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How to Drink from a Firehose: Systemic Supports for Polytechnic Chairs

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Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is centred on the Problem of Practice of the inadequate institutional supports for academic Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic (a pseudonym), a large public higher education institution in Western Canada. Chairs are pivotal for higher education institutions because they impact student, departmental, and institutional outcomes; however, the leadership development needs of Chairs are overlooked, and the limited training available for Chairs is primarily ad hoc, episodic, short-term, and self-guided. The objective of this OIP is to determine how Prairie Polytechnic can provide more effective systemic supports for Chairs. Postmodernism is used to explore the relationships between knowledge and positional power, and Critical Theory highlights the inequities Chairs face. Four potential solutions are explored and compared: increased release time from teaching, increased role clarity, Chair learning communities, and a Chair life cycle strategy. The Chair life cycle strategy is selected as the most feasible, efficacious, and ethical solution, and a change plan is detailed for how the strategy will be implemented at Prairie Polytechnic. The change plan is mapped to the stages of change from the ADKAR change model (awareness; desire; knowledge; ability; reinforcement) and guided by Adaptive Leadership behaviours. A communication plan identifies how collaborators will be engaged in the change process, and a monitoring and evaluation plan identifies how the change plan will be assessed. Successful implementation of the change plan will provide the systemic infrastructure needed to support academic leadership development at Prairie Polytechnic.

Keywords: Chairs, leadership development, polytechnic, systemic solutions

Executive Summary

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is centred on the Problem of Practice (PoP) of the inadequate institutional supports for academic Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic (a pseudonym), a large public higher education institution in Western Canada. Within this inquiry, I hold multiple intersecting roles as a Chair, subject matter expert, consultant, and scholar-practitioner tasked with recommending how to plan and implement systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic.

The work done by Chairs is complex and diverse, which creates a heavy workload with a wide range of competing and dissociated tasks with short timelines that result in high levels of pressure and stress (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Morris & Laipple, 2015). Up to 80% of administrative decisions are made at the department level by Chairs because the role is central to faculty development, curriculum development, culture change, policy development/enactment, and institutional goal attainment (Berdrow, 2010; Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Czech & Forward, 2010; Gmelch, 2015). The position of Chair is frequently the first formal leadership role taken on by faculty, but the skills Chairs gain as academics and faculty members are discrete from those needed in a leadership role (Pritchard, 2009; Sirkis, 2011).

Supports for Chairs may include leadership preparation, onboarding, ongoing professional development, coaching, mentoring, and succession planning (Rayburn et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2014; Wolverton et al., 2005). However, the literature is clear that Chairs receive very little formal learning or institutional support for the role (Aziz et al., 2005; Dopson et al., 2019; Gonaim, 2016; Gmelch, 2013), and the training they do receive tends to be non-systemic, episodic, opportunistic, ad-hoc, short-term, self-guided, and limited to on-the-job training

(Brinkley-Etzkorn & Lane, 2019; Hecht, 2004). While institutions typically allocate resources for faculty development and student success, the development needs of administrative faculty, specifically Chairs, are overlooked, causing a difficult and confusing transition into their new leadership roles (Gigliotti, 2021; Stanley & Algert, 2007). Given the importance and complexities of the role, this OIP explores how Prairie Polytechnic can provide systemic supports for Chairs.

The first chapter focuses on problem-delving with a micro-, meso-, and macro-level analysis of the PoP. The micro-level analysis outlines my positionality, the multiple roles I hold within Prairie Polytechnic, and how these roles influence my understanding of the PoP. Postmodernism is my chosen lens for exploring the relationships between knowledge and power with the PoP, and Critical Theory provides the rationale for why the status quo for Chairs is inequitable. I selected Adaptive Leadership as my leadership framework because of its alignment with the PoP and theoretical paradigms. The meso-level analysis includes a summary of the recent turbulent history of Prairie Polytechnic and how that volatility has impacted its Chairs. The macro-level analysis links trends at Prairie Polytechnic with neoliberalism, New Public Management, globalization, and equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization initiatives. Using Bolden et al.'s (2008) five dimensions of leadership, I summarize the literature on Chairs, including their history and importance, how their intersectional role involves competing priorities, the role tensions and emotional labour they face, and how their role is a form of leadership socialization. From this analysis, I conclude that Chairs' development needs are not met in general and specifically at Prairie Polytechnic, and my leadership-focused vision for change is for Chairs to be systemically supported throughout their role's life cycle.

The second chapter involves problem-framing, where I explore how Adaptive Leadership

and the ADKAR change model (awareness; desire; knowledge; ability; reinforcement) will be used to implement systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. I present four potential solutions to the PoP, none of which include the status quo because I argue that inadequate institutional supports for Chairs are inequitable and unsustainable. The four solutions are increased Chair downloads (i.e., increased release time from teaching), increased role clarity, Chair learning communities, and a Chair life cycle strategy. I score and rank each solution's feasibility, efficacy, and ethicality and identify that the Chair life cycle strategy offers the maximum benefits for minimum costs.

The last chapter focuses on problem-resolving through a comprehensive change plan framed by Adaptive Leadership behaviours and the phases of the ADKAR change model. I identify how the change plan's goals and process align with institutional priorities and how anticipated limitations and challenges can be mitigated. The communication plan identifies how and when collaborators will be engaged in the change process. The monitoring and evaluation plan identifies how the change plan will be assessed. Next steps and future considerations are described, and I reflect on the process of writing this OIP in a narrative epilogue.

Acknowledgements

Colonized minds hear “ours” and think of possession.

Decolonizing minds hear “ours” and feel connection.

–Josie Valadez Fraire, *We, Not Me* (Valadez Fraire, 2018, March 14)

I will begin this section by acknowledging that I live, learn, and work on Canadian Treaty territory; while the treaty number has been removed to maintain anonymity, these lands are traditional gathering places and meeting grounds for the Cree, Chippewa, Dene Tha’, Inuit, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Niitsitapi, and Siksika peoples. Colonialism, racism, white supremacy, misogyny, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and other bigotries continue to cause significant harm within our society. As a Canadian-born cis-gendered non-disabled Caucasian English-speaking employed settler in a heteronormative marriage, I commit to using the privileges inherent in my various identities to engage in Truth and Reconciliation and make the world we live in a safer, softer, and more equitable place.

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them.

And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?

Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,

(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)

Do I contradict myself?

Very well then, I contradict myself,

(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

–Walt Whitman, *I Celebrate Myself* (Whitman & Reynolds, 2005, p. 55).

While I cannot fully articulate the ocean of gratitude I have for my supportive family and friends, this section will give thanks and recognition to those who directly contributed to my success. Thank you to my husband, Mike, for bringing me chai lattes, mopping up my tears, listening to me whine about how much insomnia grad school has caused me, and encouraging me to start my doctorate in the first place. Without you, this educational journey would not have been possible. Thank you to my children, Charlotte and Francis, for your patience, understanding, and encouragement. I have tried to be an authentic role model for the two of you, and I hope that watching your mother ~~nearly drown~~ finish her doctorate has taught you not to be afraid of doing difficult things that take time, practice, and effort. Thank you to my parents, Heather and Stephen, and sister Felicity for being the loudest cheerleaders and butt-kickers in the prairies and supporting me as a lifelong learner. Thank you to my soul sisters Comrade Katie, Rachel, Jill, Brooke, Vickie, Beth, Eliese, and two Leanne Fs for being a circle of women who raise me up when I am down and are there to celebrate small and big milestones with me.

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Department chairs who don't know which way to turn are swivel chairs.

Those chairs who play instruments are musical chairs.

Those who overdress are upholstered chairs.

Those who kick back and do nothing are recliner chairs.

Those who collapse under pressure are folding chairs.

Those unsteady on their feet are rocking chairs.

Those who lazily go through the motions are lounge chairs.

Those who do not have standards are easy chairs.

Those who always complain are beach chairs.

Those who write devastating reports are electric chairs.

And those who dump on others are just plain stools.

—Walt Gmelch, *The Typology of a Department Chair*, (Gmelch, 2011, p. 3)

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List of Acronyms

ADKAR	Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement
CLCs	Chair Learning Communities
CREAM	Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate, and Monitorable performance indicators
EdD	Doctor of Education
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
FTA	Full-Time Appointment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NPM	New Public Management
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
OKRs	Objectives and Key Results
ORC	Organizational Readiness for Change
PD	Professional Development
PoP	Problem of Practice
QA/QI/PE	Quality Assurance, Quality Improvement, and Program Evaluation
RACI	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed
REB	Research Ethics Board
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals
VP	Vice President

Definitions

Chair: An academic leader of a discipline-specific department in a higher education institution who is accountable for their department's faculty and students and whose contract is a set length of time that may (or may not) be renewed (Gmelch, 2015; Normore & Brooks, 2014).

Core Chair Collaborators: The term collaborator is used instead of the word "stakeholder" because of its violent colonial roots (Government of British Columbia, 2023). At Prairie Polytechnic, core Chair collaborators include faculty, Chairs, Department Heads, Associate Dean Academics, and Teaching Services and Organizational Development department representatives.

Download: At Prairie Polytechnic, Chairs are positioned in the Collective Agreement as faculty with leadership downloads where the term "download" refers to time released from teaching for Chairs to accomplish their leadership duties (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022a).

Equity-Deserving Groups: Systemically marginalized and historically underserved people who have faced significant attitudinal, historical, social, or environmental barriers based on ability, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexuality, language, race, or ethnicity (Ahmed, 2012; Potts & Brown, 2015; Williams, 2013).

Polytechnic Institution: A higher education institution that offers advanced technical or vocational education through apprenticeship training, certificates, two-year diplomas, and applied bachelor's degrees (Polytechnics Canada, 2023).

Systemic supports for Chairs: Institution-wide processes that provide a framework for the strategy, structure, and systems (Gmelch, 2013) for the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning for Chairs.

Chapter 1: Problem Delving

Historically, higher education institutions have produced and disseminated knowledge for the common good; however, globalization, academic capitalism, and neoliberalism have sparked tremendous change in higher education by transforming knowledge into a good that can be imported and exported (Dobbins et al., 2011; Ward, 2012). I work within this system as a Chair at Prairie Polytechnic (a pseudonym), a large public higher education institution in Western Canada that offers apprenticeship training, certificates, two-year diplomas, and applied Bachelor of Technology degrees. I am entangled with and devoted to my work, which is why the Problem of Practice (PoP) is centered on inadequate institutional supports for Chairs.

There are many names for Chairs in the literature, including academic Chairs (Chetty, 2009), academic middle managers (Floyd, 2016), academic department heads (Saniel, 2013), academic leaders (Hoppe, 2003), academic administrators (Morris & Laipple, 2015), faculty Chairs (Young, 2020), and Chairmen (Wilson, 2001). By “Chair,” I mean an academic leader in a discipline-specific department within higher education who is accountable for its faculty and students and whose contract is a set length of time that may be renewed (Gmelch, 2015; Normore & Brooks, 2014). While supports for Chairs can include preparation, onboarding, ongoing professional development (PD), and succession planning, at Prairie Polytechnic, they are employed in an ad hoc and inconsistent manner that positions supports as voluntary “extras” rather than embedded within Chairs’ workloads. I define systemic supports as an institution-wide framework including the strategy, structure, and systems (Gmelch, 2013) related to the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning for Chairs.

There is a strategic imperative to provide systemic supports for Chairs. As departmental leaders, the number of Chairs is often larger than all other types of leaders combined in higher

education (Eddy et al., 2016; Filan, 1999). In overseeing faculty and students, Chairs directly impact their departments' learning and teaching outcomes (Buller, 2015; Kruse, 2020; Saniel, 2013). They also influence the socialization of new faculty and the ongoing motivation of long-term faculty (Czech & Forward, 2010). Chairs are vital in creating inclusive departmental cultures in alignment with institutional Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and decolonization efforts (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Quinn et al., 2007). A low-performing Chair can impact departmental funding and faculty development levels (Fairchild, 2013). Carroll and Wolverton (2004) and Gmelch (2015) contend that 80% of administrative decisions are made at the department level by Chairs, causing the role to influence their institution's overall effectiveness and productivity (Brinkley-Etz Korn & Lane, 2019).

In this chapter, I will summarize my positionality and describe the contextual and historical factors affecting the work done by Chairs. This organizational improvement plan (OIP) will integrate Postmodernism, Critical Theory, Adaptive Leadership, and the ADKAR change model (Awareness; Desire; Knowledge; Ability; Reinforcement) to structure how systemic supports for Chairs should be planned and implemented at Prairie Polytechnic.

Positionality and Lens Statement

Before embarking on a meso- and macro-level analysis of this PoP, I will first engage in a micro-level exploration to position myself within this inquiry. Curriculum scholar Maxine Greene's quip "I am what I am not yet" (Teachers College, 2001, ¶1) exemplifies how I have navigated my personal and professional roles as a jubilant lifelong learner as well as my alignment with Postmodernism (described in the next section). My formal learning can be summarized by a list of degrees: a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Education, Master of Education, and following the successful examination of this OIP, Doctor of Education (EdD).

This list reflects the many layers of privilege I have as a Canadian-born cis-gendered non-disabled Caucasian English-speaking employed settler in a heteronormative marriage, which I am actively coming to understand and harness for the betterment of others through Critical Theory (also detailed in the next section).

I have worked at Prairie Polytechnic for 19 years as a faculty member instructing high school- and college-level sciences. Five years ago, I became a Chair for a department that had experienced three Chairs in three years, a series of redundancies that had halved the department's size, and a devastating laboratory fire that required significant renovations. The underlying rationale for this PoP fits Ma et al.'s (2018) definition of a "felt difficulty" stemming from a "deep concern or dissatisfaction upon which the practitioner felt the urge to take action" (p. 17); my exasperation arose from the ad-hoc and inefficient supports I received as a new leader with a challenging portfolio. While I was promised and provided plenty of moral support from my immediate supervisor, the lack of systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic meant that my onboarding and training were a reactive and frustrating process dominated by trial and error.

During the entire course of this EdD, from drafting a statement of intent for my EdD application to writing this OIP, I have explored how Prairie Polytechnic can provide better supports for its Chairs. While beyond the scope of my formal role (i.e., a Chair), I became an informal change initiator (Deszca et al., 2020; Hall & Hord, 2015) by advocating for agency to my supervisors using networking and informal leadership tactics (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Kezar, 2018). I succeeded in having some agency allocated to my portfolio and became a consultant tasked with recommending how systemic supports for Chairs should be implemented at Prairie Polytechnic. In 2022, I conducted a literature review and led a needs analysis research project that identified the knowledge and skills that were most important and difficult for Chairs to learn

and determined the gaps and overlaps with existing supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. The needs analysis data collection methods (a survey, individual interviews, and focus groups) were approved by Prairie Polytechnic's Research Ethics Board (REB) in December 2021. The survey and interview questions are found in Appendix A. Western University's REB was also consulted; the needs analysis fell under Quality Assurance, Quality Improvement, and Program Evaluation (QA/QI/PE) using the Canadian Tri-Council (2022) policy guidelines. I submitted a QA/QI/PE application, which was also approved in December 2021. The recommendations in this OIP are grounded in my work as a scholar-practitioner and will be shared with various portfolios, including Prairie Polytechnic's Senior Leadership Council. These recommendations will be used to implement systemic supports for Chairs.

A scholar's philosophical worldview, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2018), is also what Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to as a paradigm; regardless of labelling, these frameworks illuminate underlying assumptions about the epistemology, ontology, and axiology of a phenomenon as well as the methodology through which one might explore it (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A researcher's chosen paradigm(s) should align with their research objectives and underlying assumptions, so I will now identify the theoretical paradigms that have framed this inquiry. Since educational leaders tend to rely more on experiential knowledge and personal views than ethical or philosophical theory to govern decision-making (Wood & Hilton, 2012), these paradigms should also align with my personal views of the world. The paradigmatic orientation that has guided this inquiry is twofold: Postmodernism is the lens through which I conceptualize this PoP, and Critical Theory is how I argue that the lack of supports for Chairs is inequitable. The lens that will guide my leadership approach to change, Adaptive Leadership, is

also congruent with these paradigms. The following section will include a discussion of how these frameworks relate to this PoP and align with one another.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism views language as a meaning-making process and tool for constructing and describing arbitrary realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Greenfield, 1980). I have used scare quotes and forward slashes to signal when I am questioning or playing with the meaning of a word or phrase. I have capitalized all paradigms, frameworks, and job titles as proper nouns to represent their significance to this inquiry, which is an intentional but respectful Postmodern departure from the OIP guidelines I am meant to follow. While asking questions implies a search for answers, Postmodernism does not accept singular answers because critical, complex questions are multifaceted and are intended to lead to yet more questions; it is for this reason that I use the term “inquiry” to re/present the processes described within this OIP. Throughout this chapter, I have used language and texts to explore how knowledge and power are re/produced in the realities Chairs experience at Prairie Polytechnic.

Postmodernism positions “realities” as constructed, relative, evolving, and pluralistic (Bloland, 1995; Nath, 2014; Willmott, 2005), which aligns with this inquiry because I assume that the status quo is variable and changeable. Embracing relativism and pluralism intentionally rejects the “tyranny of the binary” (Banerjea, 2002, p. 572) by replacing oppressive Euclidean dichotomies with complex spectra and fractals that allow for more profound engagement with and exploration of diverse human experiences (Davis & Sumara, 2005). By replacing the dualistic “or” with a pluralistic “and,” Postmodernism positions individuals and their organizations as being dynamic, complicated, and inconsistent (Allan et al., 2010; Loewenthal, 2003). As such, I assume that individuals learn and grow at work and that Chairs’ current selves

develop and change while in the role, which reflects the Postmodern dynamic process of “becoming” (Greenfield, 1980) instead of a positivist static notion of the self. Postmodern selves are affected by and affect their contexts (Loewenthal, 2003); this means that Chairs’ views of leadership and how they learn and perform the role dialectically influence and are influenced by their institutional contexts. Given this multitude of realities, I have used the pluralized word “supports” to describe what Chairs should receive from their institutions because individual Chairs have different needs, and there are many ways to address them through a multitude of potential supports.

Postmodernism focuses on the relationships between power and knowledge (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006; Ashton, 2003). In this inquiry, leadership skills are the knowledge in question, and an underlying assumption is that leadership skills empower Chairs to succeed more and suffer less in their roles. By focusing on leadership-as-knowledge, I position this PoP as an epistemic instead of an empirical concept (Eacott, 2013). However, since leadership knowledge is related to the experience of being a leader, Stein’s (2019) concept of onto-epistemology is also relevant because it demonstrates how ontology and epistemology “are intertwined in ways that shape the conditions of knowledge and existence” (p. 148). If organizational power is wielded by those controlling scarce resources (Morgan, 2006), the people who wield the most power reinforce the truth of the dominant narratives (Foster, 2004). This inquiry therefore focuses on how the institution scaffolds the social processes of becoming and being a Chair. I intend to disrupt the status quo by redistributing power through systemic supports for Chairs.

Critical Theory

While Postmodernism is a useful exploratory tool, Critical Theory offers stronger arguments for changing the status quo for human emancipation by exposing and resisting

hegemony, oppression, and exploitation (Asghar, 2013; Mumby, 2005; Willmott, 2005). Critical Theory highlights how higher education is stratified by “haves,” “have nots,” and what counts as “having” (Maton, 2005, p. 690). The academe’s scholarship practices perpetuate the violence of colonial modernity (Stein, 2019), so in this OIP, I will “legitimize[s] certain understandings of the world by speaking them into existence” (Rottmann, 2007, p. 56), whether I intend to or not. Meighan (2023) coined the term “colonialinguism” (p. 146) to describe how words covertly and overtly uphold imperial mindsets and inequitable practices. To avoid linguistic imperialism, I have prioritized decolonial terms (Ravishankar, 2020). For example, the ubiquitous word “stakeholder” has violent colonial roots because “settlers were given wooden stakes to claim their plot of land prior to any treaty or land negotiations with Indigenous Peoples” (Government of British Columbia, 2023, ¶15), so I will instead use “collaborators” to represent roles that are most intertwined with Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. Since terms like “minorities” and “equity-denied people” perpetuate a deficit-based narrative, I will use the phrase “equity-deserving groups” to advocate for systemically marginalized and historically underserved people facing significant attitudinal, historical, social, or environmental barriers (Ahmed, 2012; Potts & Brown, 2015; Settlege, 2011; Williams, 2013).

It is an un/settling notion that this EdD program and the OIP I have written are more likely to re/produce than disrupt colonial onto-epistemological norms. The question is not “Am I a colonizer?” because I am, nor is this admission illuminating or emancipatory. Furthermore, saying “we are all colonizers” implies that “none of us are settlers” in what Tuck and Yang (2012) identify as “settler moves to innocence” (p. 10) that alleviates guilt and ignores complicity. Critical Theory is useful for this inquiry by disrupting how dominant ideologies (i.e., white capitalist hetero-patriarchal Christian supremacies) reinforce the status quo where some

people (i.e., elite heterosexual non-disabled Caucasian Judeo-Christian English-speaking Western cis-gendered men) are privileged as leaders because they are assumed “to be more fit to govern others” (Liu, 2017, p. 351). Using Critical Theory, I can challenge the assumption that there is no need to support Chairs when certain exclusive groups already re/present the ideal or definitive version of them (Acker & Millerson, 2018).

Illuminating how power is distributed unequally and inequitably within organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2017) and higher education (Lumby, 2019) is the first step in preventing privileged people from making decisions for equity-deserving groups (Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). Since power relations are constructed, they can be transformed (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006; Asghar, 2013; Kezar, 2000). Freire (2018) linked education and oppression, where education can be a tool to subjugate others or a method of liberation, and it is the latter that relates to this PoP. Freire (2018) also emphasized how education can be used for individual growth and societal change; Critical Theory can be used to argue that there is a moral prerogative to provide adequate supports for Chairs (i.e., education on leadership skills) because they benefit individual Chairs and the systems they work within.

Adaptive Leadership

All leadership approaches are underpinned by values (Burnes et al., 2016). A chosen leadership model is not neutral or value-free, and rigour in the social sciences involves explicating these values (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). My chosen leadership framework is Adaptive Leadership, which involves “mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 11) and relates to my desire to mitigate systemic barriers for Chairs. Adaptive Leadership is aligned with Postmodernism in positioning leadership as a normative social act influenced by relational histories, cultural differences, and social networks (DeRue, 2011;

Heifetz, 1994). The model also positions learning as a complex dynamic process instead of a static product (DeRue, 2011). Leadership and authority are not the same thing (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017), because Adaptive Leadership positions leadership as a practice and not a job title (Heifetz et al., 2009). Leadership cannot be confined to one trait, act, or characteristic (Nelson & Squires, 2017), so Adaptive Leadership challenges the static notion of self that relates to the individual leader-as-hero archetype (Gronn, 2010; Heifetz, 1994). Through Critical Theory, I reject a focus on “heroic” individual leaders who “possess the right traits and exhibit the right behaviours” (Liu, 2017, p. 344) because this fails to examine the systems from which these privileged leaders have emerged (Nelson & Squires, 2017). Thus, Adaptive Leadership is a model that is more follower- than leader-centred (Northouse, 2019) by valuing knowledge and power invested into communities rather than individual leaders (Preece, 2016).

While the notion of “organizing” an “organization” can be playfully positioned as an oxymoron (Petrich, 1998, p. 23), Adaptive Leadership can be used to institutionalize continuous learning and encourage others to accept change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Jefferies, 2017; Nelson & Squires, 2017). Adaptation is defined as an opportunity to survive environmental changes (Urry et al., 2021), so Adaptive Leadership offers a means of increasing higher education institutions’ capacity to change during turbulent times (Nicolaidis & McCallum, 2013). Since stability and equilibrium are anathemas to adaptation and change (DeRue, 2011), Adaptive Leadership can be used to disrupt the status quo (Khan, 2017). However, the status quo is tenacious because it has evolved from successful solutions to past problems (Heifetz et al., 2009). Changing the status quo involves loss and conservation because a change initiative is unlikely to overhaul an entire system (Heifetz et al., 2009). Tensions arise when routinizing institutional activities and supplanting those same routines to change the status quo (Lewin &

Volberda, 2005). Biologically, evolution occurs after generations of adaptations (Urry et al., 2021), so Adaptive Leadership aims to build on the past rather than rejecting or ignoring it.

On Being Perfectly Imperfect

I have written this OIP using multiple identities (e.g., Chair, subject matter expert, consultant, and graduate student) that fall within Schein's (2009) definition of a scholar-practitioner: one who uses their professional role to create new knowledge to help their systems improve and evolve. Integrated roles with permeable boundaries can create tensions, dilemmas, and conflicts of interest (Wasserman & Kram, 2009). For example, my embeddedness within this PoP wields a double-edged sword where my conceptualization of "Chairness" risks myopia because my experiences are not necessarily the same as how others experience or perceive the role (Austin & Harkins, 2008; Mercer, 2007; Raven, 2016). There are no guarantees that insiders are more capable of understanding their contexts than those who appear or identify as outsiders (Tilley, 2016). Moreover, Postmodernism, Critical Theory, and Adaptive Leadership are imperfect models, as is any person or organization that employs them. For example, Postmodernism is criticized for its inherently paradoxical nature because the paradigm rejects all grand narratives including itself (Nath, 2014). Since power dynamics are relative and individually dependent, Critical Theory may not provide adequate guidance for navigating these contextually bound realities (Freundlieb, 2000). Adaptive Leadership is still in the early stages of theoretical development because it is primarily based on writings by Ronald Heifetz (Northouse, 2019). Identifying errors is an essential step toward learning (Argyris, 1994), and such weaknesses are expected because "any conceptual model is, of course, an ideal that cannot necessarily be realized" (Jäppinen, 2017, p. 463).

These are unresolvable tensions (Allan et al., 2010; Alvesson & Deetz, 2006), but a Postmodern solution (to itself) is to lean into the complexities and ambiguity that are inherent to

organizations (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). One purpose of “social science is not to get it right but to challenge guiding assumptions, fixed meanings and relations, and to reopen the formative capacity of human beings in relation to others and the world” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006, p. 23). Through praxis, scholar-practitioners can merge evidence-informed practices with their professional contexts (Wasserman & Kram, 2009). There are also tools to help navigate potential conflicts of interest. For example, REB processes helped me delineate how and what information was collected from whom during the needs analysis. Using a leadership framework and change model based on engagement with collaborators integrates a broader range of viewpoints, experiences, and lenses into the change process. Thus, my Postmodern approach is not to attempt to resolve this PoP in a positivist manner but to embrace the paradoxes of change while balancing my passion for action with the realities of my context (Deszca et al., 2020).

Organizational Context

Rottmann (2007) argues that an essential step to changing the status quo is to analyze the structural, systemic supports that uphold it. Since social, political, cultural, and economic factors affect how changes are planned and implemented, historical and organizational contexts should be considered when planning a change initiative (Kezar, 2018). A sole focus on an individual leader ignores systemic power dynamics and structural inequities that favour the success of some through the systemic oppression of others (Blackmore, 2013), and a simplistic search for contextually removed “best practices” obscures systemic barriers (Niesche, 2018). The following section will summarize the meso-institutional and macro-global level factors affecting Chairs (Austin & Jones, 2016).

Meso-Level Contextual Factors

Prairie Polytechnic has experienced many recent upheavals. The first structural budgetary deficit in the institution’s history was announced in 2015 and continues to date. The academic

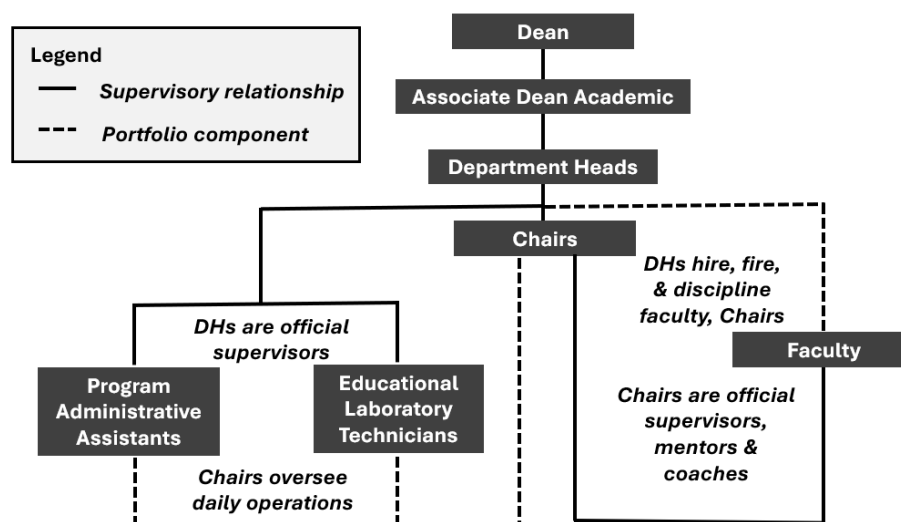
staff's Collective Agreement expired in 2019, and the new one was not ratified until 2022, when the contentious bargaining process was settled through voluntary mediation (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022a). The long-term President retired in 2019, just before the institution's strategic plan expired, and the new President did not begin until late 2020. The provincial government implemented the largest-ever cuts to post-secondary funding and introduced a new performance-based funding model just before the pandemic shut down on-campus operations in 2020. As a result, the institution cut approximately 250 jobs impacting several portfolios that support Chairs. In 2021, the Vice President (VP) Academic and Provost departed, and the VP portfolio was restructured, resulting in a series of interim leaders until two new VPs began in 2022. The leadership changeovers delayed the new institutional strategic plan, which was released in draft form in 2021 after some consultation with higher-level leaders and finalized in 2022 following broader engagement (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022b). The Board of Governors also released objectives and key results (OKRs) aligned with the new strategic plan to address the ongoing budgetary deficit (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022c). See Appendix B for more details on the new strategic plan and OKRs.

While all institutional work units have been affected by resource scarcity, this analysis will focus on the impacts on Chairs. Associate Chairs were mainly abolished as a cost savings measure, removing a primary support role for Chairs and the only means by which aspiring leaders among faculty could learn the role through apprenticeship. Chair numbers were reduced by combining similar programs and offering experienced Chairs voluntary departure packages with little opportunity for succession planning or cross-training. A new administrative position of Department Head, supervised by the Associate Dean Academic, was implemented above Chairs to merge budgets between programs. While Department Heads were meant to oversee

administrative tasks so the Chairs could focus on academic affairs, this new position has caused considerable role confusion. Chairs remain the official supervisors for faculty, but the non-unionized Department Heads now hire, fire, or discipline them. The rationale for this positioning was because Chairs and faculty belong to the same faculty association, and the institution determined that an out-of-scope employee should conduct formal discipline. Although Chairs work most directly with Administrative Assistants and Educational Laboratory Technicians, Department Heads became those roles' official supervisors. The outcome is a blurring of responsibilities between Chairs and Department Heads that complicates program-level decision-making (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Role Tensions between Department Heads and Chairs



Macro-Level Contextual Factors

The decreased government funding experienced by Prairie Polytechnic aligns with the macro-level impacts of neoliberalism and New Public Management (NPM), where institutions must balance constrained budgets by eliminating so-called inefficiencies (Busch, 2017; Olssen & Peters, 2005). Neoliberalism emerged in the late 1960s as an economic and political philosophy

idealizing a free market and consumer-centred capitalistic society (Ward, 2012) and was applied to the public sector via NPM through increased auditing and management of (Hall, 2013; Try & Radnor, 2007) and requiring a measurable return on investment for public services (Lorenz, 2012). Dwindling governmental higher education funding has been reported in Canada (Fisher et al., 2009; Shanahan & Jones, 2007) and globally (Busch, 2017; Ward, 2012). In Canada, tuition rates are regulated by provinces and territories, so funding cuts are expressed in locally unique ways across the nation (Deering & Sá, 2014). My context is Western Canada, where decreased levels of post-secondary funding have occurred in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba (Jeannotte, 2010; Joosse, 2010; Whiteley et al., 2008). Institutions are becoming increasingly reliant on private funding sources for revenue (Saunders, 2010), which has narrowed research foci (Giroux, 2002), changed academic priorities (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Whiteley et al., 2008), and increased outsourcing of services (Taylor, 2017).

To reduce costs and mitigate funding cuts, higher education institutions are hiring increasing numbers of adjunct, temporary, and sessional instructor appointments (Brownlee, 2015); hence, Prairie Polytechnic is not an outlier in implementing a hiring freeze for permanent salaried faculty. Another outcome of funding cuts is a reduced number of non-academic staff supporting faculty and students (McMurray, 2019). At Prairie Polytechnic, staffing reductions in the departments supporting Chairs (the departments of Teaching Services and Organizational Development) have caused leadership PD to be suspended or offered as self-paced online courses. Under NPM, enhanced auditing and reporting are implemented as quality assurance measures to ensure a return on investment for funding (Sporn, 2006), of which the new provincial performance-based funding model is a prime example (Dougherty & Natow, 2020). Chairs are pressured to increase key performance indicators (e.g., enrolment and graduation

rates) or risk program cancellation (Page, 2020). Global league tables are another example of comparisons that have increased institutions' pursuit of accreditation with professional or licensing bodies (Croucher & Lacy, 2020; Lorenz, 2012). At Prairie Polytechnic, programs are encouraged to achieve accreditation through Technology Accreditation Canada (2021), adding yet another responsibility for Chairs. International students, who are charged significantly higher tuition fees than domestic students (Marcucci, 2013), are seen as a strategic revenue source and are aggressively recruited (Cantwell, 2015). International students arrive with unique needs, and Chairs are often their first point of contact when seeking support (Lima, 2016). Thus, funding cuts have had a widespread impact on higher education and have significantly impacted Chairs.

Fiscal constraints paired with increased monitoring and auditing have changed the role of academic leaders from being first-among-peers to corporate-style managers (Lorenz, 2012). Academic leaders are now "expected to bridge the world of academe and business" (Giroux, 2002, p. 439) by treating the university like a corporation, which positions leaders as strategic directors, faculty as traditional workers, and students as customers (Saunders, 2010). The redefined relationships between academic leaders and the professionals they oversee are an ideological departure from shared governance for public welfare to academic freedom for autonomous professionals (Hogan & Trotter, 2013; Winter, 2009). In turning knowledge into capital, higher education now engages in academic capitalism (Croucher & Lacy, 2020), where the shifting demands of the free market are prioritized over the common good (Taylor, 2017).

Other macro-level factors Critical Theory highlights are the systemic barriers that perpetuate the hegemony of white, hetero-patriarchal, cisgender, ableist, and Western privilege (Isaac et al., 2010; Kezar, 2000; O'Connor et al., 2016). EDI and decolonization initiatives are now common in higher education and identified as policy priorities (Dua & Bhanji, 2017;

Tamtik & Guenter, 2019); Prairie Polytechnic (2021) has unveiled a new EDI strategy in alignment with these initiatives. However, the gap between policy-as-intended and policy-as-enacted is noted in the literature (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Cairney, 2016; Schein, 2017), particularly concerning EDI policies (Ahmed, 2007; Guo & Guo, 2017) where the presence of an EDI strategy or policy does not remove discrimination, racism, sexism, etc. from the institution (Dua & Bhanji, 2017). Henry et al. (2017) call for equity metrics using disaggregated, biographical data from equity-deserving groups to address these systemic barriers.

Executive changes, a new strategic plan, governmental funding cuts, an ongoing budgetary deficit, and the pandemic have dramatically impacted Prairie Polytechnic's Chairs. Global changes, including neoliberalism, NPM, academic capitalism, and EDI policy trends, have also affected Chairs' work. In the following section, I will describe this PoP and summarize the literature on Chairs to demonstrate how the lack of supports for Chairs' leadership development is a widespread phenomenon rather than limited to Prairie Polytechnic.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The PoP is the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. While Prairie Polytechnic allocates considerable resources for faculty development and student success, the development needs of its Chairs are overlooked. Although inadequate leadership development support is arguably true for all leadership roles at the institution, it is essential for Chairs because they are the largest group of leaders at Prairie Polytechnic (n=106 in 2023). With the abolishment of most Associate Chairs, Chairs are usually the first leadership position faculty members can achieve, whereas higher-level roles require prior formal leadership experience.

The skills needed by Chairs are discrete from those gained by academic faculty, and although voluntary leadership courses are available at Prairie Polytechnic, none are required for

the role. The training new Chairs receive at the institute is episodic, ad-hoc, and short-term. New Chairs must complete a training course that focuses on institutional policies and procedures; however, due to a lack of time release for PD, the new Chair may be unable to take the course for one or two years. The key roles supporting Chairs are their Department Head (i.e., immediate supervisor) and their school's Associate Dean Academic, but both roles can only provide limited support for any individual Chair because they supervise many employees. Due to recent downsizing, the Teaching Services and Organizational Development departments also have diminished capacity to support Chairs. Considering Chairs' importance, scope, and complexities, this inquiry asks: How can Prairie Polytechnic provide more effective systemic supports for Chairs given time and resource constraints?

Framing the Problem of Practice

The lack of systemic supports for Chairs is a broader phenomenon. I will use Bolden et al.'s (2008) five dimensions of leadership to summarize the literature regarding Chairs because of the framework's focus on educational leaders and the systems in which they operate.

Contextual Dimension: Chair History

Bolden et al.'s (2008) *contextual dimension* includes the larger historical, cultural, and political contexts that impact Chairs. As higher education institutions grew in size and complexity, additional leadership roles were needed (Kruse, 2020), and massification of higher education significantly increased the number of Chairs (Bellibaş et al., 2016). During higher education's rapid expansion in the 1960s, Chairs became essential to departmental-level administration (Gonaim, 2016), whereas previously, the academic role focused on relationships with faculty and students (Boyko & Jones, 2010). Now, however, the department is a fundamental operational locus for universities (Bryman, 2007), community colleges (Craig,

2005), and polytechnics (Hoekstra & Newton, 2017). By setting departmental agendas, Chairs are held accountable for department-level goals and institutional-level strategies (Chu, 2012; Gonaim, 2016). Chairs are also the starting place of the “academic leadership pipeline” (Hoppe, 2003, p. 3) for those aspiring for higher-level leadership roles (Strathe & Wilson, 2006).

Structural Dimension: Intersecting Roles and Competing Priorities

The *structural* dimension examines institutional organizational systems, including human resources and strategic planning (Bolden et al., 2008). Chairs must bridge the academic and operational realms of an institution (Foster, 2006; Paape et al., 2021) by acting as an “organizational fulcrum between faculty and senior administration” (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017, p. 97). Chairs are accountable to and for numerous competing roles, including faculty, staff, students, administrators, and accrediting bodies (Aziz et al., 2005; Griffith, 2006; Hecht, 2004). At Prairie Polytechnic, core Chair collaborators are faculty, Chairs, Department Heads, Associate Dean Academics, and representatives from the departments of Teaching Services and Organizational Development (these relationships between these roles and Chairs are summarized in Appendix C). Page (2011) places Chairs inside a trialectic between their department, institution, and students; similarly, both Floyd (2016) and Pritchard (2009) describe Chairs as being “caught in the middle” of administration, faculty, and students. Chairs are therefore expected to represent and pivot between the competing interests of the institution, students, and faculty (Ayers & Gonzales, 2020). Bellibaş et al. (2016) refer to this positioning as paradoxical because Chairs’ relatively high importance is saddled with low authority, autonomy, and agency.

Chairs face a heavy workload of competing but dissociated tasks with short timelines that cause their workdays to be fragmented and unpredictable (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017;

Berdrow, 2010; Boyko & Jones, 2010; Cipriano & Riccardi, 2013; Paape et al., 2021). The literature contains long lists of responsibilities (Bowman, 2002; Cramer, 2006; Settoon & Wyld, 2004; Stanley & Algert, 2007; Wolverton et al., 2005) that include faculty development (Czech & Forward, 2010), culture change (Bystydzienski et al., 2017), policy development and enactment (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004), institutional goal attainment (Cowley, 2018), scheduling (Thomas & Schuh, 2004), promotions and tenure (Hecht, 2004), and scholarship support (Cramer, 2006). Resource allocation and budgeting are identified as being especially daunting tasks due to lack of training or experience (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Settoon & Wyld, 2004), and the COVID-19 pandemic only increased the role's demands (Gigliotti, 2021; Kruse, 2020).

The role of Chair is often a temporary, short-term appointment with high turnover, and most Chairs return to being faculty members (Berdrow, 2010; Boyko & Jones, 2010; Bryman, 2007; Cowley, 2018; Smith & Stewart, 1999). While the length of terms for Chairs varies significantly (Boyko & Jones, 2010), the role's high turnover creates structural challenges when the scope is considered (Kezar, 2009; Paape et al., 2021); for example, Gmelch (2013) reports that of the 50,000 American Chairs, "almost one quarter will need to be replaced and developed each year" (p. 5). High turnover has also been echoed at Prairie Polytechnic, where there were job competitions for 20% of its Chairs in 2022 (Prairie Polytechnic, 2023a). The lack of institutional support for Chairs is partly related to the role's temporary nature (Gonaim, 2016); furthermore, these short-term appointments limit the power of Chairs within their institutions (Bryman, 2007; Cowley, 2018). One factor that compounds the level of turnover is an overall lack of succession planning in higher education (Buller, 2019; Hoppe, 2003; Rayburn et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2012; Wilson, 2016), where "planned continuity occurred only in the most innovative schools and in cases of isolated transitions" (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 165).

Personal Dimension: Role Tensions and Emotional Labour

The *personal dimension* examines leaders' knowledge, skills, and experiences (Bolden et al., 2008). At the individual level, Chairs face substantial levels of pressure and stress (Acker, 2012; Chu, 2012; Cowley, 2018; Gmelch, 2013). The high workload causes a significant "home invasion of work" (Page, 2011, p. 101) and extended workdays that interfere with Chairs' health, family, and social commitments (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017). In their study of 1500 American Deans, Associate Deans, and Chairs, Morris and Laipple (2015) found that 15% reported feeling burnout at least once a week, and 77% reported being less enthusiastic about their work since their appointment to the role. Burnout is a significant factor as to why most Chairs return to their roles as faculty members, thereby increasing the turnover rate in the position (Bradshaw, 2020; Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Hecht, 2004).

Transitioning from a faculty member to a Chair involves identity tensions (Acker, 2012; Hecht, 2004; Young, 2020). Emerging leaders must learn where their personal and professional identities intersect, converge, and clash (Carden & Callahan, 2007). Becoming a Chair can lead to isolation and loneliness as the new leader is no longer a peer with their colleagues (Cramer, 2006; Griffith, 2006). Gmelch (2015) identified significant transitions faced by new Chairs: from solitary academics to social administrators; from focused scholarship to fragmented tasks; from engaging in autonomous, private work to visible and accountable work; from writing manuscripts to memoranda; from professing knowledge to persuading others; from role stability to mobility. There is also the pressure to maintain stature within Chairs' original disciplines and publish research (Aggarwal et al., 2009). As described earlier in this chapter, there are also ontological role tensions arising from neoliberalism and NPM where Chairs are positioned as corporate-style managers, faculty as workers, and students as customers (Broucker & De Wit,

2016; Saunders, 2010) because this is a departure from traditional academic roles emphasizing shared governance and producing knowledge for the common good (Siekkinen et al., 2020).

The role tensions experienced by Chairs contribute to increased levels of emotional labour (Chu, 2012; Cowley, 2019; Gonzales & Rincones, 2013). Ayers and Gonzales (2020) identify four sources of emotional labour experienced by Chairs: historical and gendered notions of “good leadership”; tensions between representing faculty/peer and administrative priorities; academic versus administrative disciplinary norms; and their institution’s socio-political context. Some emotional labour arises when Chairs report obscuring or suppressing emotions other than positivity or objectivity (Ayers & Gonzales, 2020; Cowley, 2018; Czech & Forward, 2010). Increased emotional labour is also connected with the need for Chairs to maintain multiple identities as instructors, researchers, and managers (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004), where the inevitable conflicts between them are labelled as painful identity schisms and cognitive dissonance (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Schein, 2017; Winter, 2009).

Social Dimension: Socialization into Leadership

The *social dimension* includes the formal and informal networks of relationships within and beyond the institution and the social identity arising from shared purposes among those groups (Bolden et al., 2008). Chairs are frequently the first formal leadership role taken on by faculty (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004), where being a Chair is a typical entry point for faculty who are ambitious for higher-level leadership roles (Kruse, 2020; Pritchard, 2009). However, many aspiring Chairs do not fully understand the role and how it will impact them (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Aziz et al., 2005; Czech & Forward, 2010). A lack of role preparation is a primary factor that increases the steep learning curve for new Chairs (Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Wilson, 2001). Even after new Chairs begin the role, the scope and expectations for the position

often lack clarity (Berdrow, 2010). In this way, the process of becoming and being a Chair is a form of socialization into leadership (Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Smith & Stewart, 1999; Thomas & Schuh, 2004), so it is strategic to plan how this socialization should occur.

The social nature of the work done by Chairs is also where EDI issues can arise. Chairs are usually faculty promoted from within their department (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Kruse, 2020; Strathe & Wilson, 2006) and have often achieved tenure (Hoppe, 2003; Sirkis, 2011), particularly those who are Caucasian, male, and heteronormative (Acker, 2012; Baber, 2020; Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Cipriano & Riccardi, 2013; Czech & Forward, 2010; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Smith et al., 2012). Smith et al. (2017) identify unconscious race/gender biases in higher education, including who presents at conferences, what work counts towards tenure, accent racism, teaching evaluation biases, and promotion choices.

Developmental Dimension: Chairs' Development Needs

Most relevant to this PoP is the *developmental dimension*, which includes the changing needs of individuals, groups, and organizations (Bolden et al., 2008). A flawed assumption made in higher education is that a talented faculty member will make a good Chair (Gmelch, 2013; Smith et al., 2012; Wolverton et al., 2005), but the skills Chairs used to gain tenure as faculty are discrete from those needed in a leadership role (Acker, 2012; Cowley, 2018; Filan, 1999; Griffith, 2006). Faculty spend years training and being mentored into academia, and yet Chairs are expected to excel immediately (Gonaim, 2016; Morris & Laipple, 2015) with substantially less training and experience than senior administrators (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Strathe & Wilson, 2006; Whitsett, 2007). The literature is clear that Chairs receive little formal learning or institutional support for the role (Aziz et al., 2005; Brinkley-Etzkorn & Lane, 2019; Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Dopson et al., 2019; Floyd, 2016; Morris & Laipple, 2015; Smith & Stewart,

1999; Smith et al., 2012; Strathe & Wilson, 2006; Wolverton et al., 2005; Yost et al., 2018). Training for Chairs is often episodic, ad-hoc, short-term, self-guided, and limited to on-the-job training (Brinkley-Etzkorn & Lane, 2019; Gmelch, 2013; Hecht, 2004; Smith & Stewart, 1999). Floyd (2016) names the lack of systemic supports for Chairs as a “culture of institutional neglect” (p. 173) because the development needs of Chairs are overlooked (Gigliotti, 2021; Stanley & Algert, 2007; Wolverton et al., 2005). Supporting the development of Chairs is a worthwhile investment by anticipating and encouraging equitable growth opportunities for leadership in higher education (Berke et al., 2009; Kalargyrou & Woods, 2009).

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

Chairs’ work has expanded significantly since the role’s inception. The skills Chairs need are discrete from those gained by faculty achieving tenure, and institutions often overlook Chairs’ developmental needs. Chairs’ work is personally and systemically challenging because of enduring structural inequities. When applied to Chairs, Bolden et al.’s (2008) five dimensions of leadership identify a clear need for systemic supports for Chairs; this section will include questions that will guide this inquiry into how such supports can be implemented.

The status quo should be examined prior to any attempts to change it. The literature presented in this chapter and the needs analysis findings have shaped the following questions regarding the status quo of Chairs: What are the developmental needs of aspiring, new, and established Chairs? How do these needs affect the experience of being a Chair? How can supports for Chairs be structured to ease the transition and emotional work of being a Chair? What overlaps, gaps, and opportunities exist at Prairie Polytechnic to provide systemic supports for Chairs? How can Chairs’ heavy workloads be supported and managed? How can authority

and autonomy be given to Chairs to match their levels of responsibility? How can these changes be implemented, given extreme resource scarcity?

My leadership framework, Adaptive Leadership, can scaffold questions to inform how systemic supports will be planned and implemented (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Heifetz et al., 2009): What cultural and political forces shape the context from which this PoP emerges? How can the practices of adaptive organizations be applied to cultivate change at Prairie Polytechnic? How does the change plan consider the relationships of the individual (i.e., Chairs) within the system (i.e., Prairie Polytechnic)? How can diverse views be incorporated into the change process without silencing the voices of equity-deserving groups? What resistance is anticipated, and how can it be mitigated to decrease barriers to implementing the change initiative? How can tensions and conflicts be harnessed to effect change rather than disrupt the change process? How can an adaptive culture be fostered to institutionalize the changes?

One person (i.e., me) cannot undertake this inquiry, so some questions arise regarding the involvement of others: What expertise and systems exist within Prairie Polytechnic to help develop an appropriate support framework once the specific gaps have been identified? What experts exist on campus to help develop a sustainable implementation program that supports multiple ways of knowing to meet Chairs' diverse learning needs? What existing systems at the institute can be harnessed to communicate at various stages of the initiative? Which roles should be involved with the initiative's evaluation? How can collaborators be engaged without reproducing harmful colonial, hetero-patriarchal, and white supremacist power dynamics?

Other questions relate to my positionality within this inquiry: What opportunities and barriers arise from my roles as a Chair and consultant? How can I harness the institute's informal and formal power systems to plan and implement systemic supports for Chairs? Who are the

sponsors and champions I will need to align with to increase the chances of success? What risks are there to me personally and to the success of this inquiry as I intentionally challenge the institute's status quo? In what ways have I benefitted from the privileges I have gained through colonial hetero-patriarchal white supremacy (Breen, 2019), and how can I leverage these benefits to help others who do not have equal or equitable access to these privileges?

Finally, I have questions about the outcomes of the change plan: How will systemic supports for Chairs change their hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning at Prairie Polytechnic? How will these systemic supports impact and, ideally, improve the experiences of Chairs, faculty, and students, particularly those from equity-deserving groups? How will systemic supports for Chairs disrupt rather than perpetuate inequitable practices?

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

This PoP is related to leadership in topic (i.e., Chairs are leaders) and in process because leadership will be needed to implement systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. This inquiry incorporates epistemology (i.e., identifying what Chairs need to learn) and ontology (i.e., supporting the becoming and being a Chair) because interventions that ignore ontology are more likely to uphold colonial harms and less likely to enact meaningful change (Stein, 2019). The motivation underlying this inquiry is that I want Chairs to be supported throughout their role's life cycle. I want the system (i.e., Prairie Polytechnic) to support the individual (i.e., Chairs) just as these individuals support the system. I seek to lift the archetypal veil on what is needed for the role so all Chairs and those aspiring to be Chairs have equitable opportunities to succeed. I want social justice and ethics to guide the decision-making process for this inquiry.

The questions in the previous section create a foundation for my vision for change: to plan and implement systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. Individual approaches

are decontextualized (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014), and interventions on an individual level address the symptoms of a problem instead of its root causes (Stein, 2019). A systemic approach to leadership development is more effective than an individual- or departmental-level approach because it discards the assumption that the individual's transition into the role is the difficulty and identifies the environment itself as the core challenge (Falola et al., 2020; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Gonaim, 2016). In doing this, I reject a preoccupation with the self and the notion of heroic leadership (Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Gronn, 2010) or 'Great Man' leadership archetypes (Nelson & Squires, 2017) to address what Liu (2017) classifies as "ethical failures in contemporary organisations" (p. 347).

Given this inquiry's complexity, a systemic approach cannot be fully controlled by one person (i.e., me), which aligns with Rottmann's (2007) argument that organizational change cannot be enacted through an individual leader and Tuana's (2014) assertion that one person cannot make a community ethical. In using a systemic approach, the change plans should align with institutional values and processes (Kezar, 2018). My chosen change model, ADKAR, was employed by the institute to implement the new strategic plan (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022b), and the components of the change plan will align closely with institutional strategic imperatives and OKRs (Appendix B); Chapters 2 and 3 will describe this alignment further.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions are home to competing change initiatives that are impacted by micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors (Blaschke et al., 2014; Kezar, 2009). In this chapter, I have outlined my positionality, paradigmatic orientation, and leadership lens, and detailed how contextual, historical, and global factors impact this inquiry. The tensions faced by Chairs are exemplified in the metaphors and adjectives used to describe them in the literature: the hot seat

(Aggarwal et al., 2009); more than floating heads with absent hearts (Cowley, 2018); like going to a new planet (Foster, 2006); a lifeguard without a life jacket (Gonaim, 2016); fundamentalists, priests, martyrs, converts (Page, 2011); leader of the band (Settoon & Wyld, 2004); beggar, psychologist, mediator, maiden (Wilson, 2001). With these complexities in mind, I will use my leadership vision for change to frame this inquiry using Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Problem Framing

The higher education sector must continually renew itself in response to societal developments (Burkhardt, 2002); however, organizational change is complex and non-linear (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). In positioning change as a process instead of a product (Hall & Hord, 2015), leadership becomes one of many change drivers (Avolio, 2007; Nebiyu & Kassahun, 2021). Since no single change model is robust enough to account for this complexity (Errida & Lotfi, 2021), I selected Adaptive Leadership to structure my leadership behaviours and the ADKAR change model to address this PoP, which is the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. Systemic solutions are required to address the PoP: institution-wide processes that provide a strategic framework for Chairs' recruitment, hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning. In this chapter, I will integrate Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR into this inquiry, where both process and products will be prioritized. I will also analyze Prairie Polytechnic's organizational readiness for change and compare four solutions for feasibility, efficacy, and ethicality to identify the one I will use in the change plan in Chapter 3.

Leadership Approach to Change: Adaptive Leadership

The Adaptive Leadership model frames my leadership approach to change (Heifetz, 1994). Since a leadership approach should align with the context in which it will be applied (Bouchard, 2021), I selected Adaptive Leadership because empirical research has found the model to be effective in helping higher education institutions respond to changes, uncertainty, and complexity in diverse settings (Moen, 2017; Mukaram et al., 2021; Nebiyu & Kassahun, 2021; Randall, 2012; Randall & Coakley, 2007; Sunderman et al., 2020). I was also drawn to Adaptive Leadership because of the emphasis on leadership during a change process. Adaptive

Leadership includes five leadership behaviours that I will use in this inquiry: 1) getting on the balcony, 2) identifying an adaptive challenge, 3) involving collaborators, 4) creating a productive zone of disequilibrium, and 5) protecting leadership voices from below. In this section, I will describe how I will integrate these leadership behaviours in this inquiry and how they align with Postmodernism, Critical Theory, the ADKAR change model, and my organizational context.

Getting on the Balcony

In preparing for change, getting on the balcony is a metaphor for the leadership process of gaining a “distanced perspective needed to see what is really happening” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 12). However, in alignment with Postmodernism, leadership is viewed as endogenous to the environment in which it is performed and “not an objective reality or static feature of a person” (DeRue, 2011, p. 130). Therefore, when getting on the balcony, leaders should consider the self and the contexts in which the self exists (Heifetz et al., 2009).

The analysis of the self includes characterizing one’s scope, agency, and authority (Heifetz et al., 2009), which relates to Postmodern positioning where individuals and institutions have multiple and sometimes conflicting roles, identities, loyalties, and motivations (Heifetz et al., 2009; Stensaker, 2015). Within this inquiry, I am a Chair, subject matter expert, consultant, and scholar-practitioner tasked with recommending how systemic supports for Chairs will be planned and implemented at Prairie Polytechnic. As described in Chapter 1, these multiple roles are sources of opportunity and complexity, where my conceptualization of this PoP is a biased insider’s view and also one that is intimately familiar with the challenges facing Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. The highest agency I have related to the PoP is connected to my consultant role, where I am tasked with making recommendations; my level of agency is significantly less with my role of Chair since enacting my recommendations is far beyond the scope of that position.

The systemic analysis includes the structural implications that can enhance or constrain an organization's ability to change (Heifetz, 1994; Northouse, 2019). These factors include group norms, the organization's political landscape, and collaborators' formal and informal networks (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). This PoP cannot be separated from its context, nor should it be, which is why Chapter 1 had a rich description (Martínez et al., 2020) of meso- and macro-level factors impacting Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic and why Chapter 2 includes an assessment of organizational readiness for change.

Identifying an Adaptive Challenge

Adaptive Leadership can be used as a lens to diagnose the need for change. The model prioritizes adaptive challenges requiring multiple levels of analysis over technical challenges with straightforward definitions and solutions (Heifetz, 1994). A technical challenge is not an appropriate topic for a PoP, but an adaptive challenge is the very definition of one (Gillham et al., 2019). Adaptive challenges cannot be overcome by maintaining the status quo (Northouse, 2019). Furthermore, adaptive challenges are complex because they are grounded in contextual values, beliefs, and loyalties and can only be addressed by identifying which practices to conserve or discard and “inventing new ways that build from the best of the past” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 36).

By analyzing how the system should better support Chairs, this inquiry is a second-order change because it requires modifications to “organizational schemata” (Bartunek & Moch, 1987, p. 486) that guide how an institution interprets its environment, selects priorities, and allocates resources. Systemic supports for Chairs will require a complex, paradigmatic change beyond an incremental first-order change, but not an overarching transformative third-order change (Ben-

Eli, 2009; Tsoukas & Papoulias, 2005). As a second-order change, this inquiry involves a multidimensional, multi-level change that results in a new state of being (Levy, 1986).

Involving Collaborators

A central feature of Adaptive Leadership is the involvement of stakeholders (Heifetz, 1994); however, as explained in Chapter 1, I will be using the alternate term “collaborator” instead. While leadership is needed to provide direction and structure to a change initiative, Adaptive Leadership positions problem-solving as being accomplished by the people most directly impacted by a change (Northouse, 2019). The needs analysis used collaborators’ input to identify how to provide systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. Core Chair collaborators (whose relationships are outlined in Appendix C) are at the core of this inquiry, and enacting the change plan without them will be impossible. The involvement of collaborators within this inquiry is framed by social justice goals where the process will be as important as the products (Potts & Brown, 2015; Simpson, 2017).

Since organizations are collections of individuals (Errida & Lotfi, 2021) and given the intersectionality of Chairs described in Chapter 1, this inquiry must consider a range of roles. Various collaborator groups will have different levels of urgency regarding systemic supports for Chairs, so the change plan will need persuasive communication, active participation, and executive sponsorship (Armenakis et al., 1993; Hiatt, 2006). I have summarized core Chair collaborators, their relationship to Chairs, their role’s priorities, the scope of their loyalty, and potential losses from the change plan’s implementation in Table 1. There are divided loyalties depending on position type. The most common anticipated loss across these groups is resourcing because funds put towards one project or portfolio will be redirected from others, given the reduction in government funding and structural deficit. Time is another critical consideration, especially for understaffed support areas whose work may be impacted by the change plan.

While this inquiry's outcomes align with the role priorities of all collaborators, the conflicting formal loyalties and potential losses will be considered in the implementation, communication, and evaluation plans in Chapter 3.

Table 1

Collaborators' Relationships to Chairs, Priorities, Loyalties, and Losses

Collaborator Role	Relationship to Chairs	Role Priorities	Scope of Loyalty	Potential Losses
Instructors	Coached & mentored by Chairs	Student success	Program	Less resourcing
Chairs	Focus of this PoP	Student & faculty success	Program	Loss of autonomy, authority, and time
Department Heads	Supervise Chairs	Departmental operations	Department	Loss of autonomy, authority, and time
Associate Dean Academics	Supervise Department Heads	Academic strategy	School	Less resourcing, loss of time
Department of Organizational Development	Provide some Chair training	Employee performance	Institutional	Less resourcing, loss of time
Department of Teaching Services	Provide some Chair training	Academic performance	Institutional	Less resourcing, loss of time

Note. Adapted from *The practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world.* (p. 47), by R. A. Heifetz, M. Linsky, and A. Grashow, 2009, Harvard Business Press.

Creating a Productive Zone of Disequilibrium

Disrupting the status quo involves orchestrating conflict to create a productive zone of disequilibrium to assist the system and individuals to accept losses (Heifetz, 1994; McLaughlin, 2020). The productive zone of disequilibrium creates disturbances that allow leaders to identify

what is adaptable or expendable from the status quo (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). Adaptive Leadership positions the distress that arises from change as a consequence of strategic change management, not its purpose (Heifetz et al., 2009). Resistance to change is a form of self-preservation that stems from a fear of loss (Buller, 2015; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017) and can manifest as a diversion of attention or displacement of responsibility (Heifetz et al., 2009). Nevertheless, ambiguity from change is not always harmful and can be a source of hope and optimism during a change process (Brashers, 2001). The productive zone of disequilibrium empowers individuals to feel safe to confront changes in their roles, priorities, and values (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Northouse, 2019). It is, therefore, important to regulate the “heat” of the disequilibrium by increasing or decreasing tensions using nonconfrontational tactics such as clear instructions, ground rules, and conflict management practices (Northouse, 2019). The metaphorical temperature can be raised by asking tough questions and bringing conflicts to the surface and lowered by breaking the problem into parts and slowing down timelines (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). While there are anticipated benefits to providing systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic, Adaptive Leadership indicates that even positive or essential changes will face resistance (Heifetz et al., 2009), so the change plan requires resistance mitigation tactics.

Protecting Leadership Voices from Below

Adaptive Leadership aims to “protect leadership voices from below” (Northouse, 2019, p. 408) by creating a safe haven to protect and engage with voices of dissent and “minority perspectives” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 66). Adaptive spaces are more effective when leaders intentionally engage with and create safety for people who may be at the fringes, marginalized, or even viewed as deviants within an organization because the voices of dissent ask critical questions and raise issues that some would prefer to avoid (Heifetz et al., 2009; Northouse,

2019). Moving forward, when I refer to “protecting voices from below,” I mean the intentional consideration, safeguarding, and amplification of the views, experiences, and rights of the voices of equity-deserving groups and dissenting collaborators. Thus, the model has some social inclusivity built into it by aiming to protect the experiences of equity-deserving people (Jefferies, 2017). Adaptive Leadership was even found to increase participants’ openness to diverse perspectives and roles (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2013). However, one criticism of Adaptive Leadership is that it does not clearly articulate how to manifest the values of social justice, decolonization, and EDI (Northouse, 2019), so there is still a risk that this leadership model will lead to the unintentional marginalization of others and maintenance of oppressive structures.

Critical Theory complements Adaptive Leadership by providing guidance for protecting the voices of equity-deserving groups because there is an ethical prerogative for educational leaders to act as moral agents on social justice issues (Berkovich, 2014). The needs analysis protocol was approved by Prairie Polytechnic’s and Western University’s REBs to ensure the process minimized harm to participants, and these practices will continue throughout all phases of the change plan. Inclusive language was and will be used intentionally in all communications with others, and a range of quantitative and qualitative data was collected from them (Gainsburg, 2020; Wyrick, 2020). The final products of the change plan (described in Chapter 3) will be co-created with collaborators through a hermeneutic process of dialectic iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, and reanalysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). On the importance of process in decolonization work, Simpson (2017) asserts:

How we live, how we organize, how we engage the world - the process - not only frames the outcome, it is the transformation. How molds and then gives birth to the present. The how changes us. How is the theoretical intervention. (p. 19)

Thus, in prioritizing relationships with people and aligning with Prairie Polytechnic's (2021) EDI strategy, this inquiry has and will continue to use anti-oppressive and decolonial methodologies where the processes are as important as the products (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019; Dua & Bhanji, 2017; Potts & Brown, 2015).

Framework for Leading the Change Process: ADKAR

While Adaptive Leadership includes leadership behaviours for the change process, the model does not adequately identify how all the components fit together (Northouse, 2019). Since using multiple models within a change plan engages a more extensive set of tools and solutions (Deszca et al., 2020; Hall & Hord, 2015), employing a change framework to clarify the process through which Adaptive Leadership can be enacted is fruitful. I selected ADKAR because it was used to implement Prairie Polytechnic's (2022b) new strategic plan; in using the same model, I am aligning this inquiry with existing institutional change processes. ADKAR is also useful because there is empirical evidence that it can be used to implement changes to onboarding processes (Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017), consolidate academic programs (Pawl & Anderson, 2017), and identify change management barriers in publicly funded educational systems (Al-Alawi et al., 2019). Like Adaptive Leadership, ADKAR applies to individual and systemic change management because the model assumes that organizational change arises from collective individual changes (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). ADKAR also aligns with Adaptive Leadership by positioning change as an emotional process that can trigger anxiety, so change agents should anticipate rather than ignore resistance (Heifetz et al., 2009; Hiatt, 2006). While ADKAR does not directly refer to social justice, its emphasis on maintaining emotional safety can be combined with Adaptive Leadership's goal of protecting

leadership voices from below, the EDI strategy of my institution, and my emancipatory goals framed by Critical Theory.

ADKAR has three phases that will be used to structure the change plan: preparing for change, managing change, and reinforcing change (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Preparing for change involves selecting a change management strategy and executive sponsorship model (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Managing change is where change plans are developed with and enacted by stakeholders (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012), although I will be using the term “collaborators.” Finally, reinforcing change involves diagnosing gaps, managing resistance, implementing corrective actions, and celebrating successes (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). The model’s name is derived from a description of how individuals experience the change process: *A*wareness of the change, *D*esire for change, *K*nowledge of how to change, *A*bility to turn knowledge into action, and *R*einforcement of the change through collecting feedback and celebrating successes (Hiatt, 2006). In this section, I will outline how I will use ADKAR to structure this inquiry.

Awareness of the Need to Change

Awareness is a “person’s understanding of the nature of the change, why the change is being made, and the risk of not changing” (Hiatt, 2006, p. 15). Awareness is affected by the credibility of the sender of information about the change, potential misinformation, and the validity of the rationale for change (Hiatt, 2006). Awareness is built through effective communications and executive sponsorship to establish an urgency level needed by the change process and identify how the change aligns with the organization’s vision (Hiatt, 2006). Within this inquiry, I have already begun to build awareness by achieving leadership approval and have had some agency allocated to my portfolio as a consultant. The needs analysis was a core part of increasing individual and institutional awareness of the need to change concerning how Chairs

are supported at the institute because it asked for feedback on past, current, and future supports for Chairs. Further awareness will need to be built based on the solution implemented as part of the change plan.

Desire to Make the Change Happen

The next step is desire, which is an individual's willingness to engage in the change process (Hiatt, 2006). Building awareness of a change is not the same as creating a desire for it because an individual's level of desire is influenced by personal circumstances relating to the change and expectations regarding outcomes (Hiatt, 2006). Cultivating desire involves managing and mitigating resistance to change, which aligns with Adaptive Leadership's productive zone of disequilibrium. The question is not whether resistance to change will occur but how the change process can guide employees through this resistance (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Tactics to cultivate desire and decrease resistance include equipping managers to be change leaders, engaging collaborators in the change process, and aligning incentives to support the change (Hiatt, 2006). A fundamental part of this stage is a communication strategy, which clarifies core audiences, key messages, timing, and anticipated outcomes (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012); the communication strategy is detailed in Chapter 3.

Knowledge About How to Change

Knowledge relates to the behaviours, processes, tools, skills, and roles needed to implement a change (Hiatt, 2006). Knowledge is developed through education programs, one-on-one coaching, and online forums (Hiatt, 2006). It is crucial to evaluate levels of knowledge during and after the change to identify any skills gaps because this will assist with planning the transition (Hiatt, 2006). This stage is aligned with this inquiry in process and topic. The needs analysis centred on how knowledge and training can be better used to provide systemic supports

for Chairs. Ultimately, I aim to increase knowledge of behaviours, processes, tools, systems, and roles needed by Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. The potential solutions discussed later in this chapter will be intimately connected with this step.

Ability to Change

Knowledge about how to change does not always lead to the ability to change because this ability is only achieved by demonstrating the “capability to implement the change at the required performance levels” (Hiatt, 2006, p. 15). The ability to change can be supported through interactions with supervisors, access to subject matter experts, and hands-on training exercises (Hiatt, 2006). Adaptive Leadership effectively complements ADKAR by encouraging individual and systemic adaptations and changes to create learning organizations (Hall & Hord, 2015; Rupčić, 2022; Senge, 1994). Since supervisors are central to this stage, they will also require training on the new processes, tools, and roles before supporting their staff with the change process (Hiatt, 2006). Collaborators’ engagement and involvement are central to building the ability to change for this inquiry, so all stages of change must include instructors, their supervisors (Chairs), Chairs’ supervisors (Department Heads), and departments that provide supports for Chairs (the departments of Teaching Services and Organizational Development).

Reinforcement to Retain the Change

Reinforcement factors needed to sustain a change include recognition, rewards, and celebrations (Hiatt, 2006). Reinforcement also incorporates employee feedback, performance audits, and accountability systems (Hiatt, 2006), so this stage of the change process will include the monitoring and evaluation plan in Chapter 3. Reinforcement processes are already built into the new strategic plan, which identifies celebration and accountability as key institutional values (Appendix B). Executive sponsors can also share successes and anecdotal stories to provide

additional reinforcement (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Since this inquiry will collect feedback to identify areas for growth and celebration, this is another area where protecting voices from below should be considered to prevent dominant viewpoints, narratives, and experiences from overshadowing the voices of equity-deserving groups (Potts & Brown, 2015; Wilson, 2008). Table 2 summarizes how Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR align with the phases of change within the change plan and indicates where these details are located in this OIP.

Table 2

Aligning Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR to this inquiry

Phases of Change	Adaptive Leadership		ADKAR	OIP Change Plan Components
Preparing for Change	Getting on the Balcony	Protecting Leadership Voices from Below	Awareness of the Need to Change	Defining PoP & Organizational Context (Ch. 1)
	Identifying an Adaptive Challenge			Measure Organizational Readiness (Ch. 2)
Managing Change	Involving Collaborators	Protecting Leadership Voices from Below	Desire to Make the Change Happen Knowledge About How to Change	Communication Plan (Ch. 3)
	Creating a Productive Zone of Disequilibrium			Change Implementation Plan (Ch. 3)
Reinforcing Change	Continuing the Productive Zone of Disequilibrium	Protecting Leadership Voices from Below	Reinforcement to Retain the Change	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Ch. 3)

Organizational Readiness for Change

Organizational readiness for change (ORC) encompasses organizational members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding "the extent to which changes are needed, and the

organization's capacity to successfully make those changes" (Armenakis et al., 1993, p. 681). The change plan and organizational context significantly influence and are influenced by ORC (Holt et al., 2007). ORC can be quantified by using levels of readiness and urgency and classified using salient characteristics of change programs (Armenakis et al., 1993). Measuring ORC should be done in the preparing for change phase and is a component of getting on the balcony in Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR's awareness stage. In alignment with the Postmodern assumption that there are many contextually embedded ways of being and knowing, my analysis will include multiple lenses to analyze Prairie Polytechnic's readiness for change. Adaptive Leadership classifies organizational adaptability as a component of ORC with a diagnostic framework including six criteria: elephants in the room (i.e., how openly crises and bad news are discussed), shared responsibility, independent judgement, institutionalized reflection and continuous learning, and leadership capacity development (Heifetz et al., 2009). Likewise, ADKAR has measures for ORC, though the criteria primarily focus on the degree of anticipated resistance to change within the organization (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012).

Using criteria adapted from Adaptive Leadership, I have informally scored and summarized Prairie Polytechnic's levels of organizational adaptability in Table 3 using my institutional knowledge as well as my acknowledged and unconscious biases. This analysis identified some opportunities because some crises have been discussed openly (e.g., the structural deficit), and there is a general sense of shared responsibility, especially regarding financial sustainability. However, unionized leadership roles (i.e., Chairs) have more freedom and security to express independent judgement than out-of-scope leaders (e.g., Department Heads, Associate Dean Academics). The highest score of organized adaptability and, thus, an opportunity for this inquiry is from Prairie Polytechnic's culture of institutionalized reflection

and continuous improvement mindset. The lowest score is the crux of this inquiry because the institute's low levels of leadership capacity development underpin the rationale for this inquiry.

Table 3

Adaptive Leadership's Organizational Adaptability Levels

Adaptability Criteria	Key Questions	Adapted scoring: 1 (low); 2 (medium); 3 (high)
Elephants in the room	How quickly are crises identified and bad news discussed?	Score: 2. Overall medium levels. High for external crises (e.g., budgetary deficit) but low for internal localized crises.
Shared responsibility	Do people act for the betterment of the whole organization as opposed to protecting individual silos?	Score: 2. Overall medium levels. Some siloes exist but merged departmental budgets have increased resource sharing between groups.
Independent judgment	To what extent are people in your organization valued for their judgment and allowed to take risks?	Score: 2. Overall medium levels. High security for unionized roles (e.g., Chairs) but low for out-of-scope roles (e.g., Department Heads).
Institutionalized reflection and continuous learning	To what extent does the organization allocate time and resources for reflection and continuous learning?	Score: 3. High. Leaders must submit annual reflections and staff feedback is collected through biannual engagement surveys and quarterly town halls.
Leadership capacity development	To what extent are there opportunities for growth, advancement, and mentorship?	Score: 1. Reduced support staff and PD opportunities. Annual performance enhancement processes do not refer to succession planning.

Note. Adapted from *The practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world.* (p. 50-51), by R. A. Heifetz, M. Linsky, and A. Grashow, 2009, Harvard Business Press.

Again using my knowledge and experiences at Prairie Polytechnic, I adapted and informally used ADKAR's diagnostic criteria to identify an overall low level of ORC for Prairie Polytechnic (summarized in Table 4). ADKAR's criteria highlight different challenges than those examined using Adaptive Leadership, including negatively perceived historical changes, ongoing change fatigue, and resource scarcity. There is change fatigue at Prairie Polytechnic

resulting from the pandemic, portfolio changes in senior leadership, and a new strategic plan, which has caused an overall negative perception of recent changes. However, using a leadership framework and change model to structure the change plan can help anticipate and mitigate resistance to change (Buller, 2015; Enders, 2007; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Hiatt, 2006). Scarce resources are this inquiry's most significant overarching limitation, so a cost-effective and nimble solution will have the highest likelihood of success. The new strategic plan has created a shared vision for the organization that is useful for this inquiry, and executive leaders have been very clear on priorities, particularly regarding increasing enrollment and decreasing the deficit. Since the new strategic plan requires Prairie Polytechnic to shift current operations, the change plan is more likely to succeed if it is closely aligned with these processes (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022b).

Table 4

ADKAR's Organizational Readiness for Change Assessment

Key questions from ADKAR	Adapted Scoring: 1 (low/negative); 2 (medium/neutral); 3 (high/positive)
Do staff perceive past changes as positive or negative?	Score: 1. Change fatigue and turmoil at the institute have made staff perceive recent changes more negatively than positively.
What is the overall change capacity of the organization?	Score: 1. High levels of change fatigue from overwhelming amounts of change in the past five years that have impacted all staff.
Is there a shared organizational vision?	Score: 3. The new strategic plan and OKRs clearly outline a shared organizational vision.
Is the institutional culture responsive to change?	Score: 2. Innovation is a core institutional value, and the new strategic plan will contribute to a culture that embraces change.
What is the availability of resources and funds?	Score: 1. Resources and funding available are very low due to decreased government funding and the budgetary deficit.

Note. Adapted from *ADKAR: A model for change in business, government, and our community:*

How to implement successful change in our personal lives and professional careers (p. 91), by J.

M. Hiatt, 2006, Prosci Learning Center Publications.

Using criteria from Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR, I have identified lower overall levels of ORC at Prairie Polytechnic. Resource scarcity is the primary barrier, so my preferred solution must have maximum impact with minimal costs. However, ethical prerogatives are also motivating this inquiry, and I have argued that the status quo is neither desirable nor equitable for Chairs and needs to change. In the next section, I will evaluate and rank four systemic solutions for supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic.

Systemic Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

I have identified four solutions to address the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic and will evaluate each solution for feasibility, efficacy, and ethicality to select the one for the change plan in Chapter 3. Feasibility will be evaluated using change assessment measures from ADKAR, including resources required for implementation, the solution's complexity, and the degree of alignment with institutional priorities (Hiatt, 2006). Efficacy will be measured by the degree of impact on Chairs' heavy workloads, the role's ambiguity, and the steep learning curve new Chairs face. Since educational leaders should act as moral agents for social justice issues (Berkovich, 2014) and because Critical Theory guides this inquiry, efficacy will also consider the degree to which the solution protects voices from below (i.e., equity-deserving groups) using an Ethic of Care and an Ethic of Critique (Wood & Hilton, 2012). In alignment with this ethical prerogative, none of the solutions will recommend maintaining the status quo because I have positioned the lack of supports for Chairs as inequitable. One element I have excluded from these measures of feasibility and efficacy is my agency level over the change. As a consultant, I am tasked with performing the needs analysis and making recommendations to my leadership, so my agency is equally high in presenting four solutions and identifying the one that I deem to be the most feasible, efficacious, and ethical.

Solution 1: Increased Chair Downloads

At Prairie Polytechnic, Chairs are identified in the Collective Agreement as faculty with leadership downloads (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022a). The term “download” refers to time released from teaching for Chairs to perform their leadership role. The Chair download is unofficially capped at 50% Full-Time Appointment (FTA) hours, meaning 50% of Chairs’ time should be focused on leadership while maintaining 50% of an FTA faculty teaching load. The 50% cap is unofficial because it is a historical and cultural norm at Prairie Polytechnic but is not officially included in the Chair job description or Collective Agreement (Prairie Polytechnic, 2018, 2022a). The unofficial cap is unfair; for example, the needs analysis identified no consistent, transparent, or equitable mechanisms for assigning Chair downloads, so downloads allocated to Chairs vary significantly between programs, departments, and schools.

Since “time is a predator and a critical source of discomfort for department Chairs” (Gonaim, 2016, p. 282), one solution to this PoP is to decrease Chairs’ teaching hours by increasing Chairs’ downloads beyond the unofficial 50% cap. Increased release time from teaching is an evidence-informed solution to alleviating Chairs’ heavy workloads (Aggarwal et al., 2009; Filan, 1999; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Wolverson et al., 2005). This solution would directly address the role’s lack of time identified by needs analysis participants and the literature (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Aziz et al., 2005; Bellibaş et al., 2016; Carroll & Wolverson, 2004; Cipriano & Riccardi, 2013; Floyd, 2016; Gedlu, 2016; Gigliotti, 2021; Smith et al., 2012; Thomas & Schuh, 2004; Weaver et al., 2019). Another step would be to create a formula to determine Chair downloads between programs that considers how programs may differ in size, number of students, number of salaried and contract faculty, number of intakes per year, program length, credential type, and accreditation requirements. The length of time a Chair has been in

the role should also be considered, with new Chairs requiring the most substantial leadership downloads from teaching (Berdrow, 2010; Chu, 2012; Cramer, 2006; Floyd, 2016). This solution could be implemented relatively quickly once executive leadership has developed and approved a formula.

Larger downloads would increase Chairs' schedule flexibility by spending less time in the classroom and decrease their workloads by reducing marking and lesson planning. Higher release time is a systemic solution; depending on a Chair's context, priorities, and needs, larger downloads could increase their ability to attend training for leadership development (Aziz et al., 2005; Gmelch & Buller, 2015), conduct research (Bellibaş et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2012), enhance work-life balance (Carden & Callahan, 2007; Griffith, 2006; Page, 2011), support students (Griffith, 2006), mentor faculty (Gedlu, 2016; Hecht, 2004; Hoekstra & Newton, 2017), engage in reflection (Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Palmer et al., 2015; Wells & Herie, 2018), build professional networks (Sirkis, 2011), collaborate with others (Thomas & Schuh, 2004), and engage in innovation (Baber, 2020). While this solution would not impact Chairs' role ambiguity, it would increase the equitable distribution of resources by decreasing the inconsistent downloads between departments and schools. This solution is aligned with some institutional priorities and values (detailed in Appendix B) by contributing to an engaged staff culture through the intersection of work and learning. It could also increase opportunities for Chairs to contribute more effectively to institutional OKRs (Appendix B) by enhancing their relationships with students, faculty, and industry members. One flaw is that this solution does not address equity-deserving groups' barriers directly. However, the most significant drawback to this solution is its high cost. There were 106 Chairs in 2023, so decreasing their teaching loads

by 10%, for example, would require an additional 10-11 faculty FTAs, and Prairie Polytechnic's strained budget may be unable to support the change, however beneficial and ethical it may be.

Solution 2: Increased Role Clarity

Another potential solution to this PoP is to increase role clarity for Chairs. The needs analysis and literature review identified that many Chairs accept the role without a clear understanding of the extensive responsibilities required for the job (Czech & Forward, 2010; Gmelch, 2015; Sirkis, 2011; Thomas & Schuh, 2004; Wolverson et al., 2005; Young, 2020), and even after they begin the role, it often remains unclear what tasks fall within a Chair's portfolio (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Aziz et al., 2005; Boyko & Jones, 2010; Chetty, 2009; Floyd, 2016; Gonaim, 2016; Griffith, 2006; Hecht, 2004; Page, 2011; Stanley & Algert, 2007). Role ambiguity is a systemic problem that increases the scope of the Chairs' work (Bellibaş et al., 2016; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Normore & Brooks, 2014) and a potential institutional liability because "most community college legal issues stem from employment disputes" (Sirkis, 2011, p. 48). Role ambiguity is also connected with the wide range of tasks Chairs must manage (Gmelch & Buller, 2015). For example, a 30-page file in Prairie Polytechnic's intranet identified 1207 unique tasks grouped into 15 core responsibilities for Chairs (Prairie Polytechnic, 2016). The blurring of roles between Department Heads and Chairs is a local factor that further contributes to this role ambiguity and is manifested by significant discrepancies in what Chairs and Department Heads do in different departments or schools. The overlap in these two roles is written in the Collective Agreement and the Chair job description. The Department Head and Chair are identified as being both responsible for onboarding, allocating faculty to courses, notifying faculty of workload changes, and approving annual PD stipend requests from faculty (Prairie Polytechnic, 2018, 2022a).

Increasing role clarity would begin with analyzing Chairs' leadership responsibilities and reallocating tasks that others can perform (e.g., Department Heads, Administrative Assistants, and Educational Laboratory Technicians). This solution's most complicated component would be rectifying the role overlaps between Chairs and Department Heads by identifying which role best suits various tasks. The Chair and Department Head job descriptions would be compared and analyzed by core Chair collaborators and amended following this analysis. The process would employ a RACI matrix, which analyzes task distinctions between roles. RACI is an acronym that stands for Responsible (i.e., those who complete the task), Accountable (i.e., those who are the final approving authorities), Consulted (i.e., subject matter experts whose views are needed to complete the task), and Informed (i.e., those who require progress updates) (Jacka & Keller, 2009). The RACI matrix would also identify tasks that can be delegated to other support roles (e.g., Educational Laboratory Technicians, Administrative Assistants). Following the RACI analysis, the institute would have to engage in the potentially lengthy process of changing the job description and Collective Agreement.

This solution would increase Chairs and Department Heads' efficiency by eliminating redundant work. Increasing Chairs' role clarity can decrease the amount of personal time used to complete tasks (Griffith, 2006; Mitchell, 2004; Smith et al., 2012), increase Chairs' self-esteem within the context of fulfilling strategic goals (Carden & Callahan, 2007), and enable Chairs to identify skill gaps more effectively for PD (Berdrow, 2010). Enhanced role clarity would lower the steep learning curve for Chairs by clarifying the tasks that fall within their portfolios. There would be indirect protection of equity-deserving groups as extra tasks would no longer be delegated to those who do not know how to challenge or feel uncomfortable challenging whether those tasks fall within their role's scope (Umeh et al., 2023). This solution relates to the

institutional value of accountability and the strategic imperative of optimization and continuous improvement (Prairie Polytechnic, 2022b; Appendix B).

However, solving complex problems is time-consuming (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018), and the significant structural overlaps in the two roles will require time to resolve. Implementation would be slow because it would rely on engagement between portfolios with competing objectives (Raven, 2016); for example, academic work units are focused on instructional excellence and student success, whereas administrative areas must ensure the budget is balanced. This process may be challenging given the emotionally charged bargaining that delayed the ratification of the most recent Collective Agreement. The solution's implementation would also be lengthy because it would be included in the next round of collective bargaining, which is set to begin when the current agreement ends in 2024. While this solution does not require additional resourcing, the longer implementation time and the necessity of coordinating input from participants would increase the solution's overall costs.

Solution 3: Chair Learning Communities

An alternate solution is the formation of Chair Learning Communities (CLCs) because they are a strategic, systemic, and practical approach to leadership development (Ayers & Gonzales, 2020; Brinkley-Etz Korn & Lane, 2019; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011). CLCs fall under the umbrella of professional learning communities, also known as communities of practice, by engaging participants with shared purposes, goals, accountability, and experiences (Wenger, 1998). CLCs can be used to explore confidential and sensitive issues (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Hoppe, 2003), provide peer support (Morris & Laipple, 2015), share best practices (Kezar, 2009), implement institutional policies (Burke et al., 2015), and develop professional networks (Martin, 2022; Sirkis, 2011). Mentorship between Chairs is one subset of CLCs noted as being

especially effective in lowering the steep learning curve faced by new Chairs (Brown, 2001; Strathe & Wilson, 2006) by direct enculturation and socialization of faculty into leadership (Brinkley-Etz Korn & Lane, 2019; Gmelch, 2013; Morris & Laipple, 2015). Since on-the-job training is a traditional route for preparing for academic leaders (Strathe & Wilson, 2006), the use of CLCs is culturally aligned with this practice in general and specifically at Prairie Polytechnic (2022a), where the “maintenance and development of employment-related knowledge and skills is a responsibility shared by staff members and the Institute” (p. 27).

The first step in this solution would be determining whether the Teaching Services or Organizational Development departments would sponsor and lead the CLCs since the project could fit within either portfolio. Once established, confidentiality would be structured into the CLCs to build trust and rapport between participants when discussing sensitive issues or sharing confidential information (Burke et al., 2015). As workload is a consideration, the CLCs would be incorporated into the Chairs’ roles through a small download so that the CLCs do not become yet another task for Chairs to manage. New Chairs would be grouped in a cohort model to facilitate relationship-driven training (Gmelch, 2013) and provide intentional socialization into the role (Thomas & Schuh, 2004). New Chairs would also be paired with more experienced Chairs to provide mentorship. CLC participants could interact through in-person or virtual meetings, structured coffee hours, or online messaging groups (Ayers & Gonzales, 2020; Cooper & Pagotto, 2003). Annual or intermittent CLC orientations would enable Chairs to receive updates on changes affecting their portfolios (Brinkley-Etz Korn & Lane, 2019).

Once the CLC sponsor has been determined, this nimble solution would be implemented quickly by mirroring existing institutional learning community practices. This solution aligns with institutional values of collaboration and celebration, as well as the strategic imperative of

the intersection of work and learning and continuous improvement (Appendix B). Since the best CLCs include diverse people and experiences (Scanlan et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998), this solution would structure EDI considerations into supports for Chairs. While it does not directly impact role ambiguity, CLCs would be used to decrease the steep learning curve for new Chairs. The solution's primary limitations are the availability of support staff to assist with the CLCs and the cost because the proposed CLC format would increase Chairs' downloads. The download size would be another component that would take time to negotiate and should be proportional to the amount of time needed to participate in the CLCs.

Solution 4: Chair Life Cycle Strategy

The final solution is creating a life cycle strategy (Smith, 2004) to structure the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning of Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. This solution is based on the assumption that leadership development policies should consider leaders' entire life cycle (Dopson et al., 2019). Within higher education institutions, there is a lack of policies, procedures, and strategies for the hiring, ongoing training, and succession planning for Chairs, contributing to fragmented, ad hoc, and inconsistent training provided to them (Buller, 2019; Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Gmelch, 2015). At Prairie Polytechnic (2018, 2022a), aside from the Collective Agreement and the role's job description, there are no policies, procedures, or strategies for specifically supporting Chairs. While some departments provide supports for Chairs (i.e., the departments of Teaching Services and Organizational Development), their mandates are large, and the number of employees in these portfolios is small, so they are limited in the supports they can provide. Hiring policies are strategic because recruitment failures have high organizational costs regarding money, time, and morale (Ross et al., 2014). Inadequate onboarding increases the steep learning curve faced by new Chairs (Carlos

& Muralles, 2022; Gedlu, 2016) and is compounded by the general lack of leadership preparation and ongoing PD for Chairs (Brinkley-Etzkorn & Lane, 2019; Dopson et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2015; Wolverson et al., 2005). A lack of leadership succession is another pervasive problem for new Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic and can arise from oversight, neglect, and pressures from crisis management (Brown, 2001; Hargreaves, 2005; Hoppe, 2003).

The process would begin with identifying an executive sponsor to oversee the project (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). The sponsor would form an advisory committee with representatives from core Chair collaborators tasked with drafting the strategy. Evidence-informed practices from the literature would guide the contents of the strategy, and feedback would be gathered from these collaborators to ensure the strategy meets their needs and is aligned with institutional processes. Since recruitment is a critical strategic event for institutions (Ross et al., 2014), the committee should examine the institutional selection process for recruiting Chairs (Mitchell, 2004). The strategy would structure the onboarding process by including job expectations, evaluation criteria, institutional values, basic legal considerations, relevant regulations, and organizational norms (Bauer, 2010; Graybill et al., 2013). Ongoing PD opportunities for experienced Chairs would be identified using a skills- or competencies-based approach (Aziz et al., 2005; Paape et al., 2021; Palmer et al., 2015) with a specific focus on leadership and interpersonal skills (Bellibaş et al., 2016; Normore & Brooks, 2014; Sirkis, 2011; Vlachopoulos, 2021). Succession planning processes would structure planned and emergency transitions (Rayburn et al., 2016) and develop future Chairs intentionally and explicitly (Hargreaves, 2005; Palmer et al., 2015; Rayburn et al., 2016; Wilson, 2016).

Creating a Chair life cycle strategy would be a slow process requiring considerable work and engagement. However, the cost required is relatively low because it could be created and

implemented using existing resources and roles. The strategy would directly contribute to institutional strategic imperatives (Appendix B) by creating systemic infrastructure to streamline processes supporting the Chair life cycle. The largest source of complexity is the number of collaborators because the strategy would need involvement and approval from multiple leadership levels and work units. Confirming an executive sponsor is another component that would require time. The solution would have a significant impact on the steep learning curve for new Chairs but only indirect effects on reducing role ambiguity and Chairs' heavy workloads. While new Chairs would receive the most benefits, the strategy would also clarify the training needs of experienced Chairs. Of all the solutions, it has the highest level of EDI impact because women, sexual minorities, and racialized groups are underrepresented in academic leadership (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016), and more effective hiring practices and succession planning can decrease some barriers for them (Rayburn et al., 2016) and increase their feelings of inclusion (Ruiz, 2021).

Selecting a Solution for the Change Plan

I scored the merits of the four potential solutions (summarized in Table 5). The solutions have similar feasibility and efficacy levels, indicating that they are all reasonable, achievable, and effective in providing systemic supports for Chairs. Solution 1 (increased downloads) appears to have the highest feasibility level, but this is because each feasibility measure was evenly weighted in Table 5. The high costs of that solution constitute a significant barrier to its implementation, given the resource scarcity at Prairie Polytechnic. While Solution 2 (increased role clarity) has high efficacy, it would be a slow, complex, and political task to change job descriptions and the Collective Agreement considering the large number of collaborators. Solution 3 (CLCs) is nimble and relatively cost-effective, but it has lower levels of efficacy in

addressing the constraints Chairs face. Solution 4 (Chair life cycle strategy) has the most impact in terms of efficacy, although the scope and complexity of the solution impact its feasibility.

Table 5

Feasibility and Efficacy Scores for the Proposed Solutions

Comparison Criteria		Scoring: 1 = low feasibility/efficacy; 2 = indirect or medium feasibility/efficacy; 3 = high feasibility/efficacy			
		Solution 1 Increased Downloads	Solution 2 Increased Role Clarity	Solution 3 Learning Communities	Solution 4 Life Cycle Strategy
Feasibility	Implementation time	3	1	2	1
	Resources required	1	2	1	3
	Solution complexity	3	1	3	1
	Institutional alignment	2	1	2	3
Efficacy	Heavy workload	3	2	2	2
	Role ambiguity	1	3	1	2
	Steep learning curve	2	2	2	3
	Protects voices from below	2	2	2	3
Scoring	Feasibility score	9	5	8	8
	Efficacy score	8	9	7	10
	Total score	17	14	15	18
	Average score	2.1	1.8	1.9	2.3

Since the four solutions have relatively similar levels of feasibility and efficacy, it is through an ethical analysis that I have determined the best solution. Wood and Hilton (2012) encourage leaders to employ multiple ethical lenses when considering alternative courses of action while decision-making. The Ethic of Care framework is closely aligned with this inquiry because it emphasizes the importance of employee skills development in achieving educational and career goals (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). This lens uses a consequentialist approach that prioritizes individual actualization to improve their circumstances (Wood & Hilton, 2012). The Ethic of Critique, which is framed by Critical Theory, aligns with my argument that the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs are inequitable (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). The

goal of this lens is to disrupt inequitable social hierarchies, including race, class, and gender (Wood & Hilton, 2012) by arguing that emancipating marginalized individuals is beneficial to organizations in the short term and society in the long term (Berkovich, 2014). In applying the Ethics of Care and Critique, Solution 4 has emerged as the best solution because it has the most significant impact on decreasing barriers faced by Chairs and equity-deserving groups.

Conclusion

Leadership is an emotional and iterative activity that involves asking questions, offering interpretations, and taking action (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Heifetz et al., 2009). Higher education institutions are too complex to be easily defined, as are their leadership practices, and uncertainty is pervasive (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). While it is trite to say that change is complicated, it is, and ignoring such complexity increases the chance that any particular change initiative will fail (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Moreover, change cannot be enacted using simple, linear processes (Deszca et al., 2020). In the past two chapters, I have used Postmodernism to illuminate how power is connected with knowledge (Nath, 2014), Critical Theory to underpin the necessity of change (Asghar, 2013), Adaptive Leadership to outline how to navigate these complexities (Northouse, 2019), and ADKAR to guide how to effect change (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Deciding which tensions to (try to) resolve and which to (try to) live with is at the heart of this inquiry. I have selected the Chair life cycle strategy as my preferred solution because Prairie Polytechnic will benefit in many ways by creating a sustainable and equitable pathway for leadership development (Kruse, 2020). The next chapter will include how the strategy should be planned, implemented, communicated, monitored, and evaluated to provide systemic supports for Chairs.

Chapter 3: Problem Re/Solving

The PoP is the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. Providing ongoing professional development for Chairs is complex because no uniform, one-size-fits-all approach exists to their role preparation, training, and succession planning (Cesário & Chambel, 2019; Paape et al., 2021). Individual institutional contexts should be considered when supporting the Chair life cycle (Saniel, 2013), and a systemic approach is more effective for leadership development (Gmelch & Buller, 2015). I have multiple roles within this inquiry as a Chair, subject matter expert, and consultant tasked with recommending how to implement systemic supports for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. The change plan includes creating and implementing a Chair life cycle strategy to provide the leadership development infrastructure missing from Prairie Polytechnic. In this chapter, I will outline the implementation plan, communication plan, monitoring and evaluation plan, future steps, and narrative epilogue.

Change Implementation Plan for a Chair Life Cycle Strategy

The change plan identifies how to create a Chair life cycle strategy for the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic. This section will include the change plan's institutional alignment, how the change plan phases will rely on Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR, short-, medium-, and long-term goals, and mitigation strategies for anticipated challenges.

Institutional Alignment

I have aligned the change plan with Prairie Polytechnic's context and strategic priorities to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes (Bolman & Deal, 2017), especially given the resource scarcity and turmoil identified in Chapter 1 and the lower levels of organizational readiness for change determined in Chapter 2. The Chair life cycle strategy will support Prairie

Polytechnic's (2022c; Appendix B) outcomes and key results (OKRs). The strategy will contribute to the student experience as Chairs are their primary institutional leadership contact (Wells & Herie, 2018). Effective recruitment and onboarding of Chairs will help build an engaged staff culture because selecting the right people for the role is critical to Chairs' success and job satisfaction (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Hoppe, 2003; Mitchell, 2004; Normore & Brooks, 2014). Strategic onboarding decreases the steep learning curve for new Chairs (Brown, 2001) and is correlated with increased levels of employee socialization and satisfaction (Meyer & Bartels, 2017). Effective onboarding can counteract some uncertainty during a financial crisis (Howley, 2020) and is therefore related to the OKR of financial sustainability. The EDI-informed process of creating and implementing the strategy (described in the next section) aligns with the environmental, social, and governance OKR.

The change plan also contributes to institutional strategic imperatives (Appendix B). It emphasizes that Prairie Polytechnic's Chairs are at the intersection of work and learning with respect to their socialization and skill development. Leadership training programs can increase leadership capacity, enhance succession planning, enculturate leaders to organizational norms, and improve employee retention (Carden & Callahan, 2007; Cloutier et al., 2015; Desmarais & Miller, 2007). The plan uses adaptability and emphasizes social and financial sustainability by eliminating support overlaps. Gmelch (2015) argues that the "lines of succession for Chairs are unclear, and Chairs' relatively high turnover rate suggests that we do not groom our leaders in ways that promote longevity, success, and effectiveness" (p. 19). The strategy will also put innovation to work using a systemic approach to improve the experiences of Chairs.

Another alignment involves the core values listed in Prairie Polytechnic's (2022b; Appendix B) new strategic plan. The change plan will rely on *creativity* and assumes a

continuous improvement mindset. The strategy will be created through *collaboration* to enhance individual and collective accountability for leadership development at the institute. The change plan advances *respect* because it will contribute to an equitable, diverse, and inclusive culture. It will also enhance *celebration* by recognizing accomplishments and successes.

Change Plan Phases

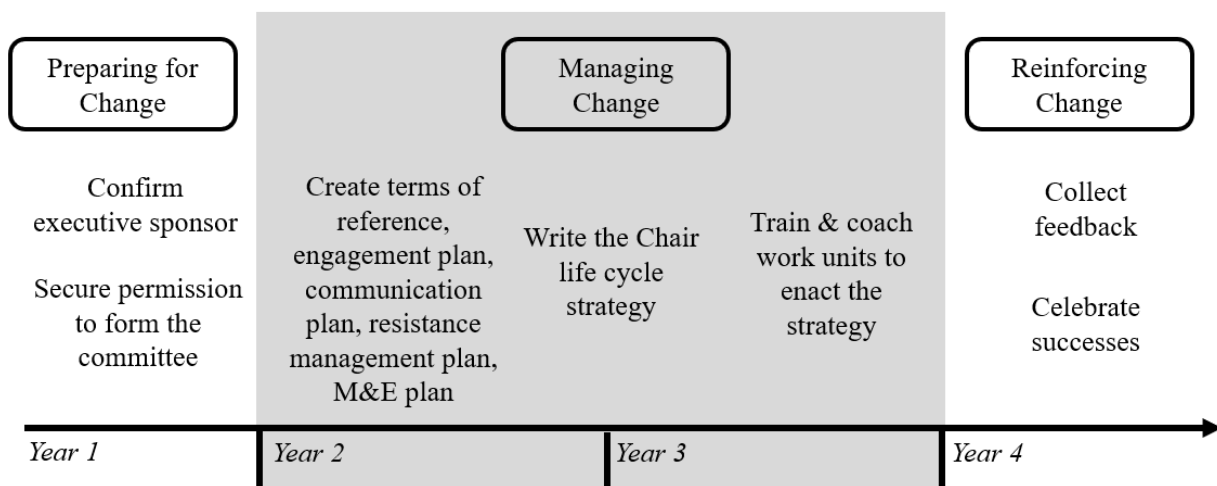
I have crafted the change plan by integrating ADKAR's three phases of change (preparing; managing; reinforcing) (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012), Adaptive Leadership's leadership behaviours (Heifetz et al., 2009), and the ADKAR change model's steps (Hiatt, 2006). Preparing for change will include getting on the balcony, identifying an adaptive challenge (Adaptive Leadership), and creating awareness of the need to change (ADKAR). Managing change will involve engaging with collaborators to create a productive zone of disequilibrium (Adaptive Leadership), facilitate a desire to make the change happen, and build knowledge and ability about how to change (ADKAR). Reinforcing change will include continuing the productive zone of disequilibrium (Adaptive Leadership) and reinforcing the change (ADKAR). Protecting voices from below (Adaptive Leadership) will be part of all stages because of this inquiry's social justice goals. This integration was summarized in Table 2 in the previous chapter.

In Postmodernism and Critical Theory, the process is as or more important than the products of a project, particularly when engaging in EDI-informed practices (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019; Foster, 2004; Potts & Brown, 2015; Tilley, 2016); therefore, the change plan will take four years to allow adequate time for the process to unfold iteratively. While the strategy is being crafted, its draft will become a "working document," as positioned by Ahmed (2012): "A working document is one that multiple actors work over. To work over a document is to become involved in its political life. The body of the document becomes part of the body of the institution" (p. 93). Thus, this change plan is a political act whose purpose is to

disrupt inequitable power dynamics (Ahmed, 2012). Figure 2 summarizes the change plan's stages, key deliverables, and timeline. In the following sections, I will outline the change plan's contents.

Figure 2

Change Plan Stages, Timeline, and Deliverables



Preparing for Change. This stage will involve receiving permission and sponsorship for creating and implementing the Chair life cycle strategy. Preparing for change includes three Adaptive Leadership behaviours: getting on the balcony, identifying an adaptive challenge, and protecting voices from below. Getting on the balcony and identifying the adaptive challenge began with the needs analysis in 2022, which structured protecting voices from below into the REB-approved data collection process and a literature review, which identified evidence-informed practices that can be incorporated into the strategy. Additional data regarding the status quo may be required, as there may be changes relevant to this inquiry between the needs analysis data collected in 2022 and the implementation of this plan in late 2023; these data will be gathered using iterative rounds of feedback from collaborators.

In ADKAR, preparing for change includes building awareness of the need to change among collaborators, identifying the scope of the change, and assessing the organization's readiness for change (detailed in Chapter 2). Executive sponsorship is required (Hiatt, 2006; Neumann et al., 2018), particularly for EDI-related initiatives (Williams, 2013), so an early step in building awareness will be to present the needs analysis findings to the institute's Senior Leadership Council, whose members are the President, VPs, Directors, and Deans. The Senior Leadership Council will give permission to proceed and confirm the leadership roles and work units involved. As the change initiator and in my role as a consultant, I have built awareness of the need to change, but since my hierarchical power is low in my role as a Chair, I will need to appeal to higher-level leaders to engage in this step. The ideal executive sponsor would be the VP Academic because the work done by Chairs is within their portfolio. While informal support has already been secured from some members of Prairie Polytechnic's leadership, it will likely take a year to secure official permission and confirm the executive sponsor given the Senior Leadership Council's quarterly meeting schedule and competing demands.

Managing Change. This stage involves developing and implementing the Chair life cycle strategy and will be the most prolonged and complex component of the change plan (two of the four years). During the managing change stage, Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009) recommends engaging with collaborators to create a productive zone of disequilibrium that protects the voices from below to achieve the change plan's vision: a Chair life cycle strategy. The executive sponsor will oversee forming a committee to create the strategy. Ahmed (2012) positions committees as "official space[s] for conversation" (p. 122) for formal and informal discussions that can disrupt or perpetuate inequities. To unsettle colonial, hetero-patriarchal, and white supremacist power relations, the committee will use a consensus-oriented group decision-

making model led by a facilitator rather than a formal committee leader (Hartnett, 2011; described further in Appendix D).

The committee will first select the facilitator, who will likely be from the Teaching Services or Organizational Development departments. Participative and consultive engagement increases ownership and overall success of a change initiative (Kusek & Rist, 2004), so the committee will include representatives from core Chair collaborator groups identified in Chapter 2 and Appendix C. All committee members will be volunteers rather than appointed or elected to prevent coercion for participating. The facilitator will prepare meeting agendas, and the meeting minutes will be a rotating task among committee members. While the executive sponsor will invite the initial membership, the committee will use an iterative EDI-informed process to recruit other participants, particularly those from equity-deserving groups. I will sit on this committee because of my intersecting roles as a change agent, Chair, consultant, and scholar-practitioner. The committee will provide monthly updates to the executive sponsor, who will report on its progress to the Senior Leadership Council.

Since group-based decision-making is time-consuming (Xiao et al., 2021), the consensus-oriented group decision-making model (Hartnett, 2011; Appendix D) is the primary reason for the two-year timeline of this step. The first year will be used to determine the facilitator and co-create terms of reference that identify how the committee will write the Chair life cycle strategy. These terms will outline how the committee's process and products will align with Prairie Polytechnic's Indigenous (2019), mental health and well-being (2020), EDI (2021), and international education (2022d) strategies to protect the experiences and amplify the voices of people from equity-deserving groups. The terms will also describe how the committee will recruit representatives and create safety for dissenting voices (Heifetz et al., 2009). ADKAR

recommends managing change by increasing the desire to make change happen through collaborator involvement (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Another early deliverable will be an engagement plan, which will determine how and when different groups will be engaged while writing the strategy. A communication plan, whose suggested contents are in the next section, will also be integral to this process. A resistance management plan, based on iterative feedback rounds, will be crafted to mitigate challenges and barriers. An ethical monitoring and evaluation plan will track and measure the project's success (and is described later in this chapter). These plans will be presented to and approved by the Senior Leadership Council.

During the second year of this stage, a productive zone of disequilibrium will be used to establish the specific components of the strategy (e.g., recruitment, hiring, onboarding, ongoing training, and succession planning). The strategy will be built from evidence-informed practices from the literature, findings from the needs analysis, and ongoing feedback. This process will be iterative instead of linear; the committee will seek input and provide updates for more feedback from core Chair collaborators. The implementation costs of the strategy will also be identified and prioritized in a budget. Once the strategy has been developed, it will take six months for the committee to provide training to build new skills or behaviors for roles supporting the change process (Hall & Hord, 2015; Hiatt, 2006). Detailed information about how to use the new processes, systems, and tools will clarify any new roles or responsibilities associated with the change (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Coaching and feedback will also be employed iteratively to ensure the new processes are responsive to evolving needs (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012).

Reinforcing Change. Adaptive Leadership's stage of creating a productive zone of disequilibrium extends to the reinforcing change stage because, like the implementation stage, it will be an iterative process centred on collaborator involvement. Adaptive Leadership behaviours

will reinforce change and promote continuous improvement by seeking feedback, adjusting as needed, and communicating successes (Heifetz et al., 2009). ADKAR recommends reinforcing change through celebration (Hiatt, 2006), which aligns with Prairie Polytechnic's core value of celebration (Appendix B). In this stage, my role will change from committee member to benefactor as the Chair life cycle strategy is implemented. This final stage will take another year to publicly recognize the committee's participants, the strategy, and its outcomes.

Change Plan Goals

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals should be used to achieve a change vision (Deszca et al., 2020; Kusek & Rist, 2004; Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). The short-term goals for the change plan include identifying an executive sponsor and forming the committee to create the strategy. The medium-term goals relate to the committee's deliverables, including its terms of reference, engagement plan, communication plan, resistance mitigation plan, and implementation budget. Long-term goals relate to addressing the PoP by implementing the Chair life cycle strategy: for Chairs to be supported systemically, effectively, and equitably at Prairie Polytechnic. I will describe performance indicators and how these goals will be measured in this chapter's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) section.

This inquiry's short-, medium-, and long-term goals also consider ethics and social justice since the change plan is framed with the intent that its process and products will lead to empowerment for equity-deserving groups. Therefore, inclusion and safety will be prioritized for all parts of the process (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019; Potts & Brown, 2015; Williams, 2013). The change plan's EDI-informed process will be achieved through inclusive committee membership, a multi-year timeline, the consensus-oriented group decision-making model, the inclusion of protecting voices from below in all stages of the change plan, and iterative feedback.

Another EDI-related goal is reciprocity, which involves giving back to the committee members and their work units for their work, time, effort, and engagement (Tilley, 2016). Indigenous poet and botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) refers to ethical reciprocity as the “honorable harvest” (p. 148) that reminds us to take, use, and share what we need mindfully and communally. The change plan will therefore include reciprocity for collaborators who engaged in the process by recognizing their contributions. Institutionally, the benefits will include better-equipped leaders, increased efficiencies for support areas, and further integration of EDI-informed processes at Prairie Polytechnic.

Anticipated Limitations and Challenges

The change plan’s primary limitation is Prairie Polytechnic’s resource scarcity from reduced government funding and a structural deficit, so my chosen solution is intended to provide the maximum impact for the minimum cost. The explicit alignment of the change plan with Prairie Polytechnic’s new strategic plan, core values, and OKRs justifies the resources needed to develop the Chair life cycle strategy by linking it with student, faculty, and institutional successes. Related to scarce resources is the impact of provincial politics on higher education institutions’ strategic directions in Canada (Fisher et al., 2009; Shanahan & Jones, 2007). The next provincial election is later in 2023, after this OIP’s submission deadline, and a potential provincial party change could precipitate another adjustment in Prairie Polytechnic’s priorities. The emphasis on process, the change plan’s iterative nature, and the extended timelines allow for adjustments in response to potential future shifts in strategic or political imperatives.

Despite explicit EDI and social justice goals, due to the widespread and overarching nature of colonial, hetero-patriarchal white supremacy, the needs and views of some people will

be unintentionally privileged over others (Ahmed, 2012; Smith et al., 2017; Williams, 2013; Wilson et al., 2019). Actively recruiting people from equity-deserving groups to the committee and privileging their viewpoints also risks being a form of colonial voyeurism that perpetuates inequitable power dynamics (Tilley, 2016). The emphasis on process over product, extended timelines, reciprocity, and explicit use of EDI-aligned frameworks, strategies, and theories will mitigate some of these challenges. The iterative process and the feedback mechanisms will serve to identify and address potential inequities that may arise.

Another challenge is that organizational change is complex (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009) and cannot be undertaken by an individual (Kezar, 2000, 2009), which is why the change plan emphasizes process over products and relies on iterative engagement with collaborators. Even if the initiative has a positive process and outcomes, there will still be resistance to change (Hall & Hord, 2015; Mumby, 2005); however, the change plan has integrated mechanisms for anticipating and mitigating the painful, emotional aspects of change from Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR. The resistance mitigation plan, which the committee will develop, will also provide guidance on alleviating opposition to change.

Communicating the Change Process: Talking the Walk

In this section, I will outline the recommended contents of a communication plan. As a committee member, I will participate in the consensus-oriented group decision-making model to contribute to developing our communication plan. The communication plan outlined in this chapter will identify evidence-informed best practices the committee can include, but the actual plan will be a co-created product of the committee.

The literature identifies communication as being fundamental to sharing information and building relationships within organizations (Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Udin et al., 2019), and

empirical findings identify communication as a significant factor in successful change plans (Barrett, 2002; Bull & Brown, 2010; Proctor & Doukakis, 2003). Conversely, failed communication within a change initiative can increase uncertainty and stress (Aher & Luoma-Aho, 2017). In alignment with Postmodernism, communication is positioned as shared experiences between people, where the purpose of exchanging messages is to create mutual understandings and meanings (Proctor & Doukakis, 2003). Defining communication in this way focuses on social interactions where senders and receivers are negotiators of co-created meanings that reflect embedded power dynamics (Tomaselli & Caldwell, 2019). Critical Theory's emphasis on inequitable power dynamics reinforces the need to plan how communication will be used/positioned within the change plan to eliminate rather than perpetuate oppression (Tilley, 2016; Zink, 2019).

Lavis et al. (2003) identify five components for knowledge mobilization that frame the communication plan: target audiences, intended messaging, credible messengers, preferred communication methods, and messaging evaluation. The communication plan is mapped with the three stages of the change plan since different communication goals exist during the change process (Wiggins, 2009). The communication plan integrates components from Lavis et al. (2003) with the three change plan phases from ADKAR, Adaptive Leadership behaviours, and ADKAR's five stages. A summary of the communication plan is included in Appendix E.

Preparing for Change

A communication plan should begin with assessing current communication practices to confirm whether they align with the change initiative's goals (Bell & Martin, 2019). A cultural practice at Prairie Polytechnic is for supervisors (e.g., Chairs and Department Heads) to have regular one-on-ones with their supervisees. Monthly departmental- and school-level leadership

meetings are also held, which allows for the mutual exchange of information. These practices align with advice from the literature: face-to-face communication is a preferred medium when sending critical messages about change (Hiatt, 2006), and direct supervisors are the preferred source of information about organizational changes (Klein, 1996). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the practices of academic leadership (Carlos & Muralles, 2022; Gigliotti, 2021), and one change is that face-to-face communication can also be done virtually with online meeting software. The communication plan is intended to be iterative and multidirectional to minimize the risk of using transmissive top-down messaging involving “telling and selling” (Russ, 2008, p. 200), which can be wielded to suppress resistance to change.

Message redundancy is a core principle within strategic communications (Klein, 1996), and “a rule of thumb is that employees need to hear a message five to seven times before that message is cemented into their thinking” (Hiatt, 2006, p. 71). The change plan will reinforce verbal messages with written documents. The committee will use agendas (produced by the facilitator) and meeting minutes (written by rotating notetakers among committee members) as information channels. Email is another tool; for example, Prairie Polytechnic sends a “Daily Digest” email summarizing key messages from various portfolios to all staff. However, large-scale email distributions will not be the primary channel for the change plan because an internal communication survey conducted at Prairie Polytechnic (2017) identified that email is overused, and overflowing inboxes are a source of frustration and lost messages. Another written communication channel is Prairie Polytechnic’s staff intranet, where portfolios frequently share messaging through blog posts. Since passive approaches to communication are less effective (Lavis et al., 2003), the intranet will not be the primary method for sharing messages because the large volume of information it contains is more of a liability than an opportunity.

The committee's early communication planning will include an audience analysis to identify key collaborators, determine desired messaging for each audience, develop a plan for the timing of the messages, identify the preferred senders for each audience, and confirm preferred communication channels for each group of collaborators (Clampitt, 2017; Jones, 2008; Lavis et al., 2003). The change plan's first target audience will be higher-level leaders to recruit an executive sponsor and seek permission to form the committee. These leaders' communication channels will be emails, informal meetings, and formal Senior Leadership Council meetings. The messaging will be framed with persuasive language and include an overt alignment to Prairie Polytechnic's strategic imperatives. The confirmation of an executive sponsor and the committee's formation will quantify this messaging's success. Following this, messaging about the committee will be shared with core Chair collaborators to recruit participants by the executive sponsor through their supervisors. For example, Department Heads will receive messaging from their Associate Dean Academic and share them with their Chairs, who will then share the messages with their faculty. This messaging will use persuasive language to recruit a range of representatives for the committee. Messages about the committee's formation will also be shared with all employees at the institute through the staff intranet and Daily Digest email. The committee's membership will be public and transparent rather than privileged information known only by higher-level leaders. While the transmission of this initial messaging is hierarchal and, therefore, more likely to perpetuate rather than disrupt inequitable power dynamics, securing the permission and resourcing for the change plan are necessary steps.

Managing Change

The managing change phase is where the strategy will be co-created by the committee. Higher-level leaders will require updates on the project's progress as the strategy and its various

plans are being crafted. These updates will be provided by the executive sponsor and the committee's facilitator through small group meetings and email updates. Because of the multi-year timeline, these updates will be used to answer questions, mitigate resistance, and retain support for the initiative from higher-level leaders. Early messaging will address why the change is occurring, what needs to change from current practices, and the level of commitment senior leaders have for the change (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Virtual town halls will also share significant updates and gather feedback because the recordings can increase their accessibility by enabling synchronous and asynchronous participation.

While the committee will include representatives from core Chair collaborators, all members from groups impacted by the strategy will be updated regularly and asked for feedback on the contents of the strategy. This messaging will be exchanged through town halls, small group meetings, emails to group leaders, updates on the staff intranet, and Daily Digest emails. Once the contents of the strategy have been created and approved, specific work units and roles (e.g., the departments of Teaching Services and Organizational Development) will be supported to build their knowledge and ability to enact the strategy (Hiatt, 2006). Messaging will come from the executive sponsor to work unit leaders through small group meetings, one-on-one coaching conversations, and emails. These announcements will include the processes, systems, tools, and job roles impacted by the change and specific portfolio changes that will occur due to the strategy (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Iterative feedback will be gathered in this stage to shape the work done by the committee and the contents of the Chair life cycle strategy (detailed later in the M&E section).

Reinforcing Change

The committee will reinforce change by communicating how the change will be institutionalized, sharing key outcomes, and celebrating successes (Klein, 1996). Overpromising

will be avoided because idealized rhetoric can increase cynicism and resistance (Driscoll & Morris, 2001). Targeted messaging will be sent to core Chair collaborators and the work units/roles that provide systemic supports for Chairs through small group meetings and emails from leaders. However, given Chairs' role intersectionality, these messages will also be sent to all staff through the intranet and Daily Digest emails. While reinforcing change is positioned as the change plan's final stage, this inquiry will also use it as an essential time to collect feedback, reflect on it, and engage in continuous improvements. Using the Monitoring and Evaluation plan described in the next section, the committee will collect feedback on the change plan's process and products from core Chair collaborators through emails and anonymous surveys. This feedback will be reviewed by the committee and disseminated by the executive sponsor.

Amplifying Voices from Below

While the Adaptive Leadership behaviour of protecting voices from below is interwoven throughout the change plan, the goal of this communication plan is to amplify the voices of those who have been traditionally silenced and underrepresented by the colonial gaze (Wilson & Beals, 2019). The explicit recruitment of committee members from equity-deserving groups will incorporate their viewpoints, perspectives, and experiences into the strategy. However, similar issues with this approach were described in this chapter's *Anticipated Limitations and Challenges* section, where recruiting people from equity-deserving groups can risk reproducing harm. The communication plan will use approaches with decolonial and anti-oppressive ontologies and epistemologies where reality is reflected in relationships and knowledge is relational and emergent (Wilson & Hughes, 2019). The plan's reliance on face-to-face communication and iterative feedback creates spaces for relational knowledge and realities to be developed within the process (Wilson, 2008).

Careful consideration of how communication will occur during the change plan (summarized in Appendix F) is necessary because the governance structures and diverse people within publicly funded institutions have created unique communication challenges that are absent from the corporate sector (McNaughtan et al., 2019). Communication within the higher education sector carries a collegial legacy of circular and democratic processes dating back to medieval universities (Manning, 2018). The industrial age also profoundly affected how modern institutions are structured and operated (Austin & Harkins, 2008) by creating bureaucratic communication patterns dictated by role, status, and power (Manning, 2018). In the next section, I will identify how similar monitoring and evaluation challenges will be addressed.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Integrating Ethics and Accountability

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are distinct but related processes that generate knowledge for action (Blaikie, 2009) by assessing organizational performance (Marshall & Suárez, 2014). Monitoring includes formative measurements, whereas summative evaluation measures the outcomes and impacts of a change initiative (Neumann et al., 2018). Effective M&E processes can clarify program objectives, facilitate continuous improvement, and analyze why intended results were not achieved (Kusek & Rist, 2004). I will now describe this inquiry's M&E complexities and explain how the Chair life cycle committee will use Gopichandran and Krishna's (2013) ethical framework for M&E. This section includes evidence-informed practices mapped to the change plan's stages: 1) assessing M&E readiness, 2) engaging collaborators, 3) setting objectives, 4) collecting data, 5) analyzing data, and 6) utilizing results.

Monitoring and Evaluation Complexities

Structural, logistical, fiscal, technical, cultural, political, ideological, and individual barriers exist to engaging in M&E (Crawley, 2017). M&E can be hindered by hidden agendas,

conflicting priorities, negative experiences from past evaluations, inadequate resources, poor transparency, insufficient communication, and fear of negative consequences (Hermans et al., 2012; Neumann et al., 2018). Ebrahim (2020) argues that there “are rarely any singular and unambiguous measures of success in organizations” (p. 12), and it is epistemologically weak to assume that the causality of organization-wide initiatives can even be measured (Try & Radnor, 2007). Since there are many potential outcomes for measuring performance (e.g., evaluation, accountability, promotion, celebration, and improvement), different measures should be considered for these diverse purposes (Behn, 2003).

Using Postmodernism and Critical Theory, I position M&E activities as contextually bound political acts reflecting inequitable power dynamics (Hermans et al., 2012; Kusek & Rist, 2004). The assumption of a need for M&E in this inquiry is troubling given the practices’ link to neoliberalism (Abrahams, 2015; Try & Radnor, 2007); as described in Chapter 1, the first M&E processes through NPM were introduced in Canada in the 1960s (Lahey & Nielsen, 2013) and are now essential components of public sector governance (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Finite resources from dwindling government funding also limit the ability of institutions to monitor and evaluate their activities (Try & Radnor, 2007). Given these complexities, I have selected an M&E approach that harmonizes with the other assumptions embedded in the change plan (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). While many M&E frameworks include engagement with collaborators, outcome selection, data collection/analysis, and reporting (e.g., Bartelink et al., 2018; Javed et al., 2019; Kusek & Rist, 2004), I have chosen Gopichandran and Krishna’s (2013) ethical framework to structure the M&E plan because of its emphasis on social justice and empowerment. I have added the step of assessing M&E readiness from Kusek and Rist (2004) to mitigate some of the aforementioned barriers to M&E.

Preparing for Change

The M&E components of preparing for change include assessing M&E readiness, engaging with collaborators, and setting objectives.

Assessing M&E Readiness. A readiness assessment identifies and mitigates barriers to M&E (Kusek & Rist, 2004). The first factor to consider is whether there is a shared vision and adequate leadership to guide decision-making for M&E (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). The change plan's reliance on Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR facilitates the creation of a unified vision within the committee that will guide its M&E activities. Another consideration is how the M&E process will contribute to achieving program goals. The change plan's iterative nature and the reliance on feedback will require M&E to succeed, so the need for M&E is built into the change plans' core assumptions. Like resistance to change, it is vital to anticipate adverse reactions to M&E activities (Kusek & Rist, 2004), and the mitigation procedures from Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR (Chapter 2) can be used to reduce this resistance. This inquiry assumes that M&E activities are contextually bound and can reproduce inequitable power dynamics (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013), so the committee will build trust and safety among participants with the consensus-oriented group decision-making model (Hartnett, 2011; Appendix D). Finally, M&E planning must confirm that there are sufficient resources (e.g., time, money, staff) and capacity to engage in M&E activities (Crawley, 2017; Williams, 2013). The change plan will include the resources and funding required by M&E activities to embed them in the process rather than be positioned as superfluous. Using existing roles, resources, and communication channels at the institute will also decrease costs for M&E.

Engaging with Collaborators. The ethical M&E framework emphasizes empowerment and active involvement of collaborators in all stages of the M&E process, which aligns with

Adaptive Leadership and ADKAR. Since communication with others is a crucial component of any M&E process (Neumann et al., 2018), this plan will also be mapped with the communication plan from the previous section (summarized in Table 6 later in this section). Many of the committee's earliest deliverables will outline how collaborators will be involved in its process and products, including its terms of reference, engagement plan, communication plan, resistance management plan, and M&E plan. Those plans will use procedures Gopichandran and Krishna (2013) recommend, such as conflict of interest disclosures, organizational and legal codes, and criteria for equitable selection of participants from equity-deserving groups.

Setting Objectives. The committee will set objectives, identify performance indicators, and align these details with their M&E methodology (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013). The M&E objectives the committee sets should be Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate, and Monitorable (CREAM) (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Applying Gopichandran and Krishna's (2013) ethical framework to these objectives, the E in CREAM will also stand for Equitable, Ethical, and Empowering. The objectives selected by the committee will measure the process (i.e., monitoring) and products (i.e., evaluation) of the change plan and align with the inquiry's SMART goals (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Neumann et al., 2018). Furthermore, the outcomes should refrain from contributing to practices that create additional marginalization for equity-deserving groups (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013).

Monitoring uses formative assessments to track the change plan's progress (Neumann et al., 2018). The short- and medium-term goals for the change plan's progress are easily measured: 1) identifying an executive sponsor, 2) formatting the committee, and 3) drafting deliverables (i.e., terms of reference, engagement plan, communication plan, resistance mitigation plan, and budget). Because program participation and retention rates are also useful monitoring metrics

(Williams, 2013), the number and diversity of participants involved with the committee and their participation will be tracked. The committee's membership will be public serving as a route for informal formative feedback.

Summative evaluations measure whether or not the objectives have been met (Neumann et al., 2018). It will be challenging to quantify the primary goal of this inquiry: for Chairs to be systemically supported at Prairie Polytechnic. Some outcome indicators (Williams, 2013) will be measured using the biannual staff engagement survey (Prairie Polytechnic, 2023b; detailed in Appendix F). Other outcome indicators will be tracked using the number of Chair training participants or applicants to Chair competitions, Chair turnover rates, and the proportion of Chairs from equity-deserving groups.

Managing Change

The managing change phase of the M&E plan includes collecting and analyzing data.

Collecting Data. There are parallels between M&E and the research process (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013), which is opportune because research parameters can be used to build validity, quality, and ethicality into M&E activities (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016; Tilley, 2016). Collecting multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data will allow for stronger triangulation of conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Williams, 2013); however, the challenge is not to collect data, of which there are many sources, but to prioritize the most useful and valuable data that align with the project's goals and embody social responsibility to the community (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013). Data collection will follow the Canadian Tri-Council (2022) policy guidelines on ethical conduct for research involving humans and will require additional permission from Prairie Polytechnic's REB. When gathering data from participants, Gopichandran and Krishna (2013) recommend obtaining informed consent,

removing personal identifiers from raw data, and protecting the anonymity of participants. The data collection process should also minimize disruption or intrusion of the participants' work (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013). The committee will prepare the data collection questions, and Prairie Polytechnic's Department of Institutional Research will support the committee by collecting data using existing institutional processes and Qualtrics software licensing. Any mishaps, malpractices, and wrongdoing will be reported immediately to the committee, executive sponsor, and REB.

Analyzing Data. The committee will receive support from Prairie Polytechnic's Institutional Research Department for analyzing the M&E data. Gopichandran and Krishna (2013) stipulate that data analysis processes should be impartial, and the findings should demonstrate community accountability and responsibility. These features can be achieved by ensuring data from all core collaborator groups have been considered, and the opinions of equity-deserving groups are sought through open-ended questions and qualitative data (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013). For equity work, disaggregated data are needed to measure and "reflect on the extent to which embedded benefits may exist for some groups to the exclusion of others who continue to struggle" (Williams, 2013, p. 268), so disaggregating data by gender, sexuality, race, or ethnicity would allow for the amplification of the experiences of these different groups (Smith et al., 2017).

Reinforcing Change

Reinforcing change in the M&E plan implements the results gathered in previous steps.

Utilizing Results. While the change plan has been presented linearly, the reinforcing change phase includes creating a productive zone of disequilibrium where feedback will be gathered in cycles and used to make adjustments (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013). A cyclical

approach is aligned with decolonial and anti-oppressive ways of knowing where “engaging in circles of questioning, learning, searching, reflecting, and participating in life and ceremony that knowledge and understanding grow” (Wilson et al., 2019, p. 154). Through these iterations, adjustments can include increasing certain implementation efforts, lowering expectations for components of the plan, and revisiting relevant policies and procedures (Hermans et al., 2012). An iterative approach to M&E is aligned with this inquiry’s social justice goals because “in-built management-response mechanism[s] within the M&E system” are the most effective ways to empower and protect participants by “giving voice to their views” (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013, p. 3).

Regarding data utilization, Gopichandran and Krishna (2013) recommend that adequate amounts of feedback are gathered and used appropriately. The results from M&E processes must be articulated with quantifiable terms through actionable recommendations (Javed et al., 2019). The findings should be relevant to participants, constructive, reciprocal, transparent, and available to anyone interested in them (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013; Javed et al., 2019). The perspectives of equity-deserving groups “must be given due importance and representation during the M&E process” (Gopichandran & Krishna, 2013, p. 2) and will rely on the communication plan to ensure the data are effectively and equitably utilized. The committee will work with human resources to use voluntary information provided by participants to amplify voices from below. The multi-year timeline will allow for refinements of the change plan, the committee’s processes and progress, and the final products of the Chair life cycle strategy.

In this section, I outlined M&E complexities and how the Chair life cycle committee will use Gopichandran and Krishna’s (2013) ethical framework for M&E. Table 6 encapsulates how the M&E plan will integrate with the change plan and communication plan. Appendix G includes

more details on assessing M&E readiness, engaging with collaborators, setting objectives, collecting data, analyzing data, and utilizing results. The M&E plan is the last required component of this chapter's change plan; the following sections will include suggested next steps, future considerations, and a narrative epilogue.

Table 6

Integrating the Communication and M&E Plans into the Change Plan

Phases of Change	Adaptive Leadership	ADKAR	Communication Plan Targets & Goals	M&E Plan
Preparing for Change	Getting on the Balcony Identifying an Adaptive Challenge Protecting Voices from Below	Awareness of the Need to Change	Higher-Level Leaders: <i>permissions & executive sponsor confirmed</i> Core Chair Collaborators: <i>invitations to participate</i>	Assessing M&E Readiness Engaging participants Setting Objectives
Managing Change	Involving Collaborators Creating a Productive Zone of Disequilibrium Protecting Voices from Below	Desire to Make the Change Happen Knowledge About How to Change Ability to Change	Higher-Level Leaders: <i>progress updates</i> Core Chair Collaborators: <i>providing feedback</i> Work Units that will Enact the Strategy: <i>training</i>	Collecting Data Analyzing Data
Reinforcing Change	Continuing the Productive Zone of Disequilibrium Protecting Voices from Below	Reinforcement to Retain the Change	Core Chair Collaborators: <i>providing feedback</i> All Staff: <i>celebrating successes</i>	Utilizing Data

Next Steps and Future Considerations

Before I cast my gaze forward, I will briefly pause to look back. Regarding the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs, there are logistical and ethical reasons to change the status quo, however ephemeral, local, and temporal that status quo may be. It is incredibly challenging to characterize Prairie Polytechnic's status quo because, as described in Chapter 1,

the institute has experienced more changes than stasis. The need to adapt has simultaneously increased and been obfuscated by budget cuts and the pandemic, which is challenging and opportune. While there is change fatigue, Prairie Polytechnic has been forced to be more flexible and creative than ever before, thus creating a fertile adaptive environment for implementing the change plan, provided it is aligned with institutional imperatives. I agree that it is untenable to continue “to place individuals [i.e., Chairs] in these positions and expect them to be successful leaders and managers without taking a long and hard look at how to challenge and support their professional development in our colleges and universities” (Stanley & Algert, 2007, p. 63).

Taking a systemic approach to cultivate academic leadership development changes inequitable “gatekeeping” into EDI-informed “groundskeeping” where an ecosystem of support can nurture creative, strategic leaders (Montgomery, 2020, p. 5). Although the future is uncertain, this inquiry’s emphasis on process means that goals will be re/assessed and achieved in small, iterative steps. The support this inquiry has already received has been encouraging, and there is momentum for what will come next.

Systemic supports for Chairs require institutional infrastructure to uphold them; otherwise, they will remain as they are provided currently: fragmented, ad hoc, inconsistent, and reactive. The next steps for this inquiry were outlined in this chapter’s change plan: the executive sponsor needs to be confirmed, and the committee needs to be created to begin writing the strategy. However, the Chair life cycle strategy represents the start of a journey, not the end. While the strategy will provide the start of the infrastructure needed to support academic leadership development at Prairie Polytechnic, it will only address some of the issues related to Chairs identified in previous chapters. The alternate solutions presented in Chapter 2 all have merits, and implementing them would benefit from the systemic infrastructure provided by the

Chair life cycle strategy. If I had unlimited resources and agency, I would choose “all of the above” with respect to the four solutions I identified in Chapter 2.

The lack of systemic supports for Chairs is not unique to Prairie Polytechnic. Furthermore, there is a dearth of Canadian research on Chairs (Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Boyko & Jones, 2010), especially in polytechnic contexts (Filan, 1999; Hoekstra & Newton, 2017). Most empirical studies on Chairs are from America and Britain and were primarily based on the experiences of Caucasian men, which ignores the experiences of equity-deserving groups (Baber, 2020). Regarding Chairs’ PD, few programs have been created at the systemic level (Brinkley-Etzkorn & Lane, 2019). In their literature review on leadership development, Dopson et al. (2019) accuse many studies of being too small-scale, non-cumulative, and only weakly theorized.

Maton (2005) uses the quip of putting “old wine in new bottles” (p. 694) to argue why innovative practices have failed to emerge because using the same frameworks to ask the same questions promotes the same practices in what Stein (2019) refers to the “uni-versality” of the “uni-versity” (p. 149). It is apt that my context is a “poly-technic” because cultural, theoretical, practical, and historic differences affect my/our onto-epistemologies and power dynamics. My approach to change is also “poly-morphic” by combining various paradigms and models into the change plan. Hall and Hord (2015) recommend braiding interventions to benefit from combined strengths and effects. Similarly, Louvel (2013) recommends the process of bricolage “to create something new out of the resources at hand” (p. 670). I am proud that this process of braiding and bricolage has produced tangible solutions for the inadequate institutional supports for Chairs. I intend to use the scholarship from my EdD to publish peer-reviewed articles on systemic supports for Polytechnic Chairs to share what I have learned with a broader audience.

Narrative Epilogue: On Being a Change(d) Agent

Forgive me, but I will end this document by descending, albeit briefly, into neurotic Postmodern self-reflection. As I typed this paragraph, I was aware of nesting symbols within symbols: I have used Latin script to assemble letters into specific English words on these pages in a particular order with a specified font type and size as a culminating act of three years of scholarship. While I am the only author of this paper, its contents emerged from the research I have done, as did the authors of the works I have cited in accordance with academic traditions. This OIP is meant to be a solitary scholarly act for a terminal degree, but it is also a co-created reality steeped with power dynamics between me, Western University, and the overarching academe that is my/our professional context. This document reflects the many layers of privilege that I am still coming to understand and learning to harness for the betterment of others. If you are reading this paragraph, it is likely that you, too, share many of these privileges.

A troubling tenet of Postmodernism, which Nath (2014) dubs “the most depressing philosophy [to] spring from the Western mind” (p. 30), is its inherently paradoxical nature because Postmodernism rejects all grand narratives including itself. Berger and Luckmann (1966) liken the process of questioning the validity of knowledge using the knowledge one currently possesses to “trying to push a bus in which one is riding” (p. 13). Given that “paradoxes are paradoxical” (Luscher et al., 2006, p. 499), these are unresolvable tensions (Allan et al., 2010; Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). And yet, it is possible to exist, even joyfully, within these tensions to gain valuable insights. For example, Wheatley (2016) identifies a paradox in living systems where each organism, with its individuality, is embedded within a system that shapes its identity and argues that the disequilibrium inherent in these tensions is a lush source of growth because maintaining equilibrium is the anathema to adaptation. The Postmodern solution is to

embrace tensions and ambiguity because these nebulous contradictory liminal spaces are ripe with learning opportunities. Thus, my approach is not to attempt to resolve the PoP in a positivist manner but to use this OIP to understand more clearly the tensions Chairs experience, attempt to alleviate some of them, and share what I have learned from this process.

Despite/because/amongst all these realities, I relish in once again confirming, possibly via confirmation bias (Schulz, 2010), that the world is ever and deliciously complicated. Buller (2015) argues that “you can’t change an organization without being changed yourself” (p. 90), and I agree; throughout the process of writing my OIP and completing this EdD, my understanding of leadership, change management, governance, the higher education sector, and myself have evolved. Just as epistemology, emotions, and ethics are intertwined (Boler, 1999), this document has outlined how I am braided within my institution and PoP. I am intrigued by and grateful for this privileged process of learning how to be a change(d) leader. I delight in the being and becoming of it all and look forward to the next steps in my lifelong learning journey as a scholar-practitioner. I end this document with my head and heart brimming with a potent mixture of relief, hope, and gratitude.

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Appendix A: Needs Analysis Questions

Survey Questions

1. What is your current role?
 - a. *Response options have been hidden to maintain institutional anonymity*
2. How many years have you worked in your current role?
 - a. 3 or fewer years
 - b. 4-6 years
 - c. 7-9 years
 - d. 10 or more years
 - e. I would prefer not to answer this question
3. Is your current role primarily associated with a specific school?
 - a. *Response options have been hidden to maintain institutional anonymity*
4. From the following list, select up to 3 ways you prefer to learn new skills at work
 - a. Mentorship
 - b. A synchronous or in-person course taken during work hours
 - c. Asynchronous self-paced online course
 - d. Just-in-time learning by asking questions when needed
 - e. Learning communities
 - f. Looking up the information yourself when you need it
 - g. None of these are how I prefer to learn at work
5. If you selected "none of the above" in the previous question, how do you prefer to acquire and learn new skills at work?

6. Rate the extent to which you think the following issues experienced by *new* Chairs are as A) not challenging, B) mildly challenging, C) somewhat challenging, D) very challenging, or E) extremely challenging. NOTE: new Chairs = in their first 3 years in the role.
- a. Personnel or conflict management
 - b. Timetabling or scheduling conflicts
 - c. Lack of knowledge of policies and procedures
 - d. Lack of knowledge of software (e.g., PeopleSoft)
 - e. Lack of time to complete teaching and administrative tasks
 - f. Lack of time to attend mandatory professional development
 - g. Lack of time to attend voluntary professional development
 - h. Balancing program, departmental, and institutional priorities
 - i. Mentoring and coaching instructors
 - j. Managing student issues
 - k. Lack of supervisory/leadership experience
 - l. Lack of succession planning
 - m. Managing change in an unpredictable world
 - n. Interpreting institutional data (e.g., enrollment reports, labour market analyses)
7. What important problems or issues facing *new* Chairs (in their first 3 years in the role) are missing from the list in the previous question?
8. Rate the extent to which you think the following issues experienced by *established* Chairs are as A) not challenging, B) mildly challenging, C) somewhat challenging, D) very

challenging, or E) extremely challenging. NOTE: established Chairs = 4 or more years in the role.

- a. Personnel or conflict management
 - b. Timetabling or scheduling conflicts
 - c. Lack of knowledge of policies and procedures
 - d. Lack of knowledge of software (e.g., PeopleSoft)
 - e. Lack of time to complete teaching and administrative tasks
 - f. Lack of time to attend mandatory professional development
 - g. Lack of time to attend voluntary professional development
 - h. Balancing program, departmental, and institutional priorities
 - i. Mentoring and coaching instructors
 - j. Managing student issues
 - k. Lack of supervisory/leadership experience
 - l. Lack of succession planning
 - m. Managing change in an unpredictable world
 - n. Interpreting institutional data (e.g., enrollment reports, labour market analyses)
9. What important problems or issues facing ESTABLISHED Chairs (4 or more years in the role) are missing from the list in the previous question?
10. Rank the list of general skills needed by Chairs from most important (1) to least important (6) for the role.
- a. Leadership skills
 - b. Curriculum and teaching skills
 - c. Communication skills

- d. Performance management & conflict management skills
 - e. Time management and organizational skills
 - f. Industry experience
11. Rank the list of general skills needed by Chairs from most difficult to learn (1) to least difficult or easiest to learn (6) for the role.
- a. Leadership skills
 - b. Curriculum and teaching skills
 - c. Communication skills
 - d. Performance management & conflict management skills
 - e. Time management and organizational skills
 - f. Industry experience
12. Are there any important skills needed by Chairs that are missing from the previous two questions? (FYI: you can choose to leave this question blank)
13. How do you think Prairie Polytechnic can provide more support for Chairs? What would this support look like?

Interview Questions

1. What is your current role at Prairie Polytechnic?
2. How many years have you been in this role?
3. What school is your current role associated with?
4. How do you prefer to learn new skills at work?
5. What do you think are the most important problems or issues that you think *new* Chairs face? (Note: new Chairs are those who have been in the role up to 3 years)

6. What do you think are the most important problems or issues that you think *established* Chairs face? (Note: established Chairs have been in the role 4 or more years)
7. Who do you think are key people and roles that Chairs must connect with?
8. What skills do you think are most important for Chairs?
9. Which skills needed by Chairs are the most difficult to learn?
10. What NAIT supports for Chairs have you received, participated in, or helped to provide?
11. Which supports do you think are/were the most useful for Chairs at Prairie Polytechnic?
12. How do you think Prairie Polytechnic can provide more support for new Chairs? What would this support look like?
13. How do you think Prairie Polytechnic can provide more support for established Chairs? What would this support look like?
14. What would good succession planning look like at Prairie Polytechnic?

Focus Group Questions

1. What do you think are the most important problems or issues that you think *new* Chairs face? (Note: new Chairs are those who have been in the role up to 3 years)
2. What do you think are the most important problems or issues that you think *established* Chairs face? (Note: established Chairs have been in the role 4 or more years)
3. How do you think Prairie Polytechnic can provide more support for new Chairs? What would this support look like?
4. How do you think Prairie Polytechnic can provide more support for established Chairs? What would this support look like?

Appendix B: Prairie Polytechnic's Strategic Plan and OKRs

Prairie Polytechnic's (2022b) Core Values

- Creativity: We create the new and exciting, always flexible and adaptable in our approach to innovation and continuous improvement.
- Collaboration: We work together towards our vision through a spirit of teamwork, relationship building, and community
- Accountability: We are accountable, individually and collectively, to each other and our stakeholders for our actions and fulfilling our promises
- Celebration: We come together in fun and enjoyment to recognize accomplishments and successes and to show appreciation.
- Respect: We build an equitable, diverse, and inclusive culture by treating each other with respect, including behaviours of honesty, integrity, acceptance, and trust.

Prairie Polytechnic's (2022b) Strategic Imperatives

- The institutional experience is transformative, engaging, & collaborative for staff/ students
- The intersection of work and learning is achieved through focused, career-specific educational offerings
- Putting innovation to work through optimization & continuous improvement
- Industry's most trusted partner by supplying talent & innovation
- Plugged in and connected through building industry relationships
- Sustainability and adaptability including social, financial, & environmental priorities

Prairie Polytechnic's (2022c) Institutional Outcomes and Key Results

- Aggressively grow enrolment based on market intelligence
- Significantly enhance customer experience outside of the classroom
- Create stronger connections between credit, non-credit, and applied research for a richer relationship with industry
- Integrate environmental social governance and sustainability lenses into decision-making and operations
- Build an engaged staff culture rooted in our core values
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the institution

Appendix C: Key Chair Collaborator Relationships

Category	Job title	Collaborator role
Superiors (complying with)	Department Heads	Supervise Chairs, Administrative Assistants, & Educational Laboratory Technicians; manage budgets; create class schedules
	Associate Dean Academics	Supervise Department Heads; mentor Chairs and receive their teaching evaluations; oversee academic issues
	Deans	Lead strategic directions of the school; supervise Associate Dean Academics
Subordinates (overseeing)	Instructors	Teach courses/labs/seminars; develop curriculum; maintain industry connections
	Administrative Assistants	Manage daily administrative issues; answer student questions; maintain student/teaching records
	Educational Laboratory Technicians	Prepare labs; order and maintain equipment; prepare reagents; store samples
Leadership supports (receiving from)	Department of Teaching Services	Provide mandatory policy and procedure course for new Chairs; pedagogical support for instructors
	Department of Organizational Development	Provide voluntary leadership courses and coaching conversations for struggling leaders
	Human Resources	Support Chairs with the performance management process when faculty are under-performing
Administrative supports (cooperating with)	Student Resolution Office	Manage student discipline issues; communicates with Chairs on disciplinary rulings
	Registrar's Office	Manage admissions; process transfer credits
	Faculty Association	Negotiate faculty contracts; represents members (instructors and Chairs) in disciplinary hearings
	Scheduling Office	Schedule classes into classrooms and lab spaces
	Library Services	Manage and find resources for students and staff
Student supports (referring to)	International Centre	Support international students
	Indigenous Student Services	Support Indigenous students
	Student Counselling	Provide short term counselling for students in distress
	Student Association	Advocate for student wellbeing
	Learning Services	Support student learning and students with disabilities
External patrons (adhering to)	Accreditation Bodies	Determine curriculum for accredited programs
	Apprenticeship Training Authority	Determine curriculum for Trades programs
	Provincial Government	Determine funding levels and parameters

Appendix D: Consensus-Oriented Group Decision-Making Model

The following details from the Consensus-Oriented Group Decision-Making Model were summarized from Hartnett (2011).

Key principles:

- *Inclusion*: “All group members and as many stakeholders as possible are present. Each person has a chance to speak and be heard. The needs of stakeholders not present are considered.” (p. 7)
- *Open-Mindedness*: “Participants are encouraged to be open-minded. Everyone is asked to consider all perspectives. Unique points of view are valued.” (p. 7)
- *Empathy*: “Effort is made to provide participants the experience of being understood. This applies both to their ideas and feelings.” (p. 7)
- *Collaboration*: “Proposals are built with everyone contributing and designed to meet as many stakeholder needs as possible. All concerns are considered important.” (p. 7)
- *Shared Ownership*: “All participants, having jointly developed a proposal, share a common motivation to make implementation of the resulting decision succeed. The group leadership participates in the discussion”. (p. 7)

Components of the Consensus-Oriented Group Decision-Making process:

The facilitator will be identified by the committee using the key principles.

- *Step 1: Framing the Topic*. “The facilitator prepares for the meeting, ensuring that the group has the right context, structure, and information it may need for a successful discussion.” (p. 37)
- *Step 2: Open Discussion*. “The facilitator structures a discussion to allow a creative mix of divergent viewpoints.” (p. 37)

- *Step 3: Identifying Underlying Concerns.* “All stakeholders affected by a decision are identified. The concerns of each of these parties are considered and added to the mix.” (p. 37)
- *Step 4: Collaborative Proposal Development.* “Selected ideas are developed into proposal options, one at a time. The whole group tries to build each option so that it addresses all the identified concerns as much as possible.” (p. 38)
- *Step 5: Choosing a Direction.* “The group analyzes support for the options and selects one to develop further.” (p. 38)
- *Step 6: Synthesizing a Final Proposal.* “The chosen proposal is amended to maximize its potential to address all concerns and gain support from the group.” (p. 38)
- *Step 7: Closure.* “The group finalizes its decision and, optionally, addresses any remaining concerns about the process.”

Appendix E: Knowledge Mobilization Plan

Change Plan Phases	Target Audiences	Intended Messaging	Credible Messengers	Preferred Communication Methods	Evaluation of Messaging Success
Preparing for Change	HR; Associate Deans; Deans; VPs; Executive	Seeking permission to form the committee & recruiting an executive sponsor	A higher-level leader (Associate Dean or higher)	Email; small group meetings; Senior Leadership Council meetings	Permission granted & executive sponsor confirmed
	Core Chair collaborators	Building awareness of the project, rationale, and desired outcomes	Executive sponsor; HR	Meetings with supervisors; staff intranet, Daily Digest email	Core collaborators are aware of the project and are invited to participate
Managing Change	HR; Associate Deans; Deans; VPs; Executive	Updates on the terms of reference, project plans, & strategy writing process	Executive sponsor; committee facilitator	Small group meetings; update emails from the executive sponsor and committee facilitator	Higher-level leaders are aware of the committee's progress
	Core Chair collaborators	Feedback on the strategy's contents	Committee members	Small group meetings; emails to collaborator group leaders; staff intranet; Daily Digest email	Feedback from all core collaborator groups is collected
	Work units & roles that will enact the strategy	Build knowledge & ability to provide systemic supports for Chairs	Executive sponsor; work unit leaders	Small group meetings; one-on-one coaching conversations	The work units are able to enact the strategy
Reinforcing Change	Core Chair collaborators; work units & roles will enact the strategy; all staff	Celebrate successes	Executive sponsor; work unit leaders	Small group meetings; emails to/from group leaders; staff intranet; Daily Digest email	Core collaborators are aware of the successes from the project
	Core Chair collaborators	Collect feedback on process and product	Executive sponsor; work unit leaders	Small group meetings; emails to/from group leaders staff intranet; Daily Digest email	Feedback from all core collaborator groups is collected

Note. Core Chair collaborators are defined as Faculty, Chairs, Department Heads, Associate Dean Academics, as well as representatives from the departments of Teaching Services and Organizational Development.

Appendix F: Biannual Staff Engagement Questions

Below are relevant questions from Prairie Polytechnic's biannual staff engagement survey that will measure the impact of components of the Chair life cycle strategy. All questions have a rating scale from zero (low) to five (high)

Supervision-related questions:

- I would recommend my direct supervisor to others.
- My direct supervisor provides me with feedback that helps me improve my performance.

Role-related questions

- My role is an excellent fit with my strengths.
- I have the resources I need to do my job well.
- I am able to successfully balance my work and personal life.
- I have good opportunities to learn and grow at Prairie Polytechnic.

Institutional questions

- I am happy working at Prairie Polytechnic.
- Prairie Polytechnic takes a genuine interest in employees' well-being.

Appendix G: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Summary

Change Plan Phases	M&E Step	Ethical M&E Practices	Source
	Assessing M&E Readiness	Identify and plan to mitigate structural, logistical, technical, cultural, political, ideological, and individual barriers to engaging in M&E	Kusek and Rist (2004)
Preparing for Change	Engaging with Collaborators	Consider external evaluation; disclose conflicts of interest; follow organizational and legal codes; disclose criteria for participant selection/methodology; identify how equity can be achieved in selecting participants; actively recruit equity-deserving groups as participants; treat participants with honesty and respect	Gopichandran and Krishna (2013)
	Setting Objectives	Stay within the budget; encourage community and individual involvement; share objectives and methodology with all participants; ensure practices do not further marginalize equity-deserving groups	Gopichandran and Krishna (2013)
Managing Change	Collecting Data	Use trained people for data collection; obtain informed consent; remove personal identifiers from raw data; protect anonymity and confidentiality of participants; report mishaps, malpractices, and wrongdoing; respond to participant questions and doubts; structure data collection to minimize disruption and intrusion towards participants	Gopichandran and Krishna (2013)
	Analyzing Data	Ensure data from all sections of the community have been considered for analysis; ensure opinions of equity-deserving groups are included; use open-ended questions and qualitative data	Gopichandran and Krishna (2013)
Reinforcing Change	Utilizing Data	Feedback should be provided to relevant collaborator groups in all levels of the process, results should be constructive, reciprocity should be enabled, wide dissemination of results should be available to anyone who may be interested	Gopichandran and Krishna (2013)