

Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL) Middle States

Background

The Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL)ⁱ was formed in 1993 with the mission of identifying, developing, and implementing new approaches to institutional assessment, planning and improvement for Rutgers—and for the higher education community more generally. The program was similar to others established during this period at Penn State, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of California-Berkeley, and at roughly 50 other colleges and universities—and is now one of approximately 65 similar programs at institutions represented within the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education (NCCI)ⁱⁱ which Rutgers helped to launch.

For its most recent past accreditation review Rutgers selected The University Program for Organizational Quality and Communication Improvement (now known as ODL) as one of four special areas for closer examination by the Middle States Accreditation team. In that review, the University received praise for the leadership role in assessment, planning and improvement at Rutgers and nationally through the Center.

Early on, ODL recognized the value and importance of integrating assessment, planning and improvement and developed materials and programs to support this approach. After looking at several different models, we determined the most rigorous, systemic, and widely recognized method developed for organizational assessment and one of the more comprehensive for linking these areas was the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality program—developed and instituted by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).ⁱⁱⁱ

Understanding the Baldrige Framework

Essentially, the goals of the Baldrige program are to:

- Identify the essential components of organizational excellence
- Recognize organizations that demonstrate these characteristics
- Promote information sharing among exemplary organizations
- Encourage the adoption of effective organizational principles and practices

The Baldrige framework places emphasis on broadly defining excellence; valuing leadership and planning; establishing clear, shared, and measurable goals; creating effective programs and departments; conducting systematic assessments of outcomes; engaging in comparisons with peers and leaders; and making improvements based on the results of the assessment.

The presupposition of the Baldrige framework is that organizational self-assessment and improvement are fundamental to institutional effectiveness, and should be thoroughly integrated into the fabric of every institution aspiring to excellence.

Assessment in the higher education sector

While the general factors and approach for assessment and improvement are quite common across a broad array of organizations, there are important differences in the culture, language, and operating practices from sector to sector.

Therefore, the basic Baldrige model has been adopted—but also adapted—for assessment in any number of differing organizational settings. The original application of the model was primarily in business. In 1999, the National Baldrige program released versions of the framework tailored to healthcare and education, and in 2006 a public sector version became available. To further contextualize the Baldrige framework, the *Excellence in Higher Education (EHE)* model—designed specifically for use within colleges and universities—was developed at Rutgers University in 1994, and tested and refined in subsequent years.^{iv} We coupled the emphasis on assessment and improvement, with an additional focus on planning. This emphasis is apparent in *EHE*, and also in *Strategic Planning in Higher Education: A Leader's Guide (SPHE)*, developed to support the planning needs of higher education institutions, departments, and programs.

EHE was designed to be adaptable to the needs of a broad range of higher education institutions. It was also structured to be useful for assessment and improvement activities by individual departments of all kinds within colleges and universities—business, student service and service, as well as academic. The framework is appropriate for departments with academic or co-curricular programs and services that primarily benefit students, and is equally applicable for considering the effectiveness of the institution—and/or constituent departments—in areas of research, public service/outreach and internal support functions involving other audiences, including faculty and staff, professional/disciplinary communities, alumni, state and local government, or the general public.

The *EHE* framework consists of 7 categories or themes that are viewed as relevant to the effectiveness of any educational organization—program, department, school, college or university. The categories are seen as components of an interrelated system, as shown in Figure 1, and described below:

Category 1—Leadership. Category 1 considers leadership approaches and governance systems used to guide the institution, department, or program; how leaders and leadership practices encourage excellence, innovation, and attention to the needs of individuals, groups, and/or organizations that benefit from the programs and services of the institution, department, or program; and how leadership practices are reviewed and improved.

Category 2—Purposes and Plans. This category considers how the mission, vision, and values of the institution, school, department, or program are developed and communicated; how they are translated into goals and plans; and how faculty and staff are engaged in those activities. Also considered are the ways in which goals and plans are translated into action and coordinated throughout the organization.

Category 3—Beneficiaries and Constituencies. The beneficiaries and constituencies category focuses on the groups that benefit from the programs and services offered by the program, department, or institution being reviewed. The category asks how the organization learns about the needs, perceptions, and priorities of those groups, and how that information is used to enhance the organization's effectiveness in addressing the needs and expectations of these groups, and in building strong relationships with those constituencies.

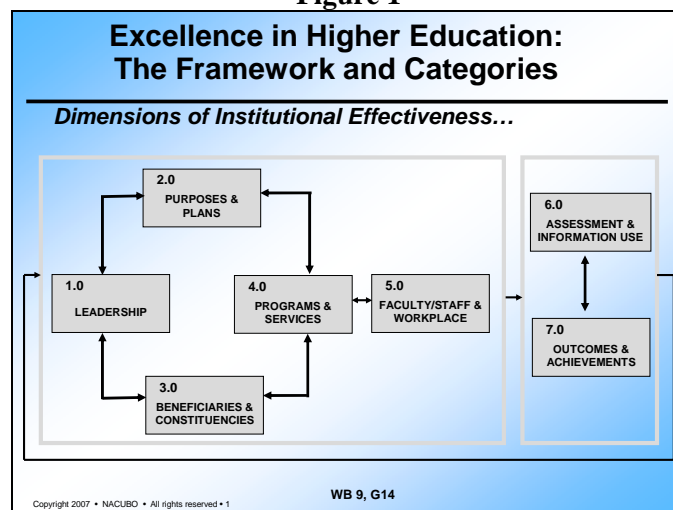
Category 4—Programs and Services. Category 4 focuses on the programs and services offered by the institution, department, or program under review and how their quality and effectiveness are assured. The most important operational and support services are also reviewed.

Category 5—Faculty/Staff and Workplace. Category 5 considers how the program, department, or institution being reviewed recruits and retains faculty and staff, encourages excellence and engagement, creates and maintains a positive workplace culture and climate, and promotes and facilitates personal and professional development.

Category 6—Assessment and Information Use. The assessment and information use category focuses on how the program, department, or institution assesses its efforts to fulfill its mission and aspirations and the effectiveness of its programs and services. Also considered is how assessment information is used for improving programs and services, day-to-day decision making, and the quality of the program, department, or institution, more generally.

Category 7—Outcomes and Achievements. Reporting outcomes and achievements is the theme of Category 7. The category asks for information and evidence to document or demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the program, department, or institution.

Figure 1



EHE has been used in various ways. The most common use of the framework is as the basis for actively engaging the faculty and/or staff of a unit in assessment, planning, and improvement activities. The *EHE Guide*, along with a companion *Workbook and Scoring Instructions* and *Facilitator’s Guide* are designed to support these various applications.^v When applied in this context, *EHE* can be used as the basis for a workshop or retreat that typically lasts one and one-half days. As it has been most often used, *EHE* workshops consist of a step-by-step assessment process, moving through the seven categories one at a time. For each category, the process includes:

- Discussing the basic themes and standards for the category
- “Brainstorming” a list of strengths and areas for improvement for the unit with respect to the category
- Reviewing “best” practices in the category as practiced by leading organizations

- Scoring the unit in the category on a 0 to 100% scale to capture perceptions of the extent to which the unit is fulfilling the standards of the category^{vi}

At Rutgers approximately 40 units have participated in the *EHE* process, including 22 University academic units, and business/service/administrative departments. (See Appendix A). The program has also been implemented in various academic, administrative, student life, and service departments within at least 35 other institutions including the University of California, Berkeley; University of Wisconsin, Madison; Pennsylvania State University; University of Pennsylvania; Texas A & M University, University of San Diego; California State University, Fullerton; Miami University; University of Massachusetts; MIT; University of Cincinnati; University of Texas, Austin; Seton Hall University; and others.^{vii}

The latest version of *Excellence in Higher Education* has expanded the earlier model to provide an approach to assessment, planning, and improvement that now integrates the framework of the Malcolm Baldrige Program with the standards and language developed by U.S. college and university accrediting associations. The Baldrige model and those developed by the regional accreditation organizations are combined to offer a standardized set of criteria and assessment process of excellence for higher education. The integrated criteria and process have the potential for encouraging and facilitating comparisons and innovation within and across institutions, and in so doing may help to address some of the criticisms voiced relative to the current approach to accrediting based on regional standards.^{viii} This approach has the important advantage of providing a common framework for reviewing institutional effectiveness, as well as for assessment, planning, and improvement within academic, student-life, administrative, and service units within the institution.

Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Like *Excellence in Higher Education*, *Strategic Planning in Higher Education: A Leader's Guide (SPHE)* provides a generic and flexible model to support higher education planning needs. Based on articulated need and a growing recognition of the essential role structured planning plays in a comprehensive assessment approach and organizational excellence, the Center developed the Strategic Planning in Higher Education program in 2004. As was the case with the *Excellence in Higher Education (EHE)* model, the program was designed specifically for use within colleges and universities.

The *SPHE* approach provides a seven-step blueprint for establishing planning priorities, guiding the process, and bringing the plan's goals to fruition. It recognizes that plans fail for all sorts of reasons, but more often than not, from deficiencies in the planning process, rather than in the plan itself. Breakdowns in the process can often be attributed to shortcomings in leadership, communication, or assessment, or in a failure to understand and take into account the powerful role culture plays in all organizations. Because of this, the *SPHE* model emphasizes these four imperatives as overarching themes throughout each component of the model. (See Figure 2)

- **Mission, Vision, and Values** – reviewing the organization's guiding principles as a useful reference point for planning, especially when determining how to allocate resources and measure achievements.
- **Collaborators and Beneficiaries** – identifying critical stakeholders, with particular attention to their expectations for the plan's development and implementation.

- **Environmental Scan** – examining cultural issues, resource concerns, and other factors that may impinge on the planning process.
- **Goals** – identifying an organization’s aspirations in tangible, achievable, and measurable terms.
- **Strategies and Action Plans** – translating goals into a series of concrete strategies and activities with appropriate timelines.
- **Plan Creation** – describing goals and strategies in a manner that is comprehensive, yet easily understood.
- **Outcomes and Achievements** – monitoring progress and, most importantly, evaluating outcomes.

The imperatives

Leadership – Defining leadership roles and responsibilities essential to a plan’s effectiveness. Unless a project’s leaders are successful in creating a commitment to the initiative, a plan that’s impressive on paper may fail to achieve its goals.

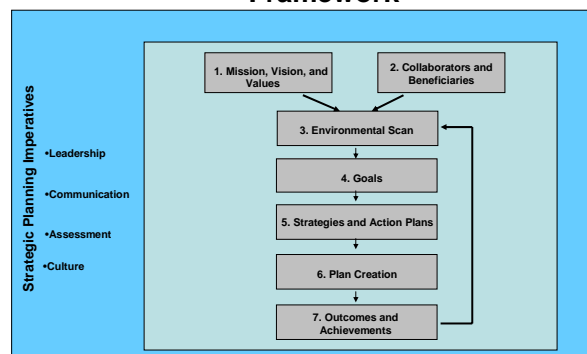
Communication – Without careful communication planning, organizational change is likely to meet with resistance by colleagues. Successful communication requires attention to each group likely to be affected by the planning process and the plan’s goals.

Assessment – Ongoing attention to assessment necessary to monitor a plan’s progress and assess its outcomes. These appraisals provide guidance for developing preplanning strategies, monitoring the planning process, and judging whether a plan’s activities and strategies are successful in fulfilling the organization’s goals.

Culture – Culture is the oft time ignored and unspoken key to success or failure. Understanding and taking account of the organization’s language, history, norms, rules, traditions, and customs is critical.

Figure 2

Strategic Planning in Higher Education Framework



At Rutgers approximately 25 units have participated in the SPHE process, including University academic units, and business/service/administrative departments. (See Appendix B).

In addition to the *EHE* and *SPHE* programs—and often as an outgrowth of having participated in these programs—ODL has assisted various departments within Rutgers in the areas of leadership development, mission and goal clarification, process review and improvement, climate review, stakeholder expectation and satisfaction assessment and improvement, and organizational effectiveness assessment. The Center has developed a number of standardized tools to support these activities at Rutgers, and through its publications and outreach role has come to be regarded as one of the leading higher education centers of its kind nationally.^{ix}

Appendix A

Excellence in Higher Education Participant Departments

1994-1999

- Cook College Dean's Office
- Law School – Newark
- Provost Office – Newark
- Faculty of Arts and Sciences – Newark
- Faculty of Management – Newark
- School of Criminal Justice - Newark
- University Facilities (1996, 2000)
- Auxiliary Services – New Brunswick
- Learning Resource Center – (1996, 2004)
- University College Dean's Office
- RC Student Centers and Student Activities
- Livingston College Dean's Office
- Office of University Financial Aid (1997, 2003)
- College of Nursing – Newark
- Graduate School - Newark
- Computing Services
- Department of Plant Pathology
- Consortium for the Arts and Humanities
- Lab Animal Services
- Office of Corporate Liaison and Technology Transfer
- REHS
- School of Communication, Information and Library Studies – Administrative Council and Faculty Leaders
- Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
- Administrative Assembly Leadership Team
- University Human Resources
- Provost's Administrative Council – Camden

2000-2007

- Douglass College Program for Women in Math and Science
- Residence Life and Housing
- Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy Dean's Office and Faculty Chairs
- School of Communication, Information and Library Studies – Masters of Communication Studies
- Citizen and Service Education Program (CASE)
- Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH)
- Center for Children and Childhood Studies – Camden
- Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum
- Career Services
- Committee to Advance Our Common Purposes
- Alumni Relations
- Business Services
- Government Services
- University Libraries

- Corporate and Foundation Relations
- Facilities Business Administration
- Center for Latino Arts and Culture – New Brunswick
- Cabaret Theatre – Douglass College (piloted Student Organization version of *EHE*)

Appendix B

Strategic Planning Participant Departments

2001-2007

- Community Policing Partnership – Camden
- Arts and Sciences Advisory Council
- Computing Services – Camden
- Blumenthal Mall – Newark
- Corporate and Foundation Relations
- RU Upward Bound Program
- University College Administrative Council
- Office of the Dean, Douglass College
- Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology Leadership Team
- Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum
- Sexual Assault Services and Crime Victim Assistance
- FAS Development Officers – New Brunswick
- Project Ready – Newark
- Academic Foundations – Newark
- Office of Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities
- Undergraduate Admissions
- College Off-Campus Student Association – New Brunswick
- Residence Hall Association – New Brunswick
- Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory
- Paul Robeson Student Center – Newark
- External Relations – Newark
- Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs – Newark
- Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum Governance Committee
- Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum Board
- Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities

ⁱ Originally named The Program for Quality and Communication Improvement (QCI).

ⁱⁱ The National Consortium for Continuous Improvement was formed in 1999 by national leaders in continuous improvement, organizational development, planning, quality, institutional effectiveness and related areas. Our mission is to advance academic and administrative excellence in higher education by identifying, promoting, supporting and sharing effective organizational practices among member institutions.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.quality.nist.gov/>

^{iv} The first version of this model was called *Tradition of Excellence* and was published in 1994 (Ruben, 1994). Revised and updated versions were published under the current name, *Excellence in Higher Education* in 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005, and 2007.

^v B. D. Ruben, (2007) *Excellence in Higher Education Guide: An Integrated Approach to Assessment, Planning, and Improvement for Colleges and Universities*. Washington, DC: National Association of College and University Business Officers; B. D. Ruben, (2007) *Excellence in Higher Education Guide: Workbook and Scoring Guide*. Washington, DC: National Association of College and University Business Officers; and B. D. Ruben, (2007)

Excellence in Higher Education Guide: Facilitator's Guide. Washington, DC: National Association of College and University Business Officers.

^{vi} In some instances, due to time restrictions or participant preference, the scoring component of the process has been omitted.

^{vii} Others include: University of Toledo; Howard University; University at Buffalo; University of Illinois; University at Binghamton; University of Vermont; Marygrove College; Wilkes College; Briarcliffe College; Excelsior College; Azusa Pacific University, and Raritan Valley Community College.

^{viii} For further discussion, see Ruben, B. D. Higher Education Assessment: Linking Accreditation Standards and the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria. *New Directions for Higher Education*. In Susan C. White and Theodore S. Glickman, eds., New York: Wiley, Spring, Volume 137, 2007 (in press); Ruben, B. D. Linking Accreditation and the Malcolm Baldrige Framework. *Academic Leader*, May 2006, 22(5) 1,5; and Ruben, B. D., T. Russ, S. M. Smulowitz, and S. L. Connaughton. Evaluating the Impact of Organizational Self-Assessment in Higher Education: The Malcolm Baldrige/Excellence in Higher Education Framework. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 28(3), 2007 (in press).

^{ix} Ruben, B. D., The Center for Organizational Development and Leadership at Rutgers University: A Case Study, "Organization Development and Change in Universities. A special issue of *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7(3), 2005, 368-395.

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