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Drake, R., Crawford, J., & Rohrbacher, C. (2014). Instituting Large Scale Change at a Research Intensive University: A Case Study. *Management Education: An International Journal*, 13(1). Retrieved from <https://commons.erau.edu/publication/1018>

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Instituting Large Scale Change at a Research Intensive University: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses Bolman and Deal's four analytic frames to examine the difficulty of instituting large-scale change at one research-intensive university. In this case, the partially successful attempt to implement a new curriculum for undergraduates at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is explored. The authors theorize that if an institution is to attempt a far-reaching, innovative transformation, it must have consistent leadership and the commitment of middle managers. Otherwise well-crafted plans are doomed to meet resistance.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCA&T) is an historically black, high research university located in Greensboro, North Carolina. Established in 1890, the land grant university confers bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees. Currently serving 9,000+ students, it graduates the largest number of African American engineers and psychology undergraduates. In 2006, after four years of planning, NCA&T launched an interdisciplinary general education curriculum under a new division, University Studies (UNST). UNST was a skill based core curriculum built upon the principles found in the Association of America's Colleges and University's Liberal Education and America's Promise document and modeled on Portland State University's University Studies program. On campus, UNST was quite

controversial; perceived as “negatively” effecting colleges and departments by absorbing many introductory courses. The animosity was also prevalent with some faculty who believed that its implementation was rushed.

The reform at NCA&T was due to problems with the elective, or distributive model, most notably the lack of assessment and insufficient course offerings. There were also unsatisfactory retention rates; only 68.9 percent of students admitted in 2005 returned in 2006 (RGP Rates, NC A&T). According to research (Johnston, et al. 1991; Twombly 1992), most students in the distributive model often perceived little connection between required general education (or GE) courses and education related to their career aspirations, thus little satisfaction in them. Astin (1993) concluded that the "true-core" interdisciplinary approach had a significant and positive effect on student outcomes and satisfaction (425). Subsequently, NCA&T decided to address concerns within their own GE curriculum with a complete overhaul of its structure.

However, this change was not only curricular, it was cultural—a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. UNST was the first significant general education change in the institution’s history, and NCA&T’s strong sense of tradition was affected by the radical general education curriculum revision. Changes affected every aspect of the institution and threatened the stability and cohesion of existing and accepted structures. This, in turn, affected morale and fostered resistance among the administration and faculty. In 2010, UNST was jettisoned for a return to an elective based general education curriculum.

Using Bolman and Deal’s (2008) influential text on reframing organizations, we attempt to deconstruct the implementation of the new general education program and hypothesize why it failed. In *Reframing Organizations* these scholars developed four frames to analyze how institutions function: the structural frame, the human resources frame, the political frame, and the symbolic frame. We use each of these frames in turn, but from them all two critical points of

interpretation or lessons emerge. The first is that resistance to change in the cultural context of A&T led to failure. HBCUs in general are very conservative and have tight communities. UNST came to be regarded as a set of outsiders (although its staff had many ‘insiders’ and its plan was created by ‘insiders’). The second lesson is that institutional leadership failed to guide the change to UNST. The political factors that may affect responses to change include political ideology, processes of government formation, lobbying groups that influence or restrict response to change, state of system, and political stability or instability (Szabla & Sanders 2012). In 2006, Chancellor Rennick instituted the new curriculum then left the university and the next two Chancellors held the position, but were “outsiders” who did not understand the culture; therefore, no positive change was attained. The President of the North Carolina system recognized the instability and appointed Chancellor Harold Martin in 2009. Chancellor Martin was a graduate and a previous faculty member of NCA&T, so many in the community automatically supported him as an “insider.” In regards to UNST, he reversed course.

A brief disclosure is warranted. As researchers studying our own institution, it is important to situate ourselves within the organization. This type of research is considered “inside research” or sometimes referred to as “endogenous research” (Trowler 2011). While we have attempted to stay neutral in our analysis, it would be disingenuous to say that we could completely distance ourselves from these experiences.

THE STRUCTURAL FRAME

The structural frame examines how an organization’s goals, policies, and managerial structure work to create strategies and direction in a complex and challenging environment. Here, organizations structure themselves by allocating “responsibilities to participants” to accomplish complicated tasks. However, according to Bolman and Deal, “problems arise when structure is

poorly aligned with current circumstances” (14). For them, the FBI and CIA’s historical lack of coordination and cooperation during times of crisis—like the assassination of JFK and September 11—were good examples of poor alignment. Because each organization reports to different areas in the US government and have overlapping responsibilities, it was common for them to work at odds with each other and against the goals of the nation as a whole (2008, 14). This example is especially appropriate for our analysis of NCA&T because the two independent divisions discussed here, UNST and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), had overlapping responsibilities while acting independently of each other—in many ways both organizations worked at odds with the mission of the university. To get a closer look at what happened at NCA&T, it is helpful to look at some of Bolman and Deal’s “assumptions [that] undergird the structural frame” (2008, 45).¹

The goals for the university are to educate and graduate students with the appropriate skill-set. As a subset of the institutional goals, the objectives for UNST were to provide general education and a transition into the major for all incoming A&T students. However, this was a goal that previously resided with the CAS. As such, CAS lost much of its reason for being to UNST in a restructuring that many in CAS did not want to occur. In CAS, departments such as English and Physics led to a call for a return to the old general education curriculum.

The creation of UNST really was an attempt to “increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization” (47). By having a unit that focused on general education, the university was embracing some of the best practices in higher education. However, because of a lack of funding, UNST could not hire enough faculty to run the program. As such, UNST could not operate without CAS. In this way, the dean of CAS was able to starve UNST of needed help when he refused assistance in staffing GE courses. Requests from the dean of UNST for

assistance were frequent and increasingly directed up the administrative ladder. However, these requests were ignored by the many A&T provosts and chancellors from 2005-2010.

While there was coordination and control within each of these divisions, there was very little coordination between the divisions and a lack of control from above. As a result, the efforts and energies of faculty and administrators in UNST and CAS were wasted on interdivisional conflict and was exemplified by the competing deans' attitudes towards each other and their respective divisions. Here, divisional meetings were often used to discuss ways to "win" this conflict that seemed to have become "personal." Indeed, both deans retreated into the rigidity of their own positions while they vied for control of general education. And, while both worked to get support for their agenda up the administrative ladder, neither could budge the largely indifferent cast of provosts and chancellors to take a stand. Students and student learning had become irrelevant.

THE HUMAN RESOURCE FRAME

Bolman and Deal's human resource frame centers on what organizations and people do for one another (2008, 117).² As they explain, organizations need people for their energy, effort, and talent and people need organizations for the rewards they offer; however, these are not always aligned. When not aligned both suffer – individuals may feel neglected or oppressed, and the organization may "sputter" due to withdrawn employees or even resistance.

The university was in a difficult position: The new division seemed to cleave the campus with detractors on one side and UNST and its supporters on the other. Both camps felt ignored and were upset with the change process. The revolving door of leadership heightened the sense of instability and frustration. Four chancellors and five provosts made it difficult for the university to come together. When discussing change, Hargreaves notes the first "pillar of

change” is an inspiring and inclusive vision. He says what “bears the weight of change” is not policies and interventions, but rather it is people working together around a “shared and compelling purpose” (2008, 22). Without that focus the campus could not come together and work for a common goal.

Without a supportive administration, it was difficult for the new division to get the much needed support and collaboration from other areas on campus. Rice found it significant that faculty must move from a “my-work” individualistic approach to an “our work” collaborative approach for a large-scale change to work (2006, 12). Since most outside the new division refused to get involved in the process, UNST was never seen as “our work.”

MacGregor claimed that the assumptions, X versus Y, that managers hold concerning their employees might cause managers to treat employees in particular ways. Specifically, Theory X assumptions include employees are “passive, lazy, have little ambition, prefer to be led, and resist change” (as qtd. in Bolman & Deal 2008, 125). Conversely, Theory Y managers “arrange conditions so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing efforts towards organizational rewards” (126). Internally, UNST was structured with an overall Theory Y management approach.

While establishing clear goals and outcomes, the Dean of UNST was a Theory Y manager swimming in a Theory X ocean. He delegated a great deal of responsibility to team leaders. Typically team leaders encouraged team members to develop and implement strategies to achieve their goals. While theory Y worked for the Dean and team leaders within UNST, when interacting with other areas of the university the faculty encountered more leaders employing theory X. Historically, HBCUs have been criticized for the lack of faculty governance and impact on policy decisions—a hierarchical institution (Guy-Sheftall 2006). In a hierarchical

organization, the typifying leadership style exemplified by departmental chairs in academe often relies on a parental, power-coercive (Chin & Benne 1961) approach to faculty. This is not a knock on this style, which as Minor (2005) notes, is “partly responsible for the survival and progress of some (HBCU) campuses in a national climate that has often been hostile to the values HBCUs represent.” It is also important to note the socio-cultural factors that may affect the university. The university is an HBCU with a robust Christian population. One professor shared her impression concerning the lack of power historically for African Americans saying when power is achieved, people tend to hold onto it (personal communication, Nov 14, 2011). Further she noted that HBCUs in general are very conservative and have tight communities (personal communication, Nov 14, 2011) which may have significantly affected how the recipients reacted to the change.

Interestingly, in this situation the strong leadership faculty were generally accustomed to was absent when it came to implementing UNST on campus. Guy-Sheftall (2006) states that changes in institutional culture often produce discomfort, even tension, among faculty members who have learned how to navigate hierarchical, president-centered environments by negotiating for their needs on an individual or departmental basis with presidents or provosts. In this instance, faculty were neither asked nor told to support UNST, so those who were against the change aired their animus in a variety of forums including campus meetings and committees.

Cheng (1995) proposed the exercise of paternalistic leadership is highly personal in nature; that is, the boss does not treat all subordinates the same but routinely categorizes subordinates into in-group and out-group members. When UNST was created, it is understandable that other departments would see the UNST faculty as an out-group. The problem of developing a new area comprised of various courses that were once discipline

specific was further compounded by a leadership style that seemingly preferred one group over the other. Many UNST faculty members and other supporters looked at administration's inaction and lack of assistance when UNST was "under attack" as essentially an assault on them personally and professionally. Thus, faculty members felt marginalized by the administration.

Individuals who are faced with competition or recognize others as a threat form in/out-groups. Threat can be perceived in terms of the in-group's social identity, its goals and values, its position in the hierarchy, even its existence (Riek et al. 2010). For example, competing for limited resources could be classified as a realistic threat (Hewstone et al 2002). In this case, when UNST was created, departments were negatively affected because they lost faculty, students, and control over their general education courses.

Sherif et al. (1961) regarded cooperative interdependence as a mediator of changes in attitude and behavior. They believed cooperation produced positive attitudes toward out-group members, but competition created more unfavorable attitudes (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami 2003). According to Sherif et al. (1961), when groups compete, one group realizes positive outcomes while the other faces negative consequences. The structure that was created within the university established UNST as a competitor to established departments rather than as a partner. This type of situation essentially creates "a win-lose, zero-sum competitive relation between groups can initiate mutually negative feelings and stereotypes toward the members of the other group" (Dovidio et al. 2003, 9).

THE POLITICAL FRAME

This new curriculum affected all aspects of the institution by giving it a new vision and deep structure, thus the change was episodic in nature. Faculty representing every discipline, chairs, directors, students, and administrators wanted to have input into the new curriculum. While

revising a core curriculum would be a challenge under normal circumstances, moving to an interdisciplinary model had unique issues: departmental loss of a number of courses; overcoming anger concerning turf and departmental budget losses; establishing collaboration between disciplines; and establishing new assessment tools to create a new teaching and learning culture. When created, the division took power in the form of prestige and resources from other units. It was not able to maintain itself in what became an increasingly hostile arena, losing allies over time.

Organizations are best viewed not as formal and static hierarchies, but rather as freewheeling coalitions. In coalitions, there is tension between authorities trying to exercise control and partisans who try to work a system to get what they want. “Viewed from the political frame, politics is the realistic process of making decisions and allocating resources in a context of scarcity and divergent interests.” As such, Bolman and Deal put struggle at the core of institutional decision making.³

NCA&T can be seen as a coalition with competing individuals and interest groups. Upper administrators, the established colleges and departments, the dean, faculty and staff of the new academic unit, and students were all stakeholders in the reform of the undergraduate core curriculum. The series of four chancellors and five provosts had an interest in order, harmony and demonstrable results. The established academic units feared the loss of student contact hours and salary lines. The folks in UNST wanted their positions to be secure and their reform mission to succeed. The students wanted to be treated well as customers of the institution.

As in the loss of the space shuttles *Columbia* and *Challenger*, imbalances of power and subsequent disruption of communication contributed to mission failure (Bolman and Deal 2008, 191-196). At NASA, engineers attempted to tell superiors of flaws in booster rocket design, but

were over-ridden by flight managers. In the spring of 2006, the faculty senate voted to delay the implementation of UNST, but it was over-ridden by Chancellor Rennick. He interpreted the vote as a delay tactic by opponents of the reform. In reality, the tight senate vote signaled a lack of confidence in UNST. Rennick's action lent credence to the claim that the new curriculum was 'imposed' on the campus by the administration, and not the product of four-years of consensus-building and faculty deliberation. To make matters, worse, Rennick left the university shortly after he insisted that UNST be launched as planned.

After Rennick's departure, cooperation began to break down. The interim chancellor, Dr. Lloyd V. Hackley, recognized the value of UNST and announced that it would be launched on schedule. The embryonic staff of UNST were scattered all over campus. Securing classrooms for teaching required constant phone calls to the building representatives in other units, resulting in confusion and sometimes outright denials. Even as the freshman class arrived the UNST faculty and staff scrambled to get rooms. Faculty resources became a bone of contention. One CAS department head announced to his faculty that he would not accept any more joint UNST appointments, "until we see where this thing is going." Chancellor Hackley held a forum where faculty critics of UNST denounced the newcomers. Despite a sound defense of the program by the chancellor, many opponents left unconvinced, supporters remained silent, and UNST folk saw that they were unwelcome. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences withdrew his teachers from UNST courses and told his faculty that their work for the new division would not count toward tenure in his college.

Despite the strong support of two chancellors, UNST met mounting resistance. "The usual mistake is assuming that the right idea (as perceived by the idea's champions) and legitimate authority ensure success," write Bolman and Deal. "This assumption neglects the

agendas and power of the ‘lowerarchy’—partisans and groups in midlevel and lower-level positions, who devise creative and maddening ways to resist, divert, undermine, ignore, or overthrow innovative plans” (2008, 235).

Some of the most important decisions about UNST dealt with resource allocation. On the eve of its launch, the new division had been given only three joint faculty appointments on the tenure track, two administrative assistants, an associate dean, and a dean. To redress this shortage, during 2007-2008, it received the lion’s share of new tenure-track positions, adding twelve. Most of these positions came with salaries that were higher than those of entry-level faculty in the established units. The dean of UNST justified his pay offers as just compensation given the job market and anticipated workload, and the upper administration backed him. The administrators and faculty of established units resented the salary imbalance. To them, the fact that these new hires were not joint appointments represented a loss. UNST also got dozens of adjunct instructor positions, especially to cover the freshman writing courses. The English department regarded these appointments as redundant.

Resource scarcity made conflict central and power the key asset. The established administrators made a bold political move. In the fall of 2007, the provost and the dean of CAS rewrote the contracts of the faculty hired by UNST. While their teaching commitments would remain in the new division, their tenure lines and promotion review would be in the established college. Most of the effected faculty of UNST disliked this new arrangement, and some questioned its legality. They took their concerns to the new, third chancellor, Dr. Stanley Battle, who nullified the arrangement. The UNST tenure-track teachers could choose either joint positions or to move completely into the new division. Most chose to have their tenure and promotion reside solely within UNST. From 2008-2010 they worked under their dean. In

essence, they countered a move that would have weakened him, made their careers difficult, and doomed the mission of reform. The political frame makes sense of these maneuvers:

“Authorities are the recipients or targets of influence, and the agents or initiators of social control. Potential partisans have the opposite roles—as agents or initiators of influence, and targets or recipients of social control” (Gamson 1968, 76). The teachers appealed to the upper manager to undo the policy of middle managers, a short term victory.

Chancellor Battle’s decision emerged from a struggle among key stakeholders, just as the political frame predicts. His settlement of the tenure-track issue did not end the campus conflict among partisans, however. It shifted the focus to the role of the dean of UNST, the apparent winner. The new division was scheduled for systematic assessment in 2009. An internal task force and an outside review panel gathered data and held a series of campus forums. UNST faculty members made the case for their work, established critics had their say, students expressed a dislike of UNST treating them as “guinea pigs,” but commended specific instructors and classes. Ultimately, although there was much praise of the division and its work, along with some fair criticism of its shortcomings, the review process condemned the leadership of its dean. He had become the lightning rod for A&T’s electrostatic tension. The fourth chancellor, Dr. Harold Martin, oversaw a structural realignment that eliminated the division of University Studies and moved its dean to a research position in 2010. The chancellor expressed a wish that the valuable teaching techniques, assessment protocols, and student-focus of UNST be preserved.

The dean of University Studies was unsuccessful in using his institutional power over the core curriculum. Bolman and Deal identify four key skills that a manager needs in order to master organizational politics: agenda-setting, mapping the political terrain, networking and

forming coalitions, and bargaining and negotiating (2008, 214). Within his division he did a respectable job in all four areas, but in the larger arena of the university, he succeeded only with the first skill, agenda setting. His strength in laying out the path for undergraduate instruction, however, severely undercut his ability to network, bargain, and get a read on opponents at A&T. Over the first three years of UNST, freshman-sophomore retention improved from 68.9% to 77.1%, exceeding the UNC system goal by five points (RGP Rates, NC A&T). Even though his people were getting the desired results, institutional rivals and would-be allies grew to dislike him. Chancellor Martin inherited a divided campus. The struggle over UNST itself was the first problem he sought to fix. “The structural frame, in particular, views conflict as an impediment to effectiveness” (Bolman and Deal 2008, 206). Chancellor Martin quashed the dis-unifying element in his coalition, removing the dean and liquidating his division.

“The political frame does not blame politics on individual characteristics such as selfishness, myopia, or incompetence. Instead it proposes that interdependence, divergent interests, scarcity, and power relations inevitably spawn political activity” (Bolman and Deal 2008, 194). The division of UNST failed to convince the larger organization of its value. It did not get and use power to its advantage, so it did not “win”.

THE SYMBOLIC FRAME

On February 1, 1960, four freshmen from North Carolina A&T initiated a sit-down protest at the segregated lunch counter in the Greensboro Woolworth’s store. Within four days 2000 people were engaged in non-violent direct action in the city against segregation. This event changed the freedom struggle in the United States from the moribund arenas of the courts and legislatures to mass protests in the street. The bravery, determination, and audacity of the A&T four towers

over the campus in the form of a colossal statue, its symbol of campus identity and pride. As an organization's culture is revealed by its symbols. At A&T, the sit-in cements the campus's identity as an HBCU. "Symbols stimulate energy in moments of triumph and offer solace in times of tribulation" (Bolman & Deal 2008, 252).⁴

In the case of University Studies, the new division came to represent for many on campus a negation of A&T as an educational institution. It was a remedial effort whose existence stood as a criticism of the faculty, staff, and administrators. Quite naturally, they resented it. By restructuring the curriculum, introducing new courses, new teaching methods, new assessments, and a set of new teachers, UNST represented a break with institutional tradition, not affirmation. The university's story line was broken, and some of its key players had changed. There was no effort to place UNST in line with existing campus student rituals. For newly hired instructors there was a lack of initiation rites. Most tenure track hires were "outsiders," and there was little effort to fold them into the strong A&T culture. Those who were not African-American threatened the integrity of the HBCU community. As individuals UNST faculty made some progress in connecting with others, but ultimately were marginalized on campus, despite the fact that they were the frontline instructors for all freshmen for five years.

Inside the division, instructors scrambled to meet the demands of teaching over 2000 students global understanding, analytical reasoning, critical writing, and an introduction to the African-American experience. One UNST administrator consistently said what most UNST teachers felt: "We were flying the plane as we built it," so they had little time to truly "integrate" into the culture. This metaphor captures the seemingly "rushed" or improvised nature of the change process. Indeed, faculty critics of UNST used it to condemn the program as haphazard and ill-conceived. However, facts did not support this view. UNST was working as a mode of

instruction. At the symbolic level, however, its success did not matter. Its deeper meaning, that A&T's old mode of instruction was insufficient, affronted the larger campus's sense of pride.

As meetings and forums convened to make adjustments for the new core curriculum, the symbolic tension of UNST was ever-present, sometimes breaking the surface as acrimony. Facing the uncertainty of broad change, the campus reversed the symbolic valence of University Studies from a welcome innovation of its own creation to an unwanted intrusion by outsiders. Some wags said that UN-ST stood for "unnecessary studies." The fact that the new division hired newcomers, many of whom were not African-American, made it easier to regard it as an unjustifiable break with tradition. Indeed, the polite phrase among black faculty who were concerned that too many white faculty are a problem at an HBCU is "non-traditional faculty." Some claimed that the dean of UNST was more comfortable with white people than "his own people." References to UNST as the "whitest division on campus," in the home of 1960 freshmen four, clearly placed the unit outside the bounds of institutional tradition.

Culture binds an organization. UNST disrupted the campus culture at A&T. Over time, opposition to it as a foreign element served as the greater unifying force in the realm of symbolism. It helped unite the majority of the campus around a common goal; namely, its elimination.

CONCLUSION

When reviewing UNST, two pictures emerged: One, a program that was successful by many statistical measures, including student satisfaction and retention; and the other, one that drew the scorn, perhaps even the hatred, of a sizeable portion of the institution's faculty and to a lesser degree its academic administration. By using Bolman and Deal's framework, there are a few conclusions that can be drawn.

First, institutional leadership failed to guide the change to UNST. This theme crossed over all four of Bolman and Deal's frames. There was a lack of transformative leadership that adversely affected content and context at every stage of the process. Liu (2008) explained the link between commitment to change and transformational leadership and commitment goes beyond just positive attitudes to include willingness to support and work for the change. At NCA&T, arguments for UNST were lost between its four different Chancellors from 2006 to 2009.

On a positive note, prior to UNST's implementation the participatory process was thoughtful and deliberate. Chin and Benne (1961) discussed normative re-educative change strategy as one that emphasizes participation of its members. Burke (2008) recognized consensus management was the most desirable for episodic change. The four-year process attempted to get all stakeholders involved before implementing UNST, thus it followed generally recognized positive strategies for change. However, structurally the lack of interdependence and collaboration between UNST and other areas on campus negatively affected its success.

Political coalitions formed to fight for resources (control of courses, student seats, tenure track lines, etc.) with the UNST instructors and their detractors splitting campus, many faculty were confused on what action to take. The dialectal model (two opposing forces that, ideally, would finally end up in synthesis) incorporates a constructivist mode that is unpredictable, thus those undergoing the change "face a high degree of uncertainty" (Van de Ven and Poole 1995, 523). Many campus faculty seemed wary of getting involved, especially with a lack of strong leadership. They ultimately let the "politics play out." Clearly, in and out-groups formed with the new division becoming the out group.

UNST met significant cultural resistance and become a symbol of the lack of participatory governance at the institution. Further, UNST became an affront to the institution's rich tradition and history. Even though the process was good for the institution, the administration miscalculated the amount of resistance. Burke (2008) said any change needs to be systemic, that everything must be addressed or the change will fail. Serrat (2009) discussed the importance of modifying the culture, the shared basic assumptions, beliefs, and values of an organization because employee emotional support needs to be present for change to be realized. NCA&T needed to address the culture to fully realize GE reform.

One administrator familiar with the entire process of UNST's creation, demise, and replacement wondered if the university community didn't have to experience these growing pains to accept and develop more modest reforms to its GE program. It could be a valid hypothesis that connects many of the conclusions drawn from each frame discussed here. However, it makes it seem that the end was inevitable, when in fact, the demise of this program came from a lack of awareness of the demands that change required of the leaders both in and outside of UNST--lessons that were learned the hard way.

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¹ The structural frame has six elements: Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives; organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization and a clear division of labor; structures must be designed to fit an organization's circumstance; appropriate forms of coordination and control ensure that diverse efforts of individuals and units mesh; organizations work best when rationality prevails over personal preferences and extraneous pressures; and, problems and performance gaps arise from structural deficiencies and can be remedied through analysis and restructuring.

² The Human resource frame has four major assumptions: Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the reverse. People and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent while people need careers, salaries, and opportunities. When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer. Individuals are exploited or exploit the organizations, both become victims. A good fit benefits both. Individuals find meaning and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed.

³ Their political frame has five key propositions: Organizations are coalitions of assorted individuals and interest groups; coalition members have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality; most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources—who gets what; scarce resources and enduring differences put conflict at the center of day-to-day dynamics and make power the most important asset; goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiation among competing stakeholders jockeying for their own interests.

⁴ Essentially the symbolic frame considers five premises: What is most important is not what happens but what it means; activity and meaning are loosely coupled; different people interpret events differently; facing uncertainty people create symbols to resolve confusion, find direction, and find hope; events and processes are more important for what is expressed than what is produced; culture binds an organization, unites people, and helps an organization accomplish desired goals.