

# Institutional Change: Planning an Effort and Making a Difference



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# Today's Goals

- Introduce principles from organizational change
- Generate questions relevant to your change efforts

*Change is difficult! Today is about asking questions; the “answers” will take more time.*



# Session Outline

- Change principles
- Example application
- Workshop
- Discussion

# Change Principles



# Develop Shared Vision (Outcomes Focus)



# Use Multiple Perspectives

## **Scientific Management**

Use incentives and rewards to influence behavior.

## **Evolutionary**

View the university as a holistic system.

Pay attention to external factors.

## **Social Cognition**

Attend to the underlying beliefs that guide decision-making.

Focus on changing underlying structures/norms/goals.

## **Cultural**

Focus on shifting the underlying culture of a department.

Align change efforts with existing cultural features.

## **Political**

Build coalitions to support strategic, collective action.

Leverage existing internal power structures.

## **Institutional**

Leverage existing external structures that influence universities.

A. Kezar, *How Colleges Change: Understanding, Leading, and Enacting Change* (Routledge, 2013).



# Make Structural Changes





# **Example: Departmental Action Teams (DATs)**



# The STEM Institutional Transformation Action Research (SITAR) Project



# Departmental Action Team

Department Action Teams (DATs) are a **new type of faculty working group** that empower faculty members within a department to **make sustainable change** by designing and implementing structures to address an **educational problem of broad-scale importance**.



# Example DAT: Potions Department

**Area of Focus** (chosen by participants): The underrepresentation of women and students of color among undergraduate majors

5 participants (2014-2015 academic year)

- 2 tenured, 2 untenured, 1 postdoc
- 2 women, 3 men

8 participants (2015-2016 academic year)

- 1 tenured, 2 untenured, 1 postdoc, 1 staff, 3 grad students
- 6 women, 2 men

18 1-hour meetings since 10/28/2014

2 facilitators (us)

# Shared Vision

What is your vision for Potions students? What should they do? What should they learn? Who should they be?





# Use Multiple Perspectives

- **Scientific management:**  
Course buyouts and service credit for DAT participants
- **Social cognition:**  
Analyzed 10 years of student data to replace anecdotes;  
Facilitators helped participants articulate implicit beliefs
- **Cultural:**  
Use the familiarity of “committees” as a way to help faculty to understand the point of the DAT
- **Political:**  
Worked with existing departmental governance structures;  
Teams have more connections to leverage than individuals

# New Department Structures

Creation of a **report** with in-depth student data analysis

Creation of a **Committee on Representation, Retention, and Recruitment** ( $R^3$ , continuation of DAT)



# Workshop

(small groups)

# Choose Your Adventure

If you are here with a team/group, sit together.

If you are here alone, sit with other individuals and either:

- Team up to think through a change that one of you would like to make
- Think individually about a change that you want to make



# Apply the Principles to Make a Plan

In a group or individually, choose a change you want to make and begin to formulate a plan:

- What is your vision? (Not what problem are you solving!) Who are possible partners? How can you work together to build a vision?
- What does each of the perspectives tell you? (e.g., are you paying attention to individual thinking? Collective culture? Incentives? Political structures? External forces?) What (additional) information do you need to gather?
- What is the timescale of your project? What structural changes can you make to ensure that your changes are sustained?

# Exchange Feedback/Critique

With your peers, consider the following:

- Is there a solution, not problem, focus?
- Has each of the six perspectives been considered?
- Are the proposed changes structural and/or sustainable?



# Discussion

(large group)

# Whole Group Discussion

- What new questions were brought up for you?
- What new things are you thinking about you didn't think about before?
- What was difficult in this process?
- Did you find anything surprising in your discussions?



**Thank You!**

# Questions?