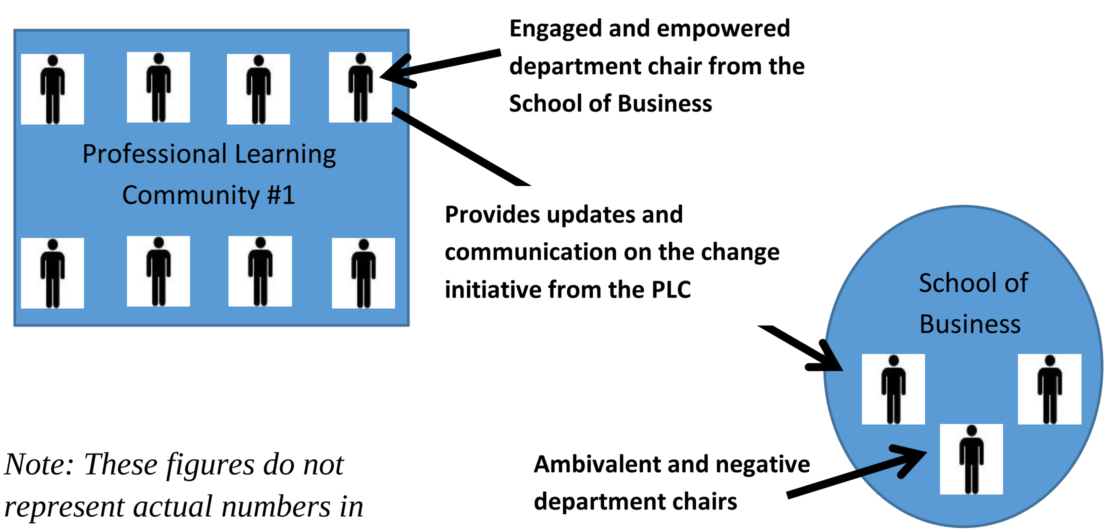
The reactions of these stakeholders regarding the change will vary and instead of guessing what those reactions might be, it will be necessary to seek out potential responses to the proposed change and adjust the plan based on unexpected responses. Mento, Jones, and Dirndorfer (2002) wrote that "Listening to and actively seeking the involvement of the recipients of the change will prove fruitful in performing many of the later steps in the [change] process" (p. 51). It is not only necessary to listen to the recipients, however, but also necessary to listen to as many stakeholders as possible. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) have acknowledged that "…all people who are affected by change experience some emotional turmoil. Even changes that appear to be 'positive' or 'rational' involve loss and uncertainty" (p. 132). It will be easier to implement the change if reactions, both positive and negative, are adequately anticipated as much as possible at the beginning of the change process.

Before moving forward with the communication plan (outlined later), the change leader can have discussions with people in each stakeholder group (see Figure 3.3) to receive feedback. This will help identify the potential reactions of each group. Each person within the groups will not have the same reaction, but the plan can be adapted before it is enacted based on anticipated reactions from stakeholders. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, members of the senior leadership team at the institution have already been informed of the plan and are in favour of it. Multiple informal conversations have been had with department chairs, and the reaction has also been favourable. More time can be spent, however, on garnering potential reactions from members of the EDC team (who will act as facilitators) and representatives from other departments.

**Engaging and empowering others.** Because this plan relies on voluntary participation, engaging and empowering department chairs is crucial. Cawsey et al. (2016) have written that stakeholders can have one of three reactions to change: positive feelings, ambivalent feelings, or negative feelings. As part of the Mobilization stage of the Change Path Model, it is necessary to "…manage change recipients and various stakeholders as they react to and move the change forward" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 218). Engaging and empowering as many people as possible is an effective way to positively manage change recipients and stakeholders. From the survey results and discussion groups, it can be assumed that some department chairs will react positively to this organizational improvement plan, and these chairs can be asked to help move the change forward. Cawsey et al. (2016) have suggested that "When people are feeling positive, engaged, informed, and hopeful, these [positive] emotions can be harnessed in support of the change" (p. 223). The department chairs who volunteer to participate in the PLCs will clearly be engaged, but they can also be empowered to influence their colleagues who may have ambivalent and/or negative feelings to the initiative.

In particular, there are eight schools across the institution, and an engaged department chair can be empowered to lead the change in his/her particular school. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) wrote that "If the (change) initiators involve the potential resisters in some aspect of the design and implementation of the change, they can forestall resistance" (p. 135). Empowering a department chair to be the liaison between the change initiative and the other department chairs in their school, who may be ambivalent or negative, will help limit resistance. A department chair can participate in one (or more) PLCs and take the information back to the management team in his/her school. Although the resistors may not be directly participating in the change, they can still receive the communication and the updates from the change process. This engagement and empowerment plan is illustrated in Figure 3.4.

*Figure 3.4. Engagement and Empowerment Plan*




*Note: These figures do not represent actual numbers in either the PLC or the School of Business.*

**Supports and resources needed.** As identified in Chapter 2, significant resources are required for this approach, but the required resources are primarily human and time-based. Both the PLC administration/facilitation and the formalized program design approach require participation from department chairs, and they require professional leadership from the EDC team. Each of the four PLCs will be assigned a facilitator for the two-month period that PLCs are established. Although it would be possible to create groups and let them self-manage, the benefits of a facilitated approach are significant. Kaner (2014) explained that:

> Facilitation enables the organization's teams, groups and meetings to be much more productive. And the side benefits of facilitated or self-facilitated groups are terrific: a sense of empowerment, a deepening of personal commitment to decisions and plans, increased organizational loyalty, and the building of esprit de corps. (p. xvi)

The PLCs will require continued support from their assigned facilitator to ensure the deliverables are achieved and help participants learn from one another—another goal of the PLC approach. A dedicated facilitator will also help the groups maximize time and discussion efficiency.

The content created by the PLCs will be recorded by the facilitators and then inform the formal program design process. As previously indicated, a dedicated curriculum department includes a team of instructional designers, writers/editors, multimedia specialists, educational technology specialists, a copyright officer, and project managers. Through an internal proposal and approval process, projects get budgetary permission to work with this team as a rigorous method to develop new curriculum. As senior leaders are already promoting and prioritizing the creation of department chair training at the institution, it can be assumed that this project will be approved to follow the formalized program design process and will be given the resources provided by the curriculum development team. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) specified that program planners need to get both people and organizational support when they are advocating for education and training programs. That support is currently in place, but as this OIP moves forward, it will be necessary to ensure that support is sustained. The communication plan, outlined later in this chapter, is a key piece to ensuring that support remains.

**Potential implementation issues.** A significant barrier to implementation would be lack of participation from department chairs. Participation in the PLCs will be voluntary, but without that participation, the plan cannot move forward. This potential barrier can be mitigated by employing the engagement and empowerment communication plan visualized in Figure 3.4. In addition, the EDC has existing positive relationships with department chairs across campus. If volunteers do not come forward, it would be possible to identify and approach department chairs to request their participation in the initiative. The discussion groups and survey, however, indicate that department chairs are keen to help create training that will support themselves and their colleagues. This change initiative is expected to be positively received.

A second barrier, which is related to department chair participation, is lack of time. Department chairs at the institution not only identified that training is required to assist them with time management and organization (see Figure 3.2), but literature also shows that chairs struggle with not having enough time to complete their daily tasks. Gmelch and Miskin (2011) reported that, in a survey or more than 1,000 chairs, lack of time contributes to the top five stressors in the chair’s job. They wrote that “Time has always been a concern of department chairs” (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011, p. 78), and they have advised department chairs to limit the meetings they attend—particularly outside their own department. Even if a department chair wants to participate in a PLC, time limitations may prohibit him or her from doing so or doing so regularly. The facilitators will need to be flexible in their coordination of PLCs. Weekly meetings, for example, may be unrealistic. Being able to contribute ideas through an online tool, however, may allow more chairs to participate.

The institution may also need to consider partial duty off-loading for some department chairs to create the space for participation. This, however, increases the financial resources required. By taking a voluntary approach first, the plan remains low cost.

**Organizational change goals.** Building on the goals identified earlier in this section, key success indicators include the following:

1. Department chairs volunteer to participate in the PLCs.
2. The participants attend the PLC meetings or contribute to the PLCs through another established process such as online discussions.
3. Preliminary outcomes are discussed, changed, clarified, and expanded to create content for the formal program design process.
4. Approval is granted to use the curriculum development team resources.
5. Department chair training is developed through the formal program design process.
6. Training becomes part of onboarding for new department chairs and is made available to existing chairs.
7. Feedback is positive and department chairs are better supported in their roles.

These indicators are realistically attainable by following the suggestions in this OIP; however, there are limitations as outlined below.

**Limitations.** Although this OIP recognizes and recommends that the training program be developed using the institution's formal program design process, the focus of this OIP is only the creation and implementation of four Professional Learning

Communities to develop the content for the four categories related to pedagogy (Supporting Faculty & Staff, Supporting Students, Teaching and Learning I & II —see Figure 3.1). As indicated earlier in this chapter, the additional 13 categories identified by the discussion group for department chair training development will not be included as part of this OIP because the OIP focuses on the mandate of the Educational Development Centre (EDC) at the institution. As identified in Figure 3.2, the remaining categories will be allocated to different departments at the institution.

## Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

To determine if this OIP is successful, it is necessary to define success and how success will be measured. Cawsey et al. (2016) have maintained that it is necessary to identify measurement tools before the inception of a change and not at the end. Not only do tools need to be considered before inception, but "…evaluation is a continuous process that begins in the initial planning phase and continues throughout the life of the program" (Knox, 2002; Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2010; Patton, 2011; Sork, 2000 as cited in Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 233). According to the Change Path Model, change process monitoring and evaluation comes at the final phase of the process, Institutionalization, and includes two main steps:

1. Track the change periodically and through multiple balanced measures to help assess what is needed, gauge progress toward the goal, and to make modifications as needed and mitigate risk.
2. Develop and deploy new structures, systems, processes and knowledge, skills, and abilities, as needed, to bring life to the change and new stability to the transformed organization. (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 345)

These steps align with the Plan, Do, Study, Act model which "…is a systematic series of steps for gaining valuable learning and knowledge for the continual improvement of a product or process" (The W. Edwards Deming Institute, 2016, para. 1). Both models encourage change leaders to constantly measure the change progress and adapt the original plan as needed; therefore, some flexibility is required in this OIP as the feedback may indicate that changes to the original plan are required. This section will define success for this OIP, provide tools for measuring success, and outline the flexibility of the OIP based on feedback obtained from the measurement tools.

**The Definition of Success**

Cawsey et al. (2016) stated that "What gets measured affects the direction, content, and outcomes achieved by a change initiative. Measurements influence what people pay attention to and what they do" (p. 340). The stakeholders identified earlier in this chapter may have different interpretations of a successful change, but because this initiative is being led by the EDC, the following six indicators of successful organizational change from this OIP are from the perspective of the EDC and align with the expressed change goals:

1. An increased institutional awareness that purposeful and deliberate training is needed to support department chairs in their roles as leaders. This has already taken place through the use of surveys and discussion groups. Senior leaders are aware that a need exists, and they support the implementation of this OIP.

2. Department chairs participate in Professional Learning Communities. If chairs voluntarily attend, a level of success has been achieved.

3. PLC participants not only attend, but they have a positive experience, network with other department chairs, and their experience results in conceptual change which results in a permanent improvement to their leadership practice.

4. Department chairs, through their participation in PLCs, contribute ideas, thoughts, and content (e.g., current resources and articles) that will support the formal program design process.

5. Through a formal program design process, and with the input from the PLCs, develop training in the four categories that the EDC is accountable for

creating: Supporting Faculty and Staff, Supporting Students, and Teaching and Learning I & II

6. Create a full training program for department chairs that meets all categories defined in the discussion groups. The EDC is not in a position to influence this measurement of success as it requires collaboration among many departments at the institution (see Figure 3.2).

Because the first measurement of success was already accomplished by the EDC in early 2016 (before this OIP was conceived), and the sixth measurement is out of scope for this OIP, the measurement tools described in the next section will focus on the remaining four indicators of success (i.e., numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 above).

**Measurement of Success**

This proposed organizational change extends over at least a nine month period, so it is necessary to use both formative and summative assessments throughout the duration of the project. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) wrote that “Formative evaluations focus on what should be done to improve or change a program while it is in progress, while summative evaluations address the results or outcomes of a program” (p. 233). It is important that regular check-ins (monitoring) are incorporated into the plan to ensure the change is either going as planned or can be adapted. Cawsey et al. (2016) argued that:

> In other words, ‘out of sight, out of mind’ is a bad idea when it comes to assessing and guiding major changes. Providing timely guidelines and assistance requires a more rigorous and systematic approach to managing the change – something that won’t happen with a ‘how’s it going → just fine’ form of cursory assessment. (p. 360)

The following table identifies five techniques that will be used to formatively and summatively assess this change initiative:

*Figure 3.5. Success Measurement Tools*

| Technique | Success indicator measured | Who will do it | Assessment type |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Observations:** Observing participants in the PLCs | 2 – Are department chairs attending PLCs? And 3 – Are chairs networking and having conversations that result in conceptual change? | Facilitators and/or change leader | Formative |
| **Surveys:** Gathering opinions, perceptions, beliefs | 3 & 4 – Was the experience positive? Did learning occur? Did department chairs contribute ideas? | Department chairs | Formative/ Summative |
| **Product Reviews:** Tangible items produced by participants | 4 & 5 – Did the PLCs result in content creation that can inform the formal program design process? | Department chairs in collaboration with facilitators | Formative/ Summative |
| **Self-Assessment:** Participants determine what they have learned and whether it applies to their own context | 2, 3, 4, and 5 – From the participant perspective, was attendance voluntary? Did it result in a positive experience, networking, and conceptual change? Was content created that can inform the program design? Do chairs believe it is valuable content that can be applied in their context? | Department chairs | Formative/ Summative |
| **Pre- and Post-assessment:** Knowledge assessment before participating in PLCs and after participating | 3 – Did conceptual change occur through learning? | Department chairs | Summative |

*(adapted from Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, pp. 245-247)*

The data obtained from applying these techniques can help inform the change plan moving forward, and the results can also be shared with stakeholders to inform them of successes and/or adaptations to the change initiative (to be discussed in the communication plan section later in this chapter).

In addition to measuring change, it is possible to assess the likelihood of the change being successful before the planned change even starts. Sirkin, Keenan, and Jackson (2005) found that there is…

> …a consistent correlation between the outcomes (success or failure) of change programs and four hard factors: project duration, particularly the time between project reviews; performance integrity, or the capabilities of project teams; the commitment of both senior executives and the staff whom the change will affect the most; and the additional effort that employees must make to cope with the change. (p. 110)

Sirkin et al. (2005) created the duration, integrity, commitment, effort (DICE) framework to help change leaders assess the likelihood of a successful outcome based on these factors. As shown, applying the DICE framework to this proposed organizational change results in a score of 14 of 28, where a low score indicates a higher predictability of success, so the likelihood of success is high (Cawsey et al., 2016).

**Duration.** Using the success measuring techniques in Figure 3.5, the project will be reviewed frequently and more than once every two months. According to the DICE framework, this results in 1 point of 4.

**Integrity.** The EDC team leader is capable and motivated to move this change forward, but participants and team members may have limited time to dedicate to the project, and some participants may not have high motivation to move the change forward. This results in a score of 3 of 4 points, and according to the model, this category carries double weight, so the score is 6 points.

**Commitment.** Senior leaders are aware of this OIP, and they support the implementation; however, many senior leaders are not directly involved in the change and would be considered neutral. A score of 2 (x2) results in 4 points. Employees are willing to participate but are not necessarily overly eager, so a score of 2 (of 4) is assigned.

**Effort.** Only incremental effort is required (less than 10%) by the majority of employees to move this change forward, so the effort category receives a 1 of 4.

Cawsey et al. (2016) wrote that “This model is useful in assessing risk and also in pointing to concrete things that can be done to make the risks manageable during the planning and deployment phases” (p. 361). This framework demonstrates continued measurement of the change is necessary to help it be successful.

**Flexibility of the Plan**

By defining success, and using techniques to constantly measure that success, it will also be possible to adapt the plan if needed. There are some important unknown factors with this OIP. For example, it is not known how many department chairs will volunteer to participate in PLCs, if they will commit to attending meetings, and if the PLCs will be successful in generating content to inform the program design phase. The assessment techniques allow the change leader to discern if goals are being met throughout the implementation phase, and if they are not, that the plan needs to be adapted to ensure the final product (i.e., content to inform the program design process) is developed. Fortunately, by incorporating frequent check-ins to the organizational change process, the change leader will know if the project is struggling or at risk. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) clarified that “This judgement process involves bringing together various pieces of the information gathered and supplying answers to the evaluation questions (Gboku & Lekoko, 2007; Knox, 2002; Newcomer et al., 2010; Sork, 2000)” (p. 251). The following questions can be answered at the conclusion of a project, but they can also be used to gather information throughout the project to help determine what, if anything, needs to be changed:

- Are the participants learning something worthwhile?
- [Are] the goals and objectives of the program [being] addressed in an effective and efficient manner?

- [Are] the learners able to apply what they [are learning] back into their work or other life situations?
- [Do] management and administrative personnel and policymakers believe the education and training programs [are providing] vital assistance in fulfilling the mission and goals of the organization?
- [Is] the program address[ing] compelling community and societal concerns? (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013, p. 251).

The change leader, in collaboration with the PLC facilitators and department chairs, and by using the measurement tools outlined in Figure 3.5, can regularly revisit the above questions to help determine if the plan is leading to success or if changes need to be made.

## Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

Ethics are a significant consideration when organizational change is proposed, leadership is required, and people are involved in the development of new processes. Cawsey et al. (2016) have written that change agents need to proceed ethically when implementing an organizational change plan, "Otherwise they risk destroying credibility and the trust others have in them" (p. 318). This organization puts a great deal of emphasis on ethics and stipulates that employees must practice fairness, integrity, respect, safety, and transparency in everything they do. Northouse (2016) has stated that ethical leaders should endeavor to accomplish the following five principles: respect others, serve others, show justice, manifest honesty, and build community. This section outlines how these five principles can be followed while implementing this OIP.

### Respect Others

To respect others, it is necessary to treat others as individuals, defer to others when required, listen closely to followers and stakeholders, and to acknowledge opposing perspectives (Northouse, 2016). Respecting others is partially accomplished by the stakeholder consultations outlined earlier in this chapter. It shows that the change leader is willing to listen to others and values their input. It also demonstrates that the change leader acknowledges existing expertise of others.

Specifically, in the PLCs, it is necessary to ensure that department chairs feel like they are safe sharing opinions and discussing their practice. Stoll et al. (2006) explained that "…bringing about educational change is extremely complex and involves dealing with fears about change, emotions are never far from the surface" (p. 237). PLC facilitators need to ensure they create a safe learning environment where authentic conversations amongst department chairs can be held. Mackeracher (2010) emphasized the following:

> For adults to become fully engaged in learning, they must be aroused, feel relatively safe, and be willing and able to channel their motives into change processes. For those reasons, adults need a supporting and encouraging learning environment that does not threaten them. (p.127)

Facilitators need to ensure there is space for all voices to be heard in a respectful way. Some participants may not be knowledgeable about the topics they are discussing, such as teaching and learning theory, because they do not have a background or education in that area, but their contributions (especially questions) are still valuable, and they need to feel like they can participate in the discussions.

**Serve Others**

The basis of this OIP is largely about serving others. The intention is for existing department chairs to support both their current colleagues and future incoming department chairs in their roles as leaders. It is also explicitly stated in Chapter 2 that this OIP follows a servant and team leadership approach – both of which value leading for the purpose of benefiting others. Northouse (2016) wrote that "Effective leaders see their own personal vision as an important part of something larger than themselves—a part of the organization and the community at large" (p. 343). This OIP's vision is to more effectively support department chairs across the institution, and in turn, increase institutional, faculty, and student success. The vision is grounded in the organization's larger vision to be a leader in applied education.

**Show Justice**

It is important to treat everyone fairly, but one ethical challenge with this OIP is the differing knowledge base of the PLC participants. Stoll et al. (2006) argued that for PLCs to be intellectually vigorous, "…members need a solid basis of expert knowledge and skills" (p. 232). By inviting all department chairs to participate, it is possible that some department chairs will participate in a PLC without having background or education in that topic. As identified in Chapter 1, most department chairs at this institution are hired for their subject matter (industry) expertise but they often do not have a pedagogical background. If a department chair volunteers to participate in the Teaching and Learning PLC, for example, the chair may not have the expert knowledge and skills in pedagogy/andragogy to participate in that topic, but he/she will be able to help identify what should be included in the topic based on their limited knowledge. Although Northouse (2016) wrote that "Justice demands that leaders place issues of fairness at the center of their decision making," (p. 344), it may be necessary to prioritize some of the participant contributions over others when the content for new department chair training is being created. In this case, Northouse (2016) recommended that the "…grounds for different treatment must be clear and reasonable" (p. 344). Creativity and contributions should not be limited in the PLCs, but when the formal program design is completed, some information may be more relevant and accurate than other information.

**Manifest Honesty**

It will be necessary for the change leader to foster trusting relationships throughout this planned organizational change. The communication plan is based on honesty and "[represents] reality as fully and completely as possible" (Northouse, 2016, p. 346) to all stakeholders. This means that if the organizational change is not going as planned, and deviations from the original plan need to be made, this reality also needs to be communicated to stakeholders. Not only does the communication plan need to be honest, but also the change leader and facilitators need to encourage honesty in the PLCs while still ensuring honesty is combined with integrity. They could also ensure the topic of inquiry is central to PLC discussions. In turn, the department chairs will be able to create trusting relationships with one another.

**Build Community**

Building community is one of the main goals of this OIP. Both Northouse (2016) and Stoll et al. (2006) wrote that effective communities have a common goal that will benefit humankind, so it will be necessary, during the outset of the PLCs, to ensure a discussion is held regarding the intended outcomes of the PLCs. If there are differing opinions on what will be accomplished in the community, there is potential for angst within the community. Northouse (2016) stated that "An ethical leader takes into account the purposes of everyone involved in the group and is attentive to the interests of the community and the culture" (p. 347). The change leader needs to be aware of not only the PLCs, but of the individuals in the communities and of the larger organizational culture.

Because this change initiative is based within a postsecondary education environment, it can be assumed that the overarching value of academic/educational collegiality will be practiced and adhered to. Thus, this OIP does not appear to significantly push any ethical boundaries, but it is still important to ensure that the above five principles are followed by the change leader(s) and encouraged with all those involved in the change process.

## Change Process Communication Plan

Communication with all stakeholders is an integral part of any organizational change. In this OIP, five stakeholder groups have been identified (see Figure 3.3 on page 62), and it is necessary for the change leader to consistently communicate with all of these. Cawsey et al. (2016) outlined that “A communication plan has four phases: (a) prechange approval, (b) creating the need for change, (c) midstream change and milestone communication, and (d) confirming/celebrating the success” (p. 320). Although these phases were preliminarily discussed in Chapter 1, they are used here to frame the implementation communication plan.

### Prechange Approval

In this phase, the change leader needs to communicate with senior leaders to obtain approval for the OIP to move forward. In particular, this organizational change plan requires a significant contribution of time from both department chairs and facilitators from the EDC, and the senior leadership team has the power to allocate time as a resource to this project. Cawsey et al. (2016) specified that communication with top management is part of the prechange phase because “change agents need to convince top management and others that the change is needed” (p. 320). Communication with top management has already occurred for this project, and developing training for department chairs is approved by the Vice President, Assistant Vice President, and Deans.

Senior management needs to not only approve the project, but they also need to have authentic buy-in. If this group of leaders supports the organizational change and, in turn, communicates that support to their followers, there will be a better chance of buy-in throughout the organization. Klein (1996) wrote that “Regardless of the level of participative involvement, most employees look to their managers for direction and guidance. If the CEO says it, the message packs a punch and gets attention” (as cited in Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 323). Senior management needs to know the reasons for the change, the goals of the change, the milestones to be achieved, and most importantly, how they can support the change. This could be provided in written form so leaders can refer to the information when needed and use it as a resource when they are discussing the change with followers. Although approval has already been communicated, the ongoing communication (outlined later in this section) with senior leaders is important to help continue to move the project forward.

**Creating the Need for Change**

This phase of the communication plan could be considered the most important because it is an opportunity to acquire buy-in and participation from department chairs. Cawsey et al. (2016) argued that “If a strong and credible sense of urgency and enthusiasm for the initiative isn’t conveyed, the initiative will not move forward. There are simply too many other priorities available to capture people’s attentions” (p. 321). Identifying that a need for change is required started when the EDC engaged department chairs in the 2016 survey and discussion groups. Some department chairs have recognized that there is an opportunity to create training to better support them in their roles.

The EDC team did not follow through by communicating the results of the survey and the discussion groups, and this information could influence participation level from chairs. If chairs knew, for example, that more than 90% of survey respondents (college administrators) believe pedagogical training would have some or substantial benefit for department chairs, more chairs may be keen to help develop that training. The chairs also need to know that although more training needs have been identified, this specific plan is designed to create training in the topic areas directly related to teaching and learning.

Initial communication with department chairs should be done face-to-face in a general meeting. Cawsey et al. (2016) commented that “Face-to-face communication is most effective” (p. 323), and Kouzes and Posner (2012) argued that “The power and long-lasting effect of direct interaction can hardly be replaced by other means of communication” (p. 229). It is imperative that the department chairs understand the need for change and the approach of the organizational improvement plan, and they need to know that this change is a result of feedback from existing department chairs—not a top-down directive. Chairs also need to know how they can influence the plan. Setting up information sessions that facilitate discussion will allow the department chairs to contribute ideas and become involved stakeholders. Senge (2006) wrote that “In a discussion, different views are presented and defended, and…this may provide a useful analysis of the whole situation” (p. 230). Because there are approximately 75 department chairs at this institution, a series of information sessions can be offered to present information, answer questions, and solicit volunteers to participate in the PLCs.

In addition to department chairs, EDC team members need to be involved in this phase of the communication plan because they will be facilitating the PLCs. Although it is part of their defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate sessions at the institution related to teaching and learning, they need to have a thorough understanding of the change initiative. Because the change leader is part of the EDC, ongoing meetings with the EDC team can accommodate this communication.

The third stakeholder group involved in this stage reflects the other departments which create training because they need to be aware of the change and the goals for implementation. Even though face-to-face communication is time-consuming, it is also most effective, so it may be necessary for the change leader to meet with representatives from the six (or more) departments creating training in order to provide updates. Those leaders can then be responsible for communicating with their respective teams.

**Midstream Change and Milestone Communication**

This part of the communication plan will be primarily informed by the formative assessments outlined in the Measurement of Success section of this chapter. Those measurement techniques (observations, surveys, product reviews, self-assessments, and pre-/post-tests) will provide the change leader with information s/he can communicate to the stakeholder groups. Cawsey et al. (2016) wrote that “Creating a sense of fairness, trust, and confidence in the leadership, and interest and enthusiasm for the initiative is important to the success of change initiatives. Well-executed communications strategies play an important role here” (p. 324). This phase of the communication plan will extend for the longest period of time because it needs to be maintained throughout the change process, and communication with all stakeholder groups is required as outlined below.

**Senior leaders.** Information gathered from the success measurement tools outlined in Figure 3.5 can be used to update senior leaders on the progress of the change. They will likely want to know if (which) department chairs are attending PLCs, whether it is a valuable experience for them, and if content is being created to inform the program design process. Although it would be possible to provide updates via email, senior leaders at this institution have weekly scheduled in-person meetings. At major milestones, such as the conclusion of the PLCs, it would be beneficial for the change leader to provide an update at that weekly meeting. This way, the senior leaders will feel informed and can provide feedback on the direction of the training development. As shown in the stakeholder map (Figure 3.3), senior leaders will have two-way communication with the change leader, but they can also communicate with the department chairs to provide information about the change initiative.

**Department chairs participating in a PLC.** Communicating with these stakeholders will be relatively easy because if chairs have volunteered to participate, they are engaged. This group will have two-way communication with the change leader, and they will also have two-way communication with the PLC facilitators. Department chairs will need to know what is expected as part of their involvement in the PLCs, and they will need to have continuous feedback on how the training development is progressing. From the success measurement tools, it will be possible to provide extensive communication to the participating department chairs on the success of the initiative. Feedback from all five measurement tools can be collated and reported back to this stakeholder group during PLC meetings and at the successful conclusion of the PLC phase.

**Department chairs not participating in a PLC.** Although not participating in the PLCs, it will be important to update these department chairs on the progress of the change. As identified in Figure 3.4, some department chairs may be ambivalent or negative towards the change initiative. Although they may be receiving updates from their colleagues who are participating in PLCs, the change leader will still need to provide updates. Because face-to-face communication was prioritized in the previous stage, these updates can be provided via electronic channels. The change leader could consider a monthly update to keep this stakeholder group informed of progress and/or create ad hoc events to which they can be invited.

**Other departments creating training.** This stakeholder group is creating complementary training for department chairs, but their mandates are different than those of the EDC. Other departments are not directly involved in the PLCs or the formal program design for these four topics. They should be updated on the progress, so there are no overlaps in the training that may be developed elsewhere at the institution, but the communication could be similar to the monthly updates provided by the change leader to non-participating department chairs. The change leader can also solicit updates from these departments on their progress in creating department chair training.

**PLC facilitators.** The facilitators will need to be in constant communication with the change leader and with the PLC participants. Because this stakeholder group is small (i.e., five people), it would be possible to hold face-to-face weekly meetings to provide updates regarding successes and challenges as the PLCs are created and moving forward. Two-way communication among the facilitators, the change leader, and the PLC participants is required.

### Confirming/Celebrating the Success

This organizational change will be ongoing and fluid. Once the PLCs have concluded, and the training is created through the formal program design process, the implementation phase may require more change, and there will always be the opportunity to further change or improve the training provided. However, as Cawsey et al. (2016) have maintained, “Celebrations are needed along to way to mark progress, reinforce commitment, and reduce stress” (p. 322). Three SMART goals were outlined earlier in this chapter, and there is an opportunity to celebrate when each of these goals is achieved:

1. Recruit at least one department chair from each of the eight schools to participate in the four PLCs.
2. Facilitate each PLC for a duration of two months with the purpose of contributing ideas and content in the four topic areas. This content will inform the program design process.
3. Using the program design process, create a formalized training program, related to teaching and learning, to support department chairs in their roles as educational leaders.

Achievement of the above major milestones can be celebrated and communicated to all stakeholder groups. Not only will it communicate that the change is moving forward, but that it is moving forward successfully.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how this institution can effectively enact a solution to address the PoP which will result in positive organizational change. By setting short, medium, and long-term goals, the change plan can be monitored and adapted if needed. Leadership ethics need to be consistently considered as this plan moves forward. In addition, following a well-planned communication plan, and engaging stakeholders throughout the change process, will assist in ensuring a successful and sustained training program at this institution. By moving forward with the implementation, evaluation, and communication plan, the EDC has a high likelihood of successfully addressing the existing PoP that department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their leadership roles and responsibilities. The next section concludes this OIP by addressing potential next steps and future considerations.

## Conclusion: Next Steps and Future Considerations

This Organizational Improvement Plan endeavors to provide a recommendation to the following Problem of Practice: Department chairs at this institution do not receive consistent and purposeful training to support them in their roles as leaders. Through the writing of this OIP, and because the Educational Development Centre's mandate is to support quality teaching at the institution, the solutions presented have been specifically narrowed to focus to supporting department chairs in their role as they relate to pedagogy/andragogy; however, other areas of support have also been identified, explored, and addressed by the EDC. Conversations have already started regarding the need for training, and awareness has started to build. The institution would benefit from moving forward with a solution to support department chairs as soon as possible to make the most of the communication that has begun.

Successful implementation of this OIP could lead to a significant level of support for department chairs at this institution. If Professional Learning Communities are successfully created, they could continue and evolve as a community-based support system for chairs, and in turn, those chairs could facilitate PLCs within their own departments. Once PLCs are created, they could continue to address the other identified training needs and/or to offer cross-institutional support to chairs. The department chair role is far-reaching as supported by Gmelch and Miskin's (2011) claim that department chairs impact deans, associate deans, faculty, other department chairs, administration assistants, department staff, students/parents, field professionals, potential new students, department alums, support staff, and the larger community. It would be unfortunate, and arguably irresponsible, for this institution to continue with the limited department chair support they are currently providing to this essential leadership group.

Although this polytechnic is situated in a unique context where industry experts are often brought into the field of academic and postsecondary education leadership (as department chairs) for the first time, the literature indicates that a lack of chair training crosses many educational and training institutions. The solutions put forward in this OIP could be adapted to other contexts. Even if the solutions proposed within this OIP do not suit an alternative context, all postsecondary institutions need to consider whether more, or different, support is needed for their department chairs.

**References**

American Association of Community Colleges. (2005). Competencies for community college leaders. Retrieved from American Association of Community Colleges: http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/competencies/Documents/compentenciesforleaders.pdf

Aziz, S., Mullins, M. E., Balzer, W. K., Grauer, E., Burnfield, J. L., Lodato, M. A., & Cohen-Powless, M. A. (2005). Understanding the training needs of department chairs. *Studies in Higher Education, 30*(5), 571-593. doi:10.1080/03075070500249260

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2013). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Bowman, R. F. (2002). The real work of department chair. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 75*(3), 158-162. doi:10.1080/00098650209599258

Caffarella, R. S., & Daffron, S. R. (2013). *Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Carroll, J. B., & Wolverton, M. (2004). Who becomes a chair? *New Directions for Higher Education, 2004*(126), 3-10. doi:10.1002/he.144

Cawsey, T. F., Deszca, G., & Ingols, C. (2016). *Organizational change: An action-oriented toolkit* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2014). *Doing action research in your own organization* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Craig, C. M. (2005). Leading from the department chair. *The Community College Enterprise, 11*(2), 81-90. Retrieved from https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/218799090?accountid=15115

Crossman, B., & Cameron, R. (2014). A comparative thematic review of vocational leadership literature from the USA, Great Britain and Australia. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 19*(4), 393-416. doi:10.1080/13596748.2014.955374

Fellows, S. & Kahn, W. A. (2013). Role theory. In E. H. Kessler (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of management theory* (Vol. 2, pp. 671-674). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781452276090.n209

Filan, G. L. (1999). The need for leadership training: The evolution of the chair academy. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 105,* 47-55. doi:10.1002/cc.10506

Gmelch, W. H., & Miskin, V. B. (2011). *Department chair leadership skills* (2nd ed.). Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Hill, S. (2016). Team leadership. In P. Northouse, *Leadership theory and practice* (7th ed., pp. 363-396). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Jick, T. D. (1990). The recipients of change. In W. W. Burke, D. G. Lake, & J. W. Paine (Eds.), *Organization change: A comprehensive reader* (pp. 404-417). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kaner, S. (2014). *Facilitator's guide to participatory decision-making.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Katz, S., & Dack, L. A. (2013). *Intentional interruption: Breaking down learning barriers to transform professional practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Kotter, J.P., & Schlesinger, L.A. (2008). Choosing strategies for change. *Harvard Business Review,* July-August, 1-10.

Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kraut, A. I. (1996). An overview of organizational surveys. In W. W. Burke, D. G. Lake, & J. W. Paine (Eds.), *Organization change: A comprehensive reader* (pp. 300-311). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lloyd-Jones, B. (2012). Department chair leadership skills. *Journal of Educational Administration, 50*(2), 245-248. doi:10.1108/09578231211210585

Mackeracher, D. (2010). *Making sense of adult learning* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Mento, A., Jones, R., & Dirndorfer, W. (2002). A change management process: Grounded in both theory and practice. *Journal of Change Management, 3*(1), 45-59. doi:10.1080/714042520

Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership theory and practice* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Palmer, M., Hoffman-Longtin, K., Walvoord, E., Bogdewic, S. P., & Dankoski, M. E. (2015). A competency-based approach to recruiting, developing, and giving feedback to department chairs. *Academic Medicine, 90*(4), 425-430. doi:10.1097/ACM.0000000000000647

Polytechnics Canada. (2015). What is a polytechnic? Retrieved from The Polytechnic Advantage: http://www.polytechnicscanada.ca/polytechnic-advantage/what-polytechnic

Schein, E. H. (1964). The mechanisms of change. In W. W. Burke, D. G. Lake, & J. W. Paine (Eds.), *Organization change: A comprehensive reader* (pp. 78-88). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E. H. (2010). A conceptual model for managed culture change. In E. H. Schein, *Organizational culture and leadership* (pp. 299-314). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Seagren, A., Miller, M., Creswell, J., & Wheeler, D. (1994). *Academic leadership in community colleges*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline.* New York, NY: Doubleday.

Sirkin, H., Keenan, P., & Jackson, A. (2005). The hard side of change management. *Harvard Business Review, 83*(10), 108-118.

Sirkis, J. E. (2011). Development of leadership skills in community college department chairs. *Community College Enterprise, 17*(2), 46-61.

Smith, A. B., & Stewart, G. A. (1999). A statewide survey of new department chairs: Their experiences and needs in learning their roles. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 105*, 29-36. doi:10.1002/cc.10504

Spears, L.C. (2002). Tracing the past, present, and future of servant-leadership. In L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on leadership: Servant-leadership for the 21st century* (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Wiley.

Stoll, L., Bolan, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change, 7*(4), 221-258. doi:10.1007/s10833-006-0001-8

Stringer, E. (2014). *Action research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

The Chair Academy. (2016). *About the foundation leadership academy*. Retrieved from http://www.chairacademy.com/academy/index.html

The W. Edwards Deming Institute. (2016). *PDSA Cycle*. Retrieved from https://deming.org/management-system/pdsacycle

Whitsett, G. (2007). Perceptions of leadership styles of department chairs. *College Student Journal*, *41*(2), 274-286.

Wolverton, M., Ackerman, R., & Holt, S. (2005). Preparing for leadership: What academic department chairs need to know. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *27*(2), 227-238. doi:10.1080/13600800500120126