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The Role of Leadership in Student Organizations

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An Honors College Project Presented to  
the Faculty of the  
Honors College  
James Madison University

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by Samantha Ann McAnallen

May 2018

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Accepted by the faculty of the Honors College, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the extent to which the leaders of the Eta Delta chapter of Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) and the JMU Women's Rugby club embody the characteristics of the leaders of successful organizations by examining these two organizations in the context of the characteristics of successful organizational cultures. In order to conduct an appropriate examination of the cultures of these two organizations, I chose to compare them to the characteristics of successful group cultures presented in Daniel Coyle's *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*. Throughout his book, Coyle highlights the characteristics that define and distinguish organizations that experience short-term success from those who are successful in the long-term. These characteristics are derived from numerous examples of successful groups that range from SEAL Team Six to Zappos, from the San Antonio Spurs to IDEO, and from the Upright Citizens Brigade to the New Zealand All-Blacks. In each of these diverse groups, Coyle identifies cultural traits that distinguish these successful organizations from their contemporaries. He then combines these traits to form a comprehensive framework of a successful organizational culture, and bases the structure of this book on a discussion and analysis of his discoveries. Coyle also incorporates the personality traits of the organizations' leaders into his discussion, and successfully draws connections between leadership styles that, at a distance, seem poles apart from one another but when examined in closer detail, prove to be oriented towards reaching the same overarching goals. The layout of this paper models the layout of Coyle's book in an attempt to mimic his discussion with that of my own experiences in BAP and JMU Women's Rugby. By using this source to compare the structures, purposes, and cultures of these two organizations, as well as the role of the leadership team in each, I hope to conduct an adequate discussion and explanation of the differences in each of the organizations as a whole, as well as in the extent to which each required me to perform an effective leadership role compared to how Coyle describes such a role in *The Culture Code*.

## Introduction

Outside of my major and numerous minors, there are two organizations that have significantly contributed to my experience at JMU: women's rugby and Beta Alpha Psi (BAP). While both of these are on-campus organizations and are primarily student run, they differ in almost every other way possible, including in their goals, their organizational structures, and their cultures. However, both organizations have managed to thrive in their respective fields, despite being so different in the ways they are run and in the cultures they create. Now that I hold the leadership position of treasurer in both of these organizations, I have been able to gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences in the ways the organizations are run, as well as an increased comprehension of my role as a leader in each of them. Over the course of this paper, I will be using the discussion of successful organizations presented by Daniel Coyle in *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups* to develop an in-depth comparison of the extent to which each of these organizations creates a culture that is beneficial to their long-term success, as well as the extent to which the leadership of each of these organizations plays a role in the implementation of that culture. I will begin with an overview of the purposes, requirements, and structures of each of the two organizations (driven primarily by my own experience in each), as well as a brief description of my executive responsibilities as the treasurer for both rugby and BAP.

I have been a member of the women's rugby club since my freshman year at JMU. I started playing rugby during my junior year of high school, so there was no question that I would be playing in college, especially once I learned that JMU had a D1 women's team that competed well in their conference and even attended national playoffs. The team does not hold tryouts, so anyone is welcome to join and to participate as often as their schedule permits. There is an A-side that usually consists of experienced players that play in the league matches with other teams in the Mason Dixon league, and also a B-side that consists of both experienced and inexperienced players that play in games that directly follow the league matches. Though they wear different jerseys than the A-side and vary in experience level, it is possible (and common) for B-side players to play in A-side games when needed, and vice versa. However, starting spots on the A-side team are usually determined by performance and attendance

at practice. The team practices three times a week for two hours at each practice, and has games (both at home and away) on most weekends throughout each semester. Home games usually last at least four hours when you take account of setup, warmup, the A-side game, the B-side game, and cleanup. Away game can require anywhere from 2 hours to 8 hours of travel, and sometimes includes an overnight stay in another state, but players are not required to attend these games unless they want to (the same applies for home games). For the first couple of years that I was on the team we also had “mandatory” lift sessions (most, but not all, players attended), but those faded out when the executive board made the decision to reduce the time commitment of the team in an attempt to increase player retention.

To be an active member of the club, the players are expected to pay dues each semester, attain 5 hours of community service, and participate in team fundraising. The community service requirements are derived from UREC’s policies, so as long as the team earns at least 5 hours per person in a combined effort, the requirement is said to have been met. Luckily, we have had a couple of players who are members of service organizations on campus and who earn enough hours for the entire team, so the community service requirement has become more lenient in recent years. There are also no restrictions on where these hours come from, as long as you fill out a form provided by UREC to verify your service. Fundraising has become a much more important component in recent years to help finance our team’s accomplishments and to ensure financial stability for the future. We now have a system where each member of the team is required to attain a certain number of fundraising points that are assigned to various fundraising activities. This has proved to be an effective way to raise money and hold all players accountable. Although the team coach serves as our faculty advisor, the executive board, which is made up of students, are primarily responsible for the activities of the team, including scheduling, correspondence with UREC, and financial planning. This has led to a relatively informal structure among the executive board where the advisor’s main role is to offer advice while the students make the majority of the decisions. This structure also reflects the nature of the organization’s governing body, USA Rugby, which is constantly changing its requirements in an attempt to adapt to the ever growing nature of the sport in the U.S., and as a result tends to be a bit unorganized at the lower levels and tardy in announcing

dates and locations at the upper levels. For example, this year our league was expanded from its traditional five teams to nine teams, which we were notified about in late July/early August, after we (and most other teams in the league) had solidified the majority of our schedule. This resulted in a league-wide scramble to reschedule matches and ensure that all of the new additions to the league were scheduled to be played over the course of the year. Luckily, all the teams were able to get their matches in, but in the end this experiment apparently failed: the league will be going back to the traditional five team model next year, demonstrating the consistently unpredictable decisions of USA Rugby in a nutshell.

In order to adapt to these ever-changing conditions, the executive team aims to provide as much transparency as possible to the rest of the team members. The organization's limited monetary funds also support this organizational structure. While we do receive some funding from UREC depending on our performance of their requirements in the prior school year (clubs earn points for completing requirements such as community service and monthly updates, and each point is worth a specified amount of money), this amount varies from year to year, so the team relies primarily on dues and fundraising to fund their activities. Since it is crucial that these funds are spent only on essential expenses that will allow the team to advance in the future, and given that the players are a key component to this success both on the field and off the field (their dues are the main source of funds), a prominent goal of the executive team is to facilitate an exchange of ideas and opinions between themselves and the rest of the team.

I was nominated and elected as the treasurer of the women's rugby team in the spring semester of my freshman year, so I have occupied the role for a total of three and a half years. My responsibilities have included budgeting, setting dues, performing bi-annual reconciliations of our bank account, and reserving vans and hotel rooms for team travel. Most of these responsibilities also require coordination with the coach, the captains, and the other core four executive team officers (president, vice-president, and match secretary). This position has given me extensive exposure to the inner workings of a club sports team, and because I took over as treasurer when the team was in a difficult financial position, I quickly learned the importance of making smart financial decisions and sticking to them in order to bring the team to a more stable financial position.

I joined Beta Alpha Psi at the beginning of my sophomore year at JMU. BAP is a professional organization that consists of accounting, finance, and CIS majors, and whose main purpose is to create opportunities for professional development and interaction between its members and business professionals, which it facilitates through professional meetings. As a young business student eager to learn and make myself more attractive to potential employers, I decided to join. I quickly realized that this organization was structured much differently than club rugby. There are three faculty advisors that oversee the activities of BAP, but only one is consistently present at professional meetings. The overall structure is a lot more formal than that of women's rugby, but seems very informal if you are a member of the executive team. There is also little to no transparency between the leaders of the organization (advisors and executive board members) and the candidates/members of the organization in terms of decision making outside of the requirements for membership and weekly updates of professional meetings and service events coming up. This type of structure is reflected in that of the Eta Delta chapter's governing body, Beta Alpha Psi International. This organization has a very formal structure, complete with achievement levels that are awarded to chapters based on their performance in various subcategories (i.e. community service events, professional events, and mid-term and end-year reports). They even hold annual and regional meetings to present the accomplishments of the various chapters and award those who have demonstrated superior performance in various aspects of the organization. Our chapter's executive board has fostered some hostility for these formalities in the past, since a discrepancy from a couple of years back that altered our chapter's achievement level prevented us from reaching the highest level of "gold" status and left us instead at "superior". However, the influence of the governing body of the organization on our chapter helps to explain why the leadership team follows this model of withholding the decision-making authority and disclosing only vital information to the general membership.

There are three different levels of membership in the organization: candidate, senior candidate, and member. For simplicity's sake, I will be referring to candidates, senior candidates, and members collectively as "members" of BAP throughout the rest of this paper, but will elaborate here on the



differences between each level of membership. You become a candidate when you “rush” BAP and go through a candidate process that consists of getting familiar with the organization, paying a one-time fee for membership dues, and attending professional and community service events. You are also assigned a mentor, who serves as your guide through the candidate process and a familiar face at meetings.

Unfortunately, my mentor was a senior who was largely preoccupied with his school work, so our meetings were brief and usually just consisted of him signing my candidate packet to prove we met before heading back into the finance lab (this was a common occurrence at the time, but it has since become a focus of the executive team to eliminate this practice and establish a real relationship between mentors and mentees). After you have completed the candidacy requirements over the course of a semester, you become a senior candidate. Senior candidates are essentially members of the organization, but they have not yet completed their first 300-level major class, which usually follows the semester in which you’ve taken COB 300. In the semester after you have successfully completed your first major class (in my case, Intermediate Accounting 1), you are initiated into the organization as a member as long as your GPA is at or above a 3.0. The main benefit in becoming a member of BAP is to receive voting rights in the executive board elections and a cord upon graduation, as well as the eligibility to run for certain executive positions such as president and treasurer. Some of the other executive positions require at least one of the officers to be a member, but not both, so technically a senior candidate could run for and be elected to one of these offices as well (i.e. reporter, candidate educator).

In order to maintain your status in the organization, you must earn 20 hours of professional activities and 20 hours of community service events over the course of the year. The majority of these hours are required to have come from BAP-sponsored events; a maximum of 5 professional and 5 community service hours per year are allowed to come from outside events. This forces members to attend professional meetings and service events on a semi-regular basis in order to fulfill their hours. There are usually only a couple of community service opportunities that give you 5 hours or more, while the others are shorter opportunities such as tutoring that only provide you with an hour or so of community service and are limited to the times that are established at the beginning of the semester.

However, there is a benefit to attending the professional meetings, since numerous firms (most of which are looking to recruit accounting majors) attend these meetings and provide presentations that cover fundamental business skills such as ethics, time management, and networking. Our chapter is required to present on a certain number of these prompts which are chosen by BAP International. Once all of these topics have been covered, a firm may present on a topic of their choosing (i.e. a comparison of tax and audit), or may just present a pitch of their firm and the service lines they compete in. Because the firms range from local to the Big Four accounting firms, there is a wide variety of options for the members to consider attending, and each provides a different perspective into the world of public and private accounting. They also give members the opportunity to build connections with the firms that they will be applying to in the future and to learn about the working world that they will be joining upon graduation. For the first year and a half that I was in BAP, I struggled to maintain my professional and service hour requirements due to my frequent rugby obligations that overlapped with professional and service events. I was also very new to networking, so I engaged in many awkward interactions with firms and with the other candidates/members of the organization, and since I focused more on taking notes at the meetings than on meeting my fellow members, I made very few friends (I later realized that it was not a common practice to take notes, but at the time it seemed like a beneficial thing for me to do).

When I was finally initiated as a member in the spring semester of my junior year, I decided to run for the executive position of treasurer and won. My main responsibilities in this position has been to perform monthly reconciliations on the organization's bank account, to ensure that money collected is deposited in the bank in a timely manner, and to keep an eye on our account to ensure that we have sufficient funds to cover our various expenses. I work closely with one of the three BAP faculty advisors to perform the reconciliations, but other than that I work alone. BAP has a much larger collective amount of money than women's rugby does, primarily because they host a recruiting event called Meet the Firms in the fall semester that generates the majority of their revenues (each firm pays a fee for a table, with the best positioned tables costing the most money), so there is little to no concern about running out of funds. Additionally, because most of BAP's funds are contributed by the firms, there is no need to disclose our

spending decisions to the rest of the organization, so long as we are spending our funds on things that benefit the general membership such as food for professional meetings and social events. While I have learned a lot of skills to better my reconciliations for the women's rugby team from this position, my role has not been nearly as extensive as I had expected it to be.

An unexpected benefit of the position was that I was encouraged to attend the annual meeting in the summer before my senior year. At this meeting I had the opportunity to get to know some of my fellow executive officers in an informal setting, to network with other members of BAP from across the country, and to attend presentations of the practices that other chapters employed to reach their group's goals, whether this concerned financial stability, inner-organizational networking, or community service. I later learned that these presentations are determined by the winners of the regional meetings that occur across the country in the spring. The best of these presentations at the annual meeting receive a prize for their efforts. Additionally, the annual meeting puts on an event called Project Run With It, which gives members from each chapter the opportunity to compete in a real-world consulting project with members from other chapters. They are given a prompt shortly before the annual meeting, and meet with their groups over the course of the meeting to come up with a solution to the business dilemma. The winners of this competition earn a cash prize for their chapter and a chance to have their solution implemented by the real-world organization that was referenced in their prompt. A member of our chapter was actually on the winning team this year, which gave our chapter a nice cash bonus and some bragging rights. This experience gave me additional knowledge on the structure of BAP International, which I have used to contribute to my analysis in this paper.

In order to effectively evaluate the cultures of these two organizations, we first need to discuss how culture is created. The word "culture" originates from the Latin word *cultus*, which translates to *care* (Coyle pre-Contents). When people think of good cultures this is one of the first words that comes to mind: organizations strive to show that they *care* about their employees; coaches show that they *care* about the growth and development of their players; and professors show that they *care* about students' academic success. As these examples suggest, good cultures almost always seek to show their members

that they care. Another way of phrasing this is that good cultures *take* great care to ensure their members are happy. This doesn't necessarily mean that they exhibit expressions of care often, or even at all; rather, they make an effort to provide members with benefits that imply that they appreciate their efforts. Examples of this kind of "caring" may be found in the design of an office, in the benefits granted by a certain position, or in personal or group-wide gifts received during or after a difficult period of work. Regardless of how they may show it, a good cultured group almost always has a way of showing its people that they are important. When care combines with full-group interaction (not just in one division or segment, but throughout all levels of an organization), the result is an organizational culture that promotes success (Coyle xvii). This can be explained by one of the definitions of the word "culture": a "set of living relationships working toward a shared goal" (Coyle xx). This definition emphasizes that culture is not just something that happens; it's a characteristic of an organization that is constantly adapting to the changes occurring in the world around it. This definition also attributes organizational culture to a common goal that the organization is pursuing, a distinction that will be of importance later on in this paper.

There are three different "skills" that are essential to building a successful organizational culture: 1) building safety, 2) sharing vulnerability, 3) establishing purpose (Coyle xix). I will first discuss the ways in which BAP and rugby build safety within their respective organizations.

### **Skill #1: Building Safety**

Safety is not the first word that comes to mind when thinking about organizational culture. This is because the word connotes physical safety, which is not usually a conscious concern when you're thinking about joining an organization. However, our brains are obsessed with physical and psychological safety. They are constantly looking for danger, having been developed from millions of years of natural selection that has conditioned them to understand that safety is necessary for survival (Coyle 24). The structure that causes this obsession with safety is called the amygdala, which perpetually searches for danger around us and, when it does sense danger, triggers a fight-or-flight response that focuses our

bodies and minds on the question, “What do I need to do to survive?” (Coyle 24, 25). One of the keys to survival that the amygdala is programmed to identify and pursue is social bonds (Coyle 25). This isn’t surprising, since groups typically offer a larger and more diverse skill set than that of an individual, and therefore provide a presumably higher probability of an individual surviving. When it comes to inner-organizational interaction, the amygdala searches for traces of safety in the actions of others in an attempt to build these social bonds and keep the individual safe among their peers. These traces of safety are called belonging cues. A belonging cue could be one of many things: it could be attention, body language, vocal tone or pitch, the level of group participation, or eye contact, among other things (Coyle 10). The three fundamental qualities of a belonging cue are energy, individualization, and future orientation; in other words, showing interest in the interaction, treating it as unique and important, and providing an indication that the relationship will continue (Coyle 11). As soon as a belonging cue is received, the amygdala focuses in on it and on the person that gave it to you. In doing so, the amygdala facilitates interaction between you and your new potential friend, paying attention to their interactions with others and attempting to guide you to create similar exchanges that will hopefully advance your friendship with this person (Coyle 25). The amygdala will not stop until you have received a continuous series of belonging cues that indicate that the friendship is stable and, therefore, that you will be safe with this person. Without constant belonging signals, it is nearly impossible to satisfy the brain’s unconscious lust for cues and, therefore, to create a true sense of belonging with an individual and, furthermore, with an organization (Coyle 56).

These constant streams of belonging signals are demonstrated in the “distinct pattern of interaction” that occur within successful groups, which is best seen “in little moments of social connection” (Coyle 7). These little moments can be culminated into ten distinct examples of physical interaction, which echo the examples of belonging cues previously mentioned: proximity, eye contact, physical touch, short (but energetic) exchanges, high levels of mixing, few interruptions, lots of questions, active listening, humor, and attentive courtesies (Coyle 8). In order to effectively compare the interactions within BAP and rugby, I will be using the characteristics of BAP’s professional meetings and the rugby team’s practices to

analyze the two organizations, since these two settings represent occasions where most members are present in the same area. I will continue to draw upon these two settings in my comparisons throughout the rest of this paper.

Close physical proximity, which often occurs in circles (Coyle 8), occurs more often in rugby than it does in BAP. In BAP, there is close proximity among members during professional meetings, but it is in rows rather than in circles. Additionally, this proximity occurs in a classroom setting, where the focus is often on the presenter rather than on the other students in the room, especially if you don't have any pre-existing connections with them. In rugby, there is constant proximity during practice, which occurs in lines during drills and in circles for discussion during and after drills. This facilitates group participation and promotes a sense of equal individual importance. Copious amounts of eye contact are also crucial to group cohesion (Coyle 8). In BAP, there is usually minimal eye contact between members, though they do maintain eye contact with the presenters, especially if they choose to engage in conversation with them after the meeting. Rugby, on the other hand, requires consistent eye contact with both the coach and other players when discussing things at practice and even when playing, especially right before passing or going down in a tackle. Physical touch is also attributed to success in groups, and ranges from a formal handshake to a fist bump or a hug (Coyle 8). The instances of physical touch in BAP usually take the form of a more formal interaction: usually a handshake with a presenter or fellow members, or a brief touch when handing off JAC cards to sign in and get credit for attending the professional meetings. It is no surprise that physical touch in rugby is much more consistent and much more informal, from tackling each other to giving back pats and hugs when things get rough or when things go well.

An abundance of short and energetic exchanges (no long speeches) that feature lots of questions and few interruptions (Coyle 8) are also consistently present in rugby, especially in the chatter on the field during practice. In drills and games alike, brief bursts of communication are always occurring, since players rely on the communication from their teammates to capitalize on opportunities to advance the ball. During and after the drills, the team pauses and reconvenes to clarify understanding and answer players' questions. These questions may pertain to anything from how to react in a certain situation to

how our coach intends for the drill to be run. Regardless of what is being asked, it is expected that the players do not interrupt one another, and it is emphasized early on that every question is a good question. BAP professional presenters often add a similar disclaimer before opening the room to questions from the members. Although the BAP meetings do not usually include the short, frequent interactions like the ones that occur during rugby practices, they do emphasize not to interrupt others and encourage questions and interactions with the presenters. The downfall here seems to be in the fact that these interactions occur between members and presenters, and not between group members, so there is a stronger connection being formed with those that are not a part of the organization than the connection to those within it. These types of interactions are also indicative of the low level of mixing in BAP, where everyone in the organization does not necessarily know one another, nor do they make much of an effort to talk with people they don't know at the professional meetings. Inner-organizational interaction is usually limited to brief conversations that range from polite to awkward in nature. There is a slightly higher level of mixing at initiation and at the regional and annual meetings, since the groups attending these events are a little smaller and have more opportunities to converse with each other outside of the formal environment of the professional meetings. The social events also attempt to encourage mixing, but for the most part there are obvious divisions between the executive team and the rest of the organization, and even among the rest of the members the connection is often strained and short-term in nature. In rugby, as previously mentioned, communication is essential, and as such there is a high level of mixing among forwards and backs alike. The social events also facilitate connection and mixing, and serve as an additional factor outside of practice that creates friendships. Though not everyone on the team is close friends, it is still essential that all players mix to maintain a civil relationship with everyone on the team; strained relationships often result in poor performance during games, since rugby is so dependent on group cohesion.

Inner-organizational mixing is important, but it is complimented and enhanced by active listening (Coyle 8). In BAP, active listening occurs during professional meetings, but usually the level of activity depends on the individual's interest in the presenter and their need for a job. Even if they do appear to be attentive, many people are still indifferent to the presentation if they are just at the meeting to earn their

required professional hours. Between members, active listening is employed in conversations, since these conversations are usually intentional when they do occur and indicate a genuine interest to get to know others in the organization. In rugby, active listening is crucial to understanding drills and learning the rules of the game, so in most cases the players are engaged in active listening. However, sometimes people engage in side conversations that may or may not be productive in nature, so in those cases they may not be actively listening to the coach or the other players, but they are actively listening to each other.

The last two examples of interaction that facilitate group connection through belonging cues are humor and laughter and small, attentive courtesies (i.e. thank-yous, opening doors) (Coyle 8). In BAP, humor and laughter are usually minimal at professional meetings, unless it is between members before the meeting or in jokes made by the firms during their presentation. However, attentive courtesies are in no short supply, since the formal nature of the meetings encourages the use of thank-yous to the presenters and to the executive board members running the event, as well as encouraging the practice of opening and holding doors for one another and helping to set up food or the laptop used to sign in at the meetings. Both of these interactions are also present in rugby, where humor and laughter are constantly occurring to help ease the pain of practice, and courtesies such as filling up the team waters and exchanging thank-yous and performance-based compliments (i.e. “great drive”, “way to be in support”) occur throughout practice.

The importance of belonging cues in organizational culture is supported by a study performed by MIT professor Thomas Allen, where it was found that the most important factor in creating a successful team was not experience or level of intelligence, but the belonging cue of proximity (Coyle 70). Allen observed that the proximity of co-workers’ desks, and the visual contact that resulted from it, gave the workers a constant reminder of their peers and served as a motivator to communicate with them (Coyle 70). This led him to develop the Allen Curve, which plots the frequency of interaction against distance (proximity) between the employees. The curve “resembled a steep hill” and showed that “at distances of less than eight meters, communication frequency rises off the charts”, but at distances of more than eight meters



communication decreases substantially (Coyle 70, 71) (see Figure 1). Digital communication also follows this curve in that you are more likely to text, call, or email people who you often find yourself physically close to; one study in particular concluded that people working in the same location “emailed one another four times as often as workers who did not, and as a result they completed their projects 32 percent faster” (Coyle 72). In rugby, the proximity and the resulting exchange of ideas is present at almost every practice. Because it is a contact sport that relies on teamwork, players are always working closely together and are forced to communicate with each other if they want to be successful as a team. This results in the constant communication of ideas that usually culminates in many failures but, eventually, success as the team learns which ideas tend to succeed and which tend to fail, similar to what Allen likely observed in his studies. While BAP also facilitates proximity among its members during professional meetings, it does little to encourage communication between members, since the goal of professional meetings (for most members) is to network with the professionals presenting, not with the other members of BAP. In this case, then, the networking focus of these meetings ironically results in a lack of networking between actual members, regardless of their physical proximity during these group events. As these examples suggest, it can be inferred that in organizations that generate an increased frequency of discussion among their members, this increased interaction results in an increased rate of idea exchange, and thus leads to a quicker arrival at a final proposal than if these people were not working together. The challenge lies in creating an environment where this kind of interaction is possible.

Leaders are often held responsible for leading an organization by setting an example, deciding on objectives, and/or delegating responsibilities. However, a good leader doesn't always create a plan of action, nor do they necessarily delegate responsibilities or lead by example. But all successful leaders lead their organizations by creating and maintaining a culture that communicates that the members are “solidly connected” and, therefore, that they are “safe”; it is this cultural characteristic that serves as the enabler of optimal group performance (Coyle 6). One way in which these leaders create a culture for their groups to thrive in is by eliminating negative influences from the group. These negative influences are also known as “bad apple[s]”, and they usually exhibit qualities such as negative attitude, patronizing presence, and

other personality traits that tend to discourage an open pattern of group interaction and cooperation (Coyle 81). Bad apples have been blamed many a time for contributing to poor performance within groups and, therefore, successful groups tend to have little to no patience for them. The New Zealand All-Blacks rugby team exhibits this low tolerance with the rule “No Dickheads”, which simply means that bad apples will not be tolerated on the team (Coyle 81). The forwardness of this message validates the culture of the team, whose leaders clearly vocalize what they expect of the players and, by doing so in this manner, portray the traits of effective communication that are practiced by most successful groups.

Another example of a company who succeeded at creating organizational conditions for success is Google, who excelled at producing psychological safety by destroying the hierarchy of official titles with company-wide hockey games and forums that encouraged complete honesty (Coyle 20). During these interactions, everyone had the opportunity to talk and listen, and the conversations that took place were energetic in nature (Coyle 20). It was this creation of belonging cues in Google’s culture that allowed them to beat out Overture in the competition for developing AdWords, even though Overture had a head start and the support of a “billion-dollar war chest” that was established through its previous success as a company (Coyle 20). Overture’s downfall was in its organizational structure; it was “handicapped by [the] bureaucracy” that characterized its employees’ interactions, and was further damaged by the “innumerable meetings and discussions” that were a part of every decision (Coyle 21). All of this culminated in a lack of belonging cues that allowed Google to win the race for AdWords not because it was smarter, but “because it was safer” (Coyle 21). Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos, creates belonging cues in a rather unremarkable way: by acting completely normal (Coyle 65). By allowing these casual, positive interactions to take place, Hsieh was able to make people feel important (Coyle 65), simply because they had a moment to bond with the CEO. Here safety and connection is comparable to companionship, which enhances employee performance because feeling like you have a friend by your side who just happens to be the CEO makes a task seem much more attainable than one where the CEO is seen as a superior that is waiting to see whether you succeed or fail.

The leaders in BAP don't do a great job of communicating to the members that they are "safe" within the culture of the organization. Some of this issue stems from the fact that even though the advisors and the executive team are the technical leaders of the organization, you don't see much of them if you're not on the executive board. One faculty advisor in particular is always present and asking questions at the professional meetings, which encourages other BAP members at the meeting to do the same, seemingly attempting to create safety within the group. But outside of that the extent of the interaction between members and the organization's leaders is often brief and formal in nature. There have been attempts to bridge this gap between the exec team and the members by hosting social events and reserving a BAP study room where members are encouraged to come to mingle and study with other members of BAP, but it is hard to say how successful these attempts have been. It may be argued that there are some bad apples in the organization (both on exec and among the general membership) whose dispositions discourage interaction and openness between members, resulting in professional meetings that lack these characteristics; but, again, it is hard to make a general comment like this when there are so many members of the organization that I do not know. Bad apple behavior may also be an inadvertent result of BAP's culture and structure, since the organization encourages formal interactions much more than it facilitates informal interaction.

In rugby, the coach and captains serve as the visible leaders for the organization, while exec does most of their work behind the scenes. Although the captains are supposed to be the facilitators of the relationship between the coach and the players, it sometimes feels as though there is still a rift between the coach/captains and the players, since a lot of things are decided without the players' input. In the past there was more transparency between the captains and the team, but lately the relationship has felt much more secretive, especially in terms of what we will be doing at practice or what the starting lineup is for a game (which used to be sent out the day before games, but now is still "undecided" as late as an hour before the game begins). These actions, which carry within them inklings of bad apple behavior, have actually led to a decline in the open culture of the organization as a whole, and therefore a decrease in the

psychological safety of the organization. For the most part, the executive team does a good job serving as leaders both on and off the field and in facilitating the creation of an open and connected culture.

BAP and rugby could both improve on the frequency of one-on-one interactions between the members and the leaders of the organizations: in particular, with the faculty advisors and the captains and executive members for rugby and BAP, respectively. Creating a stronger connection between the members and their leaders could help to form a stronger sense of identity throughout the organization. In addition, both organizations struggle with long-term retention, which may be a result of the hefty time commitment that each organization requires, but also suggests a new member mindset of doubt and discomfort. The main cause of this mindset is likely from the belief that rugby and/or BAP is too much of a burden that people don't feel they can succeed at and/or make time for. Without a steady stream of encouragement, it is nearly impossible to convince someone that they will be able to succeed in the group, especially if they are already doubting themselves. For this reason, it is essential for the group to make one-on-one connections with these individuals, either as mentors or even as friends, to guide them through the difficult times and remind them that they will prove to be worth it.

As implied above, successful groups and cultures are not necessarily happy places to be. This is a common misconception surrounding successful organizations (Coyle 55), since it is usually true that an organization that experiences success is happy to have done so. However, achieving this happiness is not the main goal of their organization, nor is it an unavoidable byproduct of the organization's success. More often, these groups are simply "energized and engaged" towards the goal of "solving hard problems together", which is not an easy task (Coyle 55). It involves a lot of discomfort, often on the receiving end of honest feedback concerning individual as well as group performance (Coyle 55). However, it is important to separate this candid feedback from brutally honest feedback (Coyle 165). Candid feedback is frank, but not to the extent of offense. Brutal honesty, on the other hand, tends to be borderline, if not fully, offensive; therefore, it is better to avoid it at all costs. This provides a good context to begin discussing what the best kind of feedback is made of. Many organizations use the sandwich method for delivering feedback, which "sandwiches" negative feedback with two pieces of positive feedback (Coyle

87). While this method may seem like the best and most effective way to criticize someone's performance without hurting their feelings, it actually more often confuses people, since their instinct is to focus on only one type of feedback: the good or the bad (Coyle 87). If they end up focusing on the bad then this method could be deemed a success, but if they focus on the good, as most people are more inclined to do, then it will be very difficult to convince them to accept and address the bad feedback in the future.

Belonging cues play an active role in performance feedback. Effective feedback typically includes a variation of one phrase in particular: "I'm giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know that you can reach them" (Coyle 56). Although this sentence doesn't provide any specific performance feedback, it does transmit three important belonging cues:

1. "You are part of this group.
2. This group is special; we have high standards here.
3. I believe you can reach those standards."

(Coyle 56)

These belonging cues are crucial to motivating a group member to embrace the challenge of improving their performance rather than succumbing to the fact that they received critique and failing to grow from it. An example of effective feedback can be drawn from the Navy SEALs. The SEALs conduct AARs (After-Action Reviews), which consist of a full breakdown of the decisions made by the team and a discussion about why they made those decisions, and takes place immediately after a mission is completed (Coyle 141). The AARs are unique in that they do not exist to assign blame or to call people out, but to encourage group members to take responsibility for their decisions and explain their actions to help the group learn from them and apply the lessons learned to the future (Coyle 141).

The women's rugby team facilitates feedback in its post-game discussions, but it doesn't exactly match the feedback that is given in the AARs. AARs tend to follow a play-by-play of what happened during the mission and why decisions were made by the individual soldiers, while rugby tends to focus first on positive and then on negative things that were done by the team as a whole. The mixing of positive and negative reviews, as well as the team focus rather than individual focus, result in a different

interpretation of the events than if the feedback had been given in the same way as the AARs were. An individual may also be called out during post-game feedback to either praise a good decision they made or highlight a bad decision they made. If it is in reference to a bad decision, they are usually told that they were not the only one to make this decision, but that it was a memorable one. They are also rarely given the opportunity to justify their actions; the actions are simply interpreted as the incorrect choice. This distinction between “right” and “wrong” decisions makes it difficult for the players to receive constructive feedback. Instead, they either focus on the praise they receive and erroneously let it boost their egos, or they focus on the criticism they receive and wrongly belittle themselves for it. It is very difficult for a person to naturally arrive at a place of understanding and rational thought when they receive this kind of feedback, which is why it is so important to emphasize every action rather than just the ones that stood out as particularly good or particularly bad. While it is true that this would be difficult to accomplish for an eighty minute rugby game, the AAR feedback structure could be implemented at practice, so that after a drill everyone would have an understanding of the decisions made, why they were made, and why another option may or may not have been better. In this way, a discussion of the individuals’ actions can be accomplished without targeting only certain players for exceptionally good or bad performances.

BAP facilitates feedback in certain professional meetings, and when this feedback is given it is usually active and constructive in nature. For example, firms may conduct activities such as resume review sessions that involve looking over members’ resumes and suggesting improvements that are honest but not insulting (i.e. “Maybe you could add a little more to this experience”, “Have you considered formatting your resume this way rather than that way?”). However, this kind of one-on-one interaction is rare in professional meetings, where firms usually spend more time explaining topics than giving feedback. Even when this kind of feedback is given, it is usually not followed up on: the firm presenting will review the resume at the meeting, but after that the connection is often lost and the next person to review the resume is someone completely different who makes new suggestions than those of the first reviewer (I am speaking from personal experience here, but also from the experiences of my

peers). The most confusing part is that these different reviews may even come from two people working for the same firm. This results in contradicting feedback that leaves the member uncertain about their performance. Instead of just having members receive feedback, it could be helpful to let them start giving feedback on the professional meetings. This may seem like a tedious task to members at first, but if the feedback survey was short and clearly stated that its main purpose was to incorporate the members' preferences into the meetings since they are the ones attending them, I think it could prove to be very effective. The members would have to complete the survey immediately after the professional meeting so that they could address everything they observed or learned from the firm and add any additional suggestions they had. This feedback could then be shared with the firms and addressed by the executive board to try to make meetings more interesting and engaging for the members attending them. If the survey was used for attendance purposes as well, everyone at the meeting would feel inclined to participate, which could serve as a uniting activity for the members. Although seemingly monotonous at first, this survey could go towards supporting the organizational goal of members gaining something from the professional meetings that will help them in their future careers rather than just attending a boring meeting for the sake of fulfilling an hour requirement.

### **Skill #2: Sharing Vulnerability**

The next skill that is essential to creating a successful organization is sharing vulnerability, especially that of the organization's leaders (Coyle 158). One of the most important approaches for sharing vulnerability is to communicate weakness by admitting that you don't know the answer to the problem at stake (Coyle 99). By demonstrating that a leader isn't all-knowing and is open to help from others in the organization, the others are more confident and eager to contribute their own knowledge or interpretation of events, which moves the discussion forward in a positive direction while also encouraging group participation. When this type of communication is done well, it results in a type of chatter that pilots refer to as "notifications" (Coyle 95). These short-bursts of verbal exchange are not orders or commands, but are observations that highlight the issue or situation at hand, each which carries

unspoken questions such as “Do you agree?” and “What else do you see?” (Coyle 95). They serve to create an unstructured discussion of the situation that allows everyone to contribute their own opinions and suggestions as equals rather than in a structured environment of the leader asking questions to their sub-ordinates. These interactions are not always natural and are more often full of awkward moments and hard questions behind the apparent smoothness that is seen from the surface (Coyle 98). Group members contribute candid feedback to their groupmates and often “struggle to figure out what is going on” before using this notification style of speaking to find a way to solve it (Coyle 98). Because of the formalized structure of BAP professional meetings, it is uncommon to have a situation where members are forced to struggle through a problem together in the hopes of eventually solving it. There have been some meetings where firms will incorporate the marshmallow and spaghetti tower challenge, which requires groups of students to work together to build the tallest tower using only a piece of string, some tape, and spaghetti with a marshmallow balanced on top (in *The Culture Code* it is revealed that kindergartners could perform better in this challenge than groups of business students because they excelled at the notification method of communication that the challenge requires [Coyle xvi-xviii]). Others have played blindfolded Jenga in an effort to facilitate continuous feedback of the condition of the blocks to the person blindly trying to take them out. However, for the most part the meetings are not this creative, so only certain members have the chance to struggle through problems together. This may be a characteristic that facilitates success for the groups that work on Project Run With It during the annual meetings; but, again, this is by no means representative of the interactions that normally occur within our BAP chapter. In rugby, these conversations are quite common, since it is crucial to identify and find a way to solve a problem if the team is going to achieve any success on the field. Therefore, notification chatter is essential to the success of the team, whether in passing down the message to slide out on defense or in pass along the message of where you are in comparison to a teammate on offense so that they know who is in support of them. As mentioned before, even a small issue reflects on the entire team when they take the field and can mean the difference between winning and losing a game due to a lack of cohesion, so these little bursts of communication are very much a part of the organization’s success in the long-term.



To establish this clear communication, it is important to also establish trust between members of the group. It is commonly believed that organizational trust needs to be established before any leadership vulnerability is exposed (Coyle 107). However, it has been shown that the opposite is true: vulnerability comes before trust is built, clarifying that “leaping into the unknown, when done alongside others, causes the solid ground of trust to materialize beneath our feet” (Coyle 107). As unnatural as this may feel and seem at first, it makes sense when observed in practice. For example, a lot of successful teams and groups participate in extreme activities together, because it spawns a stream of vulnerability that reveals the level of trustworthiness within the organization, and brings them closer so they can continue to take productive risks together (Coyle 112). Taking risks and participating in extreme activities also sends the message to group members that they have a role and are needed by their groupmates (Coyle 112), which is crucial for encouraging vulnerability and, subsequently, for creating trust. It is also essential in promoting cooperation within the group. Cooperation is built through repeated interaction that is centered on the “risky, occasionally painful, [and] ultimately rewarding process of being vulnerable together” (Coyle 113). This is imperative to creating a successful group culture, since trust and cooperation work hand in hand to generate opportunities for a group to succeed; one without the other is likely to cause tension within the group rather than growth.

BAP’s struggle to create and maintain an open organizational culture may be due to the lack of opportunities for the leaders to show vulnerability in the organization. Vulnerability is often revealed when smaller groups (i.e. the exec board and members who attend the regional and annual meetings) engage in some type of risky or extreme activities together. For example, last year the executive team participated in a paintball game shortly after the new executive board was elected, and the members who attended the annual meeting all went to Disneyland together. Sharing these unique experiences gave everyone involved the opportunity to be vulnerable with each other, and thus built a connection between these organizational members. However, because the members involved in these activities primarily consisted of executive officers, there was a great development of vulnerability and trust within exec, but not within the organization as a whole. In rugby the traditionally accepted method of creating trust

between teammates before leaping into vulnerability is often used when introducing people to the sport, especially with techniques like tackling. The coach typically has the members play “games” that work on body form and address general strengths and weaknesses. For example, there is a drilled when one player must climb around another player without touching the ground. These activities create vulnerability, but while simultaneously forcing the trust that is necessary to rely on someone to hold you up while you climb around them rather than let you fall. If we could find a way to reverse this process, however, it may be possible to decrease the anxiety that new members experience when learning to tackle for the first time; maybe “tackling” vulnerability first will inspire people to trust each other when they start tackling for real. It should also be noted here that in both BAP and rugby, trust is not always accompanied by cooperation, and vice versa. Some relationships between executive members embody trust, but the members still struggle to cooperate. Other times it’s the opposite, where cooperation is crucial to the organization’s overall success but there is little to no trust between the executive members. However, when it comes to the group as a whole, both of these traits (trust and cooperation) should be present to keep the group on the path to becoming a successful organization, and overall it is fair to say that BAP and women’s rugby both meet this requirement.

Groups rely on the existence of trust to perform well together. This is most clearly seen in sports teams, which necessitates reliance on your teammates to do their jobs well so that you can focus on doing yours. The same assumption is present in non-sport organizations, which require trust that everyone is performing their own position adequately so that you may focus on yours without worrying about theirs. It is not usually emphasized, however, that one of the key aspects in creating inner-organizational trust is group cohesion. It is nearly impossible to put your faith in someone that you don’t know well or who you don’t believe can do the work. Therefore, it is essential to establish a sense of cohesion within a group so that members can be reassured in the competence of the people they are working with. The best examples of developing this cohesion are found in military groups. The Navy SEALs, inspired by the Corps Franc (Coyle 118), are one of the most reputable military groups in history. They owe their success to their founder’s understanding of the culture in which the Corps Franc operated, and how such a culture was

created and maintained. The Corps Franc was the ultimate military example of comradery during World War II, and were known for their refusal to leave a man behind, even if it meant fighting a force that outnumbered them in order to save him (Coyle 117). When Draper Kauffman fought with them during the war, he realized that their success was dependent on the trust and respect they had for each other (Coyle 117). When the navy reject was assigned to train specialized teams, he decided to throw out the navy's template and instead created what would become the Navy SEAL's training program (Coyle 118). He based a lot of the training on creating the same kind of connection between the American officers as the one he experienced with the Corps Franc (Coyle 118). The success of his "makeshift" training program is attributed not only to the exercises that he incorporated, but also to the fact that he participated in every activity that he made the young officers participate in (Coyle 119). This is similar to the practice of leaders participating in the menial work that is necessary to maintain the organization (also referred to as "muscular humility"), such as picking up trash or wiping down counters (Coyle 85), which sends a message to the group that they are all expected to follow the code of teamwork that their group embodies, to which the leader will also hold himself accountable. In addition, Kauffman always "asked for suggestions" and made an effort to incorporate the good ones (Coyle 119). These combined actions prompted his officers to respect him not because he had any superior training or high ranking, but because he equated his position with theirs and incorporated himself as part of the team rather than the dominant member of the team.

It is true that in BAP the executive team performs the majority of the menial tasks for the organization, such as setting up and cleaning up after professional meetings and community service events. However, the rest of the members are generally unaware of the effort that goes into these meetings and events behind the scenes. They are aware that exec is required to attain the minimum hour requirements as well, but the lack of inner-organizational interactions makes it difficult to communicate that the exec board does not see themselves as any better than the ordinary members, but that we do take on additional responsibilities for their sake. Recently, BAP has also begun to embrace the idea of asking for suggestions from its members. Although the response rate of the most recent survey was less than

50% of the active members of the organization, it is a step in the right direction in terms of improving the organization for the good of everyone involved. In rugby there is a similar attempt to have captains and the coach participate in drills and in menial tasks such as setting up and breaking down the field for practices and games. Ironically enough, this was not a common practice until my second and third years on the team; in the first year, it was the rookies (the players who had joined the team in the past year) that were responsible for setting up and cleaning up the field for practice; though everyone would contribute to setting up the field for games. Additionally, the captains and most of the exec board are active at practice, participating in all the drills and fitness components. The coach will even take the time to demonstrate a particular technique during practice if she deems fit, since she was once a rugby player as well. This increases the respect on the team for these leadership members since they not only help to run the team, but also contribute to its on-field success (indeed, the most active members of exec are usually starters on the A-side team). Women's rugby has also recently begun to implement surveys that relate to both the club (the exec board's performance) and the team (the captain's performance/overall team success). Although the team has done a good job taking suggestions, it could benefit from making more of an effort to ensure that we are implementing the good ones and showing the players that their voices are being heard.

A well-known component of Kauffman's training program, most of which is still used by the Navy SEALs today, is Log physical training (PT). Log PT consists of a group of trainees completing various "maneuvers" with a log the size of a telephone pole (Coyle 120). Although Log PT is a miserable experience for everyone involved, it serves a crucial purpose in training. It is not a test of physical strength, but a test of mental strength and comradery within the group, creating a moment where "vulnerability meets interconnection" (Coyle 121). As you are suffering to carry the weight of the log, so are your groupmates; you are all experiencing this pain and struggle together, acutely aware of when someone makes a mistake and the group is forced to compensate for their shortcomings, while also holding yourself accountable to minimize your own shortcomings (Coyle 121). The point of this exercise is not to show off your individual strength or skill at maneuvering the log, but to force you to focus on the

rest of your team and how you can contribute to the group's success (Coyle 121). A similar training technique is used by the comedic school called the Upright Citizens Brigade, where all students are required to participate in an improve game called the Harold (Coyle 124). Like Log PT, the Harold is a dreaded event whose focus is to make you as uncomfortable as possible in order to assess if you can perform selflessly with your group (Coyle 127, 128). Comedians are forced to "disobey every natural instinct" and to instead find a way to work together with what they are given to create a cohesive performance (Coyle 128). Though it's easy to tell when a Harold goes wrong, it is also very difficult to explain the exact formula to getting it right; it all depends on the group. The common factor between these two dreaded tests of comradery are their results: if you can successfully complete Log PT or the Harold, you are almost guaranteed to be successful in your future career as a soldier or as a comedian because you have proven that you are not only selfless but also an extremely hard worker (Coyle 128). This success says less about your individual skillset than it does about your ability to work and succeed together with others.

In rugby, this skill is crucial: you need to be able to give yourself up to the group, both in a physical sense and a mental one. You need to be willing to push harder than you think you can and play with more guts than you knew you had, and know that everyone else on the field with you is doing the same. This feature of team culture has changed a bit within JMU Women's Rugby since my freshman year. The team used to embody this feeling, and we were extremely successful because of it. However, during the last two years there has been a change in overall team attitude, with people feeling less obligated to give their all. This has negatively impacted team performance to the point where we have lost (or nearly lost) games that we should have easily won. Contrastingly, it is very difficult to simulate this kind of connection in BAP, at least in the interactions that the majority of the members have with each other. At the BAP Annual Meeting, Project Run With It simulates some of this forced interdependence and discomfort by bringing together a group of individuals who have never met and asking them to put together a comprehensive proposal in a matter of days. This kind of environment facilitates a similar experience to that of the Harold and Log PT, but to a lesser extent. It also only applies to one member of

each BAP chapter, so the group connection that is created is not something that applies to the organization as a whole but only to that particular member and the people they worked with.

Listening to suggestions is another important characteristic of leaders addressed in the Navy SEALs example and that is often taken for granted. When we think of leaders, we think of them as the talkers: the speakers, lecturers, and demonstrators that are looked up to and listened to with enthusiasm and respect. However, listening is a two way street, and we accordingly see that successful leaders are not always the ones that talk, but are always the ones who listen. This is because when you're listening to someone, you are focused on the task of connecting to the person you are listening to, and this act of prioritizing someone else's thoughts and feelings creates an instantaneous connection between the two people involved (Coyle 157). Although one-on-one talking and listening is probably the most effective at creating this connection, it is probable that it can also be created through group conversations, as long as there are no interruptions and people feel comfortable enough to disclose their opinions. The development of this open environment all stems from the first step of creating vulnerability, especially among leaders. Once this is done, everything else is bound to follow.

Leaders who create vulnerability are often the most successful and the most memorable not necessarily because of their other individual talents, but because they excel at helping groups succeed together. Dan Cooper, who was a part of SEAL Team Six, has been noted as being one of the best leaders the group has ever known, not because of his individual skillset in any of the normal performance measures of Team Six, but because he was "the best at creating great teams" (Coyle 135). When asked about how he did it, his answer was simple: he created conditions where people felt comfortable communicating within the group and weren't afraid to question authority. This seems contradicting to the normal structure of the military, where respect for authority is one of the most important and notable characteristics of the group. However, Cooper emphasizes that while it is important to respect authority, it is equally as important to speak out against their decisions if you have experience that contradicts their expected outcomes (Coyle 140). Cooper actually experienced a situation like this where his opinion was ignored by a superior and it almost resulted in the deaths of everyone on the team (Coyle 138). So now,

Cooper makes it clear to his teams that they shouldn't be afraid to speak up during missions, and that he is willing to listen. He explicitly instructs them to question his plans and call him out if he is doing something wrong (Coyle 139, 140). He then emphasizes that this is the way they should conduct themselves at all times, with every decision that they or someone in their group makes (Coyle 140). A less blunt way of opening this channel of communication is demonstrated by Roshi Givechi, a designer at IDEO who uses her talent for conversation to guide teams to a feasible solution to their creative dilemmas (Coyle 149). She does this by being "soft and hard, [and] empathetic but also persistent," dedicating large amounts of time and patience until she has successfully guided the employees to a viable solution (Coyle 151).

Both BAP and rugby struggle to effectively open a channel of communication within the organization in the way that Cooper and Givechi do in their respective groups. In rugby it is clear that there is a hesitance to ask questions for the fear of looking stupid or simply for a lack of understanding about the questions to ask. For example, some people have little to no experience with rugby and don't understand the basic structure of the game yet, let alone how to properly ask a question about the things they don't understand about the game. Additionally, the coach and captains can come off as intimidating during practices and even outside of practice, so many people (despite a persistent effort by the captains to get people to ask questions) refrain from expressing their confusion. As time goes on some of this hesitance usually fades and people get comfortable enough on the team to express their concerns and gain an understanding that rugby is a complicated sport and there is always something new to learn. However, even as people become more confident asking questions about the game, they are still uncomfortable for the most part in questioning the leaders' decisions, for the reasons mentioned above about their intimidating nature. This is something that rugby could definitely improve on by having the leaders expose their vulnerability by admitting to mistakes as they happen. BAP seems to struggle with this because there are not a lot of opportunities to question the decisions of the leaders, since most of the organizational decisions are made by the executive board and faculty advisors and are simply communicated to the members, if they are communicated at all. Additionally, there is not a lot of contact

between members and exec outside of their brief and limited interactions at the professional meetings. However, members do not hesitate to highlight the mistakes of an executive officer by bringing up discrepancies in their recorded professional or service hours, and I'm sure in that case the executive officer would admit they were at fault. In addition, I had a conversation with a faculty advisor a couple of weeks ago about how she screwed up the hotel reservations for the regional meeting and the group almost didn't have a place to stay. I would have to argue, then, that at least within the leadership of BAP there is an open channel of communication among most of the group. In the rest of the organization, though, the channel of open communication is limited at best.

One way to help ease the issue of closed communication could be to find a way to temporarily eliminate the leader from the equation. Having ordinary members of the organization take control of a practice or a meeting could prove to be extremely effective in creating a successful team culture and in communicating to the faculty advisors and other leadership figures that they are capable of doing things themselves. This would inspire mutual respect from both parties involved and could help to generate a conversation of effective feedback. Both the Spurs and the All-Blacks employ this method, and both of their teams have proven that they can play just as well, if not better, when they are forced to figure things out on their own (Coyle 167, 168).

### **Skill #3: Establishing Purpose**

The third and final skill fundamental to creating a successful group is establishing a purpose for the entire organization to get behind. In practice, this is much easier said than done. At Johnson & Johnson, president James Burke struggled to determine if their founders' Credo was still relevant to their mission (Coyle 174). Once determining that this Credo was still relevant to what they aimed to achieve as a corporation, Burke reincorporated the credo into the lives of Johnson & Johnson employees, holding challenges for employees at all levels of the company to create a feeling of purpose and motivation that was centered around the goal of helping every employee to embrace the credo (Coyle 174). This company-wide movement would become vital to their survival seven years later when the Johnson &



Johnson product Tylenol caused public panic after a batch was laced with cyanide (Coyle 174). The incidents appeared to be isolated to a single city (Chicago), but the company's reputation was still on the line. Burke and the other higher-ups of the company faced a major decision: recall the contaminated batch and continue to sell the clean batches to maintain some of their profit, or recall all of their Tylenol batches and rebrand themselves as a trustworthy brand in the eyes of the public. Their decision was easy. Against the advice of both the FBI and the FDA, they "ordered an immediate national recall of every Tylenol product on the market... at a cost of \$100 million" (Coyle 176). With such a large cost at stake, many wondered how this decision could have been so easy. The answer was in the Johnson & Johnson credo: "We believe our first responsibility is to doctors, nurses, and patients; to mothers and fathers and all others who use our products and services" (Coyle 176). In this make it or break it moment, Johnson & Johnson stayed true to the mission they worked so hard to embody, and it ended up being the crucial decision that pulled them through the crisis and which allowed them to stay relevant in the public's eyes into the present day.

Purpose is established based on organizational goals, but how does a group create a goal that can be embraced by the entire organization? Leaders are the main facilitators of the purpose discussion, since they (in theory) have the best understanding of the group and where it is going. However, they need to ensure that the mission that they are pursuing (which will likely be the basis for the organization's purpose) accurately reflects what the organization is doing; otherwise, they should make an effort to alter their mission so that it reflects their activities and goals as an organization before building their purpose off of it. They also need to keep in mind that the function of a purpose is to create a "beacon that focus[es] attention and engagement on the shared goal" of the organization (Coyle 180). One way that this is done is by rigorously searching for new ways to frame the company's story: how did they arrive where they are today, and how do they plan to pursue their goals for the future (Coyle 180). This is often done by developing high-purpose environments (Coyle 180). A high-purpose environment can be described as a culture that is comprised of small but important signals that connect the present-day organization with where it wants to be in the future (Coyle 180). It has been proven that although this decision is made by

the organizational leaders who may be distant from the general members of the organization, the members of the organization are surprisingly responsive to the “pattern of signaling” that is created in a high-purpose environment (Coyle 180). With this piece of knowledge in mind we can begin to discuss how this link is established throughout an organization.

Motivating group members to embrace and follow an organizational purpose is easier said than done, but it is also much easier to do than most people think. This is because research has shown that motivation (long believed to be something that you’re born with) is not intrinsic, but is created by focusing one’s attention on where they are now and where they want to go (Coyle 182). In an organization, this future could be almost anything, from doing better on a particular performance measure to expanding the organization. The most important characteristic of successful and motivated organizations is that there is a link between where the organization is and where it wants to go, and that this future goal is shared and embraced by all members of the group (Coyle 182).

This characteristic can be seen in an experiment where teachers were told that certain children in their classes had “unusual potential for intellectual growth” while others did not (Coyle 185). These children were actually selected at random, but at the end of the year it turned out that the “special” students performed better than the ones who were said to be average (Coyle 185). This result may come as surprising at first, but the study showed that by giving the teachers a future goal of these students being more successful than the average student, an alignment was formed between the teachers’ “motivations, awareness, and behaviors” and changes took place accordingly in their warmth, input, response-opportunity, and feedback (Coyle 185). To elaborate, the teachers made small unconscious changes in their behavior towards these students: being kinder to them, giving them more practice material and opportunities to participate in class, and giving them the benefit of the doubt when they made a mistake (Coyle 186). These little changes in behavior proved to be extremely impacted to the students’ success, giving them increased opportunities to thrive in their class even if they weren’t stellar students to begin with (Coyle 186). This experiment also suggests that the teachers themselves were able to summon their untapped potential, since they were now motivated to perform well to help their students perform well;

therefore, all types of teachers could have successfully achieved this performance if they received the right motivator. The same result was found among employees at a struggling call center, whose performance increased by 142% in time spent calling and 172% in weekly revenues, all because they were introduced to a student who received a scholarship based on the donations generated from their calls (Coyle 187). This interaction gave the employees a “clear beacon of purpose”, which motivated them increase and improve their efforts and resulted in an overall improvement in performance (Coyle 187).

A difference found between BAP and women’s rugby is the extent to which each organization pursues a shared goal or purpose. In rugby, everyone on the team is working towards the same goal of creating a successful team, though they take on different roles and responsibilities in order to pursue this goal. The players work hard in practice and in games to ensure the team plays well enough as a whole to continue to advance throughout the season; meanwhile, the executive team works behind the scenes to schedule games, make travel plans, and ensure the club has enough funds to pursue all of the opportunities the team earns during the games. So even though members on the team contribute in different ways to the overall goal, both the active players and the executive board are actively pursuing the goal of a successful season. However, it should be noted that the official purpose of the women’s rugby team is to allow women to participate in the sport of rugby. Although the team has obviously done well in fulfilling this purpose (it does allow women to participate in the sport of rugby), it doesn’t do justice to the goals that are pursued by the organization. The team usually sets weekly and semester-long goals, which usually consist of short-term goals that are skill based (i.e. passing, rucking, tackling) and long-term goals that are performance based (i.e. making it to the fifteens national playoffs, making it to seven’s nationals, winning a certain percentage of our league matches). However, these goals are often not followed up on: weekly goals are sometimes reiterated during practice, but semester-long goals are usually not addressed again until the end of the season. This ignorance towards the team goals makes it difficult for the players to pursue them, since they are not usually incorporated into practices and it seems that no matter what our goals are we still focus on the same drills week after week.

In order to help channel success on the team with the performance of goals, I believe that the purpose of the organization should be redefined and then explicitly incorporated into the weekly practices so that players are constantly reminded of the team's goals for the future. In addition, the team should decide on one set of goals to focus on: either weekly goals or long-term goals. If the goals are going to be long-term, then we need to define the short-term actions that will lead the team to meeting that goal and then focus on those things during practice, all the while reiterating the long-term goal that has been put in place. If the team chooses to focus on short-term goals, then they should be consistently emphasized and not confused with long-term goals; rather, the long-term "goals" should be framed as long-term outcomes that the team has the potential to reach by achieving its short-term goals. This is the only way for the players to possess a clear outlook on the shared purpose of the team and their individual roles to go about making it happen.

In BAP, on the other hand, the main goal of the leaders of the organization differs from that of the ordinary members of the organization. BAP has a clear and defining purpose, and it is identifiable to most members of the organization: to capitalize on opportunities to networking with the professionals that visit from various firms in an effort to create a relationship that may aid in getting a job, as well as gaining exposure to essential soft skills that will help you in this future position. This is understandable since most of these members are only familiar with the professional and service events that BAP puts on, and not with the events that the organization participates in on the national level. The executive board, however, is familiar with the larger goal of the organization, which is to perform well at the regional and annual conferences and to maintain Gold status as a chapter. This is, after all, the underlying reason that the organization requires a certain number of community service hours from each member and hosts so many professional meetings throughout the year. However, very few people in the organization that do not hold executive positions are aware of this goal. Thus, even though the members are helping to contribute to the executive board's organizational goals, their pursuance of a separate goal makes it difficult for the organization to achieve a sense of cohesion and identity in terms of pursuing one

particular goal. Additionally, it is difficult to unite the members of a professional organization under a shared goal when, in fact, this goal pits them against each other for future employment with the firms that they encounter at the professional meetings. If anything, it seems like this shared purpose may unite members in the struggle for a job search and in taking similar courses, but also forces them to realize that their fellow members may be acquiring the soft skills presented in these meetings better than they are. Of course, the reaction to this kind of situation depends on the person: some would take advantage of the opportunity to get to know the peers who could potentially help them progress as professionals, while others may see the other members as a potential threat and may thus remain isolated. This could further explain the good and bad apple speculation from the previous section of the paper. However, please note that this is all nothing more than speculation, even though it is tempting to accept that this is why some members are more social with each other than others.

Even once a purpose is established, it cannot be assumed that this purpose will not change in the future. One of the main challenges of building purpose is that its “a never-ending process of trying, failing, reflecting, and above all, learning” (Coyle 228). In fact, learning velocity (the rate at which a group becomes efficient in performing a new skill) is one of the strongest measures of a group’s culture (Coyle 193). This was demonstrated by a group of hospitals that were learning to perform (insert surgery here) shortly after their leading surgeons attended a demonstration of the procedure. Many predicted that the larger hospitals would easily succeed, since they possessed the experience and the skill set of some of the best doctors in the world and could surely master the surgery with little to no difficulty. However, many of the smaller hospitals were actually the ones able to grasp the techniques of the surgery with ease, while many of the larger hospitals struggled. It was discovered that the reason for this dramatic difference between the hospitals’ performance was the signals that each hospital’s culture emitted concerning the connection between the surgeons and the purpose of their efforts (Coyle 195).

The five different types of signals found were framing (successful hospital teams saw MICS as a learning experience that would benefit patients and the hospital, while unsuccessful teams simply saw it as an add-on), roles (successful team leaders explicitly communicated the importance of individual roles

and why team performance was important; unsuccessful teams did not), rehearsal (successful teams took elaborate steps to prepare, practice, and communicate their understanding of the new procedure; unsuccessful teams practiced minimally), explicit encouragement to speak up (successful teams were encouraged to express their concerns, while the unsuccessful team members were not encouraged and were thus hesitant to speak up), and active reflection (successful teams discussed their performance between surgeries and suggested improvements; unsuccessful teams did not) (Coyle 195, 196). Sound familiar? They should; these signal types are almost identical to the characteristics of interaction in successful groups that were discussed in the preceding sections of this paper. Experience, surgeon status, and organizational support had little to nothing to do with the rate at which a team learned to successfully complete the surgery (Coyle 196); instead, it was all in the culture of the team, which directed their efforts towards the purpose of the task at hand. These signals may seem redundant, especially for surgeons whose job relies on their extensive knowledge and confidence in their own skills; however, these signals are still valuable because they helped the teams to identify the purpose of the procedure and to place trust not only in themselves but also in the team members that would be helping them do it (Coyle 197). These five signals are also the traits that define high-purpose environments.

In order to develop a high-purpose environment, it is essential to first attain an understanding of the skills that your group needs to perform, which will determine which of the two types of high-purpose environments describes your organization: high-proficiency or high-creativity (Coyle 199). High-proficiency environments are more concerned with providing a “well-defined, reliable performance”, while high-creativity environments are focused on facilitating the development of something new (Coyle 199); as it may be expected, there are different approaches for each of these methods (Coyle 199), so correctly defining your organization is very important to ensuring its success. High-performance environments are tuned into the fact that customer satisfaction lies in the overall performance of the organization’s goals, but customer loyalty comes from the little things, and it’s this loyalty that will ensure the organization has a strong base to support its long-term success. Danny Meyer, the owner of Union Square Cafe and twenty-three other successful restaurants, understood this point, and his

restaurants are praised for their skill in accomplishing the little things and making every guest feel valued. They remember important dates, seating preferences, and many other little details that are dependent on an “unbroken chain of awareness and action” within the organization (Coyle 202). Meyer developed this niche by ensuring that his employees’ number-one concern is “to take care of each other” (Coyle 204). To create a culture that encourages this, Meyer embraced the use of heuristics, which are simple rules that channel a group’s efforts towards their shared goal. He learned that the key to the successful implementation of heuristics is to “create engagement around [them]”, which he does through developing catchphrases that exemplify the group’s collective goal of creating a personalized dining experience for its customers (Coyle 212). He is constantly developing new catchphrases and testing them, keeping the ones that most strongly encourage team members to connect with each other (Coyle 212). Other leaders of high-efficiency groups have also picked up on the importance of defining and emphasizing “keystone behaviors” and subsequently “flooding the environment with heuristics” that connect the behaviors to the goals of the organization (Coyle 213). Tony Hsieh of Zappos also demonstrates the phenomenon of utilizing repetition to emphasize characteristics of the organization and, therefore, to create mindset shifts among employees that encourage them to start embodying these characteristics. “When an idea becomes part of a language, it becomes part of the default way of thinking.” It’s hard to explain how and why this process works, especially for Hsieh’s employees (Coyle 67), but nonetheless it has proven to be a successful method of bringing together the members of his organization.

The women’s rugby team can also be characterized as a high-performance culture, and is consequently more concerned with the team knowing what to do and how to act in a consistent and cohesive manner than their ability to be creative. The drills that we do at practice exemplify this, as they consist of running through motions of play and repeating them until we can successfully execute them. The heuristics referred to above are also common on the rugby field, and expressions such as “kick, kick, or go quick”, “and drive, two, three”, and “ready, ready, UP” serve as the catchphrases that encapsulate the behavior that is expected of the team during games. Similarly to Meyer, our coach is constantly

coming up with new drills and new phrases to help the players remember what to do in certain situations, which aids in easing the transition from being brand new to rugby to feeling confident playing in a game.

While performance-based groups like Danny Meyer's restaurants and the All-Blacks thrive based on this "purpose-building technique" that guides them from where they are to where they want to be, creativity-based groups thrive on the ability to orient themselves towards an "unknown destination", which still involves creating a culture where group members can be successful, but in a manner that is much more subtle and behind the scenes (Coyle 215). The leaders of successful creative cultures are often soft-spoken, observant, and introverted, and are more comfortable "talk[ing] about systems" than about organizational achievement (Coyle 215). These types of leaders can be thought of as "Creative Engineers" (Coyle 215); like performance leaders, they spend a lot of time observing their group, and coming up with ideas to facilitate success. However, they focus more of their time on creating conditions for creative compilation rather than teaching the techniques of perfecting performance. Thus, these cultures facilitate two different types of interaction: one that produces encouragement for the groups to learn from one another based on the organization's goals of providing a consistently good performance, and the other that produces a culture that encourages groups to challenge the typical way of doing things in order to discover new and inventive ways of achieving the organization's goals.

For example, Ed Catmull, the president and cofounder of Pixar, facilitates the creative interaction between his employee by giving them the space to figure things out for themselves, allowing top filmmakers to make painfully candid comments on the progress of films but not to make suggestions (Coyle 221). In this way, he ensures that he is building the confidence of his young filmmakers, but is also pushing them to their creative limits as they work together to create cinematic masterpieces that are unique but also relatable. Catmull's creative culture was so successful that Disney, who was struggling at the time to create unique and profitable films, acquired Pixar for the sole purpose of acquiring Catmull so that he could save them (Coyle 224). As they had hoped, Catmull was able to apply his skills to turn Disney around, and since then the company has generated consistently successful and creative films (Coyle 225, 226).



BAP could also be characterized as a high-creativity culture, since its organizational purpose is focused more on helping students discover for themselves how to be successful in the business world and what kind of service line they would like to pursue when they graduate. BAP doesn't necessarily create the cultural conditions for this kind of success, but it does facilitate success by hosting professional meetings that give students the opportunity to explore their options as well as learning the soft skills that will serve as a compliment to their business knowledge when they are applying and interviewing for jobs. The regional and annual meetings also encourage creativity, as they push members to elaborate on creative things that their chapter does to advance the well-being of its members and the chapter as a whole. Since the presentations are also judged in a competition, the regional and annual presentations motivate participants to give their best efforts and to prove that they have what it takes to go above and beyond what the national branch of the organization requires of them.

The paramount difference between proficient and creative cultures is that proficient cultures require that people know and feel exactly what they need to do to succeed, while creative cultures require that people discover what they can contribute on their own (Coyle 222, 223). An analogy for understanding this point is that the leaders of proficient cultures act as a lighthouse that directs "signals of purpose" to its members, while leaders of creative cultures act as the engineers of a ship, creating the conditions of success for a much larger body of people (Coyle 223). As mentioned earlier in this section, the women's rugby team definitely relies on ability of its players to follow the lighthouse method, using their shared goals to guide them to the way to succeed. Dissimilarly, BAP focuses more on designing a system that facilitates success without necessarily telling its members how to get there.

Catmull also exemplifies the particularly special trait exemplified by good leaders and touched upon earlier during the discussion of vulnerability: the ability to admit and take advantage of failure. When a moment of crisis occurs, successful groups use the crisis to fine tune their purpose (Coyle 228). Rather than dwelling on these failures as negative experiences, successful group leaders look back on them with "gratitude" and "nostalgi[a]", recognizing that without these failures, it would have been impossible to grow into the organizations that they are today (Coyle 228). Catmull lives for the moments

where he can admit that he made mistakes in designing the first multimillion-dollar building that served as the headquarters for Pixar (Coyle 217). In fact, he embraced this failure as an opportunity to reflect on the growth the organization has made since then rather than shaming himself for failing (Coyle 217). Without these failures, Catmull never would have discovered that the goal for Pixar as an organization, and for him as its leader, was not to put out a good film, but to create an environment that expedites the process of identifying the problems that are inhibiting the filmmakers from making good films and fixing them so that they have the opportunity to succeed (Coyle 218). This isn't exactly what you would expect for an organization whose purpose is to produce films, but it has proved to make all the difference for Pixar, as well as many other successful organizations that rely on creativity-derived success. Meyer similarly experienced failure when establishing his now reputable restaurants, in regards to how to create the signature cultural niche that now embodies them (Coyle 204). If it wasn't for this initial failure and the eventual recognition that it was employee interaction that was the driving force behind the restaurant's culture and performance, he never would have known to ensure that good interaction was taking place behind the scenes to maintain the organization and group understanding of transmitting information about customer preferences (Coyle 204).

Again, both rugby and BAP could do better in the ways that they approach their failures. Neither organization views failure in a positive light. In rugby, failures are seen as shortcomings of the team to reach their goals, and are not approached from a positive angle as learning opportunities until later on in the season. Because these failures are approached as a display of the amount of effort put in by the team, especially when they occur at practice, they can easily demoralize the team and make it much more difficult to get into the proper mindset to play the next game. BAP, on the other hand, has only had a few failures that it has acknowledged, but the most notable one that I can remember was the failure of the members who went to the regional meeting in the spring of 2017. While they should have been capable of putting together a presentation that at least placed in its category, the team that went used the travel opportunity to mess around rather than focusing on putting together and successfully presenting their topic. In fact, it is a miracle that they all made it to the venue and presented at all. While the faculty

advisors were obviously not very pleased with this performance and framed it in a negative light at the time, they also used the experience as a learning opportunity for the future and made sure that the team that represented our chapter this year prioritized the presentation and at least gave themselves a chance to place. If the failures from each of these organizations was framed in a more positive light, they would probably serve as a motivator for ordinary members of the group to step up and get involved without the fear of failure. Knowing that your leaders or role models have messed up as well makes it much less intimidating to step into their shoes and take the risk of messing up as well. If anything, this can only benefit the organization as a whole, since it trains younger members to let go of their fears and become the next leaders.

Although there are many other challenges that are essential to creating a successful organization, the most important factor in facilitating success is sustaining the group that is expected to attain it. It is impossible for a group to succeed without the help of everyone involved, so it is crucial that the entire group demonstrates healthy relationships; as long as this is true, the rest will follow (Coyle 229). Even if a group does attain success, it should not be assumed that this success will last; as mentioned at the beginning of this reflection, culture is sustained by constantly adapting it to changing environmental conditions, and these changing conditions may just as easily alter the organization's purpose and structure. Therefore, many leaders of successful groups follow the practice of "productive dissatisfaction", which requires a suspicion of success and an assumption that their way of doing things is not the only way nor the best way, but just the way they happened to stumble upon (Coyle 230). As a result, these leaders are not afraid of change, but embrace it, and rather than assuming they have all the answers, they are the first to ask for advice or clarification (Coyle 230). These traits are what allow them to sustain their success: staying aware of their surroundings and understanding that the world is constantly changing makes it possible for them to inspire the same changes in their organizations.

In BAP, the outlook on the relationship between the leaders of the organization and the members is that it is one of mutual benefits. If the member is not benefiting the organization (i.e. not earning their hours, not paying their dues, or not taking the professional aspect of the organization seriously), the exec

team and faculty advisors will not hesitate to kick this person out of the organization and cut them off from the benefits that BAP provides in terms of connecting with firms and teaching applicable skills. This cutthroat relationship is not necessarily healthy, but because most of the members of the organization are not necessarily close with one another, it makes it easy to cut out the people who are bringing the organization down. However, if having deadweight members is such a concern, it may be smart to make the candidacy process and membership requirements more rigorous, or to stress the organization's additional purpose of recognizing excellent performance in accounting, finance, and CIS students, so that the number of students who are interested in joining decreases and those that do decide to join are more motivated to fulfill the requirements and become productive members of the organization. I would argue that in recent years BAP has also learned to be wary of their organizational success, considering the less than satisfactory performance at regionals last year that was followed by a disappointing classification as a superior chapter rather than gold due to a technicality.

In rugby, the relationships that are created between team members are much healthier and often stronger than those created in BAP. This is not a dig at the professional organization as much as it is an acknowledgment of the inherent differences between it and the women's rugby team. However, these close relationships make it much more difficult to eliminate members from the organization, since even if they are not active on the field anymore it doesn't mean that they are not still considered a part of the team. Many girls suffer injuries that take them out of the game for extended periods of time, but even when they can't play they still often show up to practice and team social events because the team's culture is such that once you have joined and shown that you are willing to put in the effort that it takes to become proficient at the sport, the team will accept you and treat you like family. Injuries and busy class schedules that conflict with practice times do not take away from that connection, but if anything they enhance the relationship when the person in question shows up again simply because they miss their friends. The benefit of this tight-knit culture is that it shows on the field, and contributes to the team's success just as much as skill and experience does, if not more so given that by showing your teammates

you trust them to give everything that they can and respect them for doing so, they are much more likely to perform well, even if they don't know what they're doing.

A major place where the rugby team falters, however, is in its outlook on success. When I joined the team, we were lucky in that we had a large number of talented players that were willing to work for their success and do whatever it took to get where they wanted to go. We attended a national championship during my freshman year, and placed second in the nation for sevens rugby in the year before. With this success in mind and a large incoming freshman class that was just as dedicated, it seemed unlikely that this success would fade over the years. Yet somehow, it did. It took only two years for the success that once characterized the organization to be replaced with a streak of disappointing performances that began in my junior year and continued through the fall of my senior year. At first we attributed this failure to a loss of talent with the most recent class of graduating seniors, but in reality it was also due to a loss of drive. We were so used to being successful that we forgot what it was like to work for that success, and realized that it was much more difficult to do so with the increased workload that comes along with advancing in college. We took the hardest workers on our team for granted, and once they were gone, the team culture began to fall apart. It took the team up until the beginning of this spring to realize that the culture needed to change, and now (finally) it has begun to turn back to what it was before. Although we are not there yet, it is encouraging just to know that the culture is and will continue to improve, and that hopefully our past success will be reborn in the future generations of JMU women's rugby.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

All things considered, both Beta Alpha Psi and JMU women's rugby exemplify a large number of the traits that are attributed to successful cultures, though each of the organizations demonstrates these characteristics in distinctive ways. Some of these differences are a result of the different purposes that each organization pursues, with one generating a high-proficiency culture and the other creating a high-creativity culture. Others are a result of the structural differences in the organizations, with one adhering

to the formal requirements of a national professional organization and displaying the same formalities in many of its decisions, and the other adhering to the requirements of a governing body that is constantly evolving with the growth of the sport. Others still result from the leadership structure of each organization, with one that follows a formal structure but has the privilege of being rather relaxed due to a reliable source of funding resulting from the organization's reputation in the professional world, and the other which requires much more attention and collaboration in regards to financial decisions due to its precarious situation as a self-funded club. That being said, both of these organizations, despite their differences, have thrived for the most part in their respective fields. They have also demonstrated that their success is a result of cultures that embody at least some of the characteristics that Daniel Coyle describes in *The Culture Code*; however, as this paper has discovered, not all of these characteristics are necessarily applicable to both of the organizations, though most can be identified in one way or another.

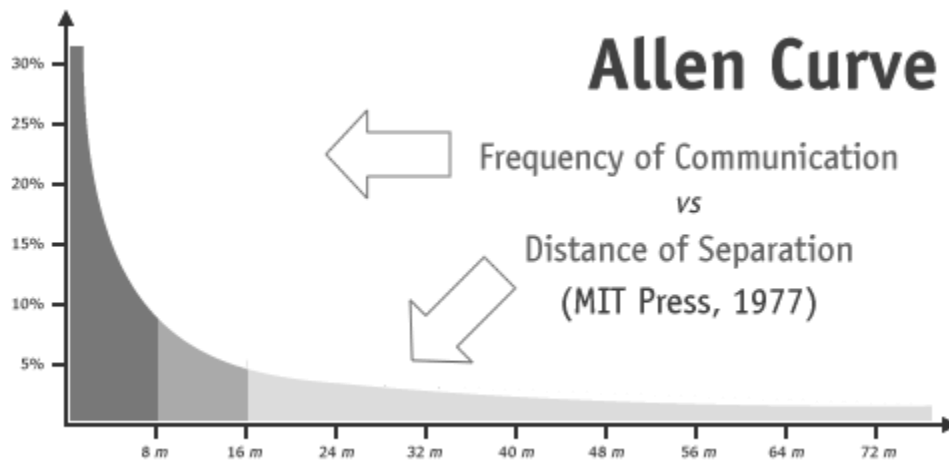
As to the extent in which the my role as an executive officer in each of these organizations executes the roles of a true leader, in respect to Coyle's descriptions of successful leaders, I would argue that my responsibilities as treasurer directly contribute to each of the purposes of the two organizations, and that, therefore, a true leadership role is fulfilled. As treasurer of Beta Alpha Psi, I reconciled the bank statements and keep an eye on the organizational funds to ensure that we could continue to host firms at professional meetings and provide opportunities for our members to grow and develop professionally as they begin to follow their own paths to a successful future. In addition, I participated in the same professional meetings and service events as the other members, and even performed the menial work of setting up professional meetings on numerous occasions. I showed vulnerability by admitting to both firms and members alike that I was behind on setting up and uncertain as to how we were going to start the meeting on time. I also showed respect for even the lowest-ranked members of the organization (the candidates) by reaching out to them before I deposited their checks to admit that I had put it off for too long but wanted to make sure that I did not cause an overcharge on their accounts. I think that I have gone above and beyond to demonstrate the traits of leadership that Coyle describes in *The Culture Code*, and would argue that I do embody the traits of the leader of a successful creativity-based organization.

As treasurer for JMU women's rugby, I reconciled bank statements, created budgets, set dues, reserved vans and hotels, and kept an eye on the bank accounts to ensure that the women's rugby team had the funding they needed to continue to pursue their opportunities to grow as a team in the future. I also established an updated system for budgeting and keeping track of expenses, along with setting up a team Venmo account to enhance the team's ability to receive money and pay it back, as needed. In this way, I have created a system that can continue to be used year after year, and can also easily be updated as things change. My work will thus allow the team to continue to improve the skills that they need to be successful as a culture, and will hopefully encourage treasurers in the future to continue to save until the team doesn't have to worry about financial stability anymore. In addition, I also attended nearly every practice save for the ones where a conflict presented itself, was present at all team meetings, and was present at all executive board meetings. I was transparent with the team about my methods of budgeting and setting dues, and worked with each player to establish a plan that worked best for them. I showed my vulnerability through many tears, both at practices and during the games. I also showed respect for the efforts of my teammates, and made sure to give them the encouragement and courtesies that they deserved. All in all, I would argue that I have provided an excellent example of a leader for a successful performance-based organizational culture based on Coyle's description of such in *The Culture Code*.

Although both Beta Alpha Psi and JMU women's rugby still have a lot of room for improvement within their respective organizations, and even though neither may ever fit perfectly into Coyle's depiction of a successful organizational culture, I have no doubt that both will continue to grow and thrive as organizations that will eventually attain the level of success that they are meant to achieve. I can only hope that I have not seen the best days of these two organizations, and that one day I will be able to return to JMU to find that both of these organizations have continued to evolve and succeed in ways that I cannot even imagine now.

## Figures

**Figure 1:**



<http://www.broadstuff.com/archives/2782-Allen-Curves-and-Social-Media-Plus-ca-Change.html>

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