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Institutionalizing Information Literacy

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Institutionalizing Information Literacy

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Vice President, National Forum on Information Literacy

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LILAC Conference, London, England
Outline

- IL and different types of literacies
- Why IL continues to be an important issue
- Apply existing higher education organizational theory to IL
Information Literacy…
Why IL Continues to be an Important Issue

- Global recognition and efforts
  - Tied to individual and community empowerment, workforce readiness, global competitiveness
  - UNESCO IFLA TTT
  - Alexandria Proclamation
    - Essential to lifelong learning
    - Empowers people in all walks of life
    - Is a basic human right
    - Promotes social inclusion of all nations
Why IL Continues to be an Important Issue

- Employers want information literate critical thinkers, problem-solvers

- No established, consistent strategy for instilling this competency throughout an institution (institutionalizing)
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

- Difficulties associated with institutionalizing IL varied and complex
- Lack of understanding of value of IL
- Considered to be “extra” so not enough time, not enough money, not enough people
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

- “Good enough” work can be successful
- Success stories without IL
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

IL crosses boundaries across all disciplines, so who is responsible for it?
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

- Need research:
  - Are IL programs effective?
  - What do they contribute to student success, ability to engage in lifelong learning, employability?
  - What works in teaching IL?
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

- Case reports, surveys, and focus groups can help to develop hypotheses, need formalized study.

- These approaches may be useful in developing hypotheses, but have not been subjected to formalized study.
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

Lack of understanding of the organizational functioning of colleges and universities may contribute to the difficulty
Why is Institutionalizing IL an Issue?

- Need research to support a scientific approach
- Research is based on models and theories
- IL relatively new field—can borrow from other more-established disciplines
Application of Organizational Theory

- Birnbaum, *How Colleges Work*
- Models of organizational functioning:
  - Collegial
  - Bureaucratic
  - Political
  - Organized Anarchy
Characteristics: Collegial Model

- Small institutions
- Informal communication
- Administrators equals of faculty
- Faculty satisfaction from college activities rather than external
Characteristics: Collegial Model

- Value thoroughness and deliberation
- Decisions take long time, influence and consensus
- Strong, coherent culture with distinctive symbols, rites (Dead Poets Society)
Characteristics: Collegial Model

*Like a family*
## Collegial institutions: Strategies for effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY:</th>
<th>IL APPLICATION:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen, to understand</td>
<td>Attend meetings, socials, events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal to norms/values to inspire trust</td>
<td>Use symbols, Sponsor forum, Involve key people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make deviations from group visible</td>
<td>Publicize IL efforts with disciplines, give incentives, awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Collegial institutions: Strategies for effectiveness

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<tr>
<td>Use established communication channels</td>
<td>Campus newspaper, discussion list, blog, social occasions, mtgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use expert power</td>
<td>Give presentations, write, consult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence, not coercion</td>
<td>Discuss and persuade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct, don’t sanction or alienate</td>
<td>Prepare recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics: Bureaucratic Model

- Larger institutions
- Efficiency, effectiveness are goals
- Org chart—systematic division of labor; defines status, communication channels, codifies functions
- Campus units isolated, no consistent beliefs
Characteristics: Bureaucratic Model

- Rules/regulations guide behaviors, ensure consistency, fairness
- Rational—objectives, goals
- Administrators are specialists, spend little time with faculty, talk to other admins and external non-faculty
Characteristics:
Bureaucratic Model

Like a machine
### Bureaucratic institutions: Strategies for effectiveness

<table>
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<th>STRATEGY:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Place in org chart</td>
<td>Dean involvement; IL Director reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use power to reward, punish; superiors give directives</td>
<td>Other Deans, Provost, Senates, incentives, awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions by rational analysis, data</td>
<td>Use literature, conduct studies, benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes, procedures are accepted</td>
<td>Develop a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals have control of specific areas</td>
<td>Meet with Provost, Deans, Chairs, Senate, Student Affairs, fundraisers, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics: Political Model

- Complex organizations; compete for power, resources
- Power, decision-making diffused
- Power is issue-specific
- No pervasive culture
Characteristics: Political Model

- Conflict
  - inherent; choices between competing goods
  - between different authority groups
  - increases cohesiveness
Characteristics: Political Model

Like a shifting kaleidoscope of interest groups, changing as issues emerge
## Political institutions:

### Strategies for effectiveness

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<tr>
<td>Get agreement on values, then design programs consistent with the values</td>
<td>Sponsor forum or retreat, structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict and disagreement are normal; negotiate</td>
<td>Anticipate reactions, plan for conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realize you may not get all you want but can usually get something; make</td>
<td>Decide in advance what is critical to win, what can be deferred; develop strategy for next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incremental progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalitions</td>
<td>Meet with stakeholders in advance to get support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Political institutions: Strategies for effectiveness

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<th>STRATEGY:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Find common ground; compromise</td>
<td>Learn about agendas and priorities across campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce cost of participation, give incentives</td>
<td>Assign staff to participate in implementation; awards and incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use intuition, experience, sense of the particular situation</td>
<td>Find out about what the org climate is like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be present, timing is critical; can then influence</td>
<td>Ear to the ground; engage all library staff; network</td>
</tr>
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Characteristics: Organized Anarchies

- Problematic goals, vague, unclear
- Unclear processes to achieve goals
- Fluid participation in issues
- Garbage-can decision making
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<td>Spend time to influence a decision</td>
<td>Meet formally and informally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persist; due to garbage can, may not succeed first time</td>
<td>Have backup plans; maintain momentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus attention on a limited agenda</td>
<td>Identify most critical things to accomplish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate opposition participation</td>
<td>Involve possible opponents in planning</td>
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</table>
## Organized anarchies

### Strategies for effectiveness

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<td>Overload the system</td>
<td>Saturate faculty and administrators with library items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage unobtrusively</td>
<td>Listen for curriculum reviews, new programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publish in discipline journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify small innocuous changes with</td>
<td>Rovers, embedded librarian, First year experience program, retirement learning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large-scale effects</td>
<td>college reads, book discussion groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret history</td>
<td>“When the university was founded…” Refer to respected professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Conclusion

- All institutions of higher education have characteristics of each mode
- 1 characteristic usually dominates
- Develop strategies for effectiveness given the predominant model’s characteristics
Thank you!

Comments and questions?