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Frozen in Time? Exploring Faith-based Admission Standards in Christian Higher Education

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Abstract

Low enrollment is a significant problem in small Christian liberal arts colleges. It is my position that addressing the adaptive challenge of organizational identity will create an inclusive, accessible, and relevant faith-based college community which appeals to applicants and thereby grow enrollment. Drawing on process organization theory, situated learning theory, and adaptive leadership theory, I propose in this organizational improvement plan a change process enacted by a community of practice to foster sensemaking about organizational identity through college admissions work. This plan identifies portfolio-based admissions and critical policy analysis as ways to invite applicants to demonstrate their strengths; the approaches honour individual faith practice and foster a sense of belonging during the admissions process. The community of practice advances continuous improvement and innovation in the change implementation plan and creates space for varying degrees of stakeholder change readiness in the process.

Keywords: process organization studies, sensemaking, community of practice, portfolio admissions, adaptive leadership, change process model

Executive Summary

Accurate College is a private liberal arts college located in the midwestern United States. A challenge has arisen at the college amid ongoing tensions about its organizational identity which, to a degree, is embodied in faith-based admission standards. This issue is made urgent by declining college enrollments and a lack of applicants who meet the college's current admission criteria. I present an organizational improvement plan which addresses those declining enrollments through a postmodern leadership approach to change. By inviting stakeholders to consider how admissions processes and procedures shape thought and embody organizational identity, the plan addresses pervasive causes of low enrollment.

The primary problem of practice that must be addressed by Accurate College's Admissions Pathways Group is the gap between applicant faith practice and Accurate College's admissions policies which must attend to faith-based entrance criteria at the same time as fostering growth in enrollment. Three guiding questions must be addressed:

- What aspects of the admissions process can be re-envisioned to encourage applications from individuals within our faith community?

- How can assessment of faith-based admissions criteria be representative of individual spiritual growth?

- How can the admissions process foster a sense of belonging for individuals with an emerging interest in our faith community?

A post-modern, leadership-focused vision for change reclaims voices in the admissions process that have been hidden or driven underground by standardized religious adherence criteria. Two recent internal reports highlight the gap between the envisioned and current state of admission policies. The reports suggest that religious adherence criteria do not align with student

views of faith practice. In particular, the admissions criterion of church attendance forces applicants to be dishonest about their faith practice during the admissions processes and during their time at Accurate College.

I use a sensemaking approach to assess the college's change readiness, privileging a sense of readiness in which time is context dependent. Framing time as a social construct acknowledges that stakeholders differ in their sense of what time is the right time for change. Valuing varying degrees of change readiness, my leadership approach consists of a trio of theories designed to respond to what lies beyond Accurate College's present identity. Adaptive leadership theory, process organization theory, and the theory of situated learning together provide a conceptual framework for addressing the problem of practice. The conceptual framework is a change process that tests fixed notions of organizational identity and creates space for adaptive challenges to be identified and mutually defined.

The adaptive leadership process provides a foundation for change in the organizational improvement plan, integrating sensemaking and sensegiving in the interpretation phase, and a community of practice as the intervention phase. This approach provides a comprehensive conceptual model for the change process. A critical organizational analysis has led to a diagnosis of three key factors that must be addressed: Accurate College has an inelastic sense of identity; low enrollment has caused disequilibrium; and, the political landscape is fragmented. The adaptive leadership approach to change primarily supports a shift from viewing the college as a fixed entity to viewing it as a set of complex processes that provide avenues for a diversity of faith practice and a more elastic sense of organizational identity.

As a solution to the problem of practice, I propose in this organizational improvement plan a critical admissions policy analysis and a portfolio admissions process. These solutions can

be implemented in a community of practice, despite diverse stages of readiness in the community, to create plausible narratives of organizational identity. Breadth of stakeholder representation in the community of practice provides agentic momentum in the work and a non-hierarchical approach gives voice to diverse perspectives. The change implementation plan outlines the change process for the first year. It incorporates plan-do-study-act cycles to foster iterative testing of ideas and to allow for innovation to be gradually modified as the college's sense of organizational identity changes.

Regular documentation and communication is embedded in the change implementation plan and outlined in the transition plan. The implementation plan includes a detailed communication plan to build mechanisms for change. The communication tactics support stakeholders in making sense of their experiences of change and create an environment that people can comprehend, manage, and respond to as Accurate College enacts the change process. The communication plan is relational at heart; the network of stakeholder relationships is shaped by dialogue and negotiation among stakeholders.

Embracing a process view of change in the organizational improvement plan allows for progress and strengthens relationships. Honouring various change readiness perspectives informs the work of the community of practice and re-frames resistance as a strength which invites pause and reflection. The leadership approach creates agency for all community members as they come together to make sense of the college's identity. A future consideration to be explored is the role of the community of practice in defining outcome measures for success and, once the imminent threat of low enrollment has been addressed, what the future outcomes of the admissions process might be.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Barbara Fife, Larry Johnson, and Becky Cox for their guidance and inspiration; they are educators in the truest sense. I appreciate their responsiveness and support of my work in the years since I became their student. They are models I wish to emulate - I am grateful for the opportunity to acknowledge them.

I have the privilege of belonging to several communities of practice. I am grateful to the children, student-educators, and colleagues who embark on a community of practice way of being and organizing work. Working in this way has changed my life and provided an avenue to experience freedom.

I am also grateful for the support of my family: Jeremy, who embraces the opportunity to be a true partner; Olivia, who shows me how to live courageously; Fletcher, who models that strength and kindness might change the world; Maeve, whose intelligence and creativity inspire me every day; and Janet, who shares the voice of our parents in her encouragement and love.

This work is my prayer of educational leadership. I appreciate and acknowledge the inspiration which guides me in the work. In defining and facing the challenges at hand, I strive to give voice to the Goodness which gently assures me that we are not frozen in time.

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Acronyms

EAP   (Education at Accurate College [anonymized])

CHE   (Christian Higher Education)

HLC   (Higher Learning Commission)

PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act)

PSES   (Panel on Student Experience and Success)

SEFC (Student Experiences of Faith at Accurate College)

Definitions

Change readiness - an individual or group's beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully implement the changes.

Faith practice – An individual's self-identification with a faith community.

Organizational change – the redefinition of organizational goals and values, accurate anticipation of the changing needs of stakeholders, and adaptive responses to changes in the organizational environment.

Religious adherence – An individual's religious practices, such as church attendance.

Sensegiving– A social process wherein individuals disseminate information in formal and informal sources across organizational levels. This creates a shared understanding of the organization's identity during organizational change.

Sensemaking – A social process wherein individuals gather and transform input from formal and informal sources across organizational levels. This creates a shared understanding of the organization's identity during organizational change.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 introduces the problem of practice addressed in the organizational improvement plan by considering the institution's history, mission, and vision within the broader context of forces shaping the landscape of Christian higher education in the United States. It is argued that the gap between applicant faith practice and Accurate College's admissions criteria must be addressed to foster growth in enrollment. The chapter introduces defining questions to guide the work and develops a postmodern leadership vision for change.

Organizational Context

History, Mission, Vision

Accurate College is a private liberal arts college[1] located in the midwestern United States. Originating in 1897 as a homeschooling endeavor for the founder's young children, the institution has grown to offer educational programs for students from preschool through undergraduate levels. Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees are offered in 36 disciplines and fields including art history, languages, biology, mass communication, studio art, music, women's and gender studies, and engineering science. These areas of study are supported by academic programs including study abroad opportunities and NCAA Division 3 athletics. The institution has two campuses, one housing the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school facilities, and the other housing the liberal arts college. Both campuses are managed by a central administration and governed by a Board of Trustees.

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[1] Accurate College is an independent, private philanthropy maintained and supported by its friends and alumni and directed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees (EAP, 1979). In order "to avoid any concerns that may arise with government programs that may conflict with our mission" (College, 2019b, p. 3), Accurate College receives no state or federal funding.

Accurate College was founded with the express purpose of serving a Christian mission: "To serve [the Christian] Cause through the education of its young people is the school's only reason for existence" wrote the Board of Trustees in 1964 (EAP, 1979, p. ix). Accurate College envisions itself as

a Christian faith community of practice where all members are students, teachers, and healers. Through transformative opportunities, a challenging curriculum, and character education based on the teachings of the Christian faith, we examine, test, and strengthen our faith while developing the skills and understanding requisite for excellence. As global, outward-looking, inspired learners, we serve and better the world. (College, 2019b, p. 6)

Today, Accurate College welcomes all qualified students regardless of age, race, gender, or sexual orientation, and has a diverse student population. Its 391 students come from 31 countries (approximately 20% of the student body is international), and over 78% of the students are from homes that are more than 500 miles away from the campus. The male-to-female student ratio is 55:45 (College, 2019b).

Accurate College's mission is supported by twenty governing principles established in 1944 to guide the work of the institution. Each of the principles is deemed vital and fundamental to the institution's growth and continued well-being. After ninety days notice, policies may be modified or changed by a three-fourths vote by the Board of Trustees but, although they are regularly reviewed and discussed at Board of Trustee meetings (College, 2019b), they have remained unchanged since 1944.

Amid varied perceived challenges confronting American higher education today, Accurate College, like other American colleges, faces a particular crisis in programming in

liberal arts, as students turn away from this traditional area of study (Wells, 2018). Schneider & Sigelman's 2018 study notes that the number of undergraduates earning bachelor's degrees in some of the mainstay liberal arts subjects – English, history and philosophy – fell by at least 15 percent between 2008 and 2016, even though the total number of bachelors rose 31 percent during that time (p.5). As noted in the Hechinger Report (2018), "pressed by students, parents and legislators to save money and show the return on their high tuitions, universities are jettisoning entire liberal arts programs or staff in favor of majors perceived to lead more directly to jobs" (Marcus, 2018, para. 11). Accurate College mirrors this national trend as students move away from enrolling in liberal arts programming - leading to an unsustainable draw on the college's endowment fund, declining enrollment and increasing student demands for experiential, global, and individualized learning compound the pressures Accurate College currently faces (College, 2020b; Usunier & Squires, 2019).

Organizational Structure

As illustrated in Figure 1, Accurate College's two campuses—essentially a school campus and a college campus—are overseen by a single central administration.

Figure 1

Central Administration of Accurate College
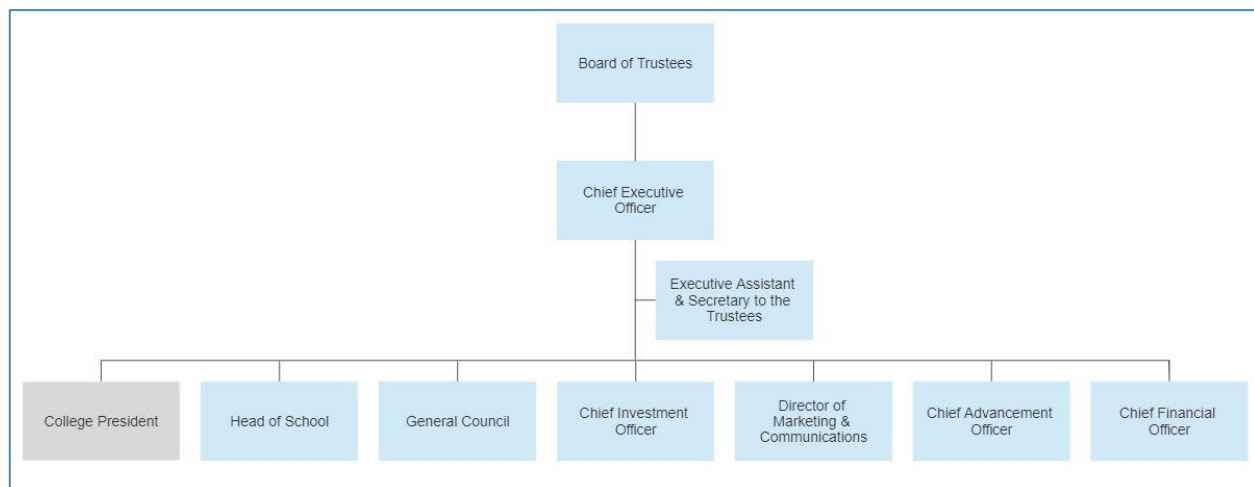
Note. The positions in the central administration provide shared services to both campuses.

Because of the different audiences and the different nature of enrollment decisions required at each campus (College, 2019c), the administrative structure has recently been decentralized to create separate student recruitment teams for the two campuses. This move has blurred accustomed responsibilities and narrowed the lenses of administrators on the two campuses to focus on their own particular needs. An Assurance Argument outlines recent policy changes and better defines governance and administration roles with a focus on the Board of Trustees, Chief Executive, Head of School, and college president (College, 2019b).

Externally, Accurate College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central region of the United States (HLC) and has maintained its accreditation status consistently since 1923. In a mid-cycle review in 2019, HLC determined that Accurate College met 20 of 21 core requirements for maintaining a standard accreditation pathway. The one core component that raised concerns with HLC had to do with systematic planning for student enrollment, retention, and budget. HLC now requires annual reporting as the college approaches its full accreditation review, and the process is having a significant impact on the college's organizational structure. As depicted in Figure 2, the desire to communicate about and coordinate HLC standards within the institution has resulted in creation of a large college cabinet (Figure 2) with a broad agenda.

Figure 2

The College Cabinet
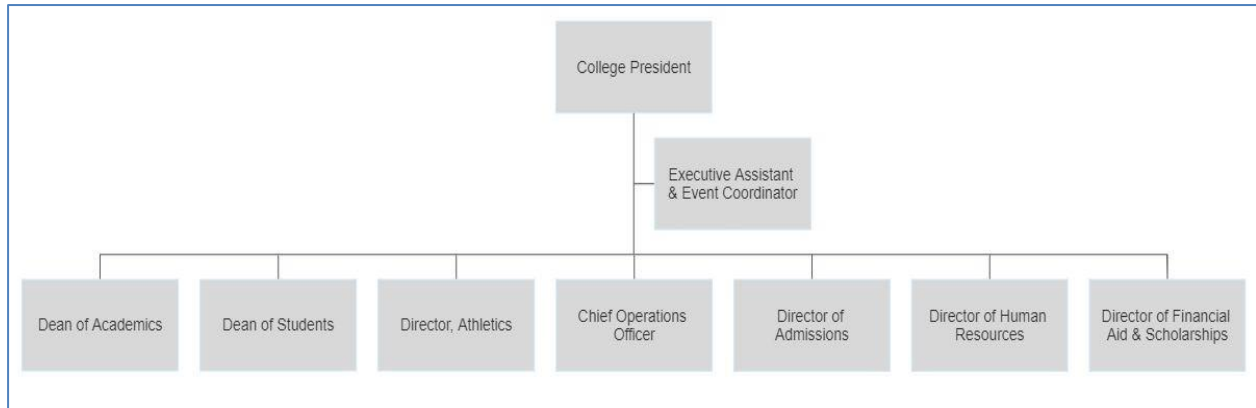
Established Leadership Approaches

Accurate College's vision of itself as a community of 'global, outward-looking, inspired learners, [who] serve and better the world' is impeded by an organizational structure that is enacted through a positivist lens and largely shaped by increasing costs and reduced demand for liberal arts programs. Leaders at the college exhibit behaviour such as that which Donaldson (2003) has described, conceiving of organization in terms of causes that determine effects, and as a structure that provides explanations for the way things are rather than supporting development of broader views which may better align with the college's values. Rooted in the positivist's underlying assumption that every problem has one most effective solution, leaders at the college are intent on studying best practices in higher education and recruiting external consultants to identify solutions to problems.

> It is this clock-work mechanistic view of the universe that has led to the modernist obsession with *representing* reality, since the latter is now believed to be made up of precise, stable, and discrete component parts that have been assembled together by universal forces. (Chia, 2003, p. 116)

Believing that Accurate College must respond to environmental factors (such as changing demographics), college leaders consider clear, well-understood goals, roles, relationships, and

coordination essential to performance. However, the college's bureaucratic organizational structure, designed to respond to environmental factors and minimize risk, results instead in the kind of confusion, apathy, and ineffectiveness which Bolman & Deal (2013) outline as risks in a monocratic bureaucracy which overly constrains employee work and process.

Accurate College's current approaches to leadership adhere to the status quo in the field of higher education leadership. Rooted in the belief that organizations are enduring entities, the college institutes a traditional science of organizations to promote stability and structure (Gergen, 2011); Individual leaders fulfil largely managerial roles, focusing solely on the level of organization at which they work, and employing skills and making decisions in an objective, rational manner "to keep the organization running through careful human and financial resource distribution" (Rottmann, 2007, p. 63). Organizational leadership is hierarchical, formally sanctioning expectations and communication within the college community. While its organizational structure does help Accurate College get work done, the bureaucracy influences individuals to conform to current norms, resulting in educational change that is incremental rather than revolutionary (Rottmann, 2007; Bolman & Deal, 2017). Hulme at al. (2016) note that in Christian higher education, in particular, the status quo of leadership approaches and perspectives in organizational science "have limit[ed] an institution's ability to embrace changes that may be necessitated by the fluctuating educational environment" (95). Reframing leadership views to a process-organization approach provides opportunity to break-free from monocratic bureaucracy at Accurate College.

The underlying assumptions of a positivist leadership approach—objectivity, self-identity, individual intentionality, local causality, homeostatic change, and linguistic adequacy—are barriers to change. Rottmann (2007), in fact, suggests that adhering to the status quo of

leadership practice in higher education is unethical because many questions and assumptions go unchallenged and unanswered. Complexity, variety, and diversity in higher education are reduced to supporting the aim of finding the one most effective solution to problems (Donaldson, 2003). What is needed in higher education, rather, is an ethical leadership approach that fosters understanding of "the origins and limitations of our own habits of thought" (Chia, 2003, p.123), and that attends to wider cultural, political, and social idiosyncrasies. Organizing a college along positivist lines inhibits independent and innovative contributions in the name of efficiency (Donaldson, 2003). Accurate College cannot prosper if its individual members do not think autonomously about their own positions and functions (Chia, 2003).

My Leadership Position and Lens Statement

Tuana (2014) has suggested that "effective and responsible educational leaders must also be ethical" (p. 153). As a faculty member at Accurate College and a leader on the Admissions Pathways Group, I apply an ethical lens to admissions work. My hope is that connecting educational leadership with ethics in an organizational improvement plan related to admissions at Accurate College will not only address the admissions issues the college faces but also free the college from current leadership practices. My plan will offer a route to establishing new admissions policies and, at the same time, offer a new way of thinking about leadership that can help to comprehend and deconstruct the complexities of college organizational life (Chia, 2003).

Attaching the virtue of goodness to leadership changes the way others view leadership roles; goodness does not simply describe the roles, it functions as a form of social action which is fitting for a liberal arts college with a social justice vision (Cavanaugh, 2015). Aristotle's concept of eudemonia (commonly translated as happiness but more appropriately defined as the highest human good) appropriately describes the connection between leadership and action.

Aristotle held that happiness does not arise from virtue, but from virtuous *activity*. Thus, leadership consists in *doing* something, not just in *being* in a certain state or condition (Kraut, 2018).

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Freire, 2014, p. 34)

Freire's notion of the practice of freedom shapes my leadership lens and orients my organizational improvement plan toward process rather than structure. Good leadership supports educational emancipation, yet the normative question is not so much what leadership is for me, but what it is for me to be a good leader (Kotzee, 2013, p. 2). In practice, the question of what it means to be a good leader is often displaced by established leadership approaches emphasizing effectiveness and efficiency rather than what those processes are supposed to be *for* (Biesta, 2010). Turning from a view of what comprises leadership helps me differentiate between power, authority, influence, and managerial ability, and highlights instead moral agency (Levine & Boaks, 2014). This shifts the leadership lens of my organizational improvement plan from a focus on knowing what is right, to doing what is right (Tuana, 2014, p. 172). To connect leadership to ethics is to focus on process (action and agency) rather than solely on structure (character and composition).

Postmodernism is a paradigmatic position (a basic belief system acting as a lens for how we see the world) that produces very different perspectives on organizations than a mainstream, positivist paradigm. Postmodernism demonstrates the connection between educational leadership

and ethics by guiding organizational change in a way that frees individuals in the change process

to interrupt dominant narratives. Moss (2019) describes dominant narratives as having a

"decisive influence on a particular subject…by insisting that they are the only way to think, talk

and behave, that they are the only reality" (p.5). Dominant narratives exercise power over

thoughts and actions, directing and governing what we see as true about the field of post-

secondary education.

> In dominant discourses, fictional stories claim to be non-fictional statements, presenting
>
> themselves as natural, unquestionable and inevitable. This is simply how things are, the
>
> dominant discource asserts: no need to add any qualifications, to say 'in my opinnion' or
>
> 'it seems to me' or 'from my perspective'." (Moss, 2019, p.5)

Good leadership at Accurate College will free prospective students from dominant

neoliberal perspectives which limit the space and visibility of progressive processes and

epistemology (Fallon & Paquette, 2014). I cannot lead and emancipate while behaving

unethically and disregarding, controlling, persecuting, restricting, or punishing individuals. To be

a good leader is as much about relationships as it is about achieving aims (Ciulla et al., 2018). To

behave unethically, to perpetuate positivist approaches, forfeits the claim to educational

leadership as I define it in my organizational improvement plan for Accurate College.

Grounding ethics and leadership in relationships is the crucial element to countering the

established leadership approach at Accurate College. "In any multiple stakeholder environment,

we are accountable to many different individuals, so how should we decide which of these

different demands to prioritize?" asks Ciulla et al. (2018, p. 10). An approach to leadership

grounded in relationships, however, transforms the concern to prioritize stakeholder groups to a

concern to develop dialogical communities (Sanderse, 2016) with them. Habermas argues that

such an approach facilitates mutual recognition and builds an all-encompassing culture; he encourages institutions to engage in discourses that push beyond contested interests and values seeking to establish harmony (Habermas, 1996). Through relationship and dialogue, Habermas asserts that issues can be resolved by appealing to people's equal right to coexist. This requires a shift in perspective on the part of participants in discourse away from the ethical question of "what is good for us" to the moral point of view of what is "equally good for all" (Baumeister, 2003, p. 745). Engaging in an ethical dialogue such as this at Accurate College would establish reciprocal understanding (Flyvbjerg, 1998); it would organize people rather than manipulate them (Freire, 2014). To be a good educational leader is to establish dialogical communities.

My leadership approach functions as a form of social action. Larkin (2011) argues that an insidious form of exclusion exists in the academy, an exclusion that is institutional in nature and adheres to a dominant epistemology that disregards and devalues other ways of knowing. I maintain that good leadership is a mechanism of emancipation, and that good leadership at Accurate College would recognize that the important question is not so much what leadership is, but what it is to be a good leader. My leadership lens shifts the view of the what-ness of leadership from a linear, neoliberal construct focusing on power, authority, influence, and managerial ability (Levine & Boaks, 2014) to a postmodern construct that focuses on the normative complexity of what constitutes effective leadership (Cuilla et al., 2018).

> The postmodern, then, is centrally concerned with giving voice and legitimacy to those tacit and oftentimes unpresentable forms of knowledge that modern epistemologies inevitably depend upon yet conveniently overlook or gloss over in the process of knowledge creation. (Chia, 2003, p. 127)

My Leadership Problem of Practice

A challenge at Accurate College has arisen amid ongoing tensions about organizational identity as that identity is embodied in faith-based admissions criteria and entrance standards. The issue is made urgent by declining enrollments and a lack of applicants who meet current admissions criteria. Accurate College's Admissions Pathways Group has been tasked with addressing declining enrollments in an organizational improvement plan and has been given authority by the Board of Trustees to pilot new admissions criteria.

Faith-based admissions criteria require assessment of an applicant's denominational commitment using some measure of faith practice. A distinction is commonly made between religious adherence (church attendance) and faith practice itself (self-identifying as a member of the faith community). This distinction is illustrated by Allen and West (2009) who reported that while census data showed that 58% of the population in London, England, identified as Christian, their religious adherence—church attendance—was 6-8%. In the U.S., recent data by the Pew Research Centre (2019) notes that 65% of the American population identify as Christian, while only 45% attend religious services monthly or more. Religious service attendance varies widely by geography and demographics. A particular issue with admissions criteria that focus narrowly on measures of religious adherence is that they often result in the selecting out of applicants by race, socio-economic status, faith practice, and ethnicity (Allen & West, 2009). Criteria that evaluate an applicant's religious adherence privileges faith practice that is representative of a small segment of the overall applicant pool – in the case of Accurate College, applicants that attend White, suburban, American churches with access to Sunday School teachers to provide reference letters about church attendance (College, 2019a).

Applicants from diverse backgrounds with faith practice outside these criteria (such as individual study or rural/remote religious activities) are unqualified for admittance.

Problem of Practice Statement

A challenge has arisen at Accurate College amid ongoing tensions about its organizational identity which, to a degree, is embodied in faith-based admission standards. This issue is made urgent by declining college enrollments and a lack of applicants who meet the college's current admission criteria. I present an organizational improvement plan which addresses those declining enrollments through a postmodern leadership approach to change. By inviting stakeholders to consider how admissions processes and procedures shape thought and embody organizational identity, the plan addresses pervasive causes of low enrollment. The primary problem of practice that must be addressed by Accurate College's Admissions Pathways Group is the gap between applicant faith practice and Accurate College's admissions policies which must attend to faith-based entrance criteria at the same time as fostering growth in enrollment.

Framing the Problem of Practice

Broad Contextual Forces Shaping the Problem of Practice (Literature Review)

The landscape of higher education in the United States has changed dramatically since the 1970s (Kimball, 2014). As Hulme et al. (2016) note, the links between higher-education demographics, economics, and technology have become strained. While data suggest a stable number of students are still interested in accessing Christian Higher Education (CHE) (Supplee, 2014), the 2012 US census indicated that 50% of children under the age of one are children of minorities, and that the divide between the poor and the wealthy is growing: in the last thirty years, the income of the poor has dropped by 7% while the income of the wealthy

has risen by 49% (Hulme et al., 2016). These signs of increasing diversity in the potential applicant pool are also signs of increasing diversity in faith and faith practice—churches, for example, tend to be located in wealthier neighbourhoods—and of the need to rethink entrance criteria.

Current CHE enrolment efforts largely address the symptom of low enrolment without meaningfully questioning the deeper, pervasive causes (Hulme et al., 2016). CHE is striving to solve enrolment issues with technical leadership strategies that are based on existing knowledge and experience, rather than shifting their focus to confront beliefs, ways of knowing, and deeply held assumptions about CHE mission and identity. Their technical focus has squelched the institutional curiosity and imagination "that is essential to liberal education" (Hulme et al., 2016, p. 98). The underlying issue, which is largely unaddressed, is how to strengthen diversity in CHE and develop a more inclusive conception of what it means to practice in a faith community. The role of organizational identity is central to diversity-related issues in CHE (Nussbaum & Chang, 2013), but the current structural leadership approach at Accurate College maintains status quo practices that do not respond to changing contextual forces in higher education.

Key Organizational Frameworks

The dominant leadership paradigm at Accurate College is rational and technical. It is a paradigm rooted in neoliberalism and economic relationships based on competition, individuality, and notions of human capital (Buckner, 2017; Ramirez, 2013). Neoliberalism is a ubiquitous lens that is often unrecognized but powerful in its focus on prediction and control. At Accurate College, rational, technical, neoliberal leadership practices are manifest in inflexible

admissions criteria and standardized processes which silence alternative narratives and limit

possibilities for including an increasingly diverse CHE population.

A postmodern paradigm opens up radically new ways of thinking about leadership and,

ultimately, the role of leadership in the admissions process. Postmodernism is an invitation to

consider how processes and procedures shape our habits of thought, and the identity, perceptions,

and expectations that are embodied in culture and policy; it is an invitation to resist the erosion

of democratic practices in leadership (Ramirez, 2013). Postmodernism invites leaders to explore

how normative understandings of the relationship between higher education and society have

created conditions in which academic capitalism is both possible and perceived as an economic

necessity (Buckner, 2017).

Postmodernism challenges traditional views of power in higher education leadership and

invites problematization of current admissions practices and beliefs. Indeed, leadership in the

admissions process is an enduring issue that requires constant problematization (MacDonald,

2013). Inducing skepticism for the dominant narrative, postmodernism invites leaders to focus on

the local context and not seek understanding in grand narratives of best practice, or predictable

replication of policy and approach (Grogan, 2000). Through inviting diverse admissions

narratives, a leader can reform an institution's identity. This reforming practice is a new-old

leadership frame which gives voice to other versions of reality and results in a better-informed

community (Grogan, 2000). At Accurate College, this would be a vision of an organizational

culture that is self-governing and free from the constant intervention that underlies neoliberal

foundations about practice (Beattie, 2020). Rather than being framed by a desire for prediction

and control, admissions work in CHE and at Accurate College could be framed for

transformation—if significant questions about access, relevance, and investments are asked and

considered (Ramirez & Berger, 2014). Conceiving an alternative admissions narrative would build moral solidarity by enabling the integration of intellectual, cultural, and social elements of collective morality.

Political, Economic, Social, and Technological Factor Analysis

A Political, Economic, Social, and Technological (PESTE) analysis provides a broader context for addressing the gap between applicant faith practice and Accurate College's admission policies.

Political and Economic Factors. In 2019, two strategic planning task force groups set the stage for Accurate College's admissions work:

- Enrolment Task Force #1 was chaired by the Director of Admissions. The Task Force was charged with documenting best practices and developing a practical plan to identify a larger population of academically qualified undergraduates in our faith community who could be recruited and considered for admission in the annual admissions process. (College, 2019f)

- Enrolment Task Force #2 was chaired by a faculty member. This Task Force was charged with engaging the community in a conversation about the Board of Trustees pilot admissions program policy and "identify[ing] which option is preferred by the community to be included in the strategic plan and whether Accurate College moves forward with the pilot." (College, 2019f)

Following the work of the two task forces, Accurate College prepared a Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 that included two goals:

- Live the Mission

As a Christian community, Accurate College is an institution which is founded on Love and Principle, and desires to create additional opportunities to encounter and engage with faith in community. Striving to embody the *fruits of the Spirit*, Accurate College is deliberate and intentional about creating activities and a healthy environment that guides and supports those who study, work and live at Accurate College. Accurate College will support in making faith more relevant for today's students wherever they are in their personal journey. (College, 2020a).

- Grow Enrolments

The desire to grow the student enrolments and more fully utilize the campus resources is a goal. Accurate College will actively seek to attract students from throughout the world who are interested in being part of a learning community grounded in our values. The admissions process will be governed by the Trustee's statement which allows for new policies and procedures. (College 2019d; College, 2020a).

These strategic planning goals illustrate the two worlds in which Accurate College resides. Goal 1 recognizes political factors within Accurate College—factors concerning the faith community in which Accurate College is situated and its expressed aim that students discern and embrace the vocation to which they are called. Such discernment fits a liberal arts framework in which students are encouraged to inquire and which "leads persons to often unexpected endeavours" (de Muynck et al., 2017, p. 3). Goal 2 recognizes economic factors affecting the broader higher education world of which Accurate College is a part—neoliberal demands that are evident in accreditation criteria that require Accurate College to attend to economic outcomes.

Social Factors. A significant theme in the educational leadership literature focuses on how neoliberalism regulates thought in post-secondary organizational theory through the use of binaries. Leadership theories continue to be constructed as binary, one or another. As it developed in neoliberal history, post-secondary knowledge production was constructed as theory or practice, truth or lie, Christian or non-Christian, modern or savage, right or wrong, good or bad, physical or metaphysical, universal or place-based, and reproducing or resisting (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Grosfoguel, 2013; Marker, 2015, Tuck, 2009; Worley, 2006). Such binary constructions disable thought and creative power and serve to segregate identities (Donald, 2012). By structuring college applicants as one or another, dominant Euro-centric narratives of objectivity are perpetuated, alternative narratives are excluded, and post-secondary places as thinking places are organized so that many epistemologies are unthinkable (Battiste et al., 2005). At Accurate College this means the faith practices of some applicants are unthinkable.

Binary oppositions such as Christian/non-Christian structure current ways of thinking about faith-based entrance standards in "a totalizing manner with serious consequences" (Madden & McGregor, 2013, p. 380). A binary opposition makes admission to post-secondary organizations difficult because both parts of the binary may not fit accepted criteria, and individual differences can feel insurmountable and alienating. Postmodern leadership practices argue for an epistemological shift that interrupts binary categorizations. It argues for a third space to break the closed circuit of those irreconcilable criteria (Tuck, 2009). In this third space, entrance criteria can be explored in ways that invite greater participation and complexity.

Postmodern leadership recognizes that post-secondary communities hold the power to shift the discourse away from binaries and to embrace complexity in the process of creating relevant, respectful, and responsive institutions (Tuck, 2009). Such leadership creates an

educational space for an organization to prosper "if it agrees to work under a non-exclusionary version of humanity" (Battiste et al., 2005, p. 13). Postmodern leadership as education frames the problem of practice I address here, a problem requiring new solutions that will enable the Accurate College community to co-create a narrative of identity and becoming in the wider post-secondary system. A solution is needed which invites Accurate College to consider how to collectively shape individual habits of thought, identity, perceptions, and expectations that are embodied in admissions policy. Higgins (2017) frames the kind of solution needed at Accurate College as a mo(ve)ment, a shift of thought that is a 'movement' toward new possibilities in a specific 'moment' of being; "they are moments in which we learn, fumble, succeed (and more often than not fail), or even get stuck" (p. 90). Such a frame counters neoliberalism and the need to monitor and measure prescribed outcomes by allowing Accurate College to "work with purpose, but without guarantee" (Higgins, 2017, p. 96) and respond to what lies beyond the institution's present identity.

The mo(ve)ments of both enrolment task force groups occurred within the context of the 2019/2020 academic year. The groups researched recruitment strategies and attempted to facilitate community conversations. Their work was cut short, however, because of upheaval following the resignation and immediate exit of Accurate College's president, the need to pivot to remote instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the announcement that the contract of Accurate College's CEO would not be renewed.

Technological Factors. At the end of the extraordinary 2019/2020 academic year, the Admissions Pathway Group emerged to spearhead the task of addressing the two goals identified in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan—live the mission, and grow enrolment—by developing an admissions process that broadens faith-based admissions criteria in support of enrolment growth.

I am the faculty representative on this five-person leadership team which includes Accurate College's new president (appointed in 2020), the Director of Admissions, the Director of Student Life, and the Director of Athletics. As a member of this group, I intend to explore Accurate College's admissions challenge and develop an organizational improvement plan to address it, and to do so within the next academic year. Developing the organizational improvement plan during the 2020/21 academic year aligns with the recruitment calendar and facilitates expedient implementation of the change plan outlined in Chapter 3 to grow enrollment. Three questions guide this exploration about admissions and belonging at Accurate College.

Problem of Practice: The Defining Questions

The primary problem of practice that must be addressed by Accurate College's Admissions Pathways Group is the gap between applicant faith practice and Accurate College's admissions policies which must attend to faith-based entrance criteria at the same time as fostering growth in enrollment. Three questions must be addressed.

Question One: What aspects of the admissions process can be re-envisioned to encourage applications from individuals within our faith community? Questions about access, relevance, and investments should be considered in relation to admissions criteria (Ramirez & Berger, 2014). An alternative narrative in the admissions process should enable the integration of intellectual, cultural, and social elements of faith practice. "Rather than advocating a race to the safe centre of bland rational consensus, [an alternative] approach [should challenge] leaders to practice moral engagement as a means of strengthening the tradition of free, open discourse" (Thompson, 2004, p. 32). Approaching admissions criteria in a new way should invoke a new way of thinking about organizational identity and institutional change, and deconstruct the complex intellectual and social ramifications of neoliberalism.

Question Two: How can assessment of faith-based admissions criteria be representative of individual growth and spiritual development? Navigating the complexity of CHE requires an understanding that institutional identity is not a fixed concept but one which develops and evolves through on-going interpersonal interactions within a community (Macdonald, 2013; Grogan, 2000). Similarly, organizational identity is not a monolithic or dualistic concept, but an emergent one. Postmodern leadership creates space for diverse voices and narratives in order to increase critical awareness that organizational reality is socially constructed (Block, 2014). A recognition that identity labels may remain but that the meaning of those labels is fluid is key to fostering organizational improvement and addressing the enrollment crisis at Accurate College.

Question Three: How can the admissions process foster a sense of belonging for individuals with an emerging interest in our faith community? Harvey and Green (1993) use the concept of ice in an analogy to describe the qualitative nature of organizational change: while we can measure variables such as the temperature of ice, and observe ice melt into water, we cannot measure the qualitative change that takes place; we cannot measure the transformation in quality which occurs as ice melts. In the same way, the admissions process is one of ongoing transformation as we make sense of it through collaboration. The process facilitates the construction of a picture of the environment in which an individual can feel belonging (Frolich & Stensaker, 2010).

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

Priorities for Change

As a postmodernist, my leadership-focused vision for change is to facilitate alternative entrance pathways to Accurate College. Current admissions pathways were developed within a neoliberal context which promotes individual autonomy and self-interest, and which gave rise to

today's Euro-centric post-secondary organizations and disciplines. Increasing access to Accurate College will be difficult because, within the neoliberal context, the use of standardized entrance criteria to measure college readiness makes common sense. Yet, the neoliberal approach is unsustainable and limited in its ability to promote healthy relations in postsecondary institutions (Ahenakew, 2017). A postmodern perspective on educational leadership takes seriously spiritual epistemic traditions, and challenges neoliberal claims that have been accepted without question (Kaomea, 2016). A postmodern perspective opens the dialogue in admissions work to multiple voices and "rejects a universality of solutions where one defines for the rest what the solution is" (Grosfiguel, 2013, p. 88). Recognizing that understanding complex admissions issues is a layered endeavor, the postmodernist creates space for a multiplicity of perspectives in approaches and promotes dialogue between different knowledge traditions in order to encourage mutual understanding (Kovach, 2009a).

A leadership-focused vision for change interrupts current practices that are focused on narrow accountability criteria and that result in exclusionary admissions frameworks; such a vision for change interrupts the neoliberal focus on self-interest and market supremacy (Burnes, 2009). Current practices at Accurate College tend to focus on failure and exclusion rather than on providing space for a fuller representation of the faith community and on considering otherwise overlooked applicants (Tuck, 2009). A postmodern leadership-focused vision for change will reclaim voices in the admissions process, "reconnecting and reordering those ways of knowing which were submerged, hidden, or driven underground" (Smith, 2012, p. 134) by standardized admissions policies.

Gap Between Present and Envisioned States

Two recent reports highlight the differences between the student perspective of what it means to be a member of the Accurate College community and the perspective represented in current standardized entrance criteria. The Student Experience of Faith at Accurate College report (SEFC) was prepared by a committee charged by the CEO to determine the impact Accurate College has on student perceptions of their faith, and to identify factors that either strengthen student ties to faith or weaken them (College, 2018). A random sample of 20% of the student population was surveyed; three key take-aways emerged:

- Students have widely divergent views of what it means to be a member of our faith.

- Students are united in their belief in God and that God impels their spiritual progress.

- Students want the freedom to be individuals on their spiritual journey, without judgement.

A second report was prepared in 2019 by the Panel on Student Experience and Success (PSES), nine alumni who had been charged by the president with assessing the current state of the student experience at Accurate College (College, 2019e). Two recommendations in that report are relevant to admissions concerns:

- Continue to assess and improve the support systems and programs for students less experienced in our faith, as well as seek to define more accurately what success looks like in relation to recruiting and onboarding students who are new to our faith.

- In light of the fact that students who may not identify with our faith are already at Accurate College, create a community-wide conversation about how Accurate College can best fulfil its purpose while educating students who identify as members of our faith and those who do not.

The two reports suggest that narrowly defined faith-based criteria do not align with student views of faith practice and, in particular, that the admissions criterion of church attendance forces applicants to be dishonest about their faith practice during the admissions process and their time at Accurate College.

Following the presentation of the two reports on student experience, the Board of Trustees announced a pilot admissions program for the institution (College, 2019d). The nine page memo acknowledges the two student reports and the wide range of faith practices on the campus: "While this range may have long been the case at Accurate College, the institution wants to more fully embrace everyone wherever they are in their current interest, understanding and demonstration of faith" (College, 2019d, p. 2). The memo further outlines a rationale for the Board's desire to be more inclusive and concludes by authorizing the institution's leadership to conduct a limited pilot program enrolling students who fall outside the regular admissions guidelines.

The diverse composition of the student body at Accurate College may be surprising given the college's current narrow, faith-based admissions criteria. Applications are reviewed by an Admissions Committee and governed by a policy created by the Director of Admissions and approved by the Accurate College cabinet. Current admissions committee standards define faith-based entrance requirements in four ways (College, 2019a):

- We welcome students from around the world who are earnest students of our faith and participate in church or Sunday School.

- High School seniors should include one reference from their current or recent Sunday School teacher. The second reference may be from a fellow church member.

- To be eligible for admission, applicants must show dedicated commitment to the study and practice of their faith.

- Applicants are expected to be practicing our faith which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways but attendance at Sunday School or church is expected.

Each member of the admissions committee reviews each applicant's electronic file (which includes academic entrance requirements) and then electronically votes on whether to accept the applicant, reject the applicant, or send the application 'to committee' for discussion. The policy does not outline if committee consensus, or majority vote, accounts for an offer of acceptance. The weight of religious adherence in the admissions committee standards policy heavily privileges religious adherence and highlights the gap between applicants' faith practice and religious adherence which us inhibiting growth in enrollment (College, 2019a).

The tension between faith-based entrance criteria and the current faith practice of the student population illustrates significant unanswered questions about access, relevance, and belonging in college admissions work (Ramirez & Berger, 2014). A leadership-focused vision for change is needed if the strategic plan admissions target for the fall of 2021—increasing enrolment from 67 to 125-145—is to be met (College, 2020a). The declining enrolment has created a sense of urgency, influencing the ambitious targets and a tight timeline. Addressing this challenge from a postmodern perspective is particularly complex when current leadership practices frame change with time-bound measures, yet responsiveness is necessary to meet the HLC reporting requirements and maintain accreditation status.

Organizational Change Readiness

Considering organizational change readiness through a postmodern leadership lens requires a shift from neoliberal notions of time and organizational change, such as those outlined

by Deszca et al. (2019), to the postmodern notion that the experience of time in organizational change is social (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011; Mead, 1932). Change readiness is defined in the organizational improvement plan to be an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the college's capacity to successfully implement the changes. Refferty et al. (2013) note that change readiness research is largely at the individual level, using data about individuals to make statements about an organization's change readiness; "This is problematic because relationships that hold at one level of analysis may be stronger or weaker at a different level of analysis and may, in fact, even reverse" (p.112). A postmodern perspective on change readiness recognizes organizational processes contribute to the emergence of change readiness at individual and collective levels which may differ from one another.

Focusing on how change readiness beliefs evolve throughout implementation of major organizational change encourages leaders to address complexity and uncertainty by identifying conditions to support transformation throughout the process (Hemme et al., 2018). Within the organizational change literature, time is viewed as "clock time, characterized as objective, linear, acontextual, invariable, equally and infinitely divisible, measurable, and reversible" (Wiebe, 2011, p. 214). A postmodern view acknowledges time as lived experience. Such a view accepts that unexpected events affect one's sense of time, and that social context affects one's sense of the 'right time' to do something (Wiebe, 2011). The concept of change readiness celebrates and nurtures a complex kind of thinking about organizations that reflects a postmodern view of the world as being continually in the process of becoming, a world "where organizations are viewed not as 'things made' but as processes 'in the making'" (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011, p. 1).

In preparing my organization improvement plan for Accurate College, I use what Wieck's (1995) seminal work calls a "sensemaking" process to assess the college's change

readiness. Organizational sensemaking is an ongoing process in which individuals fine-tune their efforts toward strategic goals to sustain relationships in the workplace (Kuntz & Gomes, 2012). Privileging a sense of readiness in which time is context-dependent allows me to make visible how things came to be and to consider how individuals' sense of time at Accurate College is used to frame a collective sense of organizational identity in the face of change. A sensemaking approach brings to light how an individual uses time to frame the change they are experiencing; it focuses on "the act of configuring (and reconfiguring) the relationship of past, present, and future" (Wiebe, 2011, p. 216). This contextually dependent view of time as social requires a change readiness assessment that considers key stakeholders' sense what time is the right time for change and articulates perceived discrepancies to inform the change implementation plan.

Stakeholders' Sense of Change Readiness

Wiebe (2011) developed a framework of five "worlds of organizational change" to categorize stakeholders' sense of organizational change:

- Then = Now World. This world of organizational change has a central story of no change. The present experience is viewed as the same as the past. Managers feel shut down and shut out.

- We'll See World. This world of organizational change has a central story of eventual change. The present experience is a deliberately slow pace. Managers feel positive about accomplishments, although stressed at times.

- Hitting a Wall World. This world of organizational change has a central story of making significant change but have now hit a wall. The present experience is viewed as a new era. Managers feel a loss of motivation (p.226).

- A Rocky Road World. This world of organizational change has a central story of progressive change with difficulty. The present experience is goal oriented and future focused. Managers often feel intense positive and negative emotions (p.228).

- It Never Stops World. This world of organizational change has a central story of massive and unrelenting change. The present experience is viewed as cutting ties to the past. Managers feel a growing inability to handle more change.

I use this framework to analyze my observations and describe how each stakeholder group may experience change, and to assess Accurate College's change readiness.

Admissions Staff. The staff's sense of change in admissions work falls in the Now = Then world. It is a story of non-change amid all the talk generated by the pilot project and all the activity of implementing the strategic plan (College, 2019d; College, 2020a). The staff's sense of readiness for change is hindered by a lack of stability and reversals in the direction of change over time – a sense that present and future admissions work remains substantially the same as in the past. Because no changes have been made to the admissions committee standards and because Accurate College currently has students attending who do not identify with the college's faith practice, the past is actively constructed as dominating the present and, the staff expects, the future (College, 2019a).

College Administration. Accurate College's administration demonstrates a sense of change in admissions work that appears to fall into the "We'll See" world—a world that shares the same central issues and features as the "Now = Then" world, but in which a sense exists that real change may come, although it will take substantial time to accomplish (Wiebe, 2011). Through sensemaking activities with a broad community and direction from the Board of Trustees via the

pilot project, the administration's mandate for the future has been developed. It is acknowledged that the present is different from the past and that the future will grow out of the present as ideas are thought through, tested, and implemented in practice.

Board of Trustees. The Student Experiences of Faith at Accurate College report and Panel on Student Experience and Success report informed the Board of Trustees sense of change readiness at Accurate College (College, 2018; College, 2019e). The Board responded with a plan for a pilot project which offered a whole new vision for Accurate College admissions work. Influences outside the Board of Trustees, however, have significantly blocked progress in the change initiative. After launching the pilot project, the college president at the time publicly critiqued it and resigned shortly afterwards. That critique, combined with the appointment of an interim president and CEO, and the effects of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, put admissions work on hold, leaving the Board of Trustees with a sense of being in the "Hitting a Wall" (Wiebe, 2011, p.226) world.

School Campus. In contrast to Accurate College's response to the pilot project, the sense of change readiness on the campus of the Accurate School (preschool, elementary, middle, and high schools) falls into the "Rocky Road" world—the work has been difficult, but progress continues to be made. Taking a pragmatic approach, the school revised its faith-based admissions criteria and admissions policy and implemented the changes immediately. The school exemplifies evolutionary change, a convoluted process in which the administration responds to critique and feedback while "consciously engaging the past and the future in the midst of attempting planned implementation in the present" (Wiebe, 2011, p. 228).

Admissions Pathway Group. Being charged with admissions work after a complicated academic year, the Admissions Pathway Group views the pilot project as an energizing watershed event which provides a sense of direction for change. Nevertheless, unanswered questions and roadblocks have given them a sense of "Hitting a Wall" (Wiebe, 2011, p.226).

Change Readiness Assessment

The ethical postmodern lens highlights the possibility that the experience of time in organizational change is social as individuals within Accurate College community have a very different sense of time in the constructions of the organizational change they are experiencing. For faculty, staff, college administration, and the school campus, admissions work is framed in continuity, whereas the sense of admissions work among members of the Board of Trustees and the Admissions Pathway Group is discontinuous.

Continuity/discontinuity seems to be determined by drawing on the future and the past in making sense of admissions work by various stakeholders. An organizational improvement plan is needed that recognizes the social construct of time and varying sense of change readiness in the community (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011; Wiebe, 2011). Rather than determining organizational change readiness as a precursor to a change implementation plan, I suggest that the implementation plan responds to diverse senses of change readiness throughout the process and needs to monitor and facilitate readiness throughout the transformation (Hemme et al., 2018). The upheaval of the 2019/20 academic year provides context for Accurate College's change readiness. In the context of a presidential search, covid pivot to remote learning, and appointment of an Interim CEO the status quo structures at Accurate College are providing a sense that the iterations of the past will predominate through routine stability (Durand et al., 2016; Wiebe, 2011).

Enrollment planning has centred around technical solutions such as client management software, a desire to revamp the website, purchasing standardized test-taker data, and surveying consulting companies to bid on creating a niche enrollment plan. These activities are in-line with practices at other US colleges, which is a highly decentralized matching market for college admissions (Che & Koh, 2016).

Chapter 1 presented the context for the postmodern leadership-focused vision for change in the organizational improvement plan which reclaims voices in the admissions process that have been hidden or driven underground by neoliberalism and positivist leadership approaches at Accurate College. Seeing readiness as continuously becoming ready broadens mainstream notions of change readiness which are unforgiving, narrow, and rigid ways of constructing everyday life (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). A sensemaking framework recognizes the diverse constructs of time and change readiness within the community and constitutes a quality of care in the Admissions Pathway Group's work that interrupts neoliberalism and defines admissions work as building closer relationships with things and ideas (Ahenakew, 2017; Wilson, 2008). This change readiness assessment interrupts attempts to fit diverse senses of time into standardized clock time and creates a space to see what emerges. For each of the stakeholders, the ongoing act of becoming ready *is* change implementation; making visible how each stakeholder group's sense of time is used to frame the admissions work. A sensemaking approach brings to light how individuals use time to frame the change they are experiencing as a community and informs the critical organizational analysis in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 explores a postmodern approach to developing the organizational improvement plan. A change process model is presented in response to the critical organizational analysis, and solutions to ethically address the adaptive challenge in the problem of practice emerge. The leadership approach to change builds on adaptive leadership theory, process organization theory, and the theory of situated learning as the foundation of the change process model.

Leadership Approach(es) to Change

Postmodern leadership recognizes that the Accurate College community, in the process of becoming a relevant, respectful, and responsive institution, has the power to shift the discourse away from binaries in admissions work to complexity (Tuck, 2009). My leadership approach to change consists of a trio of theories designed to counter neoliberalism and respond to what lies beyond Accurate College's present identity: adaptive leadership theory, process organization theory, and the theory of situated learning provide a conceptual frame of reference for addressing problems of practice. It is a conceptual framework that tests fixed, structural notions of organizational identity and creates space for adaptive challenges to be identified and mutually defined.

Adaptive Leadership Theory

Heifetz et al. (2014) define adaptive leadership as the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges—and to thrive while doing so—by engaging them in a process that helps them distinguish what is essential to preserve in an organization's heritage and what is expendable. The most common cause of failure in leadership, Heifetz et al. (2014) suggest, is treating adaptive challenges as technical problems. Technical problems, such as developing an effective admissions recruitment process, may be very complex and critically important, but they

have known, technical solutions. Adaptive challenges, on the other hand, can be addressed only through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties. For Accurate College, revising religious adherence criteria for admissions is an adaptive challenge; it requires mobilizing people to think deeply about organizational identity and gatekeeping practices as a faith community, and engaging in a process to distinguish what is essential to preserve in the organization's heritage and what is expendable.

Process Organization Theory

Adaptive leadership theory holds that people do not resist change so much as they resist loss (Heifetz et al., 2014). Engaging Accurate College in consideration of faith-based admissions criteria will not only be intellectually challenging, but it will also challenge the organization's investments in relationships, competence, and identity. Process organization theory reflects an adaptive leadership understanding of the world as continually "becoming," and prioritizes process over outcome: "What really exists is not things made but things in the making" (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011, p. 1). Rather than focusing simply on the goal of increasing enrollment, an organization that supports individuals in considering the losses and changes that might be involved invites a process of becoming in the changing post-secondary landscape. Seeing Accurate College not as a fixed entity but as a complex system of processes exposes fragile assumptions about permanence and loss (Schultz et al., 2012). Process organization theory can help the Admissions Pathway Group interpret observations and complexity with a sense of things in the making rather than with a sense of loss about faith-based identity.

Process organization theory provides depth to an organizational improvement plan by addressing questions about evolving organizational identity; it interrupts the neoliberal narrative in organizational theory that pushes questions about time, movement, sequence, and flux to the

periphery. "The presumption of enduring entities is pivotal to the traditional science of organization… In effect, as we shift assumptions so do we stand to open up new theoretical, methodological, and practical avenues of scientific activity" (Gergen, 2011, p. 57). Process organization theory considers how change in one process influences other, complex, multilayered processes, and people's past, present, and future conceptions of those processes. Process organization theory invites an unpacking of complexity and moves people towards a dynamic understanding that can improve the organization (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011). Such dynamic understanding cannot be framed in neoliberal practices which compress time, movement, sequence, and flux into variables and define all problems as technical challenges. One simple way the Admissions Pathway Group can embrace a process organization theory approach is by adding the word "work" to particular concepts as a way to emphasize the complex and dynamic nature of those concepts (Weick, 2011). The Admissions Pathway Group is engaged in admissions criteria work; rather than trying to predict the future, they are creating it (Gergen, 2011).

Admissions work at Accurate College cannot exist in a social vacuum. Participants in the admissions process are mutually defining. An applicant, a college, a geographical area, an academic year – alone, these constituents of the admissions process are without meaning. In bringing these elements into a mutually defining relationship, we can speak about a college admissions process.

Theory of Situated Learning

Bringing elements of the Accurate College admissions process into mutually defining relationships requires a third theoretical lens in an organizational improvement plan's conceptual framework. The theory of situated learning is a cultural-historical constructivist

learning theory which asserts that learning does not occur in insolation but rather occurs in relationship with others, through social interaction and social processes within authentic contexts (Ebbers, 2017). The theory of situated learning runs counter to other cognitive learning models in holding that learning is more dependent on social context than on individual cognitive ability (Patel, 2018); the theory provides a frame for the transformational possibilities of being and becoming complex, full, cultural-historical participants in an organization (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As a general theoretical perspective, theory of situated learning affirms the relational character of knowledge and learning, the negotiated character of meaning, and the dilemma-driven nature of organizing work. It implies an emphasis on developing a comprehensive understanding of an organization; an emphasis on activity and processes in and with the organization; and an emphasis on the view that the members of an organization, their activity, and the organization itself mutually constitute each other.

To apply the theory of situated learning in practice, Petcovic et al. (2020) identified three components of situated learning: content, participation, and community. In the organizational improvement plan I present here, an applicant learns about the content of faith-based admissions criteria during the admissions process; through participation in admissions activities and dialogue, an applicant develops mutually defining relationships with the Accurate College community. Such situated learning informs the process of faith-based criteria work for the Pathways Admissions Group.

Employing a leadership approach to change consisting of adaptive leadership theory, process organization theory, and the theory of situated learning will challenge fixed notions of organizational identity at Accurate College and create space for adaptive organizational processes to be identified and mutually defined through admissions criteria work.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

The problem of practice I will address in my organizational improvement plan—the gap between student faith practice and Accurate College's admissions policies—is an adaptive challenge. The change process must acknowledge that faith-based admissions criteria are an important part of Accurate College's identity. Further, the change process must lead Accurate College to the desired future outlined in the strategic plan and pilot project and must do so through a postmodern process that highlights the mutually constitutive nature of the Accurate College community and its prospective students (Gioia & Thomas, 1996).

Adaptive Leadership Process

The adaptive leadership process (Heifetz et al., 2014) as illustrated in Figure 4 is an iterative approach to change that will help Accurate College identify the parts of its organizational heritage that are essential to preserve and the parts that are expendable.

Figure 3

The Adaptive Leadership Process
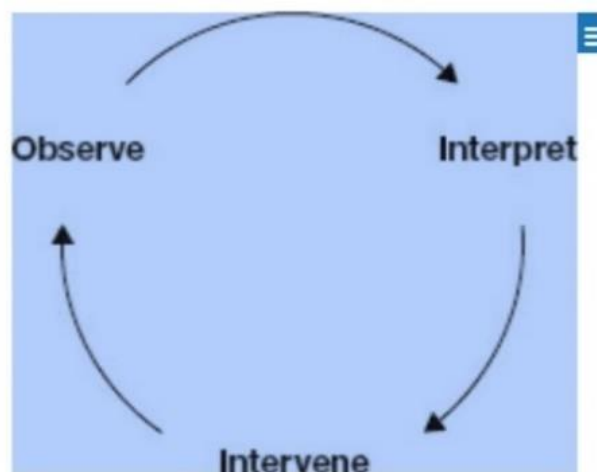
Note. From "The Practice of Adaptive leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World" by R.A. Heifetz, M. Linsky, and A. Grashow, Harvard Business

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The adaptive leadership process involves observing events and patterns, interpreting them and developing multiple hypotheses about what is really going on, and then designing an intervention or interventions to address the challenge. Observation is critical. Repeatedly refining observations, noticing what people are doing and saying, and also noticing what is not being said is key to a successful process. Thus, the Admissions Pathway Group is challenged to observe and interpret the behaviour of their own group as well as that of the wider community: "If you do not question your own and the group's preferred interpretation, you and your organization may end up colluding in avoiding the difficult work of addressing the more important issues" (Heifetz et al., 2014, p. 4224). The Admissions Pathway Group must be committed to intervention while also being open to unanticipated possibilities.

Sensemaking and Sensegiving

Enhancing observation in the change process by adding a sensemaking and sensegiving approach to interpretation enriches the framework for change by providing a way to "structure the unknown" (Weick, 1995, p. 4). A sensemaking and sensegiving model guides the community's exploration of the adaptive admissions challenge both individually and as a social entity (Weick, 1995). Informed by Stigliani & Elsback (2018) work, organizational identity and admissions criteria are kept at the forefront of thought and practice. Rather than simply observing, or making sense, of these elements in implementing change, the change process in this organizational improvement plan informs, or gives sense, to the college community as the admissions work unfolds. The process is dialogical throughout rather than a prescriptive intervention following plan development.

Sensemaking and sensegiving necessitate an adjusted view of interpretation in the change process: "sensemaking is clearly about an activity or a process, whereas interpretation can be a process but is just as likely to describe a product" (Weick, 1995, p. 13). Sensemaking addresses the adaptive challenge at an earlier, more tentative stage than typical interpretation which is often a more detached and passive activity. Sensemaking is to talk about change as the ongoing reality for the Admissions Pathway Group – it makes the construction of organizational identity and learning visible in the moment as Accurate College engages with the adaptive challenge and further interrupts neoliberal notions of monitoring and evaluation of product/change (Weick, 2003).

Organizational sensemaking and sensegiving about Accurate College's faith-based admissions criteria can be organized around Weick's (1995) seven characteristics of sensemaking:

1. Grounded in identity construction (p.18)

2. Retrospective (p.24)

3. Enactive of sensible environments (p.30)

4. Social (p.38)

5. Ongoing (p.43)

6. Focused on and by extracted cues (p.49)

7. Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (p.55)

Sensemaking acts as a rough guideline for inquiry as the Admissions Pathway Group embarks on "disciplined imagination" (Weick, 1995, p. 18). Each of the characteristics has a self-contained set of research questions, incorporates action and context, and can be

represented crudely as a sequence during identity co-formation (Stigliani & Elsback, 2018; Weick, 1995).

Conceiving of interpretation in the adaptive leadership process as sensemaking and sensegiving challenges traditional notions of organizational theory that would define Accurate College as a stable entity. Thus, there is reason to maintain a separation between observer and observed during intervention. In viewing Accurate College as an organization in process, however, the dichotomy breaks down. "Observation is always situated within a context of relationship" (Gergen, 2011, p. 59). This perspective invites the Admissions Pathway Group, when considering adaptive leadership interventions, to participate in the broader processes making up cultural life at Accurate College.

Community of Practice

Constructing themselves as a community of practice will enable participants involved in admissions process work at Accurate College to share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that might foster new approaches to faith-based admission criteria (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). A community of practice is a reflective practice that respects the complexity of faith-based admissions and promotes intentional and thoughtful admissions work and professional growth (Curtis et al., 2013). The approach promotes an alternative to bureaucratic processes and standardization, promoting admissions work as research-in-practice where a group works with others to think through the complexity of the work. "Whether informal or more carefully planned, communities of practice have been proved to be a powerful force for professional learning and growth in a variety of work environments" (Curtis et al., 2013, p.16). A community of practice has three characteristic features:

1. Domain: Members of the community share an identity defined by an area of interest.

2. Community: In pursuit of their interest in a domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information.

3. Practice: Members of the community are recognized as practitioners.

Communities of practice create a sense of belonging and fulfil a human desire to connect with other people (Webber, 2016). They act to support individuals in an organization support organizational change and learn how to do things better. As part of a community of practice, applicants to Accurate College are invited to learn about the content of faith-based admissions criteria, participate in admissions activities and dialogue, and engage in situated learning; mutually defined relationships can be developed to help inform an applicant's admissions choice and Accurate College's admissions decision. The community of practice facilitates the applicant's situated learning and sense of belonging to and identification with the Accurate College community prior to enrollment.

Applicant participation in an admissions community of practice facilitates learning for the admissions team; applicants share tacit knowledge, knowledge which is implicit in people's actions, rather than explicit knowledge, knowledge which lives in repeatable process and can be written down (Webber, 2016). Tacit knowledge about faith-based admissions criteria and the perspectives and impact of the criteria on the applicant pool is critical for Accurate College to understand to grow enrollment while developing and adjusting a sense of organizational identity. Applicant participation in a community of practice is an integral aspect of addressing the adaptive challenge in admissions work.

The Change Process

Figure 4 illustrates the change process, an adaptive leadership process provides a foundation for the change process in the organizational improvement plan which integrates

sensemaking and sensegiving in the interpretation phase, and a community of practice as the

intervention phase, providing a comprehensive conceptual model for the change process.

Figure 4

Change Process Model
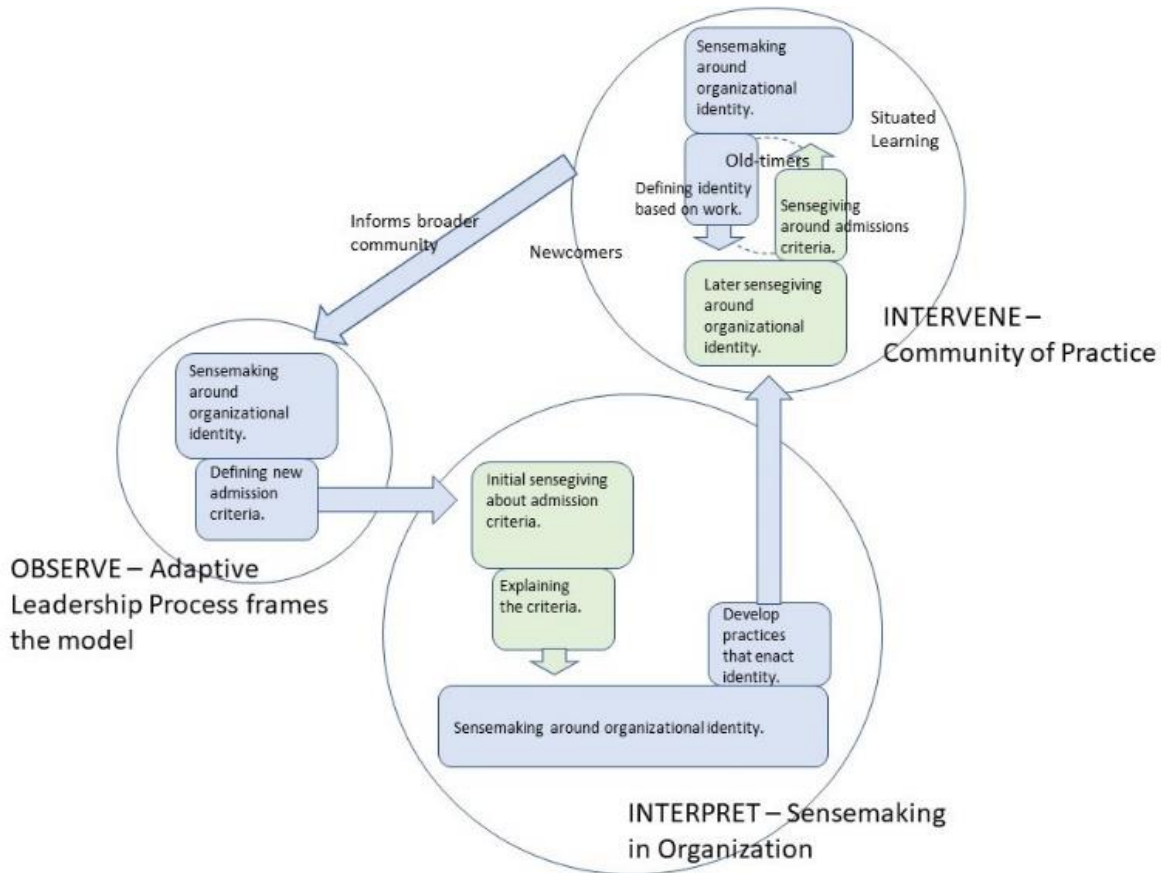
Note. Adapted from "Legitimate Peripheral Participation" by J. Lave & E. Wenger, *Situated*

Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation, Cambridge University Press. Copyright 1991 by

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   Initiating the change process by observing the adaptive challenge invites the Admissions

Pathway Group to "get on the balcony" (Heifetz at al. 2014), taking a birds-eye view, and make

sense of the organization's identity. Interpreting the observation data in a sensemaking and

sensegiving model with Accurate College community provides a focus on the process of organizing identity. Applying the interpretation to an intervention framed as a community of practice translates the interpretation into action while embodying the inclusive and elastic principles that are foundational to the leadership approach to change. Inviting applicants to collaborate on the admissions process work embraces a postmodern approach to organizing and reorients the leadership work of the Admissions Pathway Group toward developing a sense of belonging for applicants during the admissions process. Chapter 3 explores the change process model in detail and applies it as a strategy for change in the implementation plan to address factors identified in the following critical organizational analysis.

Critical Organizational Analysis

A key to the use of adaptive leadership theory at Accurate College is the ability to assess the college's adaptive capacity and to diagnose the kinds of losses at stake for the college community as it explores the adaptive challenge (Heifetz et al., 2014). Resisting the pressure to 'do something' is a foundational principle in the critical organizational analysis of the problem of practice. Applying Heifetz et al.'s (2014) three diagnostic lenses—which focus on the system, the adaptive challenge, and the political landscape—to the analysis of Accurate College's activities highlights the kinds of losses at stake for Accurate College in organizational sensemaking about identity.

Diagnose the System

Diagnosing the system requires getting on the balcony to see how the organization is responding to the adaptive challenge (Heifetz et al., 2014). Accurate College is a highly complex system; the structures, culture, and defaults that define and maintain the status quo are tenacious. Since the foundational policies were written in 1944, Accurate College has operated under the

assumption that identity labels are fixed and consistent. Based on this assumption, the college constructed processes to support core attributes for faith-based admissions criteria. Some peripheral students may have been admitted but their participation was marginalized or considered insignificant to the institution's identity (Kreiner et al., 2015). Yet, even as the college operated under this assumption, the faith practices of students changed, creating a tension in organizational identity. Accurate College's admissions system has constricted student identity while the student body itself has expanded that identity, resulting in a situation in which college infrastructure no longer supports students adequately and, indeed, alienates potential applicants. Lack of support for students is evidenced in the SEFC and PSEC reports on the student experience, both of which show that students who do not identify with the faith community are currently enrolled at Accurate College and are inadequately supported (College, 2018; College, 2019e). The organizational improvement plan's change process reframes identity as a verb rather than a noun; as a result, Accurate College stands to lose a sense of identity, a sense of who they are, as outlined in the foundational policies. This diagnosis highlights gaps in the system that must be filled in order to meet the adaptive challenge.

Diagnose the Adaptive Challenge

Diagnosing an adaptive challenge requires separating a problem's technical and adaptive elements:

Unlike with a technical problem, there is no clear, linear path to the resolution of an adaptive challenge. You need a plan, but you also need freedom to deviate from the plan as new discoveries emerge, as conditions change, and as new forms of resistance arise. Once you unleash the energy to deal with an adaptive issue, you cannot control the outcome. (Heifetz et al., 2014, p. 4167)

Accurate College's pilot project clearly defined faith-based identity work as the adaptive

challenge and provided initial information about identity labels. By framing the changes to faith-

based admissions criteria as a pilot project, the Board of Trustees sought to facilitate an elastic

stance (Kreiner et al., 2015) toward organizational identity; they demonstrated how the pilot was

consistent with current admissions practices while at the same time identifying the low

enrollment trajectory. The pilot project highlighted the adaptive challenge clearly for the first

time, and the community formally recognized their disequilibrium and the potential loss of their

identity as outlined in the college's foundational policies. This recognition led to sensemaking

activities during the 2019-20 academic year—activities such as community forums, data

gathering, memo writing, and the formation of the Admissions Pathway Group—all of which

involved a sharing through dialogue of the community's changing sense of identity. The present

organizational improvement plan's change process frames Accurate College's interpretation of

identity as a process; as sensemaking and sensegiving activities continue to unfold, Accurate

College stands to lose a sense of stability about who they are.

Diagnose the Political Landscape

Diagnosing the political landscape requires viewing Accurate College as a web of

stakeholders. A critical organizational analysis needs to include a diagnosis of the system of

relationships, alliances, constituencies, and power beyond those members of Accurate College

directly involved in the admissions process. Drawing from Maitlis' (2005) longitudinal study of

the social processes of organizational sensemaking, one can categorize Accurate College's

political landscape as fragmented. Sensemaking activities undertaken during the interpretation

phase of the change process will allow people to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity by creating

rational accounts of the world that enable admissions staff action; having fragmented stakeholder

sensegiving is problematic. Fragmentation is characterized by low leader sensegiving (sparse official communication and action) and high stakeholder sensegiving (lots of consultation and survey-taking); the process is highly animated but not controlled. Maitlis (2005) writes that fragmentation produces multiple, narrow accounts of sensegiving with an emergent series of inconsistent actions:

> Stakeholders animated these fragmented sensemaking processes by raising issues, generating and shaping accounts of the situations, and arguing for potential solutions. Leaders often sought the views of stakeholders, but they did not attempt to organize or control discussions, not did they typically integrate stakeholder constructions into coherent collective accounts. (Maitlis, 2005, p. 36)

The organizational improvement plan's change process frames Accurate College's interpretation about identity as a process of sensemaking and sensegiving; Accurate College stands to lose stakeholder engagement if fragmentation continues (Humphreys & Brown, 2002).

Gap Analysis and Needed Changes

As shown in Table 1, a critical organization analysis suggests that gaps exist and change is needed at Accurate College in the areas of systems, organizational identity, and the political landscape.

Table 1

Summary of the Critical Organizational Analysis

	Analysis	Losses at Stake	Gaps to Address
Diagnose the System	Accurate College has an inelastic sense of identity. Diversity is viewed as peripheral to organizational identity Foundational policies remain unchanged since 1944. Admissions faith-based criteria are narrowly defined as religious adherence. Applicants are assessed in a standardized manner.	Loss of identity about *who they are* as outlined in the foundational policies.	Address organizational identify - framing as a verb, not a noun. Address infrastructure which does not support current faith practices and alienates potential applicants.
Diagnose the Adaptive Challenge	Faith-based identity work has been clearly defined as the adaptive challenge. Accurate College recognizes its disequilibrium.	Loss of stability based in past practice.	This diagnosis highlights gaps in how Accurate College currently responds to the adaptive challenge by focusing on technical work (such as websites, test scores etc.).
Diagnose the political landscape	Accurate College's political landscape is fragmented. The change process is highly animated but not controlled; fragmentation produces multiple, narrow accounts of sensegiving with an emergent series of inconsistent actions. Accurate College rejects internal distinctiveness.	Loss of stakeholder engagement.	There are gaps in how Accurate College communicates organizational practices and processes which enact change, and a gap in defining timelines and expectations for addressing the adaptive challenge.

The change process primarily needs to support the gap between how Accurate College views organizational identity and the processes which support identity; addressing this gap will provide processes to facilitate diversity of faith practice and a more elastic sense of organizational identity.

A distinct aspect of adaptive leadership theory that supports the needed change is the connection with values, beliefs, and anxieties of the people who are being encouraged to change.

Enacting the three-part change process —observation, interpretation, intervention—provides a non-linear path forward that allows engagement with the heart. It also guides organizational sensemaking around identity to address the gap in student faith practice and religious adherence criteria. Rather than using a change path model such as that of Deszca et al. (2019), which starts with a powerful vision for change, my organizational improvement plan's model for change allows for the complexity of an adaptive challenge, which requires openness and flexibility even in defining success: "the pathway is not a straight line . . . and the resolution might be quite different from what you first imagined" (Heifetz et al., 2014, p. 4167). This model of change allows me to connect to a larger purpose and reach people where they are while also promoting an emergent series of consistent actions (Heifetz et al., 2014; Maitlis, 2005). The focus of the model is on thinking experimentally and embracing organizational identity work as adaptive instability (Schultz et al., 2012).

Possible Solutions to the Problem of Practice

The critical organization analysis applied three diagnostic lenses (system, adaptive challenge and political landscape) to interpret sensemaking and sensegiving activities in the change process. This analysis leads to the articulation of three interventions for facilitating change and addressing the gap between student identity and faith-based admission criteria at Accurate College. Intervention in the change process is framed in the theory of situated learning and modelled as a community of practice. Communities of practices are increasingly being employed deliberately as management tools in education to break down communication barriers and support the learning of newcomers to a community (McKellar et al., 2014). The three possible solutions to address the problem of practice will be enacted as a community of practice by the Admissions Pathway Group, the Accurate College admissions department, and

prospective applicants. The community of practice is a circular model of the admissions process that provides definition and allows for the process of collective learning with an experimental mindset (Heifetz et al., 2014; Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Three possible solutions for change are presented to address the problem of practice: portfolio admissions, critical policy analysis, and métissage.

Solution 1: Portfolio Admissions

In diagnosing the system, it became clear that Accurate College has an inelastic sense of identity and has viewed diversity as peripheral to organizational identity. This inelasticity has resulted in standardized admissions criteria based on religious adherence. Such standardized practices act as institutional barriers and result in low enrollment (Strandvad, 2015). Recognizing that Accurate College fears a loss of identity as laid out in its foundational policies is a key to the change process. Reframing identity as a verb rather than as a noun will support elasticity and inclusive admissions practices. Viewing identity as a state of being that moves and adapts fosters organizational change in contrast to a view of identity that serves as a subject to change. Inviting a portfolio-based approach to admissions work creates room for individuality of expression about the practice of faith, while also allowing for broad, faith-based criteria to be applied.

A portfolio approach invites applicants to share their story of emerging faith practice in a non-standardized way, highlighting the importance of the social actor in organizational identity. In conceptualizing the admissions process as a portfolio, each admissions criterion (faith-based and academic) comprises one element of a portfolio which provides a holistic picture of the applicant. A portfolio assessment is a qualitative and multidimensional assessment relying on a variety of materials, pieces of work, or other

types of media as evidence of meeting admissions criteria (Gibbs & Adkins, 2000). A holistic picture of the applicant allows Accurate College to conserve its faith-based identity while embracing processes which acknowledge that an applicant's faith may be emergent.

Kroezen and Heugens (2012) discovered that although applicant identity claims may change over time and differ slightly by individual applicant, identity claims as a system remain relatively stable. This stability is due to the nature of engagement in admissions process work with organizational insiders. A portfolio approach to admissions will create elasticity in organizational identity, embracing the diversity of student faith practice which currently exists, but which is systemically suppressed by standardized admissions measures (Strandvad, 2015). Elasticity creates space for diversity in admissions while conserving the essential, faith-based nature of the Accurate College community.

Solution 2: Critical Policy Analysis

The inelasticity of organizational identity is systemically reinforced by departmental policies (College, 2019a). Initiating a policy analysis will problematize the policy and invite a more inclusive process while conserving broad, faith-based criteria. Problematization of policy is a form of critical analysis that calls underlying assumptions in the policy into question. With the admissions policy, two key conceptual premises appear to underpin the problem. One of these assumptions is that a neoliberal post-secondary landscape is foundational to the Accurate College admissions process. Accountancy language—words such as 'quality' and 'requirement'—are central to the policy and are used as though natural and self-evident. They give authority to certain knowledges—e.g., "All prospective students are required to take the ACT or SAT"

(College, 2019a)—and subjugate notions of a post-secondary landscape which could challenge this narrow, neoliberal view of education (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

A second assumption is that of the "proper aspirant" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p.72). The application process is assumed to be one-way. The Admissions Committee judges the applicant and decides if enrollment will be recommended; there is no avenue for the applicant to judge Accurate College and provide feedback. Admissions committee standards govern the admissions process in such a way that the problem of an applicant with an emerging faith practice is non-existent (College, 2019a). The precarious situation of a student wishing to explore faith-based identity is overshadowed by the negative characterisation of church non-attendance and silences the benefit such students might bring to our community.

Post-structural policy analysis investigates the seeming contradiction that Accurate College is governed by the admissions policy when it is not followed. The subjectification effects of problematizing and governing religious adherence of applicants highlights the idea that choosing to offer enrollment to non-church attendees would question the fundamental identity of Accurate College. Through the identification of the 'proper aspirant' it becomes possible to consider how admissions work is governed through subjectification effects. Inhabiting a subject position outlined in admissions policy shapes how admissions work unfolds, based not on the applicant's faith identity, but culturally produced within what Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) call meticulous rituals of power outlined in the policy (College, 2019a). The process in the policy assigns all the power in the admissions offer to Accurate College, relegating the applicant silent and unproblematized and thereby governed through subjectification (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Recognition of this complexity in admissions process work is critical to making the politics of faith-based admissions criteria visible.

Solution 3: Métissage

In diagnosing the adaptive challenge and the political landscape, it is clear the pilot project stretched the elasticity of Accurate College's faith-based identity. The Board of Trustees initiated disequilibrium in the community, threatening the community's sense of stability and threatening stakeholder engagement. Inviting sensemaking and sensegiving about organizational identity through dialogue will facilitate a reframing of the faith-based identity labels.

Storytelling can be a sensemaking and sensegiving practice that facilitates cultural renewal and respect for how diverse people experience space, history, and identity at Accurate College (Marker, 2015). Because the change process is not striving for a replicable set of leadership strategies, story provides a way to navigate interpretation activities in the community of which the Admissions Pathway Group is a member. In what Grosfoguel (2013) terms transmodernity, is a call for inter-philosophical political dialogues to produce pluriverses of meaning where the new universe/university is a pluriverse/pluriversity. Through stories of place, community members become inspired to a communal sense of identity by addressing difference and complexity. Story works to give voice to those marginalized by narrow, faith-based admissions criteria; story becomes a holistic endeavor in which silences, ruptures, and excess will occur and can be as important as more stable stories (Kovach, 2009b; Madden & McGregor, 2013).

Métissage is a possible solution for the problem of practice. From the latin *mixus*, it means mixed, and affirms rather than polarizes difference: "as a research praxis, métissage seeks cross-cultural, egalitarian relations of knowing and being" (Chambers et al., 2008, p. 142). It explores how individual stories, when woven with those of others, reveal the subjective nature of

experience and organizational identity. In a postmodern leadership sense, métissage resists neoliberalism which attempts to totalize experiences and dominate narratives (Cox et al., 2017). The weaving of narrative dismantles an inelastic sense of identity; métissage provides an opportunity for community members to face each other and deconstruct their shared past outside of neoliberal, standardized constructs. It braids together isolated and independent identities into a co-constituted community of belonging (Donald, 2012; Higgins & Kim, 2019).

Resourcing Organizational Improvement Plan Solutions

Table 2 shows the unique resources required for each of the possible solutions.

Table 2

Resourcing Organizational Improvement Plan Solutions

	Solution 1	Solution 2	Solution 3
	Portfolio Admissions	*Critical Policy Analysis*	*Metissage*
Benefits	This solution creates a process for enacting the Pilot Project directive. It provides for elasticity in organizational identity while conserving faith-based criteria.	This solution directly addresses the process which governs faith-based admissions criteria. The solution is direct and decisive, providing needed sensegiving admissions work.	This solution addresses the fragmented sensemaking and sensegiving practices which threaten stakeholder engagement in reframing organizational identity at Accurate College.
Time	Admissions Pathway Committee: collaboration with admissions committee to restructure admissions procedures.	Admissions Pathway Committee: collaboration with admissions team to evaluate and re-write policy.	Admissions Pathway Committee: facilitating community forums and town hall meetings.
Fiscal	Admissions Pathway Committee: workload assignment; ongoing expense of non-cognitive admissions assessment process.	Admissions Pathway Committee & Admissions Team: workload assignment, policy analysis resources (books and articles).	Admissions Pathway Committee: workload assignment; community member workload assignment to attend forums; research assistant to compile data and notes.

	Solution 1 *Portfolio Admissions*	Solution 2 *Critical Policy Analysis*	Solution 3 *Metissage*
Information	Comparative analysis of portfolio admissions in colleges. Non-cognitive admissions assessment consultant and training; consultation with accreditation body.	Library and bookstore services. feedback from Board of Trustees and College Cabinet.	Compilation of narratives from previous student experience reports.
Technology	Client Information Management System (currently under tender).	Collaborative word-processing and presentation software.	Auditorium booking and technological support to deliver forums.
Potential Challenges	Stakeholder resistance to admissions practices outside of cultural norms for a liberal arts college.	Stakeholder resistance to problematizing traditional admissions criteria.	COVID-19 complicates gathering as a community; stakeholder resistance to fragmented sensemaking activities in recent past.

Proposed Solution

The leadership approach to change in this organizational improvement plan addresses the adaptive challenge identified in the problem of practice (the gap between student identity and Accurate College's admission policies) and applies a change process model that acknowledges faith-based admission criteria as constituting Accurate College's identity. The proposed solution requires the Admissions Pathway Group develop a portfolio admissions process (solution 1) and undertake a critical policy analysis (solution 2). These solutions address the change readiness of varying stakeholders: They address the structural policy work needed for individuals in Wiebe's (2011) Now = Then world who crave continuity in clear policies and procedures, while also addressing the new era perceived by individuals in Wiebe's (2011) Hitting a Wall world who crave discontinuity in practices (Figure 3, p. 31). This admissions work will lead Accurate College to a desired future as outlined in the Strategic Plan and Pilot Project. The strength of the proposed solution lies in the mutually constitutive nature of the activity – inviting the admissions team and prospective students as a community of practice to shift the discourse around organizational identity (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Tuck, 2009).

The proposed solution addresses the identified loss at stake for the Accurate College system. The solution embraces complexity with a sense of 'things in the making' rather than a with a sense of loss about faith-based identity. Including prospective students in the community of practice, through a portfolio admissions approach, is critical to advancing the elasticity of Accurate College's identity. Working on critical policy analysis in isolation would translate the Admission Pathway Group's activity into technical work and perpetuate the fragmented sensemaking and sensegiving processes at Accurate College.

Possible solution 3, métissage, is beyond the current scope of the Admissions Pathway Group. Addressing the fragmented interpretations (multiple, narrow accounts of activity resulting in inconsistent actions) at Accurate College is necessary, but within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the logistics of effectively bringing the community together in a way that does not perpetuate the fragmented activities of the past is problematic. Through the critical organizational analysis, I detected an opportunity for métissage through the faculty and staff senates. These college groups are more intimate and have communication practices in place to comply with current social distancing protocols. Members of the Admissions Pathway Group sit on both senates and can provide sensegiving about identity labels and the work of the proposed solutions while métissage is facilitated by the senate presidents.

Enacting Solutions

Enacting a portfolio admissions process (solution 1) and undertaking a critical policy analysis (solution 2) will follow a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) approach. Orienting the admissions work within a community of practice acknowledges that the Admissions Pathway Group's work occurs in relationship with others, through social interaction and social processes (Ebbers, 2017). Through the admissions work, an applicant learns about the content of the

admissions policy, develops relationships with Accurate College through portfolio dialogue, and

supports a mutually defining sense of organizational identity. As illustrated in Figure 5, the

intervention part of the change process model, the community of practice has an embedded

PDSA cycle.

Figure 5

PDSA Cycle
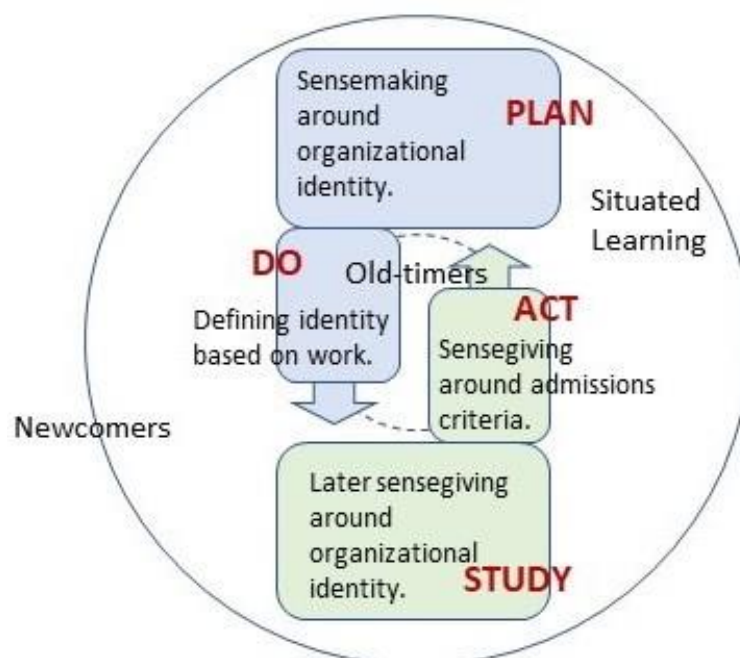
Note. From the intervene portion of the Change Process Model (Figure 4) highlighting the PDSA

application.

The PDSA approach will collectively inform observations of the change process as the

Admissions Pathway Group gets on the balcony, and on the playing field, during admissions

work to interpret Accurate College's wider organizing work about identity (Heifietz et al., 2014).

The approach is integral to the change implementation plan developed in Chapter 3 and provides

an ethically oriented monitoring of the organizational improvement plan's success.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

A postmodern leadership approach to organizational change is ethical practice. As
Schwartz and Sharpe (2010) articulate, ethics is not about establishing rules and following them,
it is about performing a particular practice (such as admissions work) well; "figuring out the
right way to do the right thing in a particular circumstance, with a particular person, at a
particular time" (p.5-6). Current leadership approaches that promote monocratic bureaucracy
perpetuate a strict reliance on rules and regulations that undermine the very wisdom stakeholders
need to make the work better. The postmodern leadership approach in this organizational
improvement plan considers the concerns of stakeholders' hearts, fostering participation in the
admissions work (Stumpf et al., 2012). The change process abandons totalizing thinking of
dominant narratives which would constrain Accurate College to the neoliberal lens and disregard
the adaptive challenge being faced (Sandu & Caras, 2013; Segal, 2014). A portfolio admissions
solution interrupts standardized ways of portraying applicants which alientates them from the
process and instead invites them into the work. The change process presented creates space for
Accurate College to learn about what is needed to succeed in admissions practice (Schwartz &
Sharpe, 2010). Postmodernism envisions the role of leadership in the Admissions Pathway
Group as a normative ideal that distributes leadership within the group, offering guidance in
sensemaking which facilitates an openness to the world which is particularly relevant in CHE
(Moritz et al., 2018). Facing plurality in the educational context is not only necessary, but crucial
for identity elasticity (Darroux, 2013).

The deconstructing of dominant narratives is a necessary part of ethical leadership. This
approach is philosophical, yet not detached from real-life practice. The ethical argument is
grounded in an understanding of the current developments in the field of post-secondary

education in the United States. The ubiquitous neoliberal narrative becomes as internalized image in the public's thought if leaders do not articulate a strong philosophical argument against it. As Nussbaum (1997) states,

> He [Aristotle] thought of the problem of life-planning as one that fundamentally involved deliberation about a rich plurality of rather general ends, in which the deliberator asked what concrete form of "modernation" or "courage" made most sense for his own life. Put in these terms, Aristotle's ethical enterprise is not unreachably "other" or impossibly foreign." (p.120)

Critical policy analysis invites stakeholders to consider the problem of practice as it is embodied in policy, deliberate on the ways the policy is enacted and connected to processes within the college, and strive to make sense of plurality and inclusion at Accurate College.

In the context of a Christian college, ethical leadership makes space for spirituality. Collaboration in a faith-based community of practice provides a vehicle for collective spiritual dialogue, and the three-part change process model provides an opportunity for individual, spiritual reflective practice in the work (Sandu & Caras, 2013). Leadership as an ethic is often defined as a quest for meaning in organizational life; framing solutions to the problem of practice as a community of practice gives the work meaning and promotes virtue in leadership as positivist leadership approaches at Accurate College are countered.

Ethical Challenges

Framing leadership as a normative ideal makes ethical commitments and responsibilities front and centre in the admissions work. Table 3 outlines the ethical challenges associated with the proposed solutions.

Table 3

Ethical Challenges

Losses at Stake: Loss of identity about *who we are* as outlined in the foundational policies.

	Solution 1 Portfolio Admissions	Solution 2 Critical Policy Analysis
Benefits	This solution creates a process for enacting the Pilot Project directive. It provides for elasticity in organizational identity while conserving faith-based criteria.	This solution directly addresses the process which governs the faith-based admissions criteria. The solution is direct and decisive, providing needed sensegiving admissions work.
Potential Challenges	Stakeholders may resist admissions practices that lie outside of cultural norms for a liberal arts college.	Stakeholders may resist problematizing traditional admissions criteria.
Ethical Responsibilities of Accurate College	Ask ethical questions about 'what is the right thing to do' while also ensuring admissions practices meet accreditation standards.	Deliberate and interrogate policy with an eye to inclusion while also ensuring adherence to the governing policies of the institution.
Ethical Commitments of Constituents	*Admissions Pathway Group*: due diligence and transparency *Admissions department*: clear communication and open-mindedness *Applicants*: honesty and creativity *College Cabinet*: principled and law abiding	*Admissions Pathway Group*: courage and open dialogue *Admissions department*: critical thinking and problematizing *Applicants*: risk-taking, moral autonomy *College Cabinet*: protect the admissions work
Actions	*Admissions Pathway Group*: Consult with HLC. *Admissions department*: Engage in retreat (Appendix B) and consider ethical questions. Research best practices for the given context. *Applicants*: Gather portfolio artifacts. *College Cabinet*: Oversee the HLC criteria and report progress to external stakeholders.	*Admissions Pathway Group*: Promote unbiased language; credit all participants. *Admissions department*: Consider multiple perspectives. *Applicants*: Speak honestly and provide feedback. *College Cabinet*: Create a safe space to work and explore options.

In practice, the present organizational improvement plan will face several challenges that relate to the interplay of higher education and faith community worlds (Moritz et al., 2018). Reconciling the need for ongoing sensemaking while decisively sharing an organizational improvement plan will require significant adaptive leadership skill on the part of the Admissions Pathway Group. Transformation of leadership practice in the institution will lead to a change in organizational identity, facilitating a more elastic sense of faith-based identity which will foster belonging and promote college enrollment.

Chapter 2 outlined the Adaptive Leadership Process as a foundation for change in the organizational improvement plan, integrating sensemaking and sensegiving in the interpretation

phase, and a community of practice as the intervention phase. This ethical approach provides a comprehensive conceptual model for the change process. A critical organizational analysis has led to a diagnosis of three key factors that must be addressed in the change implementation plan in Chapter 3: Accurate College has an inelastic sense of identity; low enrollment has caused disequilibrium; and the political landscape is fragmented. The adaptive leadership approach to change primarily supports a shift from viewing the college as a fixed entity to viewing it as a set of complex processes that provide avenues for a diversity of faith practice and a more elastic sense of organizational identity. As a solution to the problem of practice, a critical admissions policy analysis and a portfolio admissions process, implemented in a community of practice, create plausible narratives of organizational identity. Breadth of stakeholder representation in the community of practice provides agentic momentum in the work and a non-hierarchical approach gives voice to diverse perspectives.

Chapter 3

Change Implementation Plan

Chapter 3 charts a framework for implementing the solution in the organizational improvement plan. The change implementation plan outlines the change process for the first year, incorporating plan-do-study-act cycles to foster iterative testing of ideas and to allow for innovation to be gradually modified as the college's sense of organizational identity changes. A budget is shared, and regular documentation and communication are embedded in the change implementation plan and outlined in the transition plan. A detailed communication plan is included to build mechanisms for change. An ethical approach is embedded in the work allowing for progress and strengthened relationships as stakeholder agency is fostered.

Strategy for Change

The intervention portion of the change process model described in Chapter 2 is the change implementation plan which operationalizes the information gathered and interpreted. The plan involves a community of practice, of which I am a member, that engages in sensemaking and sensegiving work while enacting an admissions portfolio solution and a policy analysis solution. The solutions are proposed mechanisms for change, but success will depend on the way in which they are implemented (Benzie et al., 2017).

My leadership approach to change views implementation as an organizing process in which stakeholders' diverse stages of readiness are shared to create plausible narratives that can inform practices and policy. A community of practice fosters change readiness by redirecting overly hierarchical structures which ingrain hesitancy to share information freely that Hemme et al. (2018) report compounds hesitancy to change. The organizing process for the community of practice follows Webber's (2016) environmental criteria for success:

- The ability to meet regularly (p.22)

- The right community leadership (p.23)

- Creating a safe to learn environment (p.25)

- Getting support from the organization (p.26)

The implementation plan is a non-linear, continuous inquiry process that fosters invention of new ideas to address the gap between applicant faith practice and those admission policies that result in low enrollment at Accurate College. Through a supportive organizational environment, inventions provide space to accommodate varying levels of change readiness among stakeholders in an inquiry model of change implementation.

Solutions for Change

Solutions for change are connected to the guiding questions that emerged from the problem of practice (Chapter 1) and that inform the implementation plan.

Question 1: What aspects of the admissions process can be re-envisioned to encourage applications from individuals in our faith community? Priority Solution: Portfolio Admissions Process:

- Objective: The community of practice will redesign the admissions process to increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles.

- Implementation Goal: Design and pilot a portfolio admissions framework which provides a holistic picture of the applicant.

- Implementation Goal: Write and pilot admissions procedures and policy. Engage with Critical Analysis Working Group.

- Implementation Goal: Create and enact a work plan to engage in ongoing critical policy analysis work.

Question 2: How can assessment of faith-based admissions criteria be representative of individual growth and spiritual development? Priority Solution: Pilot Faith-based Admissions Criteria:

- Objective: The community of practice will redesign and pilot faith-based admissions criteria to increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles.

- Implementation Goal: Write and pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric.

  Question 3: How can the admissions process foster a sense of belonging for individuals with an emerging interest in our faith community? Priority Solution: Create an Admissions Community of Practice:

- Objective: The Admissions Pathway Group will create an Admissions community of practice by August 1st, 2021.

- Implementation Goal: The community of practice will include full applicant and student participation by June 15th, 2022.

Selecting Personnel

Understanding the diverse change readiness worlds that characterize the Accurate College community is key to the implementation plan's success. Response to the pilot projectnhas not resulted in a clear path forward because the community's diverse stages of readiness create a sense that the change implementation plan is starting in the middle of a non-linear process (Benzie et al., 2017). The approach to change I am taking in my organizational improvement plan addresses the adaptive challenge identified in the problem of practice (the gap between student faith practice and Accurate College's admission policies) and applies a change process that acknowledges that admissions work constitutes Accurate College's identity. Chapters 1 and 2 of the organizational improvement plan laid the groundwork for considering

membership in the community of practice; as Grotto et al. (n.d.) suggest, inviting recipients of the work (college applicants) and others with knowledge relating to the guiding questions is key. The strength of the implementation process for the proposed solution lies in the mutually constitutive nature of the activity – inviting the admissions team, colleagues, and prospective students to shift the discourse of agency around organizational identity (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Tuck, 2009). This work is implemented by two non-hierarchical groups as outlined in Figures 8 and 9 below. Figure 6 highlights the centering of applicants in the change process; no longer viewing them as outsiders wishing to gain access to the college, applicants are central to the admissions work.

Figure 6

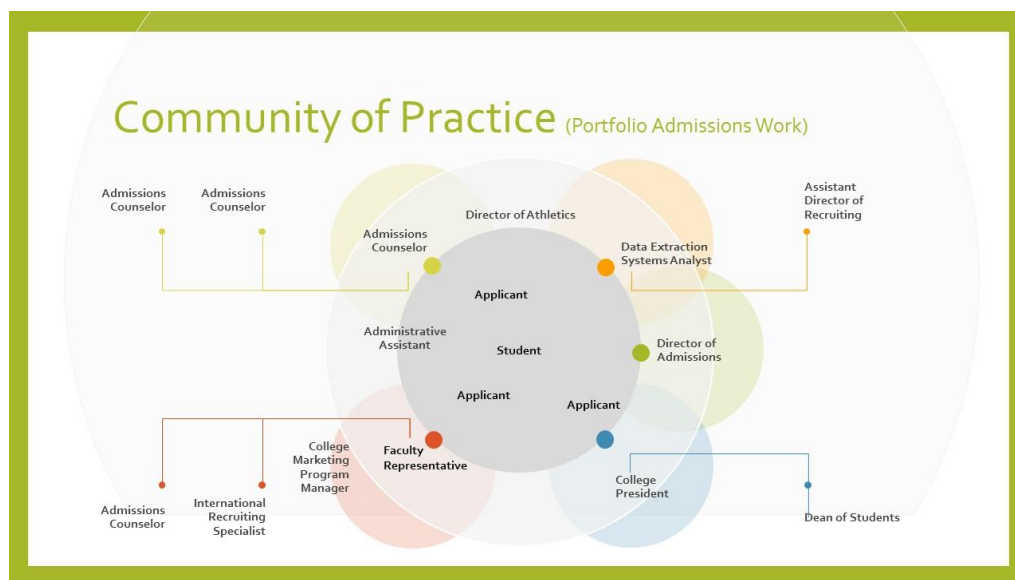*Community of Practice at Accurate College*

Figure 7 highlights the complexity, and process-orientation, of admissions work at the college. Each representative on the working group supports processes at Accurate College which are directly connected to admissions processes. Articulating and navigating these integrated processes is an important avenue for organizational identity formation and negotiation.

Figure 7

Critical Policy Analysis Working Group at Accurate College
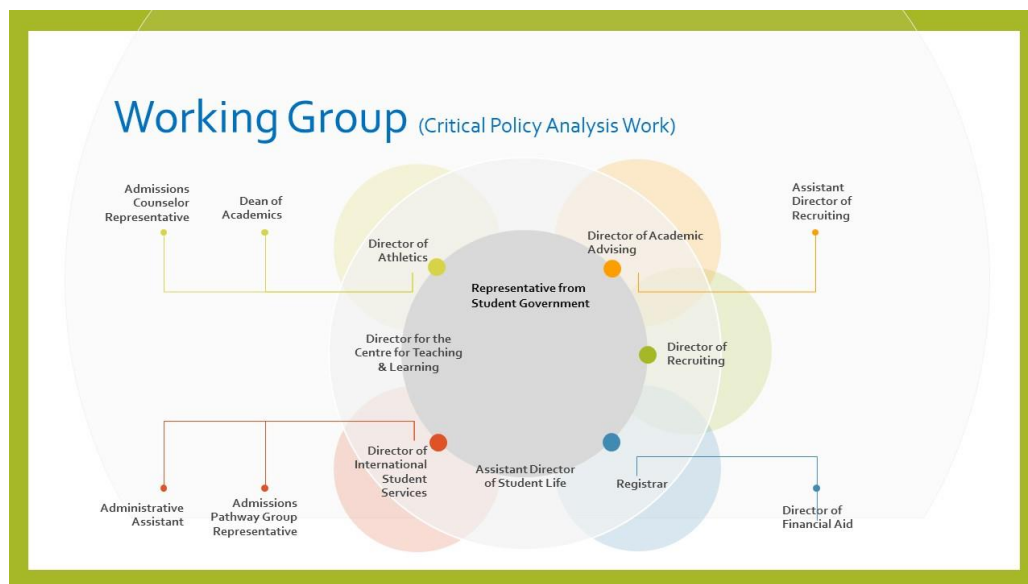
Curtis et al. (2013) considerations for structuring community informed the composition of the

two groups. The membership strives to balance diversity of views with a sense of shared purpose

in the work, honoring both dissonance and agreement in group learning. The community of

practice is mandated for individuals holding certain positions at the college; this mandate

"send[s] a strong message about organizational values and culture and create[s] clear

expectations for staff. Full staff participation in the communities of practice model can generate

a powerful force for making last programmatic change" (Curtis et al., 2013. p.29). The function,

as outlined in the change implementation plan, promotes flexibility over structure in group

process valuing responsiveness, creativity, and unrestricted dialogue to counter status quo

monocratic bureaucracy.

Plan Overview

Table 4 summarizes the change implementation plan connecting the organizational

improvement plan goals with the intervention process for the four PDSA stages. A detailed

implementation plan with specific support, timelines and milestones is found in Appendix A.

Table 4

Change Implementation Plan (Summary)

Goals/Priorities	Implementation Process	Implementation Issues & Limitations	Supports & Resources	Stakeholders & Personnel	Timeline & Milestones
Sensemaking around organizational identity. **Implementation Goal**: Design a portfolio admission framework **Implementation Goal**: Write admissions procedures, policy, and rubric. **Implementation Goal**: Create a work plan.	**PHASE 1: PLAN** 2 Day Retreat Community of Practice AGENDA (Appendix B) Community of Practice retreat material collected to inform the critical policy analysis work with colleagues. 1 Day Retreat Critical Policy Analysis Working Group AGENDA (Appendix B).	Unexpected changes to the Strategic Plan (2020) may impact this organizational improvement plan. Competing priorities continue to jeopardize admissions work (i.e., COVID-19, leadership turnover).	Financial & logistical support for the retreats: Facilitator Materials Participant Salaries	Community of Practice. Critical Policy Analysis Working Group.	August 2 & 3 - Community of Practice Retreat August 9 – Working Group Retreat
Defining identify based on work. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot the portfolio admissions framework v1. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot admissions procedures & policy v1. **Implementation Goal**: Enact the work plan. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric v1.	**PHASE 2: DO** A trial of the portfolio admissions framework and faith-based admissions criteria v1 will occur during this time. Regular community of practice meetings Regular Working Group meetings.	Work will be complex. Space is needed to practice without critique. Potential limitation of non-hierarchical reporting relationships.	Implement the communication plan. Prioritize time for meetings to dialogue and complete PDSA reporting.	Community of Practice Working Group	**August 15 - Dec 15**. **Dec 7:** Spring admissions deadline.

Goals/Priorities	Implementation Process	Implementation Issues & Limitations	Supports & Resources	Stakeholders & Personnel	Timeline & Milestones
Later sensegiving around organizational identity. **Implementation Goal**: Study portfolio admissions framework v1 using PDSA documentation &, enrolment data **Implementation Goal**: Study admissions procedures & policy v1 using PDSA documentation & enrolment data. Consult with Critical Analysis Working Group by Jan 15th, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Study faith-based admissions criteria and rubric v1 using PDSA documentation & enrollment data, by Jan 15th, 2022.	**PHASE 3: STUDY** 2 Day Retreat Community of Practice AGENDA (Appendix B).	Fidelity to PDSA documentation is key. Discussion about change readiness needs to be on-going and prioritized. There is a risk of admission staff burn-out as we gear-up to implement and document v2.	Financial & logistical support for the retreats: facilitator, materials, salaries. Data collection, report preparation.	Study and assess multiple stakeholders' interactions in the change implementation. Community of Practice Working Group.	**January 2 & 3:** Community of practice Retreat & Working Group consultation.
Sensegiving around admissions criteria. **Priority: Portfolio Admissions Process** **Implementation Goal**: Pilot the portfolio admissions framework & policies v2. **Implementation Goal**: Plan for Year 2 PDSA Cycle. **Priority: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria** **Implementation Goal**: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric v2. **Implementation Goal**: Share the admissions policy and revised portfolio admissions framework with the broader college community for feedback.	**PHASE 4: ACT** A trial of the revised portfolio admissions framework and faith-based admissions criteria v2 will occur during this time. Regular Community of Practice meetings. Ad hoc Working Group meetings. Implementing communication plan with broader college community to inform the Change Process Model. Initiate new PDSA cycle for Year 2.	Shifting the Working Group to an ad hoc status risks disconnect with the admissions work and larger college systems.	Prioritize time for bi-weekly community of practice meetings to dialogue and complete PDSA reporting.	Community of Practice Working Group. Admissions Pathways Group	**Spring semester starts January 23rd.** **January 15 - June 15:** Implement revised admissions framework v2 for Fall recruitment cycle. **June 1** – Fall admissions deadline. **June 15** – initiate Year 2 PDSA cycle.

The transition plan to implement the phases is captured in the Appendix C which shows the progression of phases and specific accountabilities on a timeline for the first year. The investment of substantial funds in the change implementation plan is crucial to the plan's success; many projects fail because of inadequate human resources and financial support (Reed & Card, 2016). Failing to plan and resource the organizational improvement plan adequately will perpetuate the fragmented political landscape at Accurate College. Table 5 shows the required budget to resource the plan.

Table 5

Change Implementation Plan Budget

Item	Description	Budget
Phase 1: PLAN	Community of Practice 2-Day retreat:	**$9200**
	• Salaries (14 participants * $200/day * 2 days) = $5600	
	• Student Stipends (4 participants * $200/day * 2 days) = $1600	
	• Facilitator fee $1000	
	• Materials & meals = $1000	
	Critical Policy Analysis Working Group 1-Day retreat:	**$3800**
	• Salaries (13 participants * $200/day) = $2600	
	• Student Stipends (1 participant * $200) = $200	
	• Facilitator fee $500	
	• Materials & meals = $500	
Phase 2: DO	Salaries:	**$10,000**
	• Community of Practice meetings (8 * $900) = $7200	
	• Working Group meetings (4 * $700) = $2800	
Phase 3: STUDY	Community of Practice 2-Day retreat:	**$9700**
	• Salaries (14 participants * $200/day * 2 days) = $5600	
	• Student Stipends (4 participants * $200/day * 2 days) = $1600	
	• Facilitator fee $1000	
	• Materials & meals = $1000	
	• Working Group representation = $500	
Phase 4: ACT	Salaries:	**$7200**
	• Community of Practice meetings (8 * $900) = $7200	
Contingency Fund	10%	**$3990**
TOTAL		**$43,890**

Strengths of the Change Implementation Plan

Admissions work at Accurate College cannot exist in a social vacuum; framing the implementation plan as a community of practice including applicants, students, and admissions workers is a strength. The complex system of processes that takes place and contributes to Accurate College's constitution is defined in relation with other processes. The processes are not inclusive unless they are viewed as such by prospective students (Gergen, 2011).

The implementation plan recognizes that stakeholders are not all at the same level of change readiness concerning faith-based admissions criteria at Accurate College; the plan does, however, create space for recognizing that stakeholders are capable of changing their perspectives and their relationship to admissions work (Weibe et al., 2012). The admissions staff's sense of change in the admissions work falls in Now = Then world; it is a story of non-change amid all the talk of the pilot project and activity of implementing the strategic plan. The staff experiences a sense of inherent momentum in which the original direction of college admissions, as set out in the foundational policies, continues. A Now = Then world temporal stance requires a break in momentum if substantial change is to be implemented.

Accurate College president's sense of change in the admissions work appears to fall into We'll See world; he has a sense that real change may come, though it will take substantial time to accomplish (Wiebe, 2011). He experiences a sense of exploratory momentum with episodic, incremental changes that may continue until a period of convergence is reached, or until a new set of priorities redirects focus. A We'll See world temporal stance, like a Now = Then world stance, requires a break in momentum if substantial change is to be implemented (Weibe et al., 2012).

The sense of change of the Board of Trustees and of the Admissions Pathway Group falls into Hitting a Wall world (Wiebe, 2011, p.226); they are working toward a goal that they understand will be the future consummation of a present reality. The pilot project is viewed as a watershed event which redirected momentum, energized, and provided a sense of changed direction (providing an avenue revised admissions criteria). Yet, the Board of Trustees experienced roadblocks to implementation. Individuals with a Hitting a Wall world perspective experience an increasing momentum that questions how momentum can be maintained to achieve goals (Wiebe, 2011, p.226).

Building Momentum

The test pilots in the implementation plan achieve agentic momentum, countering the community's current inertia and fragmentation (Weibe et al., 2012). Addressing the low engagement which results from a fragmented community is essential to build momentum and foster agency in stakeholders (Humphrey & Brown, 2002; Maitlis, 2005). The trial portfolios (versions 1 and 2 as outlined in Appendix A) create an experiential learning opportunity for the community of practice; offering an inquiry space to test, evaluate, and reconsider portfolio admissions and policy changes. An essential element of a postmodern approach, the test pilots interrupt monocratic leadership approaches at the college and fosters agency in the community.

The work of the community of practice manipulates Accurate College's social environment to some degree as change is implemented; the notion of change as an agentic process involves the development of organizational identity over time – each mo(ve)ment is the right time to implement change in some way as Accurate College's sense of organizational self evolves (Lorina & Tricard, 2012; Higgins, 2017; Weick, 1995). This aspect of sensemaking is "manipulation" (Weick, 1995, p. 162) that begins with actions to which temporal stances

accommodate. It involves acting in ways that create an environment that people can then comprehend and manage; it results in an entrepreneurial change implementation plan. This entrepreneurial, inquiry-based approach to continuous improvement fosters an adaptive leadership approach to implement change and address the problem of practice (Heifetz et el, 2014). The change implementation plan offers a way for Accurate College to become organized in admissions work.

Stakeholder Representation

Diverse stakeholder representation in the community of practice is a strength that can enhance the possibility of plan adoption. In particular, participation of Accurate College's president will give the admissions work credibility and buy the community of practice some time to grow and develop without scrutiny. The integration of the admissions department and the Admissions Pathway Group brings together two bodies which have significant interest in the success of the implementation plan. Including the Working Group in critical policy analysis further broadens the base of champions for admissions work at Accurate College and strengthens systems to support the change plan.

Limitations of the Change Implementation Plan

Response to the pilot project has not resulted in consensus in admissions work at Accurate College and has exacerbated a sense that the change implementation plan is starting in the middle of a non-linear process (Benzie et al., 2017). The approach to change in the present organizational improvement plan addresses the adaptive challenge identified in the problem of practice and applies a change process that acknowledges that admissions work constitutes Accurate College's identity. This approach is different from the current leadership approaches at Accurate College (as discussed in Chapter 1) and leaves the plan vulnerable to critique because

of its relational approach. In a context of high leadership turnover, a relational approach may be a limitation.

The co-constituting nature of responsibility in the community of practice may also be a limitation. A responsibility chart cannot be created with work assignments pre-assigned to ensure continuity and follow-through. Each community of practice meeting will interrupt structural hierarchies and rely on participant autonomy and agency to move the work forward. The composition of the community of practice should mitigate work flow problems to some extent as approval and support from supervisors can be provided as individuals negotiate the work to be done.

A final limitation to be considered is the lack of a contingency plan. If buy-in from the Admissions Pathway Group is unsuccessful at the start of the change implementation plan, current technical approaches to admissions work will continue without an opportunity to address the adaptive challenge. A neoliberal, market-driven view of recruitment will dominate, resulting in a need to eliminate faith-based admissions criteria (and accept open enrollment) or to close Accurate College as the applicant pool becomes too small to sustain operations. The potential limitations of the change implementation plan can be countered by a robust and responsive evaluation and monitoring of change processes as outlined below.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Organizational time consists of learning cycles which include exploration and exploitation phases (Lorino & Tricard, 2012). The PDSA cycle documents change processes that supports narratives of change in sensemaking and sensegiving as the work progresses. PDSA is one of few tools that focuses on the adaptive challenge, translating ideas and intentions into action (Reed & Card, 2016). Building on current continuous improvement research in the field of

education, such as the Carnegie Foundation's Advancement of Teaching Pathways program, the

PDSA cycle integrates well with the community of practice model of implementation in the

organizational improvement plan's change process. PDSA cycles allow for complexity in

characterizing the context of the implementation plan, embrace a process model for admissions

work, reconceptualize the leader's role in change to align with a postmodern view, and use

practical measurement tools (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2017).

Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycles

PDSA provides a structured learning approach in the community of practice to test

change processes (Reed & Card, 2016); providing opportunities to implement changes in

Accurate College admissions work in short cycles which encourage early and iterative testing of

ideas allowing innovation to be modified to respond to college's changing sense of

organizational identity (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2017). PDSA cycles consist of four parts which

are integrated in the change implementation plan.

In the planning stage, the community of practice and working group make sense around

organizational identity and redesign admissions process, policies, procedures, and criteria. In the

second stage, the organizational identity is further defined through implementation as the

community of practice and working group gathering information and documentation during the

120-day test cycle piloting version 1. Thirdly, by studying the information gathered during the

pilot, the community of practice and working group identify implementation problems and revise

the processes, policies, procedures, and criteria building the sense to organizational identity

(Reed & Card, 2016). In the fourth stage, the community of practice acts on the conclusions

reached through study and test the pilot version 2 for a 150-day cycle. New information and

documentation gathered on version 2 will inform continuous improvement in the subsequent academic year (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2017).

Proposed Tools and Measures

Complex problems such as the problem of practice require a sophisticated application of the PDSA method. The simplicity of the PDSA can create challenges in practice as leaders need to understand how to adapt its use to the problem. Embedding the PDSA in the organizational improvement plan's change process adapts the PDSA approach and addresses "the misconception that it can be used as a stand-alone method" (Reed & Card, 2016, p. 148). Embedding the PDSA cycle in the change process removes many of the barriers to its successful implementation.

Integrating PDSA cycles into the change implementation plan will help with fidelity to the method. A suite of documentation tools developed to align with the implementation plan priorities support the test pilots as outlined in Table 6. There are six principles in the PDSA measures which the change implementation plan adheres to, increasing the likelihood of implementation success: ongoing documentation, learning activities, documented preditions, iterative cycles, incremental testing scales, and use of data over time (McNicholas et al., 2019).

Documentation tools include a Kanban Board for collaborative tracking of applicants during the admissions process (Layton, 2020). A Kanban Board is a tool for workflow visualization and provides an overview of current work status. During bi-weekly community of practice gatherings annotations about portfolio admissions test cycles are added to the Kanban Board which is reviewed and manipulated daily by the admissions team as applicants join the community of practice. A process map is used to facilitate critical policy analysis and help the group visualize the complex systems connected to the admissions policies. A process map is a

graphical representation of processes and their interconnectivity. The third documentation tool is the faith-based admissions rubric developed by the community of practice during test cycles to capture dialogue and individual applicant admissions stories.

The implementation plan structures learning activities. Through facilitation, foundational learning activities and predictions occur during the initial retreat for the stakeholders. The retreat provides an opportunity to develop tools (including portfolio admissions framework, policies and procedures, and admissions rubrics) and navigate ethical challenges in the work. The second retreat facilitates an analysis of test cycle 1, evaluates data and predictions, and re-visions the work for test cycle 2.

Table 6

Change Implementation Plan Tools and Methods

PDSA cycle conduct principle	Change Implementation Plan Tool or Method
Documentation *Ongoing documentation is implemented.*	**Implementation Goal**: Pilot the portfolio admissions framework v1 between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot admissions procedures & policy v1 between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **TOOL: Kanban Board -** available for collaborative tracking of applicants during the test cycle (Layton, 2020). - Capture the KanBan Board bi-weekly and annotate during community of practice meetings. **Implementation Goal**: Enact the work plan to engage in ongoing critical policy analysis work monthly between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **TOOL: Process Map** – available for critical policy analysis work. - Meeting minutes capture the dialogue. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric V1 between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **TOOL: Rubrics** for each applicant will be saved and reviewed.

PDSA cycle conduct principle	Change Implementation Plan Tool or Method
Learning Activity *PDSA cycle is used to structure a learning activity.*	**Learning Activity 1** **METHOD: Facilitation** 2 Day Retreat - Community of Practice (August 2021) 1 Day Retreat - Critical Policy Analysis Working Group (August 2021) **Implementation Goal**: Design a portfolio admissions framework which provides a holistic picture of the applicant by Aug 10th, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Write admissions procedures & policy. Engage with Critical Analysis Working Group by August 10th, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Create a work plan to engage in ongoing critical policy analysis work by August 15th, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Write pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric by August 10th, 2021. **Learning Activity 2** **METHOD: Facilitation** **TOOLS: PDSA Documentation** (KanBan Board & annotations, Process Map & minutes, Faith-based Admissions Rubrics). **Enrollment Data.** 2 Day Retreat - Community of Practice (January 2022) **Implementation Goal**: Study portfolio admissions framework v1 by Jan 15th, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Study admissions procedures & policy v1 Consult with Critical Analysis Working Group by Jan 15th, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Study faith-based admissions criteria and rubric v1 by Jan 15th, 2022
Prediction *An explicit prediction is documented.*	The change implementation plan will increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles.
Iterative Cycles *The PDSA cycle is within a series of iterative cycles.*	The change implementation plan is year 1 within an iterative Change Process Model at Accurate College.
Incremental testing scale *The PDSA cycle is within a series of cycles with increasing scale.*	• The initial DO stage tests pilot version 1 for 120-days. • The subsequent ACT stage test pilot version 2 for 150 days. • PDSA cycle 2 in 2022/23 academic year.
Use of data over time *The PDSA cycle is within a series of cycles using regular data over time.*	The PDSA documentation informs the admissions work over time. Enrollment data is used to measure progress in meeting the change implementation plan's goal to increase admissions by 50% over 2 years.

Framing the ongoing documentation and information gathering during the second and fourth PDSA stages as community of practice work will address the lack of joint ownership reported by Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2017) and foster the required "shift in their [admissions staff] mindset about the nature of their work" (p. 489). Ongoing community of practice meetings

throughout the PDSA cycle is an important practice to build infrastructure at Accurate College, creating space and time for the change implementation work. PDSA cycles are a fundamentally different way of working (McNicholas et al., 2019). Through diverse stakeholder participation in the community of practice, the community is aware of each participant's work and priorities, enabling colleagues to prioritize the time needed for the PDSA information and data gathering work.

Embedding regular documentation time and dialogue into the change implementation plan addresses the challenges faced by many PDSA cycles, especially during the first round. The community of practice provides structure to support the change in admissions work, supporting the intentional use of the PDSA method and highlighting its value to the admissions staff. Offering time for documentation activities during the community of practice meetings will address the common concern that change implementation requires implementers to 'PDSA everything' with little recognition of stakeholders' workload (McNicholas et al., 2019).

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and Change Process

Part of creating a dynamic implementation plan is the incorporation of a communication plan to build mechanisms for change (Tennyson, 2005). The communication plan addresses agentic momentum through sensemaking and sensegiving. The communication tactics support stakeholders in making sense of their experiences of change. Through multiple communication tactics, the communication plan creates an environment that people can comprehend, manage, and respond to (Wiebe, 2011; Weibe et al., 2012). The communication plan starts with the guiding questions emerging from the problem of practice and builds on the priorities, objectives, and goals of the implementation plan (Tennyson, 2005). From the foundation of implementation plan priorities, communication goals and objectives are developed. A broad audience for the

communication plan is identified – the various individuals and organizations on which the organizational improvement plan's success depends. When considering each audience category, simple and pre-planned statements have been proposed for each; "by identifying the message in its communication plan, the message becomes central to all communication efforts for this proposed project" (Tennyson, 2005, p. 51).

The diverse stakeholders in the Accurate College community each have different experiences and temporal awareness of the admissions work which impacts the way they receive and make sense of messages about organizational change (Lewis, 2007; Wiebe, 2011). With established messages developed, multiple methods for reaching the communication objectives are outlined considering various learning modalities and the different temporal constructions of organizational change they are experiencing. As outlined in Table 7, the communication plan is a broad document establishing priorities in the communication plan narrows the focus and provides definition for the communication action plan (Appendix E).

Operating from the principle that one should start small and do a few things well, the action plan outlines the proposed day-to-day implementation of what will happen and who will do it. Under the general direction of the Admissions Pathway Group, with revision, implementation, and bi-weekly monitoring by the community of practice, the communication action plan will have specific measures and targets. It is important to ensure the communication action plan does not become a one-way communication campaign, but that it creates authentic space for stakeholders to engage in the change process and provide feedback as it unfolds. The communication plan is a sensemaking and a sensegiving activity; "how implementers communicatively treat employees may have a good deal more to do with how they come to understand and judge the outcomes of change than previously thought" (Lewis, 2006, p. 42).

Ensuring the communication plan is implemented by a broad range of community of practice members will create invitations for dialogue about the admissions work across Accurate College *community.*

Measures of Success

Effective communication is clearly a key component of successful change implementation. The present organizational improvement plan facilitates change for Accurate College in addressing the gap between applicant faith practice and the current faith-based criteria in admissions work. This change invites the Accurate College community to shape a new organizational identity. The communication plan invites elasticity in the Accurate College system, countering the constricted sense which currently views diversity as peripheral to organizational identity (Kreiner et al., 2015). The communication plan addresses the fragmented political landscape at Accurate College currently characterized by multiple, narrow accounts of sensegiving and inconsistent actions (Lewis, 2006; Maitlis, 2005). Success of the communication plan lies in individual assessment of the degree to which the plan has impacted the Guiding Research Questions and bolstered enrolment as Accurate College becomes organized in admissions work.

Lewis (2006) argues that stakeholders will perceive communication about change differently than will the community of practice. The community of practice will benefit from a clear sense of the implementation work and progress; other stakeholders (such as a faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees) will have less personal knowledge of the change process and rely on communication tactics for information. These stakeholders will also have valuable perspectives on how the implementation plan is unfolding. The communication plan reinforces the leadership approach to change by interrupting dominant narratives in the field in which time, movement,

sequence, and flux are under-represented. The communication plan is dialogical and embodies a process organization lens (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011). Small informal discussions and word of mouth tactics are key; it is not the frequency of the communication which stakeholders associate with perceptions of change success but rather the dialogical nature of the communication. "Creating the sense that employee input is valued and that a leaders' vision is clear, combined with measures to reduce resistance to change, best predict success as judged by employees" (Lewis, 2006, p.41). The communication plan weaves a balance between informational materials and invitations to discuss the work.

Dimensions of the Communication Plan

Informed by the work of Lewis (2007), Table 7 shows the four dimensions that frame the communication plan:

- Balanced messages: The communication plan aims to share activity and progress in meeting the implementation plan objectives.

- Dissemination and input focus: The change process is grounded in a dialogical approach to change. The communication plan facilitates both sensegiving and sensemaking tactics as the admissions work unfolds.

- Targeted messages: Each stakeholder group is considered; communication is intentionally geared to address the perspectives and priorities of each group and to create space for multiple and competing narratives of process (Langley & Tsoukas, 2011).

- Discrepancy focus: Regular communication with the Accurate College community about enrolment data is important. Given the variety which characterizes the community's sense of change readiness, acknowledging that progress in the admissions work may not be linear invites meaningful relationships among stakeholders (Benzie et al., 2017).

Table 7

Communication Plan (Summary)

Implementation Plan	Communication goals	Communication objectives	Audience	Messages	Strategies & tactics	Evaluate
A portfolio admission process re-envisions admissions to encourage applications from individuals in our faith community. Objective: Develop a Portfolio Admissions Process to encourage applications.	Foster acceptance of portfolio-based admissions.	Inform college community about the need to increase enrollment.	Governing, Internal & External including potential applicants.	Accurate College is committed to increasing enrollment. A portfolio admissions process draws applicants who want a flexible, authentic application process where they can share their strengths in diverse ways.	Categorized tactics: Informational materials, Public participation, Media relations, Gov relations & internal communication.	Admissions fact sheet & FAQ will be distributed. One news briefing will be distributed with an invitation for campus visits Monthly newsletter enrollment updates will be distributed to internal stakeholders. Two town hall meetings.

Implementation Plan	Communication goals	Communication objectives	Audience	Messages	Strategies & tactics	Evaluate
Revised faith-based admissions criteria represent individual growth & spiritual development. Objective: Pilot Faith-based Admissions Criteria to encourage applications.	Foster acceptance of a revised faith-based admissions rubric.	Inform college community about the difference between faith practice & religious adherence.	Governing, Internal & External including potential applicants.	Accurate College is committed to promoting individual spiritual growth & development. Revised faith-based admissions criteria will reflect an applicant's faith practice and not their religious adherence.	Categorized tactics: Informational materials, Public participation, Media relations, Gov relations & internal communication.	Criteria fact sheet & FAQ will be distributed. Two news briefings will be conducted with religious affiliates. One town hall meeting.
An admissions community of practice fosters a sense of belonging for individuals with an emerging interest in our faith community. Objective: Create an Admissions Community of Practice	Foster acceptance of a dialogical admissions practice.	Inform college community about the need to foster a sense of belonging in the admissions process.	Governing, Internal & External.	Accurate College is committed to fostering a sense of belonging in the admissions process by including potential applicants in an admissions community of practice.	Categorized tactics: Informational materials, Public participation, Media relations, Gov relations & internal communication.	Community of practice fact sheet, FAQ & invitations to participate will be distributed. Two community of practice updates will be shared on the intranet.

The communication plan is relational at heart; the network of stakeholder relationships is shaped by dialogue and negotiation among stakeholders. A detailed communication plan in Appendix D outlines the dialogue and negotiation in detail. The communication plan is revised, implemented, and monitored by the community of practice. Appendix E is a detailed communication action plan to facilitate agentic momentum in the admissions work through sensemaking and sensegiving tactics. These tactics build mechanisms for change which support

stakeholders in making sense of their experiences of change by re-configuring their relationship with past, present, and future admissions work at Accurate College.

Conclusion and Future Considerations

As suggested by Lewis (2007), I recognize that my assessment of context, choice of theoretical frames, and selection of strategies in the organizational improvement plan is due, in part, to my own perceptions of the change situation. The title of the present organizational improvement plan is framed as a question, *Frozen in Time?* to acknowledge the role of temporal perceptions in organizational change. Through the admissions work, I have discovered that individual stakeholders respond to this question of timing differently. Rather than a retrospective assessment of the question, the change process developed in Chapter 2 highlights sensemaking and sensegiving as creating an organizing space for stakeholders to consider the question in the present and readjust their conception of organizational identity (Weick, 1995; Wiebe, 2011).

Identifying a process orientation creates confidence in the leadership approach used in the organizational improvement plan; understanding that observation and interpretation of the adaptive challenge requires engagement with processes, not structural entities, allows for periods of progress and pause in the change implementation plan. Questions such as "is there really no change occurring currently?" (Now = Then world view), and "is this another roadblock in our progress?" (A Rocky Road world view), can inform the community of practice in their work. Honouring the different perceptions of organizational change that exist within Accurate College helps me to craft an implementation plan that is relational and promotes the socially constructed nature of organizing. Identifying stakeholders' temporal perceptions in organizing processes recognizes that resistance to change is a strength which slows the pace and allows for processes to adjust to the broader change plan. This stance is complemented by stakeholders who wish to

rush processes and promote momentum. This leadership approach to change creates agency for all community members as they come together to make sense of Accurate College's identity.

A consideration for future exploration is the role the community of practice has on implementing change. Wiebe (2011) suggests that stakeholders tend to experience increasing negative emotion when they construct their sense of change based on an external referent (i.e., the governors, the Ministry). On the other hand, when stakeholders construct their sense of change based on themselves, they tend to experience no emotion, or more positive emotion. Bringing diverse stakeholders together in a community of practice and framing change as agentic momentum invites greater participation and involvement which shifts change readiness. Examining change implementation from this perspective will be an area of future research.

The present organizational improvement plan suggests that clock time is limited in its usefulness in understanding and characterising organizational change as it is understood and enacted by stakeholders (Wiebe, 2011). Considering ways a PDSA model to change implementation structures a community of practice during test changes will be an interesting research avenue. Following Reed and Card's (2015) assertion that a successful PDSA process consists of informed learning and action, deconstructing measures of success bound by clock time is an interesting avenue of inquiry in the change process. If a community of practice has learned and adapted action during change implementation, can it ever really fail? How can I construct measures of organizational improvement plan success that honour diverse worlds of change readiness? Framing measures of success as mo(ve)ments in the ongoing process of becoming organized interrupts the dominant narrative in organization theory that entities and change occur within fixed time frames and answers the call for more dynamic approaches to the

study of organizational and management phenomena (Higgins, 2017; Langley & Tsoukas, 2011; Tichnor-Wagner et al. 2017).

     In summary, low enrollment is a significant problem in small Christian liberal arts colleges. It is my position that addressing the adaptive challenge of organizational identity will create an inclusive, accessible, and relevant faith-based college community which appeals to applicants and thereby grow enrollment. Drawing on process organization theory, situated learning theory, and adaptive leadership theory, I propose in this organizational improvement plan a change process enacted by a community of practice to foster sensemaking about organizational identity through college admissions work. This plan identifies portfolio-based admissions and critical policy analysis as ways to invite applicants to demonstrate their strengths; the approaches honour individual faith practice and foster a sense of belonging during the admissions process. The community of practice advances continuous improvement and innovation in the change implementation plan and creates space for varying degrees of stakeholder change readiness in the process.

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Appendix A: Change Implementation Plan (Detailed)

Goals/Priorities	Implementation Process	Implementation Issues & Limitations	Supports & Resources	Stakeholders & Personnel	Timeline & Milestones
Sensemaking around organizational identity. **Priority: Portfolio Admissions Process** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the admissions process to increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Design a portfolio admissions framework which provides a holistic picture of the applicant by Aug 10th, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Write admissions procedures & policy. Engage with Critical Analysis Working Group by August 10th, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Create a work plan to engage in ongoing critical policy analysis work by August 15th, 2021. **Priority: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the faith-based admissions criteria and rubric and pilot the redesign for two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Write pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric by August 10th, 2021. **Priority: Create an Admissions Community of Practice** **Objective**: The Admissions Pathway Group will charge the creation of an Admissions community of practice by August 1st, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: The community of practice will include full applicant and student participation by June 15th, 2022.	**PHASE 1: PLAN** Organizing processes involve **mediation.** Use signs and interpreted acts (Lorino & Tricard, 2012). "Implementation details are outlined bringing to the fore areas of conflict, which through mediation find an acceptable framing that allows for different possible resolutions" (Benzie et al., 2017, p.235). 2 Day Retreat Community of Practice AGENDA (Appendix B) Community of Practice retreat material collected to inform the critical policy analysis work with colleagues. 1 Day Retreat Critical Policy Analysis Working Group AGENDA (Appendix)	Need to recognize importance of admissions department, applicants, and pathways group work (Benzie et al, 2017). The Strategic Plan (2020) is expected to receive final approval from the Board of Trustees in February 2021. Unexpected changes to the Strategic Plan (2020) may impact this organizational improvement plan. Competing priorities continue to jeopardize admissions work (i.e., COVID-19, leadership turnover).	Organizing processes involve **dialogicality.** Addresses the audience (Lorino & Tricard, 2012). Focus on process, discussions to reach common understanding; don't use outsiders; develop relationships with broad stakeholders (Benzie et al., 2017, p. 231.) Financial & logistical support for the retreats: Facilitator Materials. Participant Salaries	Organizing processes involve **character definition.** Assign roles (Lorino & Tricard, 2012). Clarify roles; no single stakeholder has authority. "In an adaptive approach there is recognition of shared 'power'" (Benzie et al., 2017, p.237). Community of Practice. Critical Policy Analysis Working Group.	Organizing processes involve **emplotment.** Impose temporal order (Lorino & Tricard, 2012). Provide guiding criteria; explore issues as they surface (Benzie et al., 2017, p.233). August 2 & 3 - Community of Practice Retreat August 9 – Working Group Retreat

Goals/Priorities	Implementation Process	Implementation Issues & Limitations	Supports & Resources	Stakeholders & Personnel	Timeline & Milestones
Defining identify based on work. **Priority: Portfolio Admissions Process** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the admissions process to increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot the portfolio admissions framework v1 between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot admissions procedures & policy v1 between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **Implementation Goal**: Enact the work plan to engage in ongoing critical policy analysis work monthly between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021. **Priority: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the faith-based admissions criteria and rubric and pilot the redesign for two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric V1 between August 15 – Dec 15, 2021.	**PHASE 2: DO** **Mediation**: At any one time, people may have a predominant temporal stance toward something (Wiebe et al., 2012). A trial of the portfolio admissions framework and faith-based admissions criteria v1 will occur during this time. Regular community of practice meetings Regular Working Group meetings.	Finding points of intersection between the Community of Practice and Working Group will be complex. The community of practice needs time and space to develop their practice without critique and technically focused redirections. Potential limitation of non-hierarchical model given established reporting relationships within the community of practice.	**Dialogicality**: yhe opposite temporal processes of phenomena and human deliberation (Wiebe et al., 2012). Implement the communication plan for the admissions work. Prioritize time for bi-weekly community of practice meetings to dialogue and complete PDSA reporting. Prioritize time for monthly Working Group meetings and PDSA reporting.	**Character definition**: the agency available to people as they situate themselves in the flow of time. (Wiebe et al., 2012). Community of Practice Working Group	**Emplotment**: time as intrinsic to phenomena (Wiebe et al. 2012). **Fall semester starts August 23rd.** **August 15 - Dec 15:** Implement admissions framework v1 for Spring recruitment cycle. Community of practice meets bi-weekly to review process and document PDSA cycle. Working Group meets monthly to engage in analysis work and document PDSA cycle. **Dec 7:** Spring admissions deadline.

Goals/Priorities	Implementation Process	Implementation Issues & Limitations	Supports & Resources	Stakeholders & Personnel	Timeline & Milestones
Later sensegiving around organizational identity. **Priority: Portfolio Admissions Process** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the admissions process to increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Study portfolio admissions framework v1 using PDSA documentation, enrolment data & agentic momentum rubric by Jan 15th, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Study admissions procedures & policy v1 using PDSA documentation & enrolment data. Consult with Critical Analysis Working Group by Jan 15th, 2022. **Priority: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the faith-based admissions criteria and rubric and pilot the redesign for two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Study faith-based admissions criteria and rubric v1 using PDSA documentation & enrollment data, by Jan 15th, 2022. Gather enrollment data and cross-reference with PDSA documentation.	**PHASE 3: STUDY** **Mediation:** What differentiates the attention on the future within each temporal focus is the relative emphasis on a particular temporal dimension (Weibe et al., 2012, p. 249). 2 Day Retreat Community of Practice AGENDA (Appendix B)	The fidelity to PDSA documentation will be key to data analysis and planning of v2. Discussion about change readiness needs to be on-going and prioritized. There is a challenge to balancing this need with change implementa-tion plan structure. There is a risk of admission staff burn-out as we gear-up to implement and document v2.	**Dialogicality:** Financial & logistical support for the retreats: facilitator, materials, salaries. Data collection, report preparation.	**Character definition**: Study and assess multiple stakeholders' interactions in the change implementation. Community of Practice Working Group.	**Emplotment**: **January 2 & 3:** Community of practice Retreat & Working Group consultation.

Goals/Priorities	Implementation Process	Implementation Issues & Limitations	Supports & Resources	Stakeholders & Personnel	Timeline & Milestones
Sensegiving around admissions criteria. **Priority: Portfolio Admissions Process** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the admissions process to increase applications to Accurate College by 50% within two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot the portfolio admissions framework v2 between Jan15 – June 15, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot admissions procedures & policy v2 between Jan 15 – June 15, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Plan for Year 2 PDSA Cycle. **Priority: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria** **Objective**: The community of practice will redesign the faith-based admissions criteria and rubric and pilot the redesign for two admissions cycles. **Implementation Goal**: Pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric v2 between Jan 15 – June 15, 2022. **Implementation Goal**: Share the admissions policy and revised portfolio admissions framework with the broader college community for feedback.	**PHASE 4: ACT** A trial of the revised portfolio admissions framework and faith-based admissions criteria v2 will occur during this time. Regular Community of Practice meetings. Ad hoc Working Group meetings. Implementing communication plan with broader college community to inform the Change Process Model. Initiate new PDSA cycle for Year 2.	Shifting the Working Group to an ad hoc status risks disconnect with the admissions work and larger college systems. Sharing the work with the larger community (as outlined in the Change Process Model) opens the Community of Practice to critique and interrogation while still organizing.	Prioritize time for bi-weekly community of practice meetings to dialogue and complete PDSA reporting.	Community of Practice Working Group. Admissions Pathways Group – communication plan to connect with Change Process Model	**Spring semester starts January 23rd.** **January 15 - June 15:** Implement revised admissions framework v2 for Fall recruitment cycle. Community of Practice meets bi-weekly to review process and document PDSA cycle. Working Group meets on an ad hoc basis to engage in analysis work and document PDSA cycle. Implement communica-tion plan. **June 1** – Fall admissions deadline. **June 15** – initiate Year 2 PDSA cycle.

Appendix B: Change Implementation Plan Retreat Agendas

2 Day Retreat

Community of Practice

AGENDA

Day 1 (Aug 2)

Community building (2 hours)

Orientation to organizational improvment plan & Change Implementation Plan (2 hours)

Engage with Pilot Project (2019) (2 hours)

- What is our 'image of the applicant'?
- Which temporal world do we identify with?

Facilitated framework development session (2 hours)

- Design a road map from current practice to the criteria outlined in the Pilot Project (2019)

[facilitator drafts portfolio admissions pathway framework for the following day]

Day 2 (Aug 3)

Facilitated framework development session continued (2 hours)

- Revise and interrogate the draft plan

Write pilot faith-based admissions criteria and rubric (2 hours)

- Review criteria outlined in the Pilot Project (2019)
- Review the rubric developed by the school admissions team

Write pilot admissions procedures & policy (4 hours)

Review Change Implementation Plan and action items.

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1 Day Retreat

Working Group

AGENDA

Day 1 (Aug 9)

Team building (2 hours)

Orientation to organizational improvment plan & Change Implementation Plan (2 hours)

Engage with Pilot Project (2019) (2 hours)

- What is our 'image of the applicant'?

- Which temporal world do we identify with?

Work plan development session (2 hours)

Design a road map to engage in critical policy analysis work.

Appendix C: Change Implementation Transition Plan

#	Task	Assigned To	Start	End	Dur
	Change Implementation - Transition Plan	Community of Practice	7/1/21	7/20/22	266.5
1	Share OIP with Admissions Pathway Group	Facilitator	7/1/21	7/15/21	10.5
2	Community of Practice & Working Group formation	Facilitator	7/15/21	8/13/21	22
3	Community of Practice Retreat (PLAN)	Community of Practice	8/2/21	8/3/21	2
4	Working Group Retreat (PLAN)	Working Group	8/9/21	8/9/21	1
5	Implement Portfolio Admissions Pilot v1. Gather PDSA documentation. (DO)	Community of Practice	8/15/21	12/16/21	85
6	Implement Faith-based Admissions Criteria & Rubric Pilot v1. Gather PDSA documentation (DO)	Admissions Department	8/15/21	12/16/21	85
7	Community of Practice Meetings (bi-weekly) & Working Group Meetings (monthly) Dialogue & document (DO)	Community of Practice & Working Group	8/15/21	12/16/21	85
8	Community of Practice Retreat. Review PDSA documentation, enrollment data, agentic momentum rubric (STUDY).	Community of Practice	1/2/22	1/3/22	1
9	Implement Revised Portfolio Admissions Pilot v2. Gather PDSA documentation. (ACT)	Community of Practice	1/15/22	6/15/22	105
10	Implement Revised Faith-based Admissions Criteria & Rubric Pilot v2. Gather PDSA documentation (ACT)	Admissions Department	1/15/22	6/15/22	105
11	Community of Practice Meetings (bi-weekly) Dialogue & document (ACT)	Admissions Department	6/16/22	7/20/22	24
12	Initiate Year 2 PDSA Cycle (PLAN…)	Community of Practice	6/16/22	7/20/22	24

Appendix D: Detailed Communication Plan

Implementation Plan Priorities	Com. goals	Com. objectives	Audience	Messages	Strategies & Tactics	Prioritize	Evaluate
A portfolio admissions process re-envisions admissions to encourage applications from individuals in our faith community. Objective: Develop a Portfolio Admissions Process to encourage applications.	Foster acceptance of portfolio-based admissions.	Inform college community about the need to increase enrollment.	Governing: Board of Trustees, college cabinet, HLC. Internal: faculty, staff, coaches, admissions team, students. External: alumni, school counsellors, religious summer camps, churches, potential applicants	The college is committed to increasing enrollment. A portfolio admissions process draws applicants who want a flexible, authentic application process where they can share their strengths in diverse ways.	Categorized tactics: **Informational materials** – portfolio admissions fact sheet, FAQ sheet. **Public participation** – Town Hall, workshops, focus groups, advisory groups. **Media relations** – relationship with reporters, media briefings, news releases about milestones, tours of campus, human interest stories. **Gov relations** – briefings with municipalities & State Board of Higher Ed. **Internal communication** – employee newsletter, intranet, staff meeting presentations, individual Trustee briefings.	Priority audience for this goal: Board of Trustees, college cabinet, faculty, staff, coaches, admissions team, school counsellors, & potential applicants. Priority tactics: Admissions fact sheet & FAQ, Media briefings & campus tours, Monthly newsletter update, Town Hall meetings	Admissions fact sheet & FAQ will be distributed to the priority audience by email once per semester. Measures: Targets to be set for the number of distributed emails and marked as read. One news briefing will be distributed with an invitation for campus visits by 12/15/21 Measures: News briefing occurs and target number of campus visits met. Secure two media stories about the admissions work. Monthly newsletter enrollment updates will be distributed to internal stakeholders on the intranet. Measures: Target frequency of postings met. Two of the bi-weekly town hall meetings will be reserved for admissions portfolio discussion. Measures: Target frequency, attendance and questions met.

Implementation Plan Priorities	Com. goals	Com. objectives	Audience	Messages	Strategies & Tactics	Prioritize	Evaluate
Revised faith-based admissions criteria represent individual growth & spiritual development. Objective: Pilot Faith-based Admissions Criteria to encourage applications.	Foster acceptance of a revised faith-based admissions rubric.	Inform college community about the difference between faith practice & religious adherence.	Governing: Board of Trustees, college cabinet, HLC. Internal: faculty, staff, coaches, admissions team, students. External: alumni, school counsellors, religious summer camps, churches, potential applicants	The college is committed to promoting individual spiritual growth & development. Revised faith-based admissions criteria will reflect an applicant's faith practice and not their religious adherence.	Categorized tactics: **Informational materials** – faith-based criteria fact sheet, FAQ sheet. **Public participation** – Town Hall, workshops, focus groups, advisory groups. **Media relations** – relationship with church-related stakeholders, news releases about rubric to faith-based stakeholders. **Gov relations** – briefings with churches, camps, and other agencies. **Internal communication** – intranet, staff meeting presentations, individual Trustee briefings.	Priority audience for this goal: Board of Trustees, college cabinet, admissions team, alumni, religious affiliates, & potential applicants. Priority tactics: Criteria fact sheet & FAQ, News releases, Town Hall meeting.	Criteria fact sheet & FAQ will be distributed to the priority audience by email once per semester. Measures: Targets to be set for the number of distributed emails and marked as read Two news briefings will be conducted with religious affiliates by 12/15/21. Measures: News briefing occurs and target number of attendees met. Secure two media stories about the admissions work. One of the bi-weekly town hall meetings will be reserved for rubric presentation and discussion by 04/15/22. Measures: Target frequency, attendance and questions met.

Implementation Plan Priorities	Com. goals	Com. objectives	Audience	Messages	Strategies & Tactics	Prioritize	Evaluate
An admissions community of practice fosters a sense of belonging for individuals with an emerging interest in our faith community. Objective: Create an Admissions Community of Practice	Foster acceptance of a dialogical admissions practice.	Inform college community about the need to foster a sense of belonging in the admissions process.	Governing: Board of Trustees, college cabinet, HLC. Internal: faculty, staff, coaches, admissions team, students. External: alumni, school counsellors, religious summer camps, churches	The college is committed to fostering a sense of belonging in the admissions process by including potential applicants in an admissions community of practice.	Categorized tactics: **Informational materials** – community of practice fact sheet, FAQ sheet. **Public participation** - focus groups, advisory groups. **Media relations** – relationship with church-related stakeholders, news releases about community of practice to students, potential applicants and alumni. **Gov relations** – research shared about the process in academic outlets. **Internal communication** – intranet, individual Trustee briefings.	Priority audience for this goal: Admissions team, alumni, students & potential applicants. Priority tactics: community of practice fact sheet & FAQ, community of practice invitations, Intranet updates.	community of practice fact sheet, FAQ & invitations to participate will be distributed to the priority audience by email each month. Measures: Target distribution and invitation acceptance met. Two community of practice updates will be shared on the intranet each semester. Measures: Target frequency of posts met.

Appendix E: Communication Action Plan

	Task	Assigned To	Start	End	Dur
	Communication Action Plan Year 1	Pathways Admissions Group	8/15/21	8/15/22	253
1	Communication Action Plan Fall 21	Community of Practice	8/15/21	12/31/21	96
1.1	Monthly newsletter enrollment updates will be distributed to internal stakeholders on the intranet.	Data Extraction Systems Analyst.	9/1/21	9/23/21	16
1.2	Two news briefings will be conducted with religious affiliates about faith-based rubric. by 12/15/21	Assistant Director of Recruiting	9/1/21	9/30/21	21
1.3	Two of the bi-weekly town hall meetings will be reserved for admissions portfolio discussion.	College President	10/1/21	10/30/21	20
1.4	One portfolio admissions news briefing will be distributed with an invitation for campus visits by 12/15/21	Director of Admissions	11/1/21	11/15/21	10
1.5	Two COP updates will be shared on the intranet each semester.	Student COP member.	10/1/21	11/30/21	40
1.6	Admissions & faith-based rubric fact sheets & FAQs will be distributed to the priority audience by email once per semester.	College Marketing Program Manager.	8/15/21	12/15/21	84
1.7	COP fact sheet, FAQ & invitations to participate will be distributed to the priority audience by email each month.	Admissions Counselors.	8/15/21	12/31/21	96
2	Communication Action Plan Spring 22	Community of Practice	1/15/22	8/15/22	147
2.1	Admissions & faith-based rubric fact sheets & FAQs will be distributed to the priority audience by email once per semester.	College Marketing Program Manager.	1/15/22	1/17/22	
2.2	One of the bi-weekly town hall meetings will be reserved for rubric presentation and discussion.	College President.	2/1/22	2/28/22	19
2.3	Monthly newsletter enrollment updates will be distributed to internal stakeholders on the intranet.	Data Extraction Systems Analyst.	1/25/22	4/25/22	64
2.4	Two COP updates will be shared on the intranet each semester.	Student COP member.	2/1/22	5/1/22	63
2.5	COP fact sheet, FAQ & invitations to participate will be distributed to the priority audience by email each month.	Admissions Counselors.	1/15/22	8/15/22	147