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A Faculty-Based Approach to Engaging University Alumni

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Abstract

Alumni engagement is widely defined as the level of relationship graduates have with their alma maters. Universities have an opportunity to leverage benefits from having strong connections with their alumni. Furthermore, graduates generally have a stronger affinity to the academic departments they graduated from than to the universities where these departments are based. Additionally, the fiscal and regulatory pressures facing Canadian universities within the province of Ontario highlight the advantages that come with having an engaged alumni community. The Problem of Practice (PoP) investigated in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the lack of alumni engagement within a faculty of business at an Ontario-based university and the negative impact it has on students, faculty members, staff, alumni, and external partners. The change process undertaken to close the gap in alumni engagement within the organization is described, as well as several possible solutions for improving alumni engagement. As the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development for this business faculty, my thinking is influenced by having a social constructivist view. A good example is my focus on stakeholder engagement and leveraging the knowledge that it provides. I also have the agency to enact the change process and apply authentic, shared, and transformational leadership approaches to close the gap that results from the PoP. The aim of the OIP is to mobilize stakeholders across academic departments within the university and achieve the envisioned future state of enjoying a stronger relationship between alumni and their alma mater.

Keywords: alumni engagement, leadership, faculty, social constructivism, universities, organizational change

Executive Summary

Fleming's (2019) definition of alumni engagement highlights the importance of how graduates perceive the alignment between their personal values and the values espoused by the university they graduated from. Additionally, the benefits of having engaged alumni proposed through Barnard and Rensleigh's (2008) research include financial contributions, improved strategic positioning, and community partnerships. These benefits are critical for Ontario-based universities in Canada as they face fiscal pressures (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013) and the need to fulfill Strategic Mandate Agreements with the provincial government (Queen's Printer, 2019).

The Problem of Practice (PoP) discussed in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the lack of engagement that Bellman (a pseudonym), a faculty of business within an Ontario-based university (University X, a pseudonym), has with its graduates and the associated loss of opportunity for Bellman to leverage the benefits of a stronger relationship with its graduates. Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames are used to examine the relevant internal and external factors that impact Bellman's organizational context. This framing highlights the influence of government policies, economic realities, and organizational structure on the decision-making needed to address the level of engagement that Bellman has with its graduates.

The fulfillment of the Vision and Mission Statements of both University X [University X, 2020] and Bellman [Bellman Academic Plan, 2014] relies on having a stronger relationship with alumni. This complex context requires the use of multiple leadership approaches and theoretical frameworks that will help take Bellman to the envisioned future state of having a more robust connection with its alumni. My leadership position as the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development provides me with the agency to enact the change process needed to transition Bellman into its future state. The leadership approaches of authentic, shared, and

transformational leadership that I will deploy throughout the change process will facilitate inclusivity among the relevant stakeholder groups at Bellman (e.g., students, faculty members, staff, alumni, and external partners) (Walumbwa, et al., 2008). These same leadership approaches will also focus the efforts of Bellman on the common goal of a higher level of engagement with graduates (Pearce & Conger, 2003) and inspire stakeholders to persevere throughout the change process (Hoffmeister, Gibbons, Johnson, Cigularov, Chen & Rosecrance, 2014). Additionally, the social constructivist view that is to be utilized throughout the process will reinforce the focus on engaging stakeholders and using the learnings from this engagement to develop an effective and efficient Change Implementation Plan (Gehart, 2014). Also, by assessing the level of change readiness that exists at Bellman, I will be able to overcome any barriers that might exist as I implement the OIP and align the resources needed to enact the solutions proposed in this document.

A focus on the leadership approaches being used in the OIP shows how they propel the change process and mitigate the limitations that exist within them. Additionally, the Cawsey, Dezscia and Ingols (2016) Change Path Model and the Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) provide us with components that fit Bellman's context. The solutions proposed in the OIP reflect the three factors identified by Crisp and Seedsman (2016) that determine the level of engagement business schools have with their alumni. These are, first, an established alumni network, second, an alumni-centric communication strategy, and third, messaging that shows the effects alumni involvement has on the alma mater. Furthermore, due to the financial pressures facing Bellman, the OIP focuses on institutionalizing a stronger communication strategy and building a clearer narrative regarding the impact that alumni support has on Bellman.

The ethical impact of this change process is another important consideration within the OIP. Consequently, a functional framework provided by Rathore and Singh (2018) is used to demonstrate the impact the Implementation Plan would have on Bellman as an organization and on its individual stakeholders. This framework helps solidify the alignment of the steps being taken to build this OIP with the rules and principles established by Bellman and its constituents (Rathore & Singh, 2018).

The Implementation Plan outlined in the OIP includes the alignment that exists between Bellman's priorities and the strategy for change that is being suggested throughout the OIP. Additionally, the use of a PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) iterative process not only increases confidence in the Implementation Plan (Leis & Shojania, 2016), it also provides an opportunity to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the changes being made (Moen & Norman, 2009). This allows me, as the agent of change, to refine the Implementation Plan and increase the chances of a successful change in the engagement levels that Bellman has with its graduates. Finally, the transparency offered through effectively communicating the change process is an important factor in building trust with Bellman's stakeholders and reducing any resistance that might occur during the process (Dixon-Woods, McNicol & Martin, 2012).

Ultimately, through this OIP, a pathway is described for Bellman to build a strong foundation for its engagement efforts with its graduates. There is also an opportunity to use this work to discover other aspects of alumni engagement and its potential for higher education institutions seeking to meet their strategic objectives. This exploration becomes vital as these institutions face fiscal and regulatory pressures. Alumni engagement presents a valuable opportunity to help alleviate some of these pressures through the benefits that these graduates can provide their alma maters.

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Acronyms

(AACSB) Association to Advance Collegial Schools of Business

CRM (Customer Relationship Management)

OCAI (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Plan)

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

PESTE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

WIL (Work-Integrated Learning)

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem of Practice

Fleming (2019) describes alumni engagement as the level of relationship that a graduate has with their alma mater. However, he argues that this widely accepted definition needs to be expanded to capture the alignment between the personal values of alumni and the perceived values established by the post-secondary institution they attended, the affinity alumni have to the institution, their desire to contribute their resources, and the sense of satisfaction derived from alumni connecting with their alma mater (Fleming, 2019). Additionally, universities have an opportunity to leverage the relationships they have with their alumni.

Barnard and Rensleigh (2008) share through their research that the benefits of having an engaged alumni community include financial resources from these graduates, community partnerships, and strategic positioning of the institution within the post-secondary sector. Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) also share these benefits in their research and further highlight the opportunity that exists for specific academic programs within universities to take advantage of alumni engagement. Universities clearly need to focus on the level of alumni engagement they have to reap the benefits listed above.

Crisp and Seedsman (2016) surveyed thousands of business school alumni across the world, and their research showed that the dissatisfaction graduates had with their student experiences resulted in low levels of alumni engagement and connection with their alma maters. The lack of engagement that exists between alumni and their alma mater in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is identified as a gap within Bellman (pseudonym), a faculty of business that is part of University X (pseudonym) This gap is clearly identified through Bellman's Academic Plan, which acts as the organization's strategic roadmap, and its acknowledgement of the absence of strong, high quality connections with its graduates

[Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. Bellman's Academic Plan articulates these benefits as outcomes of building a stronger relationship with its graduates and sees that the engagement of their alumni is a priority they cannot ignore any longer.

Organizational Context

Bellman is a faculty of business at University X. This university is based in Ontario and is one of the top twenty comprehensive universities in Canada (*Maclean's*, 2017). It offers undergraduate, masters, professional, and doctoral programs. It has more than 30,000 students, more than 900 faculty members, and more than 7,000 full-time and part-time staff. There are multiple faculties that form the academic units of University X. The university's alumni population consists of more than 100,000 graduates who come from a diverse set of academic programs.

Organizational History, Vision and Mission

Bellman is one of the founding academic faculties within University X and was established in the late 1940s. The student body within Bellman represents more than 20% of University X's current total enrolment [Bellman website, 2020]. Undergraduate students comprise more than 98% of Bellman's student population. Bellman offers more than ten undergraduate majors, along with a graduate program that has both professional (e.g., Master of Business Administration) and academic (e.g., Master of Science) streams. Bellman has achieved a high position in multiple national and international rankings for its graduate programs and is accredited by the globally recognized Association to Advance Collegial Schools of Business (AACSB). It is home to 15 research centers. More than 40,000 graduates constitute the alumni population of Bellman, representing more than one-third of University X's alumni population.

Bellman's Vision and Mission Statements focus on creating leaders with a global perspective and on using unique and innovative experiential learning to develop graduates who are diverse, entrepreneurial, and socially conscious [Bellman website, 2020]. These goals align well with University X's vision and mission [University X website, 2020]. Additionally, these Vision and Mission Statements align with a neoliberal worldview that encourages entrepreneurial thinking and activities in order to support society (Harvey, 2005). This worldview competes with the conservative worldview that exists in the hierarchal organizational structure and traditional academic knowledge distribution in both University X and Bellman (Tomberg, 2013). Gutek (1997) highlights hierarchy as an important tenet of conservatism, while Heywood (2012) confirms the importance of tradition, from the conservative perspective, in sustaining an institution.

The Problem of Practice within the Organization

Bellman's alumni engagement function has always been delegated to a centralized Alumni Relations Department under University X's advancement function. The advancement function has inherently been tied to the fundraising activities that a higher education institution undertakes (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013). Due to their potentially robust connection to their alma maters, alumni are seen as strong prospects for financial contributions that can help the university support its operations (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013).

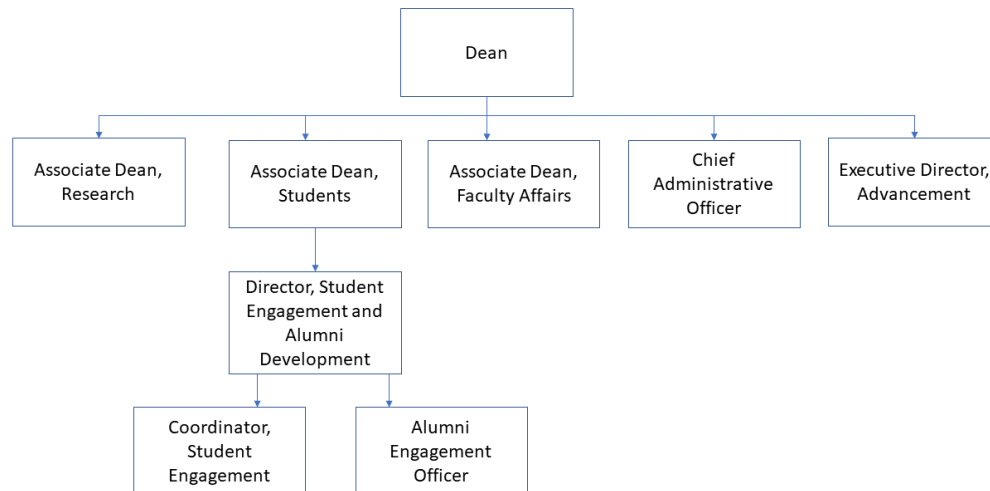
However, in the past University X's centralized alumni relations function was not able to leverage the connection with Bellman's alumni, due to their lack of targeted programming and approaches that considered the unique experiences of these graduates. Weerts and Cabrera (2017) consider a targeted approach to alumni engagement an essential piece of building strong connections with graduates. This targeted approach includes a segmented engagement strategy

that recognizes the diversity of the journeys that each graduate experienced when they were at their alma mater. Crisp and Seedsman's (2016) research shows that ineffective communication about their alma mater's activities, the perception of a weak alumni network, and lack of clarity on how to support the institution negatively impact the level of satisfaction that business school graduates have with their institutions. Therefore, the gap that exists in engagement with Bellman's alumni affects the ability of the university and Bellman to leverage potential contributions, both monetary and non-monetary, from its graduates.

Within its organizational structure, Bellman did not have any financial or human resources dedicated to engaging its alumni prior to the establishment of my role as the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development. The decentralization of advancement strategies, which includes alumni engagement activities, is driven by the fiscal pressures that higher education institutions have faced for more than twenty years (Duderstadt & Womak, 2003). Bellman faces these fiscal pressures, which directly impacts its ability to achieve its vision and mission. It has therefore decided to make its lack of alumni engagement a priority issue that needs to be resolved as part of its Academic Plan [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014].

The Current and Future Organization

A chart showing Bellman's organizational structure (Figure 1) illustrates the leadership team that influences the creation and sustainability of active alumni engagement within the institution. My role as the agent of change is to be responsible for alumni engagement and the associated staff who support this role. University X's Senate, as the highest academic authority within University X, gives Bellman's Council [name changed for anonymization purposes] the ability to be a decision-making body within the faculty.

Figure 1*Bellman's Organizational Structure*

Note. Bellman's staff leadership hierarchy

The council's main role is to approve the priorities set by the Dean of Bellman and their leadership team on both the academic and administrative levels. The council's voting members consists of all full-time faculty members, along with a proportion of students and staff who are elected by their peers to represent them on the council. Bellman's alumni also have a seat as non-voting members on the council. Alumni representatives are selected through an application process.

The leadership team – also known as the Decanal team – is made up of the Dean and direct reports that include the three Associate Deans, the Executive Director responsible for Advancement (i.e., fundraising), and the Chief Administrative Officer. As the Director of Student and Alumni Engagement, I report to the Associate Dean of Students. I am responsible

for the portfolios of Student Engagement and Alumni Engagement. I have one staff member in each portfolio as direct reports.

Political Context

University X is a publicly funded and regulated institution and is therefore impacted by the political policies set by the provincial government. Included in these policies are individualized agreements that the government has with each post-secondary institution. These contracts, called Strategic Mandate Agreements, determine certain institutional priorities that the university must achieve to fulfill the joint vision of the government and the institution (Queen's Printer, 2019).

Economic Context

Economically, the current funding breakdown shows that almost half of the revenues of University X come from government funding, while the other half is funded by the tuition fees collected from University X's students (University X website, 2020) The amount of government funding and tuition received by University X is a function of the Strategic Mandate Agreement it has with the provincial government and the political mandate of the current provincial government (Queen's Printer, 2019). The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) is another government policy that determines the amount of support that students receive when it comes to loans and grants dedicated to tuition and other related expenses (Queen's Printer, 2017).

These two government policies have a significant impact on students' access to a university education and the demographics of the student body. They also affect the monetary and non-monetary contributions that a post-secondary institution must achieve in order to support its students and its own operations. A small portion of revenue comes from donations

and other gifts that University X receives from the philanthropic campaigns it conducts. This breakdown of financial revenues is in line with other universities operating in the province (Michael, 2014). Bellman allocates the funds it receives from University X based on its specific priorities. It also has the autonomy to raise funds that specifically go to achieving these specific priorities (such as program development, hiring staff, acquiring space, and student financial support). The fundraising function for Bellman is under the Executive Director of Advancement. Due to the potential propensity of alumni for supporting the academic programs they graduated from, I work with Bellman's advancement function to help achieve its fundraising goals.

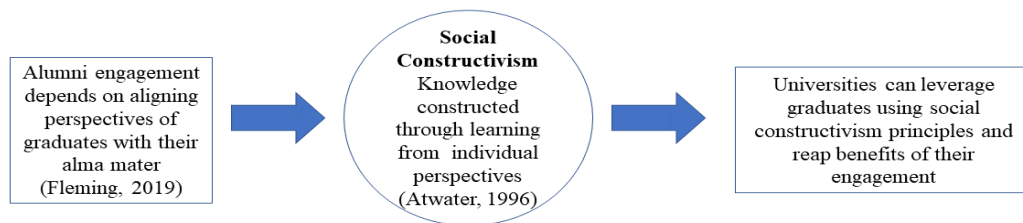
Resolving the financial pressures of Bellman and University X are not part of the scope of this OIP. However, addressing the lack of engagement that Bellman has with its alumni could allow it to financially benefit from its graduates. As the agent of change responsible for the engagement of both students and alumni, I have an opportunity to positively impact the student experience of these future alumni. Certainly, the student experience is an essential component of alumni satisfaction (Koenig-Lewis, Asaad, Palmer & Petersone, 2016). However, the focus for this OIP is on the alumni engagement gap that the organization is trying to close. Furthermore, the decentralization of the alumni engagement function from University X's advancement portfolio allows for Bellman to take control of its relationship with its graduates, which is an important ingredient in building a strong connection with their alumni base. Consequently, this stronger connection can be leveraged by University X to continue positioning itself as a leading institution and to build community partnerships that can further its commitment to experiential learning and social impact. Research by Snijders, Wijnia, Rikers, and Loyens (2019) shows that the attainment of these benefits for a university comes out of building a robust relationship with its graduates.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism as a theory is built on the need for interactions with stakeholders to build knowledge and understand context (Atwater, 1996). This sociological theory originates from the work of Vygotsky (1978) relating to human development and how it is situated in social interactions (McKinley, 2015). Additionally, the social ontology associated with social constructivism (Hay, 2016) comes from its focus on facts originating from social interactions, as opposed to facts that exist independent of human thought. This theory uses individual perspectives, in contrast to an objective and external view, to develop social constructs (Gehart, 2014). Falkner and Falkner (2012) reinforce these concepts of group learning and discussion, along with the benefits of engagement and deeper learning that come with social constructivism.

Figure 2

Using Social Constructivism to Strengthen Alumni Engagement



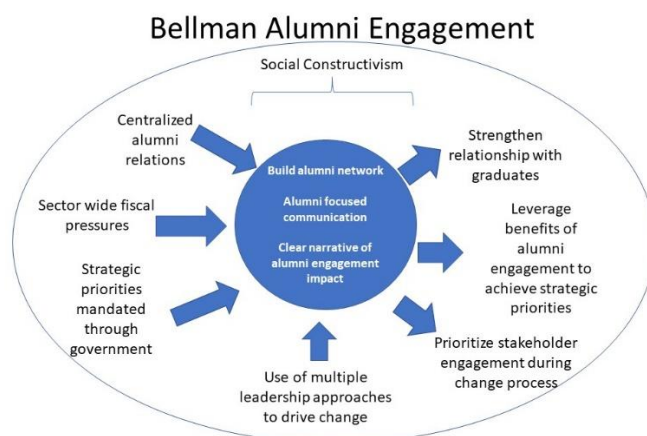
Note. Connecting social constructivism theory to Bellman’s context

My understanding and application of the theory of social constructivism supports the development of this OIP, as illustrated by Figure 2. Fleming (2019) uses the four factors of beliefs, thoughts, actions, and emotions that graduates have about and toward their university programs to define alumni engagement. Therefore, building a robust relationship with Bellman’s alumni depends on how strongly the organization aligns itself with its graduates’ perspectives. Having effective interactions with alumni can only help Bellman build that understanding.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 3 showcases the various components that make up the conceptual framework of this OIP and how they interact with each other. I use a social constructivist lens to focus my work as the agent of change on learning from the Bellman stakeholders (students, alumni, faculty members, staff, and external partners) involved in the change process (Gehart, 2014). The centralized Alumni Relations Department is a stakeholder group that is part of the conceptual framework. The shift in positional authority that the centralized Alumni Relations Department is facing as part of this change process can create conflict (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The fiscal pressures being faced by post-secondary institutions (Michael, 2014) and the Strategic Mandate Agreements that exist between the Ontario government and universities in the province (Queen's Printer, 2019) also impact the OIP's context and the expectations Bellman must meet.

The use of multiple of leadership approaches provides me, as the agent of change, with the ability to deal with the complexity of Bellman's context and propel the change process to Bellman's envisioned future state. The priorities of this change process are to build an effective alumni network for Bellman graduates, solidify an alumni-focused communication approach throughout Bellman, and present a clear message of the impact alumni support can have on their alma mater. Overall, the framework helps lead Bellman to benefits that come from post-secondary institutions having stronger connections with their graduates (Barnard & Rensleigh, 2008) and keeps the focus on the social constructivism principle of prioritizing learning from Bellman's stakeholders (Atwater, 1996).

Figure 3*Conceptual Framework***Leadership Position and Lens Statement**

The change process requires strong leaders to motivate the required change and creativity to support new ideas (Kosiarek, 2016). A clear leadership position and lens for my agency, within the context of being Bellman’s inaugural Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development, is important to discuss when setting a strong foundation to frame the change at Bellman. Additionally, elaborating on the diversity of leadership approaches being utilized helps underline the complex nature of the PoP.

Leadership position

The Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development role was created through the amalgamation of two different positions that were previously part of Bellman’s organizational structure: the Manager of Student Engagement and Business Development and the Manager of Alumni Relations. I was the incumbent in the student engagement management role, and my responsibilities were focused on the current student population within Bellman. This focus included providing them with experiential learning opportunities, overseeing student

leadership activities, and creating external partnerships with corporate and not for profit organizations that could help sustain the experiential learning and leadership activities in which students were involved.

As the agent of change, my leadership approach has been framed by a broad set of experiences within the post-secondary education sector. Additionally, inclusiveness, empowerment, and motivation are values that ground this leadership approach, along with the goal of building a unique and positive environment for student success. These tenets align with multiple leadership approaches, including authentic, shared, and transformational leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Bass, 1985). The assumptions held in this leadership role include the fact that the Problem of Practice and its organizational context are unique and have many layers. Thus, a strong understanding of Bellman's setting and its constituents requires multiple approaches, viewpoints, and skill-sets, as well as a detailed understanding of the university sector.

Authentic Leadership

My leadership role allows me to employ an authentic leadership approach, which connects my leadership abilities with Bellman's organizational context (Avolio & Luthans, 2003). Walumbwa, et al. (2008) use four components to conceptualize authentic leadership. They are: 1) balanced processing (i.e., objective rationalization using data); 2) internalized moral perspective (i.e., using personal values rather than external factors and values to make decisions); 3) relational transparency (i.e., a leader showing others their true self); and 4) self-awareness (i.e., a leader recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses). Using an authentic leadership approach, I have been able to build a robust sense of self-awareness within the engaged student population (Avolio & Luthans, 2003), along with a strongly built sense of inclusiveness (Cottrill,

et al., 2014), and the ability to innovate and explore new ideas through their student leadership experiences (Černe, et al., 2013).

The decision made by Bellman's leadership team to merge the roles led to a united leadership voice that could integrate both student and alumni engagement. Indeed, this restructuring allowed for the synergy of these two mandates to fit within the hierarchal structure that exists within Bellman (Tomberg, 2013). Through the authentic leadership approach, I am able to manifest my personal strength of creating a memorable student experience and my personal belief that this will lead to graduates having a strong bond with Bellman (Walumbwa et al., 2008). I can also use these authentic leadership principles to include the centralized Alumni Relations Department in the changes to Bellman's alumni engagement efforts. This inclusion will improve the chances of having the department as a willing partner and reduce any barriers they may construct in response to my leadership efforts within Bellman (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012).

Crisp and Seedsman (2016) have shown that the experiences graduates have as students impact the level of engagement they have with their alma mater. In their study, low satisfaction led to 8% engagement, compared to 58% engagement when alumni were satisfied by their student experience (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). I have been given the opportunity to galvanize Bellman and its constituents, including faculty members, students, staff, alumni, and external partners, to embrace Bellman's priority of engaging alumni and create an understanding of the benefits that can come from having a better connection with the organization's graduates.

Limitations of Authentic Leadership

The limitations of authentic leadership include the lack of work attitude congruence, lower impact of intrinsic value motivation, decreased willingness to be followers, and the

underestimation of the role of followers (Anderson, et al., 2017). These limitations can affect the work of engaging alumni and the leadership impact I can have as the agent of change. Without the internal will of Bellman's stakeholders, the process can be negatively impacted through the related lack of interest and participation from these stakeholders (Dixon-Woods, et al., 2012).

The participation of these stakeholders and the knowledge created from their interactions is an important component of the social constructivist view that is used throughout this OIP. By focusing Bellman's stakeholders, including alumni, staff, students, faculty members, and external partners, on a common goal of building a stronger connection with Bellman's graduates, and by including them in the decision-making process, the agent of change will be able to mitigate the limitations exhibited by authentic leadership. A shared leadership approach can create this organizational focus and inclusion.

Shared Leadership

The shared leadership principles that I have garnered through my diverse leadership experiences can overcome some of the limitations of authentic leadership raised in the previous section. Pearce and Conger (2003) define the shared leadership theory as a process that influences individuals in an organization to work toward the success of the organization's overall goals. Additionally, Liang, Knippenberg, and Gu (2021) perceive shared leadership as a process where constituents dynamically share the role of leader. Through the implementation of shared leadership, the limitations of authentic leadership are mitigated through the sense of trust and motivation that is created within an organization (Pearce & Conger, 2003). In addition, shared leadership has the potential to positively influence the creativity of an organization's constituents, which counters the lack of intrinsic motivation experienced under authentic leadership (Liang, et al., 2021). Shared leadership is developed throughout a team's lifespan and

there is a reciprocity that helps enhance relationships (Avolio, et al., 2009). These factors are important when bringing stakeholders who have different individual goals together to achieve common objectives, and in countering the potentially decreased willingness they may have to be followers under an authentic leadership approach. Staff, faculty members, and external partners within Bellman have unique goals that they must meet as part of their roles and responsibilities. Students and alumni also have their own achievements that they want to focus on as part of their career goals or personal aspirations.

Transformational Leadership

The authentic and shared leadership approaches discussed above are inherent to my lived experience as a leader. Integrating these leadership approaches provides key components, such as stakeholder trust, inclusion, and organizational focus, that allow for the stakeholder engagement and organizational will to change the current level of alumni engagement at Bellman.

Transformational leadership practices are effective in enacting planned change within an organization through the positive impact they have on employee change readiness (Abbasi, 2017). Maheshwari's (2021) research shows that transformational leadership has a positive impact on satisfaction and the performance of constituents. These findings support the addition of transformational leadership as part of the change being implemented in this OIP.

The definition of transformational leadership is underpinned by four characteristics: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002). Idealized influence solidifies my leadership position, as Bellman's constituents identify with the work being done to close the organization's alumni engagement gap and emulate that work where it applies in their own context within Bellman. Through inspirational motivation, the

work of shared leadership can be reinforced to rally Bellman's constituents to the common goal of engaging alumni in a more effective way. Intellectual simulation encourages constituents to transition from the status quo of not having a clear and targeted approach that engages our graduates to a future state of having a coherent direction that builds a stronger relationship with our graduates. Individualized consideration focuses my leadership on respecting the individual voices of the constituents and making sure they are heard as we go through the process of engaging Bellman's alumni (Hoffmeister et al., 2014).

The social constructivist view and its impact on how the principles of authentic, shared, and transformational leadership practices can be deployed within Bellman's context set the stage for how the Problem of Practice in this OIP can be approached. Additionally, this multi-faceted approach recognizes the diverse factors that influence the organization and the outcomes that it wants to achieve. The next step will be to clearly and persuasively present the Problem of Practice and the impact it has on Bellman's aspirations as it relates to the engagement of its alumni.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The Problem of Practice (PoP) being addressed is the lack of alumni engagement that Bellman has with its graduates, which has reduced Bellman's ability to effectively leverage its mandated Academic Plan. As the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development, I have the agency to close the gap in Bellman's engagement of its graduates and leverage this inherent loyalty, but Bellman's organizational context requires the support of multiple stakeholders, including the organization's staff, faculty members, students, external partners, and alumni. Bellman's lack of ability to leverage its alumni for resources is an emerging challenge for the organization [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. Without creating stronger connections

with its graduates, post-secondary institutions like University X are unable to leverage their graduates to achieve organizational goals. (Ebert, et al., 2015). Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) show in their research that alumni have a stronger loyalty to their academic programs when compared to the university as a whole. The authors also found that the lack of a targeted engagement approach can prevent alumni from providing their time, social networks, and participation in fundraising activities (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013).

Furthermore, the centralized Alumni Relations Department of University X oversaw the engagement of Bellman's graduates before the establishment of the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development role within the organization. The creation of a faculty-based solution for the PoP has the potential for a collision between my agency and the centralized alumni department, since Bellman's alumni are still considered graduates of the university under University X's lens. The positional power that the centralized alumni department possesses could decrease, along with the resources and autonomy that come with this power, resulting in a potential collision of needs that produces conflict (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Framing the Leadership Problem of Practice

Earlier sections have highlighted the conservative worldview of University X, with its emphasis on hierarchal organizational structures and tradition in its learning and distribution of academic knowledge (Guttek, 1997). Furthermore, the economic realities that the university sector is facing are indicative of a neoliberal worldview that universities need to contend with as they try to maintain their operations with reduced government funding (Michael, 2014) and achieve institutional priorities governed by their Strategic Mandate Agreements (Queen's Printer, 2019). Admittedly, these views are common within the broader university sector (Tomberg, 2013). As an academic unit of a university, Bellman is impacted by both these

worldviews, and it views the lack of alumni engagement as a hindrance to its attempts to achieve its strategic goals and leverage its graduates to accomplish its institutional objectives.

Throughout the history of Bellman, alumni engagement has always been delegated to the central Alumni Relations Department of University X. This centralized department operates under the fundraising division of University X. The mandate of the fundraising division is to create relationships with different stakeholders (such as parents of current students, corporations, foundations, philanthropists, and alumni) and convert those relationships into financial and in-kind contributions (goods or services in lieu of money) that benefit University X. These contributions are in the form of donations or sponsorships. This allows contributors to claim these contributions as tax deductions (Canada Revenue Agency, 2020).

The centralized Alumni Relations Department primarily uses a common narrative that speaks about University X's history, achievements, and trajectory. It conducts limited messaging that addresses the unique experiences of alumni from a specific program's perspective. Furthermore, requests for this kind of messaging to be implemented typically have to be initiated by the academic units. Bellman has identified a missed opportunity in not having a relationship built with its alumni that leverages the inherent association these graduates have with their academic experiences [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. Koenig-Lewis et al. (2015) have shown that alumni with stronger ties to their alma maters attribute that bond to their unique academic experiences. Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) also concluded that the relationship of alumni to the specific programs they graduated from is stronger than their relationship with the university where the programs are taught. This puts Bellman in a better position to have a stronger connection with its alumni. Bellman committed to closing that gap as one of its stated goals in that strategic roadmap that is its Academic Plan.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model is a useful tool for viewing the PoP through different frames that are relevant to the context of the organization. Sowell (2014) argues that this model allows problems to be diagnosed under multiple lenses, increasing the potential for capitalizing on more effective solutions. The Four Frames model includes the Political Frame, the Structural Frame, the Symbolic Frame and the Human Resources Frame.

The Political Frame

The need for Bellman to close the gap in engaging its alumni collides with the need of the centralized alumni department to maintain its positional power as the authority that formerly oversaw this responsibility (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Bellman has stated in its Academic Plan that it wants to have a targeted approach when it comes to building bridges with its graduates [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. Consequently, there is a shift to the organizational structure that helped avoid incessant conflict and allowed shared power and resources throughout the history of the faculty (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Bellman's Academic Plan was constructed through a consultation process that was initiated and administered by Bellman's leadership team. There was participation from all the organization's stakeholder groups in developing and accepting this strategic document. Bolman and Deal (2013) have shown that relying on the assumption that a good plan and legitimate authority will facilitate success can lead to failure. They argue that this failure occurs due to the diverse agendas and power of the "lowerarchy" of individuals and groups with low to medium power (Bolman & Deal, 2013). This point underlines the importance of engaging all stakeholders who can impact the PoP.

The Structural Frame

The Structural Frame looks at the goals of an organization and the efficient implementation of these goals (Tan, et al., 2015). Using this frame, closing the gap in alumni engagement can be viewed as a tool to achieve the institution's objectives, both for Bellman and for University X. This frame can also help showcase how the envisioned future state can provide the resources needed to fulfill the efficiency mandates of the provincial government in Ontario (Fedeli, 2018).

The shared leadership approach can keep the focus on organizational goals, and it helps avoid any distraction due to the potentially political nature of sharing a constituency with the centralized alumni department within University X. Additionally, the Structural Frame can be used to articulate the role of the agent of change to those responsible for the allocation of resources and propose ways of working across the institution to leverage resources that can have a positive impact on Bellman and University X (Ebert et al., 2015).

The Symbolic Frame

The Symbolic Frame looks at the culture of an organization and providing a sense of direction through stories and interpretations that rally constituents together to a common goal (Tan, et al., 2015). This frame is especially important due to the direction that Bellman wants to take when it comes to its alumni and how it connects with them. Bellman wants its alumni to spread awareness of the positive impact that it has on society by using their own experiences as exemplars. These experiences could include their academic learning, both inside and outside the program. They could also include the social networks that were created due to the environment of trust established by the organization for all its stakeholders. The process of engaging alumni needs to contribute to the development of an environment within Bellman that supports the

ambassadorial role the organization envisions for them. This can be done by consulting with different stakeholders (faculty members, students, alumni, staff, and external partners) on how the relationships Bellman needs to have with its alumni can achieve this culture (Varvasovszky, 2000). The transformational leadership characteristic of inspirational motivation helps my role as the change agent focus these stakeholders on why creating the culture of support is important from an organizational perspective (Bass & Avolio, 1993)

The Human Resources Frame

Bellman needs to understand how to create a fit between its goals as an organization and the needs of its alumni when it comes to engaging with their alma mater. A positive fit will give both Bellman and its alumni the necessary path to achieving their respective goals (Bolman & Deal, 2013). This frame should not be limited to alumni. The needs of staff, students, faculty members, and external partners must also be considered when developing the OIP that addresses the PoP. These needs can be considered and tackled through the implementation of the transformational leadership approach, with its foundation of a tailored focus on an organization's constituents (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Within Bellman's context, this would mean engaging its stakeholder groups and making sure that the change process is transparent and inclusive of the organization's constituents.

Political, Economic, Social, Technological and Environmental(PESTE) Analysis

Armenakis and Fredenberger (1997) and Cawsey et al. (2016) provide an analytical tool that combines multiple macro-considerations. A Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental (PESTE) analysis provides the OIP with drivers that impact the alumni engagement approach used by Bellman. By adding these considerations, the agent of change can

have a clearer understanding of the impact that the change process offers within the broader context.

Political. Bellman is part of University X, a provincially funded and regulated post-secondary institution in Ontario. Government funding policies are impacted by the ruling party in the province (Queen's Printer, 2020) and influence the financial landscape that Bellman faces on an annual basis. These policies also impact the fundraising goals of Bellman, which in turn shape the nature of the engagement Bellman has with its alumni. Bellman is also bound by the legislation that pertains to University X's ability to operate within the province.

Economic. University X's revenue sources are approximately equally split between the operational grants received from the provincial government and the tuition received from the students attending the institution. Donations represent almost two percent of the revenue sources of University X as whole. The cost of labour constitutes 80 percent of the expenses across the University X [University X website, 2020]. This cost structure is representative of Bellman's financial situation and shows that there is an opportunity for alumni to support the financial sustainability of the organization. This is especially important with the efficiency mandate that the current government has taken when it comes to its expenditures (Fedeli, 2018).

Social. Bellman's Vision and Mission Statement recognizes its place in society as a catalyst for positive socio-economic change. Bellman also recognizes the need to increase access to post-secondary education for marginalized communities by providing financial assistance (scholarships, bursaries etc.) that help alleviate the financial need exhibited by a proportion of its students. This is especially important due to the changes implemented by the current government that reduced the amount of financial aid provided by the government (Queen's Printer, 2017).

Technological. The engagement methods that Bellman uses rely heavily on leveraging technology, including electronic mail and social media platforms. Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) have shown that the way technology is used to communicate with alumni impacts their decision to engage with their alma mater. Bellman needs to consider the need that alumni have shown for individualized content (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013) when investing in communication tools and Customer Relation Management (CRM) platforms.

Environmental. Weerts and Cabrera (2017) highlight the importance of segmenting the alumni population. For example, environmental considerations might be an important factor for a segment of alumni when identifying with Bellman. Bellman needs to assess how important these environmental considerations are for its graduates when developing its engagement tactics. An alignment in values will positively impact the way alumni perceive Bellman and lead to a stronger sense of loyalty towards their alma mater (Stephenson & Yerger, 2014).

Framing the PoP allows us to consider multiple lenses as they relate to the context of Bellman. There is a clear need to look at the internal and external political environments, along with the overall vision of Bellman, broadly and specifically when it comes to the engagement of Bellman's alumni. In the next section, there is a discussion of the questions that arise from the PoP that helps guide the work of creating the Organizational Improvement Plan.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

The Problem of Practice (PoP) creates an opportunity for lines of inquiry that can be explored and answered throughout the Organizational Improvement Plan. One of these questions concerns the status quo as it relates to the gap in lines of communication between Bellman's alumni and the university. A second question looks at the ineffective network the organization

has provided for alumni and how it impacts the perception that these graduates have of Bellman. The final question revolves around the delivery of a clear message regarding the potential impact of alumni contributions towards the success of their alma mater.

Gap in Communication

Bellman's alumni engagement approaches have historically been implemented by University X's centralized Alumni Relations Department. This centralized department have used a university-wide strategy to connect with University X's graduates. This approach has included the communication channels and content used to relate information to alumni. Weerts and Cabrera (2017) have shown that the segmentation of alumni is important when trying to build a relationship with them. Crisp and Seedsman (2016) have also shown that communication is an important improvement factor when it comes to business school alumni sentiments about their alma mater. Therefore, the question, "What are the communication strategies needed to build a stronger connection with alumni?" helps integrate an essential component for building a robust alumni engagement approach with Bellman's graduates.

Ineffective Alumni Network

Building strong lines of communication between alumni and their alma mater is important for alumni engagement. However, the perception that these graduates have of their business school's alumni network is considered pivotal (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) confirm the elevated value that alumni place on social networking when considering their relationship with the academic programs they graduated from. Thirty three percent of more than 6000 business school alumni across the world believed that their school was effective in keeping relationships built during their time as students (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). The question, "Does the organization's network of alumni meet the requirements of its

graduates?” is thus in line with a key area that determines the level of engagement graduates want to have with their alma mater.

Delivering a Clear Message

Bellman has an opportunity to leverage its alumni to achieve its strategic goals. Previously, these goals were expressed through the centralized Alumni Relations Department and did not carry the targeted approach needed to galvanize the organization’s alumni. Consequently, Bellman is not able to utilize the support of its alumni to its full potential. Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) reinforce that clearly communicating the impact of alumni contributions is an important factor that makes them more likely to give. Hence, “Is there clarity in the messaging that alumni receive when it comes to supporting the organization and the impact of their contributions?” is another important line of inquiry.

These three questions help focus the discussion on multiple aspects that are important to the stakeholder groups that Bellman needs to close the existing gap identified through the PoP. They are part of the context that needs to be considered when developing and executing the Organizational Improvement Plan. The following section looks at creating a vision for the change that Bellman wants to see when it comes to its alumni engagement efforts. It discusses the important components that Bellman will need for its overarching goal of having a pool of engaged alumni who will act as ambassadors for the organization.

A Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

The current state that is relevant to the Problem of Practice (PoP) is defined by the lack of engagement that Bellman has with its graduates. Consequently, an alignment between Bellman’s Academic Plan and the efforts to engage alumni is important to achieving Bellman’s strategic

goals (Ebert et al., 2015). Additionally, the absence of a targeted approach towards building a relationship with Bellman's alumni is seen as an important factor in the PoP.

Both the problem and the lack of a targeted approach can be seen in the absence of a clear message that helps Bellman's graduates understand how they can support their alma mater. The absence of well-developed communication channels that speak to the needs of the organization's graduates is another aspect of this ineffective approach to alumni engagement. As a result, there is a weak perception of the social network that Bellman has created, a key factor in persuading alumni of the value in connecting with their alma mater (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). These conditions have led Bellman to take over ownership of the alumni engagement function from the centralized Alumni Relations Department, setting up a potential area of conflict due to the shifts in resources and authority that have occurred with this new organizational structure (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

The future state of Bellman involves having a stronger relationship with its graduates. From an organizational perspective, Bellman will have a better chance of reaching its overall strategic goals when it achieves this future state. Bellman is also able to use the process of change to segment alumni and provide them with customized opportunities to engage with their alma mater, which is an important component of leveraging alumni as effective ambassadors for the organization (Weerts & Cabrera, 2017).

These customized opportunities enable Bellman to align the engagement of alumni with the achievement of its organizational strategic goals, which include community partnerships, fundraising, and strategic positioning as a leader within its sector. These goals are reflective of the resources and support alumni can provide to their alma mater (Barnard & Rensleigh, 2008). Furthermore, these outcomes help meet the institutional goals mandated by the agreements that

University X has with the government and fill the void created through the decrease in government funding (Michael, 2014).

This envisioned future state needs to be based on changes to the communications that the organization has with its graduates. Additionally, there must be a focus on creating the right narrative, one that reflects the vision and mission of Bellman and the impact of the support that they receive. Finally, an effort needs to be made to build an environment where alumni can connect and reignite relationships created when they were students. All these actions will improve the perception that graduates have of the institution and the value that comes from getting involved with Bellman (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016).

Priorities for Change

Bellman's institutional priorities are communicated in its Academic Plan [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. They include closing the gap in engagement with its alumni. The need to strengthen Bellman's financial position and secure its position as a leading business school within the sector are also significant factors. Partnerships with industry and community organizations are other important priorities. The focus on alumni engagement in the Academic Plan shows that effective communication between Bellman and its graduates is a high priority. A related goal is the building of a social network that Bellman alumni can rely on to strengthen relationships. Finally, the need to present a clear story of the impact of alumni support is significantly elevated as the organization goes through the change process.

Drivers of Change

The drivers of change for this PoP include the fiscal constraints facing the university sector, the importance of strong strategic positioning within this sector, and the significance of community partnerships for achieving the organizational goals of higher education institutions.

Charbonneau (2019) highlights the funding limitations that universities face, due to a reduction in operational grants from provincial governments and cuts in program funding by the federal government, as a significant challenge for post-secondary institutions. With the continued expectation of governments that universities be knowledge economy drivers, the reduction of basic funding forces these post-secondary institutions to adapt to this new reality. Consequently, the funding sources that these organizations can tap into need to be diversified for them meet their responsibilities. Alumni contributions play an important part in this diversification effort and are therefore underscored as a significant component of the PoP.

Bellman's position as a leader among Canadian university business schools is essential to building a strong relationship with its stakeholders. An important part of this leadership position is the ability of these business schools to create a robust academic experience. This creates a high sense of student satisfaction, for example when compared to sentiments related to their employability after graduation (James & Yun, 2018). This finding aligns with Crisp and Seedsman's (2016) work investigating alumni satisfaction and its positive correlation to student experience. Student retention is also an important consideration for post-secondary institutions, due to its impact on university rankings and reputation (Abu Zohair, 2019). Stephenson and Yerger (2014) point out that it is important for alumni to be drawn to the brand of their alma mater in order for them to act as ambassadors for the organization and enhance the social capital of the organization throughout Bellman's community and stakeholder groups.

The relationships that university-based academic programs have with community partners facilitate their ability to meet their strategic goals. These relationships are a necessity for economic development and innovation (Abramo, et al., 2010) and for meeting the societal goals expected from institutions like Bellman (Manning, 2018). Both components are an important part

of the Strategic Mandate Agreements that Ontario based universities have with the government (Queen's Printer, 2019). Consequently, building strong connections with industry partners enhances the ability of post-secondary organizations in the province to access funding and achieve their institutional priorities. Additionally, these connections provide potential benefits to an institution's stakeholders, including alumni, who put a high value on the ways these benefits can impact them directly (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016).

Organizational Change Readiness

Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2016) use multiple factors to determine how prepared an organization is for change. These factors can be used to analyze Bellman, based on its current context. Furthermore, Armenakis, Harris, and Feild (1999) provide aspects that ready an organization for change. Using their work, it is possible to determine how Bellman can be prepared to transition into its envisioned future state. To frame the change that Bellman is going through, it is important to also look at the competing internal and external forces that shape the organization.

Six themes are presented by Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols (2016) to help determine an organization's readiness for change. They are: a) the previous change experience of individuals within the organization; b) the openness of the organization to change; c) executive support for change; d) having credible leadership and change champions for the change; e) the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that come with the change; and f) measures for change and accountability. Students, staff, alumni, faculty members, and external partners have been exposed to multiple changes throughout Bellman's history. Bellman can benefit from an analysis using these themes to gauge its ability to move into its envisioned future state. The analysis is summarized in Appendix A.

Consultations with stakeholders were always an important part of the positive change experiences that Bellman went through. These consultations reduced the levels of cynicism that these stakeholders had and increased their level of commitment, a finding that Bakari, Hunjra, Jaros, and Khoso (2019) agree with through their research. A lack of consultation has always contributed to a negative experience with change for stakeholders in Bellman. These negative experiences cause a sense of disillusionment, which according to Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2016) may result in resistance to the change that the OIP is attempting to bring to the organization.

Bellman's Vision and Mission Statements focus on the use of innovative and unique methods to achieve its goals. This shows that the organization is open to new avenues that can help achieve its objectives. Additionally, Bellman's commitment to taking ownership of engaging its alumni, traditionally the responsibility of the centralized Alumni Relations Department, shows its flexibility to change. The envisioned future state for Bellman's alumni engagement comes from the organization's Academic Plan, which was approved by Bellman Council and brought forward by Bellman's senior leadership team [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. This commitment from the leadership team and the support from the organization's governing body shows that the executive support for the change is present at Bellman.

Lazaric and Raybaut (2014), Proenca (2007), and Bartol and Srivastava (2002) argue that a focus on intrinsic rewards, along with a balanced measure of equitable extrinsic rewards, can increase levels of commitment, information sharing, and motivation within teams. Punishing people for failure and focusing on short term achievements has a negative impact on the readiness of an organization for change (Cawsey, et al., 2016). Within Bellman's context, there is a clear set of benefits to a change in approach when it comes to engaging the organization's

graduates. These benefits include the positive impact on fundraising, industry partnerships, and positive strategic positioning for the organization. There are no excessive rewards or punishments linked to the success or failure of this change. The presence of such levels of reward or punishment makes unethical behavior more likely (Castellano, et al., 2004).

Change and accountability are illustrated by the presence of good organizational measures to assess the need for and track the progress of change, organizational action on data being collected, an organization's efforts in measuring and evaluating the satisfaction of stakeholders, and the careful stewardship of organizational resources to determine organizational readiness for change (Cawsey, et al., 2016). Bellman does not yet have these measures in place for the change process as it relates to alumni engagement. It is a priority for me as a change leader to create these measures in order to have the organization in a positive position for change.

Armenakis, Harris, and Feild (1999) have identified a list of factors that allow an organization to ready itself for a change. According to these authors, the factors include: a) the need for change to be identified when it comes to the gap between the current state and the envisioned future state; b) the belief of the organization's constituents that the proposed change is the right change to make; c) the need to bolster the confidence of the organization's constituents; d) having support from key leadership individuals that people respect; and e) addressing the "what's in it for me/us" question. These factors, as they relate to Bellman's context, are summarized in Appendix B.

Bellman has recognized in its Academic Plan that it does not have a strong relationship with its graduates [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. Without a stronger connection to their alma mater, Bellman's alumni cannot be leveraged to contribute resources and support the

organization in reaching its overall organizational objectives (Ebert et al., 2015). Bellman's Academic Plan was approved by Bellman Council, which represents all the stakeholders of Bellman. Bellman Council supports strengthening the engagement that the organization has with its alumni. As the agent of change, I need to present a concrete representation of how this change will take place and get the approval of the individual stakeholder groups. This approval from the "lowerarchy" increases the likelihood of receiving the support needed to implement the change (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The transformational leadership style employed throughout the change process can rally Bellman's stakeholders toward a common goal and create the needed confidence to support the change process (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

The transformational leadership tenet of idealized influence espouses the need for constituents to believe that the leader's interests go beyond his or her individual interests (Bass & Avolio, 1993). By focusing on the synergies that manifest for Bellman as a whole, I can objectively show the organization's constituents how I can further the common goal of better engaging the alumni population.

Individual outcomes for Bellman's stakeholders can be appropriately addressed by using a targeted approach toward each constituency. Students benefit from increased student work placements through better engagement with Bellman's graduates (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013). Faculty members get a larger network of industry partners to connect with to further their research and innovation activity (Abramo et al., 2010). Staff can leverage alumni to fulfill departmental goals as they relate to guest speakers, fundraising, and corporate partnerships. A clearer direction for alumni on how to engage with their alma mater can be achieved, which is an important consideration for graduates when they decide to connect with their alma mater (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). External partners get access to a network of alumni who are connected to

Bellman and the larger community. This access creates opportunities for external partners that include synergies with an expanded audience of engaged stakeholders.

Internal and External Forces Affecting Organizational Readiness

The stakeholder groups within Bellman represent a major internal force that will shape the change. The readiness for change analysis shows that these stakeholder groups are important for the organization to build a robust alumni engagement approach with its graduates. The Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols (2016) framework showed that the experiences of these stakeholders with change, their confidence in the leadership team, and their use of data to achieve organizational goals are important foundations that indicate how ready an organization is for change. The analysis above has shown how I can engage the stakeholders as an agent of change to support the efforts of Bellman to prepare for the change.

The recognition of alumni engagement as a significant priority for Bellman is another important internal force that impacts the organization's readiness for change. Connecting with Bellman's graduates is highlighted in its Academic Plan. However, it is important to effectively raise the necessary awareness among all the organization's stakeholders through an appropriate consultation process that focuses on reducing any skepticism these stakeholders might have (Bakari et al., 2019).

The external forces that frame Bellman's change include the funding policies of the provincial government and the Strategic Mandate Agreements with the government that influence Bellman's institutional priorities. As a provincially funded and regulated institution, University X bases its fiscal strategy on the policy of the provincial government. With the efficiency mandates that the province has put forward (Fideli, 2018), there is pressure on

University X to build new pipelines of revenue. This fiscal pressure trickles down to Bellman under the decentralized model of revenue generation that exists within the university.

The Strategic Mandate Agreements that University X has with the provincial government set the institutional priorities it has as a university operating in Ontario (Queen's Printer, 2019). The university relies on its academic programs to support these priorities and uses its hierarchical structure to reflect them within the strategic roadmaps of its faculties. University X's Senate approves the Academic Plans of the faculties, which helps align them with the university's goals.

Conclusion

This chapter has built a strong foundational case for Bellman's need to change its current relationship with its alumni. The context in which the change is taking place shows a faculty that has not been able to realize the full potential of its graduates' resources when it comes to reaching its organizational goals. The delegation of alumni engagement responsibilities to a centralized department had removed Bellman's ability to use the inherent loyalty and affinity that its alumni have towards their academic programs. Through a transformational leadership style that can complement the existing authentic and shared leadership inherent to me as a leader, a vision to build a connection with the institution's alumni can be realized. The organization has the right pillars for the process of change to occur and to remain sustainable, based on an organizational readiness analysis that was presented in the chapter. Chapter 2 will introduce the Change Path Models that fit the organizational PoP discussed in Chapter 1, along with potential solutions and the ethical considerations needed for the leadership involved in this OIP.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

The organizational context and the conceptual framework discussed in the previous chapter set a base for the PoP. The background within the higher education organization, the change process, and the envisioned future state are the next areas of focus for this OIP. First, a discussion of the leadership approaches that drive the change expands the understanding of their impact on Bellman, the agent of change, and the rest of the constituents affected by the engagement efforts being centered on the institution's graduates. Next, exploring a framework for the change process helps to set the stage for a deeper understanding of different components that relate to the closing of the alumni engagement gap at Bellman.

A critical analysis of the organization's readiness for change is conducted here, based on the learnings discussed in the previous chapter. This analysis is followed by a review of the possible solutions that can allow Bellman to benefit from a stronger relationship with its alumni. After using an evidence-based approach to decide on the best solution to implement, an ethical lens to the change process is discussed. This lens grounds the OIP in the accountability and responsibility that the institution and the diverse organizational actors share, as Bellman moves toward its envisioned future state when it comes to its relationship with its graduates.

Leadership Approaches to Change

The leadership approaches utilized by me as an agent of change need to be supplemented with leadership approaches that drive Bellman to create a stronger relationship with its alumni. In this section, authentic leadership, shared leadership, and transformational leadership are examined under both an institutional lens and an individual lens to expand on their potential to propel the desired change.

Authentic Leadership

My leadership at Bellman embodies the elements of authentic leadership. In their research, Gardner (2011) states that the earliest literature on authentic leadership can be found in the 1960s. The work of Novicevic et al. (2005) demonstrates that the authenticity of an organization is displayed through its leadership. Therefore, my leadership approach as the agent of change also affects the perception stakeholders have of Bellman as an organization, which is an important consideration when engaging alumni (Fleming, 2019). Additionally, the elements of authentic leadership include a sense of trust and inclusion that form a foundation for stakeholder engagement needed to initiate a successful change. There is also a positive relationship between authentic leadership and commitment to change (Bakari, et al., 2019). This commitment is especially important to Bellman's readiness for change (Cawsey et al., 2016). Buller (2018) illustrates that authentic leadership is ideal in post-secondary institutions. He highlights certain qualities that are preferred when it comes to leadership in post-secondary institutions; these include humility, honesty, bravery, and steadfastness (Buller, 2018).

The influence of the authentic leadership approach is apparent in transparent conversation and consultative decision-making and practices, all visibly present in the establishment and activities of Bellman Council. These activities include regular meetings, open to all of Bellman's community members. Additionally, Bellman Council members decide on the policies and direction Bellman takes to achieve the organization's priorities. Unfortunately, the cynicism that individual stakeholders at Bellman have demonstrated regarding other change processes negatively effects the positive relationship between authentic leadership and commitment to change. The skepticism about dedicating new resources to a new alumni engagement approach

may have such an impact at Bellman. Authentic leadership will have a more positive impact on commitment to change when cynicism is low than when it is high (Bakari et al., 2019).

The practices of authentic conversation and consultation can help reduce the cynicism within Bellman's stakeholder groups and thus allow for authentic leadership to have a more positive impact on the commitment to change from the stakeholder groups (Bakari et al., 2019). An authentic leadership approach is important for the agent of change in Bellman's context in order to reinforce the culture embodied by the organization. Building relationships based on trust with Bellman's stakeholders (such as Bellman members, staff, students, and alumni) becomes a priority. This trust is important as part of the consultative approach that will be taken to decrease resistance to the change we want to present through the alumni engagement process (Bakari et al., 2019).

In order to accomplish a successful change as an authentic leader, there needs to be a high level of engagement, a substantial effort, and the creation of a setting that promotes continuous learning (Alavi & Gill, 2016). The trust relationships built with the stakeholder groups through the change process will set the stage for honest conversations and the transparency of the consultations. These trust relationships reduce cynicism and help promote the valence of change vision among the stakeholders (Alavi & Gill, 2016). Agote (2016) reinforces these findings and also suggest that preparing supports within the organization that raise awareness of authentic leadership will help build the trust needed with the organization's constituents. The hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy that are developed through authentic leadership will also help contribute to the sustainability of the change process. These attributes will be important when there are any difficulties or changes that take place throughout the process of engaging Bellman's alumni (Alavi & Gill, 2016).

Shared Leadership

Bellman did not have alumni engagement as an objective that its stakeholders can rally behind prior to this engagement effort being articulated through the organization's Academic Plan. A shared leadership approach needs to be employed that focuses these stakeholders on the goal of engaging the institution's alumni, as stated in Bellman's Academic Plan. The tenets of shared leadership, including the participation of constituents in setting goals and decision making, were part of the work done in the early twentieth century by authors like Follett (1924), Turner (1933), and Barnard (1938) within the larger theories and research related to the situational, human relations, and social systems perspectives. The evolution into our current understanding of shared leadership culminated towards the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, with multiple authors directly addressing shared leadership. These authors include Pearce and Sims (2000), who defined shared leadership as a process where influence is shared among individuals.

This leadership approach emphasizes the need for constituents to prioritize an organization's overall goals over individual goals. Pearce et al. (2018) argue that shared leadership creates the opportunity for the alignment and reinforcement of common benefits for administrators and faculty members. They point to the opportunity an institution has to use shared leadership to prevent ethical lapses. This prevention mechanism comes out of the fact that shared leadership promotes a wide consultation and engagement of stakeholders (Pearce et al., 2014). Pearce et al. (2018) also underline the importance of leadership within an institution and, for optimal success, the need for the leadership of a public university to have a clear vision within an ethical climate that shares leadership with stakeholders.

Shared leadership provides Bellman with an increased probability of positive team performance during the creation of a solution for alumni engagement (D’Innocenzo et al., 2016). This will help the change process become more effective and provide better results for stakeholders. This positive team performance that comes with shared leadership will help Bellman overcome barriers during the change process. My personal shared leadership philosophy will provide a positive reinforcement for the focus on achieving the goal of engaging Bellman’s alumni. The mandate as the agent of change will be used to influence the stakeholder groups and lead them toward this focus. The clarity provided by this focus is especially important for alumni if we expect them to be involved in the process of creating this new direction for engaging them with Bellman (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013).

To be successful in promoting shared leadership throughout Bellman and the stakeholder groups who are impacted by engaging the institution’s alumni, the agent of change needs to embody the traits associated with shared leadership (Grille et al., 2015). One of the main aspects identified by Copland (2016) is the need to switch my role from a leader to a follower and back to being leader, depending on the situation. This ability to switch roles is particularly important when creating consultation opportunities with stakeholder groups. These stakeholders need to feel ownership of their roles throughout the process of change. The agent of change, under a shared leadership frame, needs to focus on making sure that stakeholder groups are reminded of the overarching goal of Bellman to create a long-term relationship that helps them leverage its alumni and better the organization as a whole.

Transformational Leadership: An Effective Change Approach

Establishing a change process at Bellman requires the deployment of a transformational leadership style within the organization. Bellman displays a “clan culture” (Cameron & Quinn,

2011) which is typical for a higher education institution (Berrio, 2003). This term will be defined and expanded on later in this chapter. Transformational leadership has a strong impact on the affective commitment of stakeholders within an organization's clan culture (Kim, 2013). This type of emotional connection to the organization reinforces the environment of trust that was discussed as part of Bellman's authentic leadership environment.

The literature on transformational leadership has evolved from the work done by Downton (1973), who coined the phrase and highlighted the importance of inspiration as part of his exploration into this leadership approach. This work was built on by Burns (1978), who pointed out the differences between transformational and transactional leadership. Bass and other authors also had a major influence on the development of transformational leadership theory, showing that it promotes, as part of its four tenets, having personalized conversations with the organization's stakeholders throughout the process of leading (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002). This consultative approach is crucial to provide an inclusive environment for stakeholders to discuss the process of change (Bakari et al., 2019), especially in the case of alumni, whose engagement can be maximized if they are part of any changes being made to better connect with them (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013).

A transformational leader has the ability to create their own clan culture. This is done through an emphasis on collaboration, harmony, employee growth, contribution, allegiance, commitment, and confidence (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Certainly, the agent of change needs to use this characteristic of their transformational leadership to create the environment necessary to promote alumni engagement. By implementing the values listed by Cameron and Quinn (2011), the agent of change can rally constituents of Bellman towards the common goal of leveraging a stronger relationship with its graduates and furthering its overall mission and vision.

Frameworks for Leading the Change Process

A look at the Cawsey-Dezsca-Ingols (2016) Change Path Model and the Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) will help identify which of their components could be utilized for the change process in this OIP. Additionally, a discussion of anticipatory and incremental organizational change concepts will inform the OIP with the necessary foundation for deciding on an appropriate change path model. The discussion that follows will examine how the change path models align with the anticipatory and incremental change concepts.

Cawsey, Dezsca, and Ingols (2016) Change Path Model

Cawsey et al. (2016) provide a phased approach to implementing change within an organization. This phased approach can be applied to Bellman's context and will help in setting a framework that an agent of change can use to bring the organization to its envisioned state of alumni engagement. The Change Path Model also aligns with the leadership approaches that are being used to bring about the desired change.

There are four phases of the Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model: Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Monitoring. The Awakening Phase has already been initiated through Bellman's current 5-year Academic Plan. In this plan Bellman identifies the need for focusing on a local alumni engagement approach and the opportunity being missed to convert graduates of the program into ambassadors for Bellman. The Academic Plan recognizes alumni engagement as an important part of Bellman's ability to compete in a changing landscape for post-secondary institutions, one that has not only questioned the place of faculties but also of universities as a whole (Barnard & Rensleigh, 2008). The shared leadership approach employed throughout the change process will reinforce the focus on Bellman's strategic goal of engaging its alumni and the competitive advantage it can provide for the organization.

Mobilization of a change in alumni engagement within Bellman needs to include an illustration of where the organization is now and what it is trying to achieve. This includes looking at the communication effort Bellman has had with its alumni and the loyalty that alumni currently have with the institution. It must also look at what success means for different stakeholders and get their opinions on those metrics. These potential alliances will help to overcome any barriers of bureaucracy and culture that might hinder the change process (Cawsey et al., 2016). The transformational leadership approach employed in this OIP can strengthen the mobilization phase through its inspirational motivation tenet (Bass, 1985). A focus on illustrating the envisioned future state of Bellman and the dedication to achieving the organization's goals can propel the change process forward.

Accelerating the creation of an alumni engagement approach for Bellman involves identifying and providing the resources needed to empower stakeholders (such as faculty members, staff, students, alumni, and external partners) to be part of the process. This includes financial and logistical resources, along with a clear articulation of where Bellman is trying to take this effort (Cawsey et al., 2016). However, the use of resources required as part of this step also needs to recognize the cynicism mentioned when discussing the leadership approaches to change.

Monitoring the achievements and the challenges that come from the change of having a new alumni engagement approach for Bellman will help make this new direction toward connecting with graduates sustainable. The sustainability of the approach will be achieved by measuring its accomplishments when it comes to Bellman's strategic goals and making sure stakeholders are provided with the resources needed to implement the change (Cawsey et al.,

2016). The transparency that comes from measuring and sharing the progress of the change process aligns with the values of authentic leadership, which prioritizes trust and inclusion.

Beckhard-Harris Change Model (1987)

The Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) is a change management model that can help Bellman address the absence of alumni engagement at an institutional level from a broader perspective. In Bellman's context, the model incorporates the scanning of internal and external conditions to determine why alumni engagement is needed (Beckhard & Harris, 1987). These conditions are articulated through Bellman's Academic Plan and focus on the impact that alumni engagement would have. This impact includes the contributions made by alumni through both financial and non-financial means and the fulfillment of these graduates' emotional need to give back (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013).

The Change Model suggests analyzing the gap identified through the Problem of Practice. This is done through an inclusive consultative process that captures all the stakeholders (such as Bellman members, staff, students, alumni) and clearly communicates the objectives that Bellman wants to achieve and the potential role of each stakeholder group (Beckhard & Harris, 1987). The authentic leadership approach supports this model's focus on inclusivity, and the shared leadership approach values the consultative nature of stakeholder engagement involved in the gap identification process. Customized interactions with stakeholders are an important tenet of transformational leadership and align with this phase of the Change Model.

The next phase of the model is an action plan for engaging alumni that will have the support of these stakeholder groups, and which will then substantially increase the chances of the new direction being accepted. The model's general approach can be revisited if stakeholders

have questions on the specific action items. Without a clear identification of the need for change, an analysis of the gap that exists in the organization, a clear action plan, and a robust transition plan, this Change Model will not be effective in implementing a change within an organization (Lavender, 2009).

Anticipatory and Incremental Organizational change

Bellman has voiced its intention of connecting directly to its alumni through its Academic Plan. The needed steps for initiating this connection are also indicated in Bellman's Academic Plan, which aligns with the anticipatory change concept (Kreitner, 2005). Additionally, outlining these steps in Bellman's Academic Plan is an example of the connection with the action-oriented component of the Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987). Bellman's stakeholders: faculty members, students, staff, and alumni accepted this direction through Bellman Council. This was then approved at the university level, which allowed the centralized Alumni Relations Department to prepare for this change.

As the agent of change, I am taking a consultative approach that is inclusive of all Bellman's stakeholders when creating the alumni engagement approach. This approach aligns with social constructivism theory, which is centered around knowledge creation through interactions with individuals (Gehart, 2014). Aligning with the phased methodology of the Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model, this approach needs to be incremental since it will allow for the ability to examine and plan the change in a modular fashion. This will help increase the tangible levels of performance when it comes to creating the alumni engagement approach (Salge & Vera, 2011). A slower change will also enable stakeholders in the university's ecosystem to see a shift that allows for consultation at each stage. This will allow for a stronger

consensus from stakeholders, including alumni, who value being asked about how they can be included in the direction that Bellman is taking (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013).

Framing the leadership approach involved in creating the strategic plan for Bellman's alumni engagement gives me multiple perspectives of the process needed to bring about the required change that Bellman has identified. These perspectives are important to reduce any barriers that come with the change process and to leverage the elements that can further the Bellman's efforts to establish a strategic plan to engage its alumni. In the next section I will critically analyze Bellman as it embarks on this change process.

Critical Organizational Analysis

A deeper dive into the changes needed within Bellman's organization is supported using the organizational readiness breakdown that was conducted in the previous chapter. The information obtained from framing the change related to alumni engagement are also utilized to support the critical organizational analysis. Finally, an approach is presented that combines the most relevant parts of these two change management planning models and outlines how the leadership approaches discussed above will drive these change path models.

Needed Changes

Bellman operates in a post-secondary sector that is facing both fiscal and regulatory constraints. There are also competing worldviews that are manifested in the difference between the vision statement of the organization and the current principles and values within the institution and the sector as a whole. The internal stakeholder groups and university departments that are relevant to closing the gap in Bellman's alumni engagement are also important drivers of the change that the organization is undergoing.

The responsibility for alumni engagement at Bellman is currently being shifted from the central Alumni Relations Department to my responsibility as the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development. A lack of engagement with graduates of the organization has been identified by Bellman's leadership and the Bellman Council, and the resulting loss of opportunities is highlighted as part of the impetus for change [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014]. Barnard and Rensleigh (2008) have shown that these opportunities include financial supports, community partnerships, and positive strategic positioning within the sector. With the fiscal pressures that have faced the post-secondary sector (Duderstadt & Womak, 2003), the efficiency mandate that is espoused by the current provincial government (Fedeli, 2018), and the Strategic Mandate Agreements that require post-secondary institutions in the province to meet certain goals in order to receive operational funding (Queen's Printer, 2019), Bellman needs to close the gap in alumni engagement approach to leverage the contributions of its graduates.

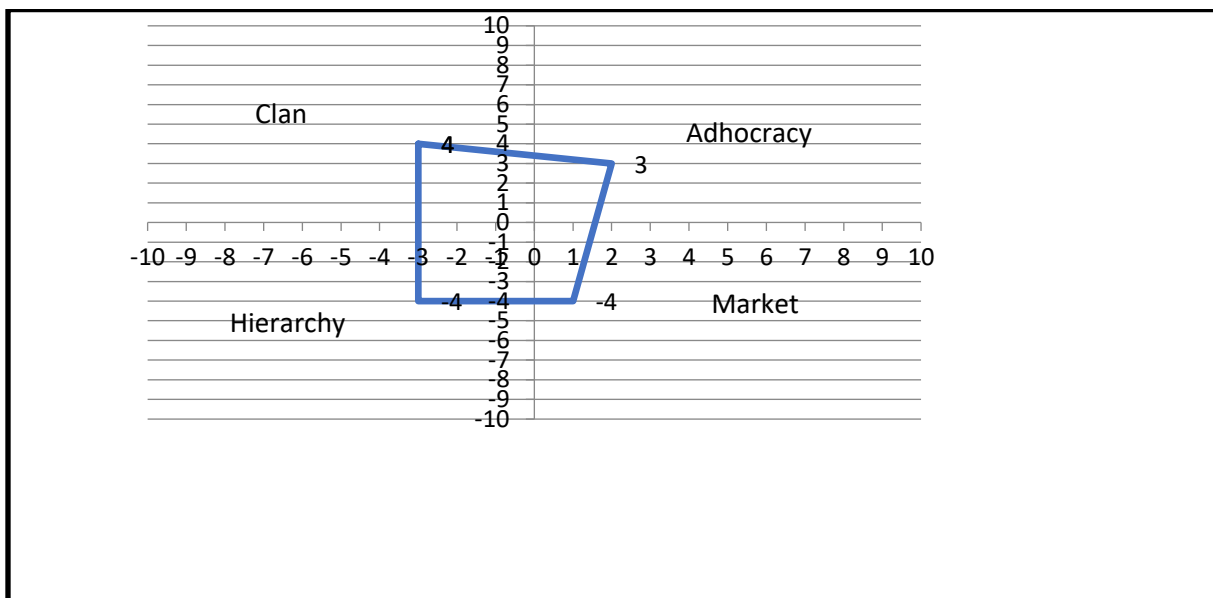
The conservative worldview that is characteristic of universities and their academic units (Tomberg, 2013) is evident in Bellman's organizational structure and knowledge distribution. Indeed, the conservative tenets (Guttek, 1997) of tradition when it comes to teaching and hierarchy in decision-making within Bellman confirm this conservative worldview. While there is a gap between this current worldview and the vision of Bellman that includes a neoliberal world view of entrepreneurship and the positive impact it can have on society (Harvey, 2005), closing the gap between the contrasting worldviews is outside the scope of the OIP.

Figure 4 depicts the mapping of Bellman's culture as an organization using the OCAI tool (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The OCAI is a psychometric tool that can determine the perception of participants of an organization's culture, both in its current and future states

(Suderman, 2012). From my perspective as the change leader, Bellman shows a strong inclination towards the clan culture quadrant within the Competing Values Framework.

Figure 4

Mapping of Current OCAI Result Based on Personal Perspective



Note: This figure illustrates Bellman's inclinations within the four quadrants (Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy, and Market) of the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Clan culture is exemplified by the family-like relationships that exist within it (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Cohesion and loyalty are also two common traits within organizations where clan culture is evident (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Clan culture and the traits that are portrayed within it are commonplace in an institution like Bellman (Berrio, 2003). The clan culture that Bellman presents through this tool guides the leadership approaches that need to be taken to propel the change forward. Transformational leadership is seen as the appropriate style that the agent of change needs to have implemented within the clan culture to attract affective commitment from the organization's stakeholders (Kim, 2013).

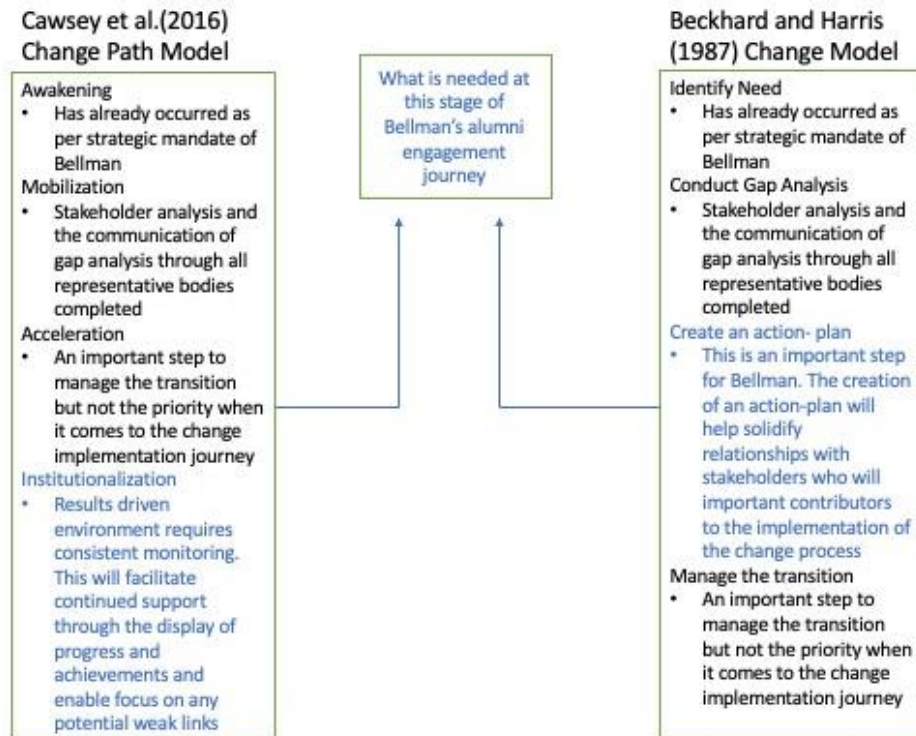
Currently, Bellman still depends on many of the resources that the centralized Alumni Relations Department possesses when it comes to engaging with its alumni. These resources include communication channels (such as email addresses and social media accounts), alumni profiles (such as engagement preferences, participation, and financial contributions), and centralized budgets that allow the department to engage with University X's overall alumni population. The shift in alumni engagement resources that need to be diverted towards Bellman's efforts to build a relationship with its graduates could potentially create the kind of conflict identified through Bolman and Deal's (2013) political frame. Such conflict may arise due to the loss of authority and power that the centralized Alumni Relations Department faces during the change process. It is therefore an important consideration as a potential barrier to the change process taking place within Bellman's alumni engagement activities.

Diagnosis and Analysis of the Changes Needed

Figure 5 presents an approach that takes specific components from the two Change Path Models to diagnose and analyze the changes needed within the Bellman context. The effective engagement of alumni is a desired future state that has already been established by Bellman's Academic Plan, which acts as its strategic mandate for the current five year-period. The gap analysis performed by Bellman shows, as indicated in its Academic Plan, that it is not able to leverage alumni as ambassadors who articulate the brand of their alma mater. Bellman is at a point where it must close the gap identified in previous sections.

Figure 5

Selecting Change Path Model Components for Bellman's Change Process



Note: Adapted from Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model and Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987)

The Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) looks at the phase Bellman is now in as an integral part of implementing change, which matches Bellman's view about establishing strong ties with its graduates. An action-oriented approach to engaging alumni, effectively communicated and widely consulted on, will engage stakeholders and build stronger allegiances among staff, faculty members, students, and alumni (Lemke 2001; Rogoff 1998). Institutionalization of alumni engagement within Bellman will help stakeholders provide the resources needed to facilitate the changes. Whether it is staff or financial resources, governance or leadership, or any other resources, the institutionalization step of the change path

model (Cawsey et al., 2016) conveys a clear sign of commitment to alumni. The institutionalization phase also helps maintain the long-term goal of alumni engagement.

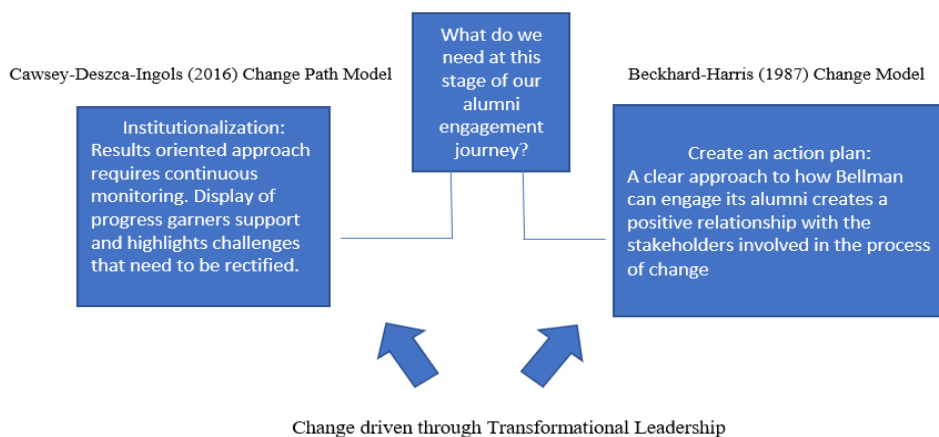
The models discussed above provide the necessary components that give the process of change an action-oriented approach, with a focus on accountability measures that display the achievements of the change in Bellman's alumni engagement. Furthermore, Figure 5 shows that many of the steps that are part of these two models have already been initiated or completed. Consequently, there is a reduction in the need of resources that would otherwise have been employed in accomplishing these steps. This is an essential consideration, especially with the governmental prerogative for efficiency in publicly funded concerns (Fedeli, 2018).

Transformational Leadership Driving the Change Path

The chosen transformational leadership style is displayed in Figure 6, which presents how this leadership style propels the process of building a relationship with Bellman's graduates that envisions having alumni act as ambassadors within their networks and beyond.

Figure 6

Transformational Leadership Theory Driving the Integration Change Path Model



Note: This figure represents the components of the chosen change path model for this OIP

Authentic and shared leadership are characteristically employed by me as leadership approaches that have helped build strong relationships within Bellman's stakeholder groups (such as Bellman members, staff, alumni, and students). Transformational leadership rallies the stakeholder groups through tenets that have a natural fit to Bellman's clan cultural context (Kim, 2013).

The clan culture that exists in Bellman sets up the right environment for transformational leadership to capture a stronger emotional attachment from the organization's stakeholders, including the alumni base (Kim, 2013). Transformational leadership creates a stronger emotional connection to the organization from its stakeholders that helps further the change process (Kim, 2013).

The analysis above helps us critically look at the change that Bellman is proposing when it comes to achieving its future state of engaging its alumni. By choosing components from two different change path models, both driven by transformational leadership and based on my inherent authentic and shared leadership tenets, I can move the change process forward to meet Bellman's alumni engagement goals. The next section looks at the possible solutions that can be taken to resolve the Problem of Practice (PoP).

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

A lack of alumni engagement at Bellman represents the status quo in the relationship that the organization currently has with its graduates. This lack of engagement has a major impact on the contributions alumni make to their alma mater. For example, research shows that 45% of business school alumni are ready to donate to their alma maters. This number goes up to 75% when these alumni are engaged with their alma maters (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Barnard and

Rensleigh (2008) also address the access to stronger partnerships and the better positioning within the post-secondary sector that alumni can provide. The benefits Bellman can attain from a stronger relationship with its graduates in achieving the goals of its Academic Plan [Bellman's Academic Plan, 2014], along with the specific direction given by the Academic Plan to close the gap in alumni engagement, negate the status quo as a potential solution within the context of this OIP.

Building a strong alumni network, a robust communication strategy, and a clear narrative of the impact that their contribution will have on their alma mater are fundamental to building a high degree of engagement with Bellman's alumni. Crisp and Seedsman (2016) have identified these fundamentals through their surveys of more than 6000 business school alumni across the world. Furthermore, Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) confirm the importance of these components in achieving a stronger connection between graduates and their alma mater. The solutions described below reflect these fundamentals and outline the necessary resources needed to implement them. Additionally, the solutions integrate the elements identified from the Cawsey-Dezsca-Ingols (2016) Change Path Model and the Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987), along with the leadership approaches discussed within the OIP's organizational context.

Solution 1: Establishing Bellman's Alumni Network on a Customer Relationship

Management (CRM) Platform

One of the top determinants for the degree of engagement that alumni have with their alma mater is their perception of the institution's alumni network. A global research study of business school graduates indicated that an alumni network is pivotal to the emotional

relationship these graduates have with their alma mater (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Furthermore, the authors of this research study argued that this emotional relationship is a major driver of alumni engagement (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Therefore, Bellman needs to create an environment where graduates can rebuild connections made during their academic journey. This will increase their level of engagement, which in turn increases their propensity to contribute towards their alma mater (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016)

While the use of official school social media channels to build this type of environment is common for higher education institutions, research shows that four times as many alumni depend on alternative social media sites to enable their connections with other graduates (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Consequently, a more effective solution needs to be employed by Bellman to facilitate its alumni network. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform would support the creation of an alumni network through an effective strategic roadmap and the appropriate underlying processes.

A useful definition of a CRM platform comes from Parvatiyar and Sheth (2001), who describe it as both an organizational strategy and an implementation of processes that lead to a creation of value for the organization and its customers. Furthermore, a CRM platform implementation has an impact on the loyalty and retention of an organization's customers (Nitzan & Libai, 2011). This observation is relevant to the stronger connection Bellman wants to have with its alumni and the resulting positive contributions from these graduates towards their alma mater. Building a CRM platform that fits Bellman's context will require multiple resources that might impact the viability of this solution within the scope of this OIP.

Resources Needed

The primary resource will be a financial commitment from the organization to implement the CRM platform. The fiscal pressures that Bellman faces will heavily affect their ability to make such a commitment (Duderstadt & Womak, 2003). Furthermore, Bellman's leadership team will not champion this investment without having an effective strategy and the necessary processes to leverage the CRM platform. Croteau and Li (2003) argue that a robust and clear breakdown of these processes will strongly support a CRM platform implementation.

Additionally, Cawsey et al. (2016) have indicated that an important component for organizational change readiness is executive support. Setting up these processes and strategies will require the input of a wide range of Bellman's stakeholders. Consultations with these stakeholders will reduce the level of cynicism they may have about the investment and increase the degree to which they are engaged with the implementation of the CRM platform (Bakari et al., 2019). Furthermore, the transformational leadership style that will drive the change process depends on these consultations as customized interactions with the constituents of the organization (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002). Finally, it aligns with the social constructivism worldview that I personally hold as the agent of change, which values interaction with constituents to build knowledge and describe context (Gehart, 2014).

One of the processes that will need to be implemented is a communication plan that shows alumni how a CRM platform will benefit them. Crisp and Seedsman (2016) have shown that business school alumni want to hear about services that directly impact them, rather than news about the vision of their alma mater and the achievements of current students. Therefore, a

targeted messaging effort needs to be employed to highlight the CRM platform as a tool that will further positive outcomes for Bellman's graduates.

Critical Analysis

The implementation of a CRM platform can eventually serve many of Bellman's goals when it comes to aligning alumni engagement efforts with its overall organizational goals of leveraging financial contributions, community partnerships, and strategic positioning of the institution within the university sector. However, the discussion above shows that there are other steps that need to be completed before the leadership team can be persuaded to invest in a CRM platform. These include the formation of a committee that focuses on propelling Bellman's alumni engagement efforts forward, and the creation of an effective communications strategy that builds a strong connection with the organization's graduates. These steps can significantly impact the PoP and provide the necessary foundation for a CRM platform that can facilitate an effective alumni network. The significant financial commitment that comes with implementing a CRM platform also needs to be contextualized within the fiscal pressures currently faced by Bellman and the entire post-secondary sector (Michael, 2014).

Solution 2: Creating an Alumni Engagement Committee under Bellman Council

The current conservative worldview represented by Bellman's leadership when it comes to its hierarchal organizational structure is a reality that needs to be dealt with throughout the OIP. In fact, this reality is common within the university sector (Tomberg, 2013). University X's Senate is the highest decision-making authority when it comes to all academic matters within the university, and its Board of Governors has the ultimate decision-making authority over financial and legal matters (University X website, 2020). However, there is language in the policies of both these bodies which delegates certain decisions to established faculty-based councils at the

university (University X website, 2020). The engagement of Bellman's graduates was deemed to be one of those responsibilities, and it has been decentralized from University X's advancement function.

Bellman Council holds the highest authority when it comes to decision making at Bellman. The composition of this council includes faculty members, staff, students, and alumni. All members are elected by their peers except for faculty members, who become part of the council by virtue of their positions, and alumni, who are selected through an application process. Bellman Council has approximately 100 members, and a significant majority of these are faculty members. However, this body depends on the work of multiple committees who create many of the processes and policies that determine the governance of the organization (Bellman website, 2020).

Resources Needed

Creating an Alumni Engagement Committee will not require a new financial commitment from Bellman. Members of the committee will be chosen from existing council members who have an existing commitment to volunteer in the activities of Bellman Council. Additionally, the selection of committee members will be based on the need to integrate the goals that Bellman wants to achieve through its alumni engagement efforts. One of these goals is having a clear narrative of how alumni can help and impact the organization, something that only a third of business school alumni feel is accomplished by their alma maters (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Representation from external partners will also be required to achieve Bellman's goal of building community partnerships through all its activities. There is flexibility in Bellman Council's by-laws to add these partners in a non-voting capacity [Bellman website, 2020]. The nomination, selection and appointment processes will follow Bellman Council's existing processes. The

alumni engagement officer will provide the necessary administrative support need for the committee's activities.

Critical Analysis

My role was created within the structure of Bellman, along with the role of the alumni engagement officer, to assist with the development of effective solutions that can create a stronger connection with our alumni. Building a standing committee within the Bellman Council governance structure that focuses on alumni engagement would allow me to work within the hierarchal structure and expand the set of stakeholders involved in the organization's alumni engagement efforts. This expanded stakeholder participation will be important in reducing the cynicism that these constituents might have about alumni engagement. Furthermore, it will allow for a better impact on the commitment to change through the authentic leadership I will be using throughout the change process (Bakari et al., 2019). Pearce et al. (2014) also show in their research that this wider consultation can prevent ethical lapses in the organization, which is an added benefit of the shared leadership that I will employ. The Alumni Engagement Committee will also help build a clear narrative about the impact that the contributions of graduates have on the organization.

One of the immediate contributions of this committee would be creation of a communication plan that speaks to alumni's need to receive information that directly relates to them (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) have indicated that the involvement of alumni in the creation of communication strategies is key to increasing the degree of engagement these graduates have with their alma mater. The composition of the Bellman's Alumni Engagement Committee would reflect that observation.

Solution 3: Building a Communication Approach that Targets Bellman's Alumni

A clear alumni engagement communication approach has been identified as a priority in building a strong connection with Bellman's alumni. The work of Crisp and Seedsman (2016) has shown that the communication an institution has with its graduates impacts the degree to which they want to get involved with their alma mater. Their research also highlighted key areas of focus those alumni want to see in the communication they receive from their programs, including benefits, services, news, and events that relate to them directly as graduates (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Additionally, Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) confirm the priority of communication to alumni who want to engage with their alma mater within the context of a program-based approach to alumni engagement.

Cohen (2017) describes an alumni engagement communication approach that fits Bellman's alumni engagement context. The author details a 3H approach (Hero, Halo, Holistic) used at Procter and Gamble that can be implemented to clearly focus on the specific narrative regarding the impact that the support provided by alumni will have on their alma mater. It also prevents the organization from overwhelming alumni with multiple asks that confuse them about the institution's priorities (Cohen, 2017). This approach will be disseminated through the communication plan that articulates the need for change. This plan is discussed further in the next chapter.

Resources Needed

This alumni engagement communication approach can be strategized and created by the Alumni Engagement Committee. Additionally, this committee would benefit from implementing Cohen's (2017) 3H approach. This approach shows that it is important to include stakeholders who are involved in leveraging the contributions of alumni. These stakeholders include Career

Services, Admissions, Alumni Engagement, Advancement, and Marketing, all decentralized functions within Bellman that are looking to seek the support of alumni in their activities.

Career Services facilitate work placements for current students. The Admissions team is involved in attracting students to Bellman and making the organization an institution of choice for their university studies. The Marketing Department is focused on raising awareness of the Bellman brand and Bellman's activities. The roles of Alumni Engagement and Advancement have been addressed in previous sections. These functions need to be represented on the Alumni Engagement Committee to ensure a consistent message is delivered through this communication plan. Along with representation from faculty members, alumni, and external stakeholders, the formulation of the communication approach will have the inclusiveness necessary to implement the plan. Since these functions already exist in the organization and this engagement effort impacts their departmental goals, there will be no need for any new financial investment by the organization.

Critical Analysis

Weerts and Cabrera (2017) emphasize the importance of segmenting the alumni population when engaging them, in order to maximize the extent to which these graduates give back to higher education institutions. Furthermore, Dixon-Woods et al. (2012) highlight the impact communication has on building trust with stakeholders and the sense of inclusion it creates, which reduces the level of resistance these stakeholders have towards the process of change. Building a sense of trust and inclusion through the alumni engagement communication approach aligns with the authentic and shared leadership approaches that I will employ throughout the process of change. Communication is also integral as a way for Bellman to interact with and learn from its alumni. This makes it an essential part of my social

constructivism lens, to be applied throughout the process of change (Atwater, 1996). For example, a digital feedback platform will be implemented to give stakeholders an opportunity to share their experiences throughout the change process and help construct my knowledge of their acceptance (or resistance) to the changes at multiple phases. The Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) component of building an action plan promotes the need for this communication effort to be pragmatic to gain acceptance from the stakeholders impacted by its development and deployment.

Preferred Solutions and Early Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Model Cycle

Appendix C shows a summary of the solutions discussed, along with the different components associated with them. The analysis conducted above shows that the most effective solutions to be implemented within Bellman's context are the establishment of an Alumni Engagement Committee (Solution 2) and the creation of a communication plan that leverages the stakeholders represented on the Alumni Engagement Committee and their functions within the organization (Solution 3).

Preferred Solutions

These two solutions align with the aim of Bellman to build a stronger relationship with its graduates and are based on two pivotal factors that determine the degree to which alumni are engaged with their alma mater: a) a clear message that describes the impact of alumni contributions and b) an alumni engagement communication approach that is clear about the benefits, news, events, and services that pertain directly to alumni (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). These two solutions are not burdened by the fiscal barriers Bellman faces or the resulting lack of support that will come from the leadership team of the organization within the scope of the OIP. Finally, these two solutions complement each other and set up a strong base for the

implementation of the CRM platform in the future by creating the structures necessary for the organizational strategies and underlying processes related to alumni engagement (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001).

Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA)

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Model Cycle can be utilized to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the Implementation Plan. This model was developed by Deming (1993) based on the work done by Shewhart (1940). The PDSA model provides a continual improvement focus and helps increase confidence in solutions (Leis & Shojanian, 2016). Within the context of this OIP, the four stages include: a) the Plan stage, which has been identified through the selection of the preferred solutions; b) the Do stage, which will involve implementing the Alumni Engagement Committee and having this committee create the communication plan; c) the Study stage, which will involve assessing whether the solutions are having the necessary impact on alumni engagement; and d) the Act stage, which will provide an opportunity for an iterative improvement to be planned, based on the findings of the Study stage (Crowfoot & Prasad, 2017). There will be a more detailed description of this iterative cycle in the next chapter. The next section addresses the ethical considerations of the leadership approaches and the change process chosen within Bellman's context before moving on to a more detailed description of their implementation.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

The leadership approaches and Change Path Models being used at Bellman within the scope of the OIP have a significant impact on individuals, stakeholder groups, and the organization. Additionally, the rules and principles of the organization and its constituents that determine right and wrong form the ethical foundation that I will have to adhere to as the leader

implementing the change (Rathore & Singh, 2018). Therefore, an ethical approach will have to reflect these rules and principles in the way I will act both personally and with others, along with an encouragement of ethical behavior within the organization's constituency groups through dialogue, decision making, and reinforcement (Brown, et al., 2005). Rathore and Singh (2018) provide a functional framework that helps focus the discussion on how leadership has an ethical impact at a micro (individual), meso (group), and macro (organizational) level. The authors have identified three dimensions of an ethical approach: value-orientation, attitudes, and influence strategies and actions (Rathore & Singh, 2018).

Ethical Considerations of Leadership Approaches

Stefkovich and Shapiro (2016) explore ethics through four different paradigms: justice, critique, care, and professionalism. The ethic of care that these authors describe is aligned to the social constructivism lens (Gehart, 2014) that I employ as a leader throughout this OIP. The focus on collaboration and listening to other individuals is a tenet of this ethic (Stefkovich & Shapiro, 2016), which aligns to social constructivism's emphasis on building knowledge through interacting with individuals. The authentic and shared leadership approaches within Bellman have created an expectation of the values that need to be embraced throughout the change process. Using an authentic leadership lens, individuals and the stakeholder groups they form have an expectation of an inclusive environment (Cottrill, et al., 2014) that supports creativity (Černe, et al., 2013) and promotes self-development (Avolio & Luthans, 2003). According to the Rathore and Singh (2018) framework, these micro and meso perspectives reflect the value orientations that are essential under the authentic leadership lens. Avolio and Luthans (2003) have shown that the organizational goal of authentic leadership is one where positive leadership capacities are integrated with a well-formed organizational context, which corresponds to the

macro perspective of the ethics framework being used in the Bellman context (Rathore & Singh, 2018).

Under a shared leadership lens, a relationship of trust and collaboration is created within the constituents and the groups they are part of (Pearce & Conger, 2003). There is also an organizational expectation of common focus on accomplishing shared goals that can help Bellman achieve its strategic objectives, including having a stronger relationship with its alumni community. From a micro perspective as the agent of change, this leadership style matches the attitude of collaboration that I carry from both my lived and professional experience (Rathore & Singh, 2018). The transformational leadership style that will be used to propel the change is based on four characteristics that involve individualized interactions, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002).

These characteristics align with the expectations seen through my inherent authentic and shared leadership. From the characteristics of transformational leadership listed above, we can see that this leadership style helps propel an organization and its constituents to a common goal by using inclusivity and creativity. There is a risk that a weak implementation of transformational leadership will impact the environment of trust and collaboration that exists within Bellman. Therefore, this risk will need to be mitigated by the agent of change to maximize the impact of the change process.

Ethical Consideration of the Change Path Model

The Change Path Model elements selected for Bellman's PoP help frame the leadership approaches needed to transition the organization into a higher degree of engagement with its alumni. In addition, the establishment of the Alumni Engagement Committee is aligned with the

institutionalization step of the Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model, which is a component that is relevant to Bellman's context. Certainly, this committee can provide the necessary metrics that will determine the progress of the change process. These metrics can include the engagement gained from alumni through the alumni-focused communication plan that is also part of the preferred solution to be implemented through the OIP. The attitudes of alumni captured through these metrics can inform the micro perspective of Bellman's graduates and the ethical consideration needed throughout the change process (Rathore & Singh, 2018).

Furthermore, the institutionalization step of this Change Path Model speaks to the organization's aim to focus on closing the gap of alumni engagement that has been identified as the PoP. This component's results-oriented approach supports the shared leadership outcome of aligning and reinforcing common benefits for Bellman's constituents (Pearce et al., 2018). The action plan step from the Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) reinforces the institutionalization component and supports the alignment that exists with the values of the constituents and the groups they form, as mentioned earlier. The collaborative effort used to create an action plan for the solutions that will be employed at Bellman adds to the level of trust being built within the organization (Pearce & Conger, 2003). It is important to acknowledge that any deviation from the values of trust, collaboration, self-development, creativity, and inclusiveness, all of which are characteristic of Bellman, during the implementation of these selected Change Path Model components will lead to negative experiences that may cause resistance to the change the OIP is trying to achieve (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Conclusion

The leadership approaches of authentic and shared leadership are integral parts of Bellman's context. The implementation of a transformational leadership style helps drive the change process within the organization and has been shown to have the ability to work within the environment created through my leadership approach. Additionally, a critical organizational analysis provided an opportunity to look at multiple Change Path Models and use the necessary components that will help the change process to proceed in an effective manner. The creation of an Alumni Engagement Committee and a communications plan, along with the selected leadership approaches and Change Path Models, align well with the ethical considerations of the organization and its constituents. The next chapter will explore the implementation of the solutions that were selected in greater detail and examine the accountability measures that need to be taken. A description of the plan to communicate the need for change will also be provided and future considerations discussed, within the scope of the OIP.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

Bellman is seeking an actionable path to building a strong connection with its graduates. Having a clear and iterative process builds confidence within Bellman's stakeholder groups, who will benefit from a robust relationship with the organization's alumni (Leis & Shojani, 2016). This chapter takes us through the concrete components needed to implement a sustainable change process that will help Bellman get to its envisioned state of alumni engagement.

Bellman's goals and priorities are revisited in this chapter and employed as the drivers for a strategy that is used to implement the change process that will transition the organization to a stronger relationship with its graduates. Additionally, an implementation plan to achieve the change in alumni engagement is introduced that addresses the necessary organizational structure, stakeholder engagement, and resources needed to apply and successfully navigate any limitations that come with the new direction Bellman is taking to engage its alumni. This is followed by sections addressing the appropriate processes to monitor and evaluate the proposed changes, along with a communication plan to effectively persuade all the stakeholder groups identified. The chapter concludes with future considerations that are relevant to the future of alumni engagement within Bellman.

Change Implementation Plan

Bellman has set a Vision Statement that seeks to engage its community through innovation, leadership, and societal impact [Bellman website, 2020]. The operational needs to fulfill this vision require the participation of multiple stakeholders, including current students, alumni, staff, faculty members, and external partners. In its Strategic Plan, University X highlights alumni as an important stakeholder group to achieve its goals and priorities, which are strongly aligned with Bellman's vision [University X, 2020]. Barnard and Rensleigh (2008) have

shown that alumni can provide the necessary resources and relationships that can help universities and their academic units meet their strategic priorities.

Organizational Goals and Priorities

Bellman's relationship with its graduates is an important driver for the organization to meet its strategic goals and priorities. As Ebert (2015) argues, efforts to engage alumni need to align with the priorities of the higher education institution for Bellman to achieve its goals. Bellman highlights its priorities and the resources that it can leverage to achieve its vision as part of its strategic objectives.

Financial contributions are one of the resources that the organization highlights as an important part of its overall strategy [Bellman website, 2020]. With the fiscal pressures the post-secondary sector is facing (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013), the lack of financial resources acts as a barrier for universities to meet the Strategic Mandate Agreements they have with the provincial government (Queen's Printer, 2019). Community partnerships are an important resource for Bellman to realize the societal impact of its vision statement. For example, partnerships allow for work-integrated learning opportunities that impact the external partners involved through access to talent from the student body within the organization, and they provide valuable work experience for students that can help them transition more effectively into future career opportunities (CEWIL Canada, 2020).

Lastly, Bellman wants to continue positioning itself strategically within its sector as an institution that builds capacity in the areas of innovation and leadership and provides societal impact. This vision is part of the Strategic Mandate Agreements it has with the provincial government (Queen's Printer, 2019). Barnard and Rensleigh (2008) show through their research that building a stronger relationship with alumni can provide financial returns for their alma

mater, access to community partnerships that alumni can facilitate through their networks, and strategic positioning through the brand ambassadorship role that alumni can maintain after they graduate.

Strategy for Change Within Bellman

The goals and priorities of the change process as it relates to alumni engagement within Bellman ensure that the envisioned future state is sustainable and provides the benefits that all the stakeholders identified throughout the OIP are expecting. The extensive global research study of more than 6000 graduates by Crisp and Seedsman (2016) showed that business school alumni articulate three major factors that determine their connection with their alma mater after they graduate: a) a strong alumni network; b) alumni-centric communication; and c) clear messaging regarding giving back. These factors form the priorities for the strategic implementation of the change in alumni engagement at Bellman and are discussed below.

Strong Alumni Network

Crisp and Seedsman (2016) argued that the perception that alumni have of their alma mater after graduation is heavily impacted by their view of the alumni network that the institution has created. Torres Bernal and Mille (2013) have also shown that alumni view these types of networks as a benefit of continuing their relationship with the individual academic programs from which they graduated. The solutions that are implemented as part of the Bellman strategy for changing its alumni engagement efforts must consider the weight that its graduates put on reigniting relationships they had during their university journey and the organization's role in facilitating these connections.

Alumni-Centric Communication

Alumni have shown a propensity towards information from their alma mater that relates directly to their post-graduation needs, rather than focusing on specific accomplishments achieved by the organization and the stakeholders who operate within it (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). This is reinforced by the work of Torres Bernal and Mille (2013), who argue that this communication strategy increases the level of alumni involvement with their alma mater. Therefore, Bellman needs to incorporate within its strategy a mechanism by which information relating to executive education, student related activities, and the vision of Bellman's Decanal team are prioritized. Alumni are looking for benefits, services, and opportunities to network in the communication assets that they receive from their alma mater.

Clear Messaging of Giving Back

The research done by Snijders et al. (2019) has shown that if post-secondary institutions build a strong relationship with their alumni, they are able to access resources that support their objectives. However, Crisp and Seedsman (2016) show that a robust message of the impact that these resources have, along with a clear process for graduates, are needed to fully leverage the support that alumni can provide. These factors were illustrated through a global survey of more than 6000 business school alumni, which showed that over 57% of these graduates are unclear on how to contribute financially to their alma mater. However, 75% have shown some propensity for giving back financially to the business school they graduated from (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Therefore, clarity for alumni on how to contribute financially can reduce a barrier to this support reaching the organization.

The stakeholders involved in the solutions should be clearly identified, along with an outline of the steps involved to enact each solution. These two factors need to have strong links

with Bellman's goals and priorities to help achieve its strategic objectives (Ebert et al., 2015). The action plan includes gaining leadership support for its implementation, establishment of the Alumni Engagement Committee, creating a communication strategy to engage alumni, and the approval of this communication strategy.

Gaining leadership support involves gaining the endorsement of an executive sponsor from Bellman's Decanal team. The Associate Dean, Students will act as that sponsor since alumni engagement falls under their portfolio. The establishment of the Alumni Engagement Committee will enable the institutionalization of the change process due its positioning under Bellman's governance structure. Furthermore, the creation of the communication strategy will propel the success of the change process because it aligns with alumni expectations of a stronger relationship with their alma mater (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Finally, getting support for this communication strategy through the decision-making process within Bellman's governance will activate the steps needed to initiate the alumni engagement communication strategy. This action plan aligns with the Change Path Model proposed in Chapter 2, specifically the action-oriented approach that was adapted from the Beckhard-Harris Change Model (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). Additionally, the creation of an Alumni Engagement Committee will institutionalize Bellman's alumni engagement activities under the organization's governance. The establishment of the Alumni Engagement Committee is also in line with the institutionalization step of this OIP's chosen change path model that was adapted from the Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model and illustrated in the previous chapter.

Engaging the Stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement is an important feature throughout the implementation of the change process. From a social justice perspective, stakeholder engagement is an important

ingredient to ensure that there is advocacy for stakeholders throughout the change process. The value of the decisions made to improve alumni engagement increases when there is an accurate representation the diverse views within Bellman's stakeholder groups (Webber & Scott, 2012). Stakeholder engagement aligns with the social constructivism lens that is employed throughout the OIP, which depends significantly on obtaining knowledge through interactions with individuals and groups (Gehart, 2014). Soliciting feedback from stakeholders is an example of how this lens is utilized at multiple stages. As illustrated in Figure 7, Bellman's Decanal team will be provided with an initial proposal to begin the development of both the Alumni Engagement Committee and the alumni-focused communication strategy. The feedback and approval provided by the leadership of the organization will allow for further stakeholder engagement with the governance committee of the Bellman Council to establish the Alumni Engagement Committee. This committee will be designated by the council to oversee any changes to the structure or the by-laws of the highest decision-making body of the organization [Bellman website, 2020]. It consists of members who represent a spectrum of stakeholder groups within Bellman. These members are elected or appointed by the council and therefore have influence and the respect of the multiple stakeholder groups that make up the organization.

The recommendations made by Bellman's governance committee and their implementation will provide feedback from influential individuals within the organization. Consequently, this consultation with stakeholders and acceptance of recommendations from them will assist in resolving any cynicism that may come from introducing the changes to alumni engagement within Bellman (Bakari et al., 2019). In line with this consultative approach, an open call will allow all community members to provide feedback regarding the Alumni Engagement Committee proposal and the alumni-centric communication strategy. This consultative approach

will leverage the use of individualized responses online and allow for anonymous feedback where needed. This kind of individualized consideration supports the transformational leadership approach being taken to propel the change (Hoffmeister et al., 2014). The acceptance of the proposal by Bellman Council to form the Alumni Engagement Committee, including its goals and membership, will provide a positive indication of how prepared the organization is for change (Armenakis et al. 1999). The formation of the Alumni Engagement Committee will commit Bellman Council to monitor its activities and the goals it aspires to accomplish with regards to engaging with Bellman's graduates. This also aligns with the institutionalization component (Cawsey et al., 2016) of this OIP.

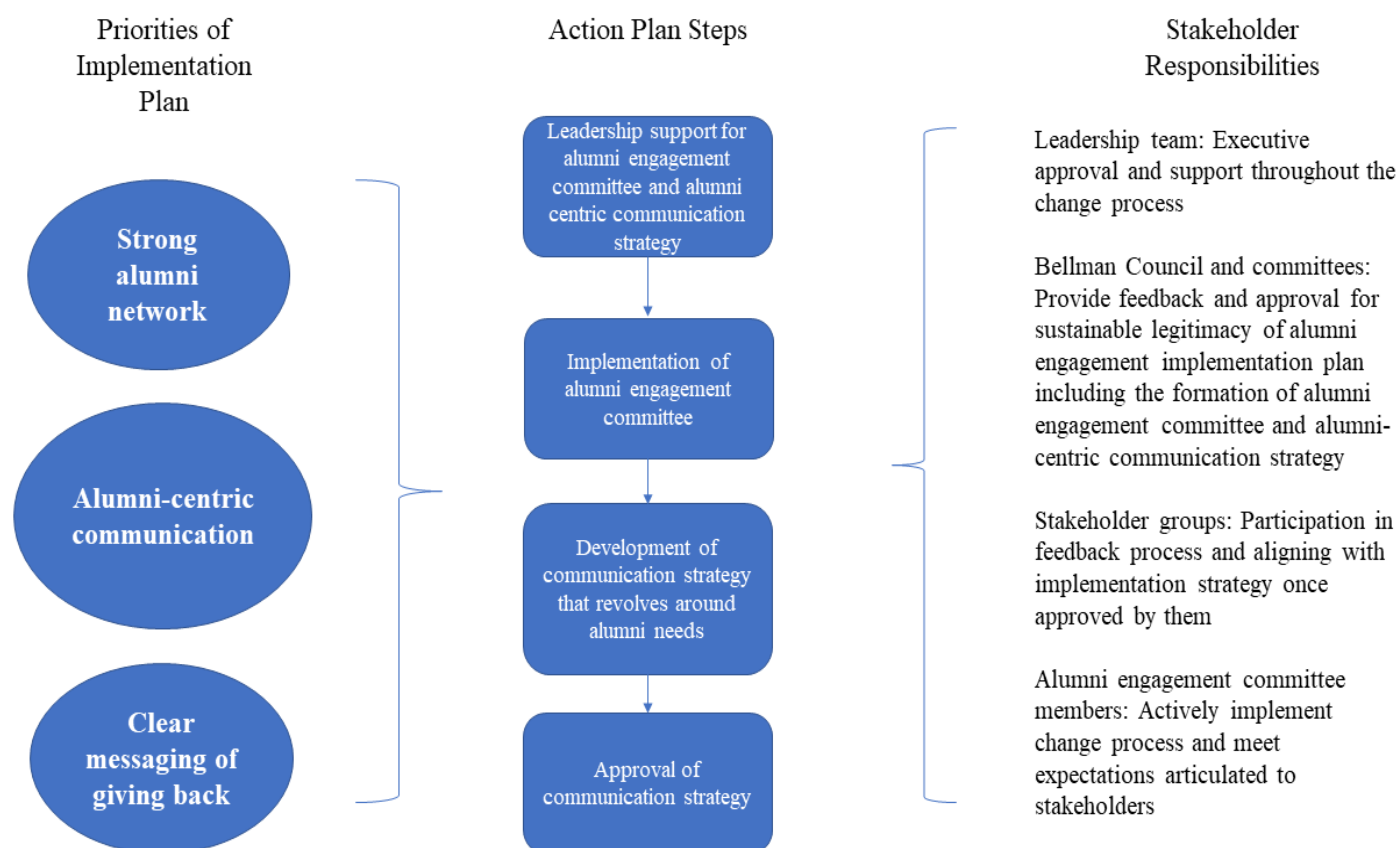
Stakeholder engagement is also an important part of the authentic, shared, and transformational leadership approaches that are being employed both inherently within the organization and as part of the change process. Authentic leadership highlights inclusivity and trust as part of its tenets (Cottrill et al., 2014) and engages stakeholders at multiple phases. The shared leadership approach employed by the agent of change also relies on stakeholder engagement as part of the inclusive decision-making process that it espouses (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Consequently, there are multiple decision-making points that involve a diversity of stakeholders from within the organization.

Transformational leadership's individualized interaction tenet ensures that unique needs of each stakeholder and group are considered (Breaux, 2014). This consideration allows for a focus on the diversity of voices being heard throughout the implementation process, at the development, consultation, and decision-making stages. Figure 7 shows how stakeholder engagement is integrated with Bellman's priorities for change and the action plan being implemented to accomplish this change.

Finally, stakeholder engagement fits in with the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model that was introduced in the previous chapter. Leis and Shojanian (2016) state that the iterative process involved in creating the proposals and seeking feedback, and then making necessary changes based on the comments provided by the different stakeholders before implementing the change, increases confidence in the solutions.

Figure 7

Integration of Stakeholders with Bellman's Implementation Plan

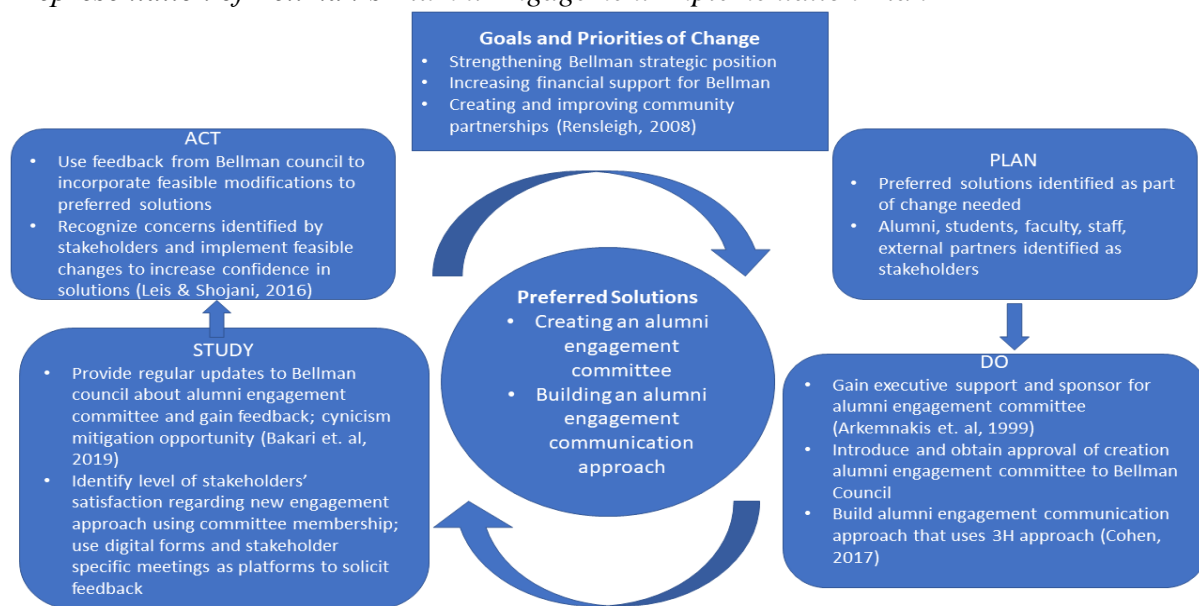


Using the framework of the PDSA model, the four components of the action plan being implemented at Bellman can leverage this iterative process and improve the quality of the

changes being made to its alumni engagement activities. Figure 8 outlines how the four components of the action plan are broken down into steps within the PDSA model. Bellman's priorities for the change being implemented are also included in the framework to keep the efforts of the change process focused on its objectives.

Figure 8

PDSA representation of Bellman's Alumni Engagement Implementation Plan



Personnel Leading the Implementation

The recruitment of specific people to the Alumni Engagement Committee follows from the 3H approach proposed by Cohen (2017) when developing a strong alumni-centric communication strategy. This approach examines the functions that have higher frequency of interaction with graduates to fulfil their operational needs, and it illustrates the need for multiple departments to be part of the communication strategy (Cohen, 2017). Within the Bellman context, these include its Career Centre, the Marketing function and the Advancement function. The Alumni Engagement function that I lead will clearly also be part of the Committee.

Including the centralized Alumni Relations Department will also be important, in order to mitigate the political conflict that comes with the shift in power regarding engaging Bellman's alumni (Bolman & Deal, 2013). One member representing each of the remaining stakeholder groups (faculty members, students, alumni, and external stakeholders) will also be part of the committee in order to have representative voices of all community members.

These stakeholders will create and develop the communication strategy that will be employed, one that meets the expectations of alumni discussed with respect to the research conducted by Crisp and Seedsman (2016). These expectations are also illustrated in Torres Bernal and Mille's (2013) research. The committee members will be leveraged to solicit and encourage feedback from the groups they represent through digital feedback forms, similar to the feedback mechanism employed when proposing the Alumni Engagement Committee. This leverage will be accomplished through the influence they possess by virtue of their appointments through the Bellman Council and through the leadership they will demonstrate in obtaining this feedback to reinforce the organization's readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1999).

The development and establishment of the Alumni Engagement Committee will employ the participation of the multiple stakeholders, who will be engaged through a diverse set of action items in the plan. Bellman's leadership team will be engaged to provide support for the proposed change and act as champions for the solutions deployed through the Implementation Plan. Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols (2016) have shown that this kind of executive support is an important indicator of an organization's readiness for change. Armenakis et al. (1999) also state that leadership support is essential for an organization as it readies itself for the change process.

The support of stakeholders who garner respect and influence is also needed for the organization to successfully prepare for envisioned future state. In Bellman's context, these

stakeholders include the elected and appointed members of the Bellman Council. These individuals were either voted in by their peers or appointed based on their experience and leadership within their stakeholder groups. Consequently, including their feedback and giving them a decision-making role throughout the development and formation of the Alumni Engagement Committee and the communication strategy will help convey legitimacy and reduce potential resistance (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Resources Needed for Implementation

The resources leveraged to implement the change to alumni engagement within Bellman include the use of the Alumni Engagement Officer within my office. This individual will support the administrative function that will enable me, as the Director responsible for alumni engagement, and the Alumni Engagement Committee to achieve the goals and priorities of the Implementation Plan. Additionally, there will be a need for the development of digital feedback forms that capture the individualized responses of the community members who participate in the consultation process. The time provided by the different stakeholders who are members of the Alumni Engagement Committee is considered a resource, but it will not have any fiscal impact on Bellman's budgets since they will have opted to participate in this committee as part of their regular operations.

Building Momentum Through Goals

Goals are addressed for each action item within the Implementation Plan in Appendix D, along with the duration of time within which they need to be achieved. Short-term goals are to be achieved within a six-month period, medium-term within a one-year period, and long-term goals within a two to five-year period. These time expectations align with the realities of Bellman's

decision-making processes and the hierarchal nature of the environment within which it operates (Tomberg, 2013).

Limitations Associated with Implementation

Three potential limitations can be observed when it comes to implementing the plan at Bellman. One of these limitations, which could impact the implementation of the alumni engagement strategy, is the lack of participation received in the feedback process. This participation will be an important factor in reducing cynicism that may accompany the change process. If a wide spectrum of voices is not included when leading the implementation, there is a risk of losing the inclusivity that Bellman's stakeholders expect (Cottrill et al., 2014). Leveraging the influence that the committee members have over the stakeholder groups that they represent and effectively using platforms (e.g., Bellman Council meetings, staff meetings and newsletters, student council meetings, social media etc.) to highlight the impact the feedback of participants are tools that will be used to overcome this limitation.

The time needed for the Implementation Plan is the second potential limitation. Bellman's stakeholders have already been through multiple change processes, and their negative experiences with how long it took for past changes to be implement are important to consider in relation to organization readiness (Cawsey et al., 2016). Consequently, a timeline needs to be set that considers the reality of the hierarchal structure within the institution (Tomberg, 2013). This will help mitigate the cynicism that might come from the length of the process, and it will provide a chance for representatives of the stakeholder groups to decide on associated milestones. This participation in the decision-making process will also help focus the stakeholder groups on accomplishing the goal of meeting the agreed upon timelines (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Therefore, the timeline will need to be accepted by all stakeholders through both Bellman

Council and the Alumni Engagement Committee for both preferred solutions. There must also be a robust effort to communicate the timeline and the milestones associated with it, along with any modifications that need to occur.

The Implementation Plan for this OIP depends on stakeholder engagement, gaining the trust of multiple groups within the Bellman community, and implementing the appropriate leadership approaches to achieve the identified goals and priorities. Using the iterative PDSA model, the plan will also benefit from appropriate monitoring and evaluation processes, which could help ensure the effectiveness of the plan for change. The next section will introduce these processes and explain how they will help move Bellman to its envisioned future state regarding its relationship with its graduates.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

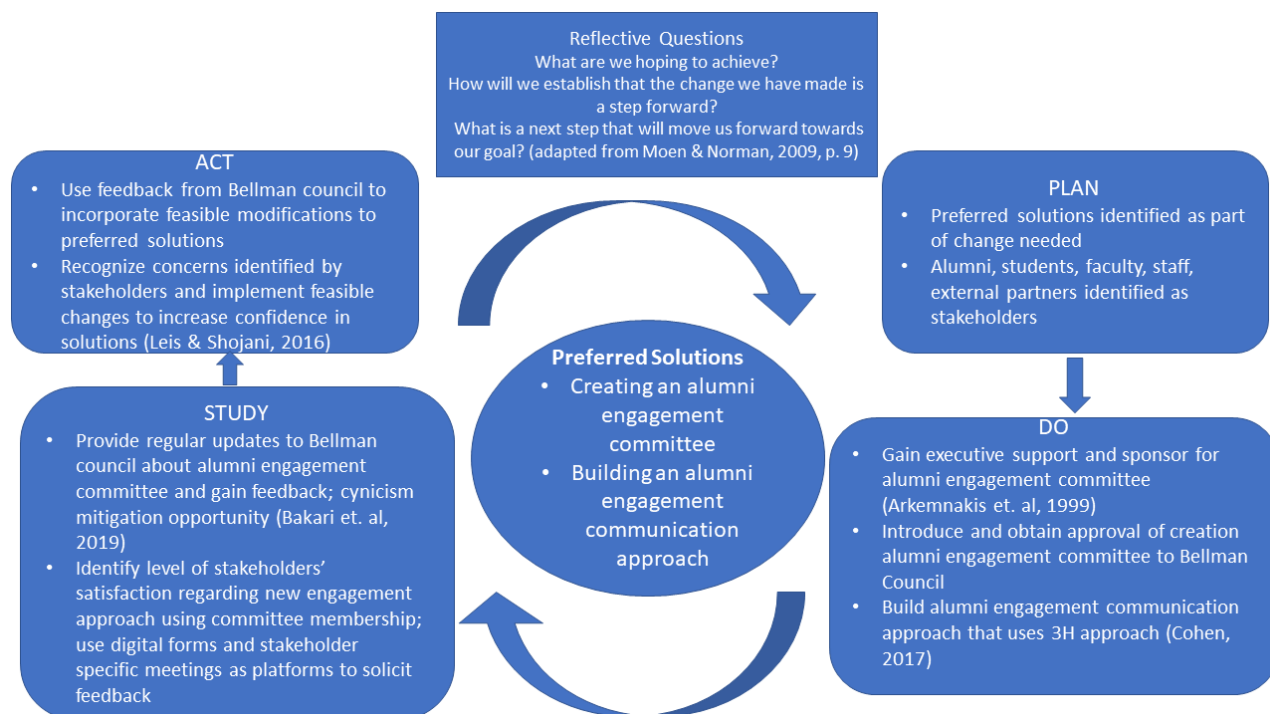
The Implementation Plan described in the previous section provides an action-oriented approach, which is a component of the Change Path Model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987) adapted for this OIP and illustrated by Figure 6 in Chapter 2. Additionally, the priorities and goals of both the organization and the Implementation Plan presented earlier establish relevant metrics that can be part of the monitoring and evaluation of the new alumni engagement approach. The refinement of the Implementation Plan can potentially be driven by the monitoring and evaluation activities that Bellman will implement as part of the OIP. Refinements will provide opportunities for a more robust alumni engagement approach, increasing confidence in the solutions being implemented (Leis & Shojani, 2016). They will also help with delivering on the goals and priorities Bellman holds for investing in building relationships with its graduates [Bellman website, 2020].

Using a PDSA Model to Monitor the Change Process

A PDSA model will be used to monitor the progress of the Implementation Plan that creates a new alumni engagement approach within the organization. Moen and Norman's (2009) adaptation of the model will be used in the Bellman context to monitor and evaluate the change process. This adaptation provides reflective questions that allow stakeholders to assess each action item illustrated in the Implementation Plan and link it effectively to the goals and priorities of the change process. In Figure 9, these questions are incorporated into the PDSA model introduced in the previous section. The questions relate to the achievements expected from the action, assessment of whether the action item will move the plan forward, and the next step needed to get the organization closer to its goals and priorities (Moen & Norman, 2009).

Figure 9

Monitoring the Implementation Plan Through a PDSA Model with Reflective Questions



Tracking Changes and Assessing Progress

The goals articulated in the previous section for the short, medium, and long term provide milestones that allow stakeholders to identify what needs to be achieved at each step of the implementation process. These goals would be vetted and accepted by the multiple stakeholder groups, including the leadership team and influential members of the community, which will enhance the readiness of Bellman to go through the change process (Armenakis et al., 1999). The achievement of the goals associated with each step indicates an opportunity for exploration of the next action item within the Implementation Plan.

The engagement of stakeholders throughout the change process is highlighted through their involvement in the decision-making process. Additionally, the tenet of shared leadership allows for the focus of multiple stakeholders towards one common goal (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Once the stakeholders provide the relevant approval (majority vote on a committee), the Implementation Plan will be ready to move to the next action item within the new alumni engagement approaches being utilized at Bellman. By having a clear and robust order of action items which stakeholders can follow, Bellman will be able to quickly recognize the series of steps that need to be taken throughout the iterative model of the PDSA. The movement through the chronological list of action items in Appendix D, along with the appropriate decision-making instances within the relevant items, will be propelled forward by using the attainment of each goal linked to each step as an indicator to progress throughout the implementation. This list of action items can act as a tool that keeps the Implementation Plan on track. The agent of change will mobilize the list of action items using the PDSA model and provide an iterative process that ensures consistent feedback, reflection, and refinement of the alumni engagement approach being implemented (Leis & Shojania, 2016).

Feedback from stakeholders can be collected using digital forms that allow relevant members of the community to give their perspectives of the iterative process and the progression through the Implementation Plan, outlined in the previous section. These responses can then be accumulated, anonymized, and shared widely by the agent of change to show how the feedback provided impacts the different iterations of the change process. Dixon-Woods et al. (2012) have shown in their research that involving stakeholders in the process and valuing their opinion increases the chance of obtaining a consensus from the individuals and groups involved in the process. This consensus reduces the amount of resistance to the execution of the Implementation Plan.

Potential Refinements

The action plan being implemented to change the alumni engagement approach has multiple steps. The plan has a focus on stakeholder engagement that follows from the social constructivism view of knowledge attainment through interactions with individuals (Gehart, 2014). The development of proposals and an alumni-centric communication plan is first created through the input of a small number of stakeholders, then presented to an open consultation (such as digital forms, constituency meetings), and finally modified to reflect the feedback obtained from the consultations. A potential refinement to the action plan could be adding another step, that of obtaining the input of Bellman's community through a wide consultation, before working with a smaller group of stakeholders to propose a potential path and then seeking inputs from the community.

This increase in consultation would have the benefit of increasing the levels of inclusion that stakeholders feel throughout the process. This inclusiveness could lead to a reduction in cynicism and the resistance that can come with it (Bakari et al., 2019). However, time would be

required to conduct this additional consultation, which could impact the timeline of the implementation process. Any delay might negatively affect the sentiments of the stakeholder groups involved and lead to a sense of cynicism regarding the new alumni engagement approach. This could increase resistance to the change being implemented.

Monitoring and Evaluation processes

The process of continuously observing and considering the action and performance of a program is the definition that will be used for monitoring (Neumann & Sloan, 2018). Mitigating situational challenges can be achieved during the change process by making modifications to action taken during the process (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Moen and Norman (2009) provide three reflective questions that can help lead the monitoring process. The questions allow for the change to be defined, what the change ultimately improves, and how the agent of change can know that these improvements were made. The questions include what the organization is looking to achieve through these changes, how stakeholders can know that the changes being made are moving the organization forward, and what next step is needed to move the change forward (Moen & Norman, 2009). By embedding these reflective questions within each iteration of the PDSA cycle, the OIP ensures that there is consistent consideration of the goals that need to be achieved and the necessary changes that need to be made to achieve these goals. Crowfoot and Prasad (2017) indicate that the PDSA model is an efficient method for data collection. The collection process is efficient because it acquires the appropriate amount of data to inform the next cycle of steps outlined by the model.

The evaluation process for the change at Bellman will leverage the feedback created at multiple stages within the Implementation Plan. The metrics used for the evaluation are based on the goals that are associated with each step, along with the timeline that is linked with each goal.

Consequently, as shown in Appendix D, the agent of change will first focus on getting leadership support, setting up the structure for the Alumni Engagement Committee, obtaining a broad spectrum of feedback from the community, and building a collaborative alliance of stakeholders that will help propel the change forward. The goals associated with the medium (within one year) and long-term (within three to five years) periods are also illustrated in Appendix D.

Monitoring and Evaluating Evidence

After proposing the Alumni Engagement Committee to the governance committee of Bellman Council, a project timeline chart will need to be created to show the progress of implementation and how it relates to achieving the goal within the accepted timeline. Additionally, the linkage between stakeholder engagement input and the modifications being made to the plan is also shared in order to meet the expectations for transparency and trust that were discussed earlier in the section. In Figure 10, an example of how the evaluation and the data collection is summarized and illustrated is shown.

Figure 10

Example of Project Monitoring and Evaluation Tool

Action	Goals (Timeline from start of change)	Progress Notes	Completed
Propose and gain support for alumni engagement committee from Bellman's leadership team	Leadership support for plan (six months)	-Meeting set to present to Decanal team on xx/xx -Presentation completed and proposal received approval for presentation to governance committee	✓

The monitoring and evaluation principles discussed thus far will enable Bellman to ensure that the change process is being efficiently and effectively carried out. They will also increase the transparency and the evidence-based approach involved in any modifications that

may occur as the iterative cycle goes through the reflective questions that will keep the Implementation Plan on track.

The impact of stakeholder feedback on the changes that occur to the Implementation Plan will signal to stakeholders the importance they have within the change process. It will also strengthen their trust in the solutions being applied. These steps align well with the leadership approaches being implemented throughout the OIP, which focus on inclusivity, shared decision making, and individualized consideration. The next section will discuss the communication of this change process to the Bellman community.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

The engagement of stakeholders throughout the change process is an important piece for the successful implementation of the OIP. Communicating with these stakeholders becomes a priority to build trust with Bellman's alumni, students, faculty members, staff, and external community members, so they feel included and to reduce the resistance they could present during the change process (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012). Without effective communication, there will be a failure in achieving the envisioned future state and the changes that lead up to it (Barrett, 2002). Consequently, the creation of a plan that addresses the change taking place in alumni engagement at Bellman, including the purpose of the change and the processes that will create it and embed it within the organization, becomes an important pillar of the OIP. This section includes a summary of a communication plan that can raise awareness of the need for change and how it addresses the questions and concerns that stakeholders have about the process.

Many of the hurdles that impact the change process can be linked to having ineffective communication during the implementation of the change (Lewis, 2019). Communication can act as a mitigating factor for issues that affect the process, including material and human resources,

politics, and the emotions associated with shifting the paradigm of an organization (Lewis, 2019). However, Lewis (2019) cautions that making communication the sole area of focus during the implementation would be an error for the agent of change.

Summary of Plan to Communicate

The communication plan implemented through this OIP leverages the Strategic Employee Communication Model proposed by Barrett (2002). This model aligns well with the leadership approach being used to implement the change to alumni engagement at Bellman. Barrett's (2002) model puts the stakeholders involved in the change at the center of all communication efforts and focuses on the success of the organization as part of these efforts, which aligns with the transformational leadership approach being employed in the OIP. Pearce's Communicative Cultural Framework (1989), adapted by Brown (2005), allows for a reflection on the type of communicative processes that exist within the Bellman context.

The Strategic Employee Communication Model (Barrett, 2002) prioritizes three objectives: a) to show effective employee communications as part of a successful organization; b) to provide a tool that analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of a company's communications; and c) to set the change process and the recommendations that come with a communication lens that will help drive the change (Barrett, 2002). A focus on raising awareness within the different stakeholder groups is the first priority of the communication plan the agent of change will use at Bellman.

In addition, there is a need to establish the strategic importance of effectively embedding the key messages of the change and the positive impact it will have for the organization and its constituents. The support of Bellman's leadership team is imperative, since they must be involved in approving the communications involved with implementing the changes to alumni

engagement within the organization. These communications need to be segmented and targeted to be relevant and appealing to the different audiences receiving them. Finally, the use of appropriate media and forums, along with a feedback loop that allows the Alumni Engagement Committee to monitor and evaluate the plan, completes the necessary components that will fulfill the primary objectives of the model described by Barrett (2002; Figure 11).

This strategic communication model supports the authentic leadership approach that was described in the Planning and Development chapter of this OIP. The importance of communicating the change in this integrated manner is aligned with the engagement needed to gain the trust of Bellman's stakeholders throughout the change process. This trust reduces any cynicism that might arise due to the change in Bellman's alumni engagement activities (Alavi & Gill, 2016).

The communication model also aligns with the action-oriented component of the chosen Change Path Model that was adapted from the Beckhard and Harris (1987) Change Model. Evidently, an important part of the action plan proposed in this chapter is communicating the change happening throughout the change process, which can be seen at multiple stages of the action plan's PDSA representation (Figure 8). This can be seen in the Do, Study, and Act stages, where providing and obtaining feedback is prominently featured when engaging with Bellman's stakeholders.

Figure 11

Strategic Employee Communication Model (Barrett, 2002) adapted for Bellman



Note: This figure shows the integrated approach that is used to communicate Bellman’s change process

Raising Awareness

As part of the implementation process for the change, the support of the senior leadership team at Bellman is the first step of the action plan described earlier in the chapter. Part of this support needs to include the communication of the changes across the organization. Alignment of these communications with the strategic goals of Bellman will be important to get the senior leadership team as champions for this effort. Admittedly, the strengthening of the organization’s relationship with its alumni is currently part of the organization’s Strategic Plan [Bellman website, 2020].

Barrett's (2002) model articulates the need for a Strategic Communication Team that represents a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Most members of this team should not be communication professionals. This will allow for the messaging to reflect the voices of the different groups who are impacted by the change. It will also help to keep the changes sustainable after the dissolution of the team. These team members will act as ambassadors who communicate the narrative of change during and after their time on the Strategic Communication Team. The proposed Alumni Engagement Committee fits the characteristics and the structure needed in a Strategic Communications Team and therefore is well situated to take on that role.

There are multiple points in the action plan which represent feedback points for the communications efforts of the Alumni Engagement Committee. These feedback points represent opportunities to monitor and evaluate the impact of targeted messaging when it comes to the objective of creating an environment of transparency and inclusion through the communications effort (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012). Feedback can be in the form of a questionnaire that solicits sentiments about the clarity stakeholders have about the need for change and the steps being taken to implement the change. The Alumni Engagement Committee can then take this feedback and refine their communications efforts to achieve the level of support needed to carry the change into the envisioned future state for Bellman's alumni engagement efforts.

Framing the Issues and Responding to Stakeholders

As part of the targeted messaging approach described above, the Alumni Engagement Committee needs to articulate the need for change and the action being implemented to a diverse set of stakeholders. The set of stakeholders that are part of Bellman's context include faculty members, students, staff, alumni, and external partners. Pearce's (1989) Communication Culture Framework (as viewed by Brown, 2005) would divide these stakeholders into four types: a)

monocultural; b) ethnocultural; c) modernistic; and d) cosmopolitan. This framework helps shape the stakeholder engagement efforts needed to enact the change process effectively.

The monocultural communicator believes that the existing messaging and methods used within an organization should not change. This viewpoint is shared by the ethnocultural communicator, while the modernistic and the cosmopolitan communicators are open to a change in the communication strategy being used within their constituencies. The stakeholders on the Alumni Engagement Committee will need to fit within the cosmopolitan culture type to embrace change, but they must also differ from all the other types in their focus on coordination, which is important for the structured Implementation Plan to be effective. This approach is needed to complement Barrett's (2002) model.

The Alumni Engagement Committee will include representatives from each of the stakeholder groups (staff, faculty members, alumni, external partners, and students). Consultations with these committee members will therefore be important in order to speak directly to the concerns that different stakeholders will have during the change. Committee members will be able to leverage the access they have to their individual stakeholder groups and engage them using multiple channels and forums, including social media, digital newsletters, and stakeholder specific meetings that occur regularly throughout the academic year. These engagement opportunities can also serve as outlet that provide answers to questions Bellman's constituents might have about the change process.

Questions from stakeholders within Bellman are expected to range in complexity and relevance to both individual and organizational concerns. The organizational structure of Bellman has been identified as one that is hierarchal in nature (Tomberg, 2013). Any change to this organizational structure due to the change process would create a potential area of inquiry by

Bellman's stakeholders, due to its potential impact on their roles. There is also an environment of trust and inclusiveness that exists within Bellman due to the authentic leadership approaches that I bring through my role (Cottrill, et al., 2014). Responses to how the change might impact this environment are to be expected. The diversity of stakeholders will also bring a range of goals and objectives that each stakeholder group will need to achieve within their context. While the shared leadership approach used by the agent of change will aim to focus stakeholders on the common goals of the organization (Pearce & Conger, 2003), particularly that of strengthening Bellman's relationship with its graduates, the positive impact the change will have on the individual objectives of the stakeholders also needs to be clearly communicated. This will strengthen the resolve that Bellman's constituents have throughout the change process.

Leveraging Communication Channels and Customizing Delivery

Research conducted by Graaf et al. (2019) on public sector organizations facing change and fiscal pressures like Bellman's shows that communication methods and channels used are an important consideration when implementing change. A focus on direct interaction, either in person or in writing, ensures less confusion within the stakeholders of the organization during the change process. A top-down approach to communicating change would add confusion, due to the potential distortion that occurs by the time the messaging reaches the constituents of the organization (Graaf et al., 2019). There is also a need for supervisors to act as a robust support for their employees as changes are communicated to ensure an appropriate transition to the organization's envisioned future state (Allen et al., 2007; van der Voet, 2014; van der Voet et al., 2016).

As shown in Appendix E, a targeted use of communication channels that are specific to each stakeholder group has been identified. The stakeholder groups are described in the table,

along with the different communication channels that are leveraged to engage stakeholders. The table also shares the rationale for each communication channel used.

Alumni are looking for opportunities to reignite relationships they built throughout their journey at Bellman, clear communication of services and benefits that relate to them as graduates, and a robust narrative of how their engagement and support will have an impact on their alma mater (Crisp & Seedsman, 2016). Therefore, the communications efforts employed by the Alumni Engagement Committee need to reflect these priorities and articulate how the action plan is achieving these objectives. Additionally, there needs to be an expectation that alumni will inquire about how the progress of change, which indicates a need to have appropriate responses ready to acknowledge these inquiries.

Staff and faculty members have individual objectives and associated metrics that need to be achieved within their areas of responsibility. The communications that relate to the change process need to reflect how the Implementation Plan will help the staff and faculty members at Bellman reach their desired metrics and the associated changes to their operations that can occur as part of the change. Such transparency has shown itself to be effective in reducing the resistance stakeholders might have towards these changes and associated skepticism regarding the action plan being implemented to better engage Bellman's graduates (Bakari et al., 2019).

Students are looking for meaningful networking opportunities that lead to potential work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities. WIL opportunities provide skills and experience that help students transition to career opportunities after they graduate (Govender & Wait, 2017). Consequently, the Alumni Engagement Committee needs to ensure that the communications efforts to students shows the alignment of the change process with the career goals that students

have and how the changes to alumni engagement will enable students to connect with alumni who can provide an additional network they can leverage.

Community partnerships are another important by-product of a university strengthening its relationship with its alumni (Barnard & Rensleigh, 2008). Bellman's external partners are looking for meaningful ways to connect with the organization and its stakeholders. The organization's alumni facilitate connections with the external partners. Therefore, the Alumni Engagement Committee needs to make sure it communicates a narrative that shows external partners how they can achieve their goals in building talent pipelines and expand their networks to help achieve their objectives.

The communication plan outlined above allows for an effective deployment of the narrative and for shaping it so it is relevant to Bellman's diverse stakeholders. Barrett's (2002) Model for the Strategic Communication of Change serves as a framework that empowers the Alumni Engagement Committee to get the necessary support from Bellman's constituents. The framework also highlights the need for an iterative approach that acknowledges the feedback received from stakeholders as it relates to the effectiveness of the communication plan and any improvements the plan needs. Finally, leveraging multiple communication channels will allow the change to alumni engagement within Bellman to be transmitted to a wide audience, while also considering the specific stakeholder group that needs to receive the narrative.

This chapter's action-oriented theme has shown how the OIP will drive the organization toward the future state it envisions for its relationship with its alumni. A description of the Action Plan reflects an iterative process that allows for continuous improvement as Bellman builds a new methodology to improve the emotional connection its graduates have with their alma mater. Additionally, the process shows its ability to create a space for monitoring and

evaluating the Implementation Plan that the agent of the change will put into place through the OIP. A strong communication strategy regarding the change that Bellman will go through highlights the importance of transparency and inclusion of stakeholders throughout the process to successfully leverage Bellman's constituents to maintain the sustainability of the change.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) resolves a gap that was identified by Bellman. As the Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development, I have the agency to close the gap in alumni engagement. At present, this gap is preventing Bellman from leveraging more than 40,000 alumni to achieve Bellman's strategic goals and reap the benefits that come with graduates having a strong relationship with their alma mater. These benefits include financial contributions, community partnerships, and strategic positioning within the post-secondary sector (Barnard & Rensleigh, 2008). However, there are two limitations that have been acknowledged while developing the OIP.

One limitation is the hierarchal nature of Bellman's organizational structure, which is representative of other organizations in the same sector (Tomberg, 2013). Coupled with the conservative world view the organization operates under, there is an inherent conflict with the neo-liberal world view articulated by Bellman's Vision Statement [Bellman website, 2020]. This conflict is consistent with the state of the post-secondary sector, which has been facing fiscal pressures over the past few decades (Torres Bernal & Mille, 2013). The agent of change within the context of this OIP needs to reconcile these differences by leveraging the different leadership approaches used throughout the change process. These leadership approaches allow the agent of change to inspire and direct the constituents of Bellman toward the envisioned future state of alumni engagement, which will help the organization in reaching its objectives. These objectives

are shared by all constituents through the goals approved by Bellman Council and the diverse set of stakeholders it represents.

The second limitation is the ceiling in the resources the agent of change will be able to access in order to implement the change process. Michael (2014) shows that Bellman's financial picture is not uncommon among other players in the sector. Therefore, the two preferred solutions that have been chosen are those that have the least financial impact on the organization's budget. However, the solutions have also been chosen to provide a strong foundation that initiates the strengthening of Bellman's relationship with its alumni.

The agent of change will need to work diligently to lead the Alumni Engagement Committee and the rest of the organization toward the goal of evolving its alumni engagement efforts. The authentic, shared, and transformational leadership approaches, combined with the PDSA Model of implementing the action plan and supplemented by a communication strategy that recognizes the diversity of the stakeholder groups within the organization, will enable the agent of change to reach these goals. Meeting the milestones of the Action Plan and communicating clearly throughout the change process become clear priorities after the development of this OIP. There is also a need to recognize the potential for changes in the senior leadership team and the key influencers within the different stakeholder groups. Therefore, the social constructivism world view that is used throughout this OIP highlights the need to interact with and learn from these new stakeholders to reflect their needs and concerns as they relate to Bellman's change process (Atwater, 1996). Gehart's (2014) research confirms this understanding of the social constructivism view and its alignment with the approach needed for this OIP. In addition, investigating the impact that the Action Plan has on achieving the priorities identified

to build a stronger relationship with Bellman's graduates and how this eventually helps to meet the organization's strategic objectives can add value to existing research on the topic.

Leadership has always been an important part of my life as a community member and as a practitioner in the post-secondary sector. I perceive this doctoral degree as a journey that has helped me hone my understanding of leadership and enhance the evidence-based approach that I use to rally stakeholders when developing strategies and plans for engagement at Bellman. It has also helped me become a better scholarly writer, which includes an appreciation of academic rigor and how to link it to the context of a Problem of Practice. Finally, it has brought me closer to understanding the power of leadership to enact societal change, which is a skill that I look forward to using throughout my life and career.

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Appendix A: Analyzing Bellman's readiness for change (Cawsey et al., 2016)

Analyzing Bellman's readiness for change using Cawsey et al.'s organizational readiness themes (Cawsey et al., 2016)

Organizational change readiness themes	Analysis within Bellman context
Previous change experience of individuals within the organization	Lack of consultation contributes to a negative experience with change for stakeholders in Bellman. Negative experiences cause a sense of disillusionment, may result in a resistance to the change (Cawsey, et al., 2016)
Openness of the organization to change	Vision and Mission Statements' focusses on the use of innovative and unique methods to achieve their goals show Bellman's openness to change
Executive support for change	Academic Plan (Bellman's Strategic Plan) was approved by Bellman Council, which includes support for change in alumni engagement
Credible leadership and change champions for the change	Strategic priority of alumni engagement brought forward by Bellman's senior leadership team
Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that come with the change	Benefits of engaging graduates recognized through positive impact on fundraising,

Organizational change readiness themes	Analysis within Bellman context
Measures for change and accountability	industry partnerships and positive strategic positioning for the organization Bellman does not have these measures in place for the change process as it relates to alumni engagement. Must be addressed by agent of change

Appendix B: Organizational Change Readiness Factors (Armenakis et al., 1999)

Factors that ready an organization for change (Armenakis et al., 1999)

Readiness factors	Relevance to Bellman context
Need for change to be identified when it comes to the gap between the current state and the envisioned future state	Bellman's alumni cannot be leveraged to contribute their resources with the current relationship they have with their alma mater
Belief of the organization's constituents that the proposed change is the right change to make	Bellman Council, which represents all the stakeholders of Bellman, approved the changes to alumni engagement efforts
The need to bolster the confidence of the organization's constituents	Approval from the "lowerarchy" increases the likelihood of receiving the support needed to implement the change (Bolman & Deal, 2013).
Having support from key leadership individuals that people respect	Bellman Council is made up of multiple representatives who were elected by their peers to represent their interests
Addressing the "what's in it for me/us" question	Transformational leadership focuses on individualized consideration which facilitates

Readiness factors

Relevance to Bellman context

the conversation with Bellman's constituents

and how these changes meet their needs.

Appendix C: Comparison of Bellman's Alumni Engagement Solutions

Comparison of Bellman's Alumni Engagement Solutions

Solutions	Resources needed	Strengths/Benefits	Limitations/Drawbacks
Implementing a CRM to create an alumni network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bellman leadership support •Financial commitment from the organization to implement the CRM platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improved perception of organization's role as a facilitator for rebuilding alumni connections •Stronger sense of loyalty created within alumni base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fiscal commitments needed under the constraints that the organization is facing •Need for a consultation process and communication plan that builds awareness of the need for the CRM and incorporates the feedback of stakeholders before investing in the CRM
Creating an Alumni Engagement Committee under the Bellman Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support of Bellman Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enhances legitimacy of the alumni engagement change process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Restricted by the hierarchal nature of decision making that exists within the Bellman Council

Solutions	Resources needed	Strengths/Benefits	Limitations/Drawbacks
Building a communication plan that addresses the needs of Bellman's alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support of the Alumni Engagement Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increases capacity of resources available through the support of committee members •Targeted communication that clearly focuses on alumni increases engagement with their alma mater •Inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the development of the communication plan strengthens the quality of engagement the organization has with its graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The conflicting agendas of the stakeholders in the Alumni Engagement Committee may require management

Appendix D: Bellman’s Alumni Engagement Strategy Implementation

Bellman’s Alumni Engagement Strategy Implementation

Action	Goals	Timeline (from start of change implementation)	Metric of Success
Propose and gain support for alumni-engagement committee from Bellman’s leadership team	Leadership support for plan; positive indicator for organizational readiness; future support to keep changes sustainable	Short-term (six months)	Leadership team supporting committee formation at Bellman Council
Gain approval to initiate process of creating committee by submitting proposal to governance committee of Bellman Council	Setup structure for Alumni Engagement Committee; ensure governance best practices for committee; reinforce legitimacy of Bellman’s alumni engagement function	Short-term (six months)	Motion to form Alumni Engagement Committee passes at Bellman Council
Open consultation process within Bellman community to provide feedback on goals, governance, and activities of the Alumni Engagement Committee	Attain diverse feedback from across the organization; mitigate cynicism of new committee; garner long term recognition and acceptance of plan	Medium term (one year)	Feedback respondents are representative of Bellman’s stakeholder groups

Action	Goals	Timeline (from start of change implementation)	Metric of Success
	from all stakeholder groups		
Incorporate feedback and present final proposal for committee to gain approval from Bellman Council	Attain diverse feedback from across the organization; mitigate cynicism of new committee; garner long term recognition and acceptance of plan from all stakeholder groups	Medium term (one year)	Present a report to Bellman Council that receives approval for implementation
Recruit committee members that reflect relevance to alumni engagement goals and priorities	Attain diverse feedback from across the organization; mitigate cynicism of new committee; garner long term recognition and acceptance of plan from all stakeholder groups	Medium term (one year)	Form committee that includes Bellman's career services, advancement, marketing, and alumni team along with centralized alumni relations
Develop communication strategy that aligns needs of the organization with the expectations of alumni	Build collaborative alliance of stakeholders; ensure alumni centric nature of communication to graduates; strengthen	Long term (two to five years)	Successful release of communication strategy to Bellman Council

Action	Goals	Timeline (from start of change implementation)	Metric of Success
	satisfaction alumni have with Bellman		
Open consultation process to receive feedback from Bellman's community regarding communication strategy	Build collaborative alliance of stakeholders; ensure alumni centric nature of communication to graduates; strengthen satisfaction alumni have with Bellman	Long term (two to five years)	Deployment of digital feedback forms and in-person sessions
Create and present communication strategy to Bellman Council for feedback and approval	Build collaborative alliance of stakeholders; ensure alumni centric nature of communication to graduates; strengthen satisfaction alumni have with Bellman	Long term (two to five years)	Motion to approve strategy passes at Bellman Council

Appendix E: Communication Plan

Communication Plan

Stakeholder	Communication Channel(s)	Rationale	Timeline
Alumni	<p>Social media: creating a series of scheduled posts throughout the Faculty and University social media accounts along with regular updates from that engagement (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)</p> <p>Email: announcement of the stakeholder engagement related to the process of change, how they can participate and regular updates of that engagement</p> <p>Mail: letters to alumni to make the announcement that is used in the email</p>	<p>Starts building the relationship with alumni who are the target stakeholder group being engaged by the change</p> <p>Uses multiple channels to address the diversity of unique profiles that these alumni have (geographic location, age, access to technology, interests)</p> <p>-Provides a channel for engagement that informs the process for change and contributes to the continuous improvement process within the PDSA model.</p>	<p>Within the first year of approval of the communication plan</p>

Stakeholder	Communication Channel(s)	Rationale	Timeline
	E-newsletter: use Faculty's E-newsletter along with the University's E-newsletter		
Staff	Email: announcement of the stakeholder engagement related to the process of change, how they can participate, and regular updates of that engagement	Initiates the request for collaboration from staff who are already directly engaged with the Faculty on a day to day basis through their duties and responsibilities	Within the first six months of approval of the communication plan
	E-newsletter: Use Faculty's E-newsletter along with the University's E-newsletter	Increases the valued sense of transparency with this stakeholder group that is part of the culture of trust in the Faculty	
	Staff meetings: Announce change process along with regular updates during Faculty's monthly staff meeting	Leverages multiple in-person opportunities for engagement that allow for awareness to be built for the process of change and the creation of the alumni engagement strategy	

Stakeholder	Communication Channel(s)	Rationale	Timeline
	Faculty Council meetings: Announce change process along with regular updates during bi-monthly Council meetings		
Faculty members	Email: announcement of the stakeholder engagement related to the process of change, how they can participate, and regular updates of that engagement	Initiates the request for collaboration from faculty members who are already directly engaged with the Faculty on a day to day basis through their duties and responsibilities	Within the first six months of approval of the communication plan
	E-Newsletter: announcement of the stakeholder engagement related to the process of change, how they can participate, and regular updates of that engagement	Increases the valued sense of transparency with this stakeholder group that is part of the culture of trust in the Faculty	
	Departmental meetings: announce change process along with regular updates during	Leverages multiple in-person opportunities for engagement that allow for awareness to be built for the process of change and the creation of the alumni engagement strategy	

Stakeholder	Communication Channel(s)	Rationale	Timeline
	individual monthly departmental meetings		
	Faculty Council meetings: announce change process along with regular updates during bi-monthly Council meetings		
Students	Social media: creating a series of scheduled posts throughout the Faculty and University social media accounts along with regular updates of that engagement (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) Email: announcement of the stakeholder engagement related to the process of change, how they can participate and regular updates of that engagement	Focuses on digital channels to address the demographic that the students fall into and how digital communication falls into that profile.	Within the first year of approval of the communication plan

Stakeholder	Communication Channel(s)	Rationale	Timeline
	E-newsletter: Use Faculty's E-newsletter along with the University's E-newsletter Class-room announcements (digital)		
External Partners	Social media: creating a series of scheduled posts throughout the Faculty and University social media accounts along with regular updates from that engagement (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)	Starts building the relationship with alumni who are the target stakeholder group being engaged by the change Uses multiple channels to address the diversity of unique profiles that these alumni have (geographic location, age, access to technology, interests)	Within the first year of approval of the communication plan
	Email: announcement of the stakeholder engagement related to the process of change, how they can participate and regular updates of that engagement	Provides a channel for engagement that informs the process for change and contributes to the continuous improvement process within the PDSA model.	

Stakeholder	Communication Channel(s)	Rationale	Timeline
	Mail: letters to alumni to make the announcement that is used in the email		
	E-newsletter: use Faculty's E- newsletter along with the University's E-newsletter		
